Ecumenical Missiology:
Changing Landscapes and
New Conceptions of Mission

Oxford: Regnum
and
Geneva: World Council of Churches

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 21st 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 21st 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 Thessalonikki), 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.

Series Editors

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Front cover photo from World Council of Churches Photo Archive shows Filipino
dancers at the WCC CWME Manila Conference in 2012
Back cover photo shows a scene from the Edinburgh 2010 conference.

Contents

SECTION 3: TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE

CONCLUSION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AG	*Ad Gentes*
AIC	African Independent Churches
AD	*Aparecida Document*
CA	*Centesimus Annus*
CELAM	Latin American Episcopal Conference
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches
DN	*Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization*
EA	*Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation*
EN	*Evangelii Nuntiandi*
EG	*Evangelii Gaudium*
GS	*Gaudium et Spes*
IMC	International Missionary Council
LS	*Laudato Si'*
MEUT	*Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today*
RM	*Redemptoris Missio*
SC	*Sacrosanctum Concilium*
TTL	*Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*
WCC	World Council of Churches

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: [1]

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 21st 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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[1] For an up-to-date list and full publication details, see 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, Kapya J Kaoma (ed).

The Reschaping 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 Jorgen Skov-Sorenson (eds).

Mission in Central and Eastern Europe: Realities, Perspectives, Trends, Corneliu Constantineanu, Marcel V. Măcelaru, Anne-Marie Kool and Mihai Himcinschi (eds).

FOREWORD

Mission and Ecumenism are the life lines of Church. As such, ecumenical missiology is an expression of these life lines in conceptual terms. It is no wonder, then, that ecumenical missiology today has become 'life'-centric. For instance, the World Council of Churches 2013 Busan Assembly focused on 'God of **Life**' and the new WCC Mission Statement is entitled 'Together Towards **Life**'. Ecumenical missiology has travelled quite far since Edinburgh 1910. It has undergone sweeping changes ever since. The accent on missiology has shifted away from colonial models to post-colonial paradigms; from classical modes to contextual modes; from monolithic, Eurocentric ways of thinking and doing mission to polyphonic expressions of missiology; from confessional slants to truly ecumenical perspectives; and from human centredness to life centric missiologies. The new Commission on World Mission and Evangelism book *Ecumenical Missiology: Changing Landscapes and New Conceptions of Mission*, among other things, provides a succinct yet comprehensive account of the history of ecumenical missiology since 1910, tracing various landscape shifts and missiological reflections during the last century.

There have been a wide range of themes within the broad spectrum of ecumenical missiology that the last century has addressed and pondered over through various world mission conferences and mission events. Section 2 of the book is a theological survey of the 'core themes across a century', the most significant missiological themes such as 'evangelism', 'church, mission and unity', 'worship', 'healing', 'culture', 'other faiths', 'formation', 'discipleship', 'partnership', 'contextualization', 'transform-ation', 'justice', 'margins', 'environment ', 'gender' and 'migration'. The thematic articulations have been efforts of the ecumenical movement to address mission concerns in ever-changing global landscapes.

The final section of the book concentrates specifically on the new WCC/CWME Mission Statement: *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (*TTL*). An edifying and enlightening discussion on *TTL* from various confessional, contextual and regional perspectives is provided in this section. The wide reception that *TTL* has received is indicative of the huge influence it has had on ecumenical mission thinking and praxis. The pneumatological mission paradigm, the Mission of the Holy Spirit, that *TTL* articulates within a comprehensive Trinitarian framework, provides fresh insights on transformative spirituality that is feminine/womanist, inter religious and earthly. The accent on mission as quest for justice and sharing in a world of gross injustice makes *TTL* one of the most prophetic texts ever on mission and evangelism. The ecological perspective where creation is treated as an agent of creation is not only ground breaking but also strikes chords with indigenous

worldviews on creation. Perhaps what makes *TTL* most popular and controversial at the same time is its new concept of 'Mission from the Margins'. This indeed is a paradigm shift. After *Missio Dei* (Willingen, 1952), no other mission paradigm, in my view, has received such recognition and enjoyed such wide currency. 'Mission from the Margins' goes beyond the classical liberation theology on behalf of the marginalized in that the marginalized here assume agency and subjecthood of liberative mission. The 'epistemological privilege' of the marginalized provides them with a particular viewpoint that those at the centre are not able to see. In this sense 'Mission from the Margins' is a subaltern version of liberation missiology. 'Margins' here refers to the marginalized all over and also to the perspective of the Global South. *TTL* in general and 'Mission from the Margins' in particular will surely have wide and lasting influence on ecumenical missiology for a long time to come. Therefore, the final section where *TTL* is the focus, is of great relevance.

The new CWME anthology on mission entitled *Ecumenical Missiology: Changing Landscapes and New Conceptions of Mission* is a significant contribution in the arena of ecumenical missiology. Not only does it provide a historical overview of the theology of world mission since Edinburgh 1910 but also throws much light on various themes that the ecumenical mission movement has dealt with over a century. The book assumes great importance also because of it's last section which functions effectively as a commentary on *TTL*.

CWME is proud to present this new volume to the ecumenical movement. On behalf of the Commission, it is my privilege to thank Prof. Dr Kenneth R. Ross, the Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum, Ms Kyriaki Avtzi and Prof. Dr Roderick R. Hewitt for having edited this volume in an impressive manner. The Commission is particularly grateful to Dr Jooseop Keum, Director of CWME, for his excellent leadership and passionate commitment to the cause of world mission and evangelism. My hope and prayer is that the book will receive wide readership and exert great influence on churches, mission agencies and mission minded people across the globe.

Metropolitan Geevarghese Coorilos
Moderator, Commission on World Mission and Evangelism,
World Council of Churches

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The World Council of Churches 2012 mission affirmation is entitled *Together towards Life*. These three simple words capture the meaning of ecumenical missiology. It is a matter of coming *together*, across the fault-lines of geography, race, gender, politics, theology, ecclesiology and anything else that might divide those who confess Jesus as Lord. It is a matter of movement – '*towards*' – being on a journey rather than being static or complacent. It is a matter of *life* – reaching out to the reality of the world in the conviction that the last word is not one of death but rather of life. *Together towards Life* is the title of a 2012 document but it is also an apt description of a century-long quest by churches and mission agencies around the world to understand what is involved in their calling to bear witness to Christ.

This book has been prepared with acute awareness of how challenging it can be to comprehend the meaning of mission and to find direction for our own engagement in it – as individuals, churches, agencies or institutions. This is all the more so today as the managerial approach which prevailed at the height of the modern missionary movement has been found wanting. Mission today is conducted along lines that are 'unmanageable' and yet the challenge remains to understand its genius and meaning. As we wrestle in the early decades of the 21st century with the missional challenges of our time and situation, we have much to learn from those who met the challenges of their time and context in earlier years. By recalling how mission thinking responded to changing circumstances in the past, we can be better equipped to develop the fresh thinking about mission that will be required in the future.

Two milestone events in the history of Christian mission frame this volume. The first is the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference to which has been traced both the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement and the start of the systematic study of mission known as 'missiology'. The second is the adoption in 2012 of the World Council of Churches mission affirmation *Together towards Life*, a comprehensive statement on the meaning of mission that has been well received by a broad cross-section of world Christianity. Between the two lie one hundred years of constant engagement with the quest to understand the missionary impetus and the call to unity found at the heart of the Christian faith. The purpose of this book is to clarify the main lines along which this quest has been pursued and to assess the result of the one hundred years of reflection as it finds expression in *Together towards Life*.

The century-long process of reflection has unfolded against a backdrop of changing landscapes. Just four years after the epochal Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference, the First World War broke out with the

result that many of the presuppositions on which Edinburgh 1910 had worked were called into question. This proved to be a recurrent pattern as events such as the Second World War, the collapse of western colonial rule in much of Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa, the arms race, the Cold War, the advance of economic globalisation, the rise of China, and the increase in worldwide migration, provoked fundamental rethinking of the meaning of mission. Indeed, the post-war period has seen an acceleration in the speed with which the global landscape is being transformed. As a changing global context has challenged the churches to rethink their understanding of mission, so the 'landscape' of ecumenical missiology has also changed. As the practice of mission changed, so missiology was reshaped accordingly. Features that were prominent one hundred years ago have faded into the background while new features, unknown in 1910, have taken centre stage. It is this 'changing landscape' that the present volume seeks to survey.

The first section of the book allows those who shaped the understanding of mission across the century to speak for themselves. Assembled on its pages are extracts from the vast body of documents generated by the periodic global mission conference held under the auspices first of the International Missionary Council and then of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches (the form in which the life of the IMC continued after integration with the WCC in 1961). Brief explanatory introductions set these extracts in context and allow the reader to engage with the issues which gripped the imagination at the time and, in particular, to discern the changes in the landscape as these were brought into focus by the successive conferences.

The second section of the book surveys the same terrain as the first but uses a different frame of analysis. It identifies the key issues with which ecumenical missiology has been concerned across the century and examines them on a thematic basis. Scholars of mission seek to trace the decisive developments that have shaped the ecumenical understanding of each particular theme. They appraise the state of our understanding today and seek to discern where key challenges may lie for the future.

The third section is focused particularly on *Together towards Life* (*TTL*), the mission statement produced at the end of the 100-year span of ecumenical missiology. This section sets out the immediate background to the creation of the document and analyses it from a variety of confessional and geographical perspectives. This critical engagement with the text will be invaluable to anyone seeking to study *TTL*. More broadly, it draws together the threads of ecumenical mission thinking that have run through the century into consideration of a single comprehensive statement. Not that this is the end of the story – critical consideration of *TTL* reveals areas where further work is required, and a concluding chapter suggests where the challenges for ecumenical missiology might lie in the future.

   Besides making a contribution to the comprehensive analysis of Christian mission attempted by the Regnum Edinburgh 2010 series, this book has the particular purpose of missional formation. It aims to be a tool that can be used at personal, congregational or institutional levels. Churches and church-related agencies for mission and development are invited to evaluate and rethink their mission policy in the light of the ecumenical journey that has led to *Together towards Life*. This will help to chart the new directions for mission required in changed landscapes. The book also aims to be a resource for education and formation. Engaging at depth with *Together towards Life*, and the century of ecumenical engagement that lies behind it, is an exercise that will immeasurably strengthen the leadership formation urgently required in many contexts today.

SECTION ONE

TRACING CHANGING LANDSCAPES AND NEW CONCEPTIONS OF MISSION

Compiled and introduced by Kenneth R. Ross

Introduction

The 'ecumenical century' is widely acknowledged to have begun with the World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910. However, scarcely had its Continuation Committee begun the task of implementing its vision when the First World War broke out. It soon became apparent that this shattering event had permanently altered the way the world was understood. Mission too would need a new interpretation. This turned out to be but the first of a series of episodes which changed the landscape in which people were living. Each called for a new conception of Christian mission.

This section will trace the changing landscapes across the century and discern the outlines of the new conceptions of mission which were formed in response. A primary frame of reference for this exercise will be the conferences which were held approximately every ten years by the International Missionary Council and, after that body's integration with the World Council of Churches in 1961, by the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. These conferences will be allowed to speak for themselves through extracts from their findings. Introduction and commentary will set them in context and make reference to leading figures and publications by which they were influenced. '(These primary texts are reproduced exactly as they originally appeared including, especially in the earlier years, expressions that display attitudes to such matters as race and gender that would not be acceptable today. Part of the observation of changing landscapes is to see how such attitudes changed in the course of the century.)

The purpose and importance of these world mission conferences is captured in a statement made by the first of them at Edinburgh in 1910: 'Assuredly, then, we are called to make new discoveries of the grace and power of God, for ourselves, for the Church, and for the world; and, in the strength of that firmer and bolder faith in Him, to face the new age and the new task with a new consecration.'[1] This is what succeeding generations have sought to do. As the landscape has changed, so understanding of mission has deepened and broadened. New discoveries of the grace and power of God have indeed been made. From these there is much to be learned as mission theologians and practitioners meet the challenges posed by the world of the 21st century.

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[1] 'Message to Members of the Church in Christian Lands', World Missionary Conference, 1910, *The History and Records of the Conference* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 109; cit. Wolfgang Günther, 'The History and Significance of World Mission Conferences in the 20th Century', in *International Review of Mission*, 92.367 (October 2003), 521-37, at 521.

THE WORLD MISSIONARY CONFERENCE, EDINBURGH 1910 – A FOUNTAIN-HEAD

- Representative gathering of the entire Protestant missionary movement
- Christendom framework of the 'Christian World' and the 'Non-Christian World'
- Sense of opportunity and obligation to take the gospel to the whole world
- In-depth research, study and reflection informed the conference
- Divisive doctrinal and ecclesial issues excluded
- Greater co-operation and collaboration needed for the sake of effectiveness in mission
- Birth of the modern ecumenical movement

The Nature and Purpose of 'Edinburgh 1910'

From the mid-19th century the western Protestant missionary movement adopted the practice of holding a major international conference on a decennial basis. The World Missionary Conference, usually remembered as 'Edinburgh 1910', stood in this succession. It was distinguished, however, by the range of its participants, the breadth and depth of its enquiry, the scale of its ambition, the sense of urgency and opportunity with which it was imbued, and the magnitude of its historical legacy in mission and ecumenism. Its leaders were united in the conviction that they stood at a moment of unprecedented opportunity in terms of fulfilling the Church's task of taking the Christian message to the whole world. They were convinced that they had arrived at a moment when political, economic and religious factors had combined to create opportunities for worldwide missionary advance which, if not grasped now, might never recur. The conference therefore convened with a strong sense that it had a role to play in world evangelisation which would prove to be historic.

An informal alliance of British and American missionary societies, with support also from continental Europe, provided the leadership and organisation for the conference. The American Methodist layman, John R. Mott, well known as a leader of the Student Volunteer Movement and the Young Men's Christian Association, chaired the organising committee and the conference itself.[1] The secretary was a young man from Scotland, J.H.

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[1] See C. Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott 1865-1955: A Biography* (Geneva: WCC and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979).

Oldham, a masterful thinker and organiser who would later become a major figure in the twentieth-century ecumenical movement.[2] The participants were drawn from the missionary societies and church mission boards of the western Protestant churches. Only agencies having missionaries in the foreign field and with foreign missions expenditure of at least £2,000 annually were invited to be represented, and they were entitled to an additional delegate for every additional £4,000 of foreign missionary expenditure.[3] On this basis 176 missionary societies and boards sent delegations – 59 from North America, 58 from continental Europe, 47 from the United Kingdom and 12 from South Africa and Australia. The delegates were overwhelmingly British and American – 509 from Britain, 491 from North America, 169 from continental Europe, 27 from the white colonies of South Africa and Australasia, and 19 from 'the younger churches' of India, China and Japan. Only one African attended and there were no delegates from Latin America, the Caribbean or the Pacific.

Complex ecclesiastical diplomacy lay behind the composition of the conference and the framing of its enquiry. A major objective of the organising committee was to secure the participation of the Anglo-Catholic or 'High Church' Anglican missionary societies – the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Universities' Mission to Central Africa.[4] In order to do so, they had to concede that territories where Eastern Orthodox or Roman Catholic churches predominated should be regarded as already evangelised, not a view usually taken at that time by Evangelical Protestant missions. Hence Latin America, much of the Middle East and eastern Europe were effectively excluded from the consideration of the conference. Its discussion was framed around the 'Christian world' of western Europe and North America, and the 'Non-Christian world' of Africa, Asia and the Pacific. The question was how to take the gospel of Christ from the former to the latter. To further allay apprehensions among the societies and boards invited to participate, the International Committee agreed 'to confine the purview of the Conference to work of the kind in which all were united… No expression of opinion should be sought from the conference on any matter involving any ecclesiastical or doctrinal question on which those taking part in the conference differed among themselves'.[5] This meant that the conference was necessarily oriented to practical issues of method, administration and co-operation in missionary work.

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[2] See Keith Clements, *Faith on the Frontier: A Life of J.H. Oldham* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark and Geneva: WCC, 1999).
[3] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *The History and Records of the Conference* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 7.
[4] See Clements, *Faith on the Frontier*, 81-88.
[5] *History and Records*, 8.

A distinctive feature of Edinburgh 1910 was that it did not aim to be a rallying of the faithful supporters of the missionary movement. Whereas earlier gatherings had concentrated on a demonstration of enthusiasm, Edinburgh aimed to be a working conference, its subtitle being 'To consider Missionary Problems in relation to the Non-Christian World'. It was distinguished by its attempt to achieve a more unified strategy and greater co-ordination within the worldwide engagement of Christian mission. The aim of the organising committee was that it should be 'a united effort to subject the plans and methods of the whole missionary enterprise to searching investigation and to co-ordinate missionary experience from all parts of the world'.[6] It was driven by the belief that the missionary movement had arrived at a unique moment of opportunity. There was a great sense of urgency to the conference, prompted by a conviction that the opportunity could be lost if the right strategy were not formed and implemented. 'Never before,' stated its flagship text, 'has there been such a conjunction of crises and of opening of doors in all parts of the world as that which characterises the present decade.'[7] In the words with which Mott entitled the book he published soon after the conference, it appeared to be 'the decisive hour of Christian missions'.[8]

Much of the drive and inspiration of the conference derived from the delegates' realisation that their goal of world evangelisation was much more likely to be achieved if there were a greater degree of co-operation and collaboration among the western missionary agencies. The only formal resolution of the conference came on the report of its Commission on 'Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity'. The conference unanimously resolved that a Continuation Committee be formed, 'international and representative in character… to maintain in prominence the idea of the World Missionary Conference as means of co-ordinating missionary work, of laying sound lines for future development, and of evoking and claiming by corporate action fresh stores of spiritual force for the evangelisation of the world'.[9] The conference resulted in structures quite quickly being put in place to facilitate co-operation between missionary agencies.

Its significance, however, went much further. Though its terms of reference explicitly excluded consideration of divisive doctrinal and ecclesiastical questions, the Edinburgh Conference spawned an epoch-making vision of church unity. The Asian delegates, though few in number, were particularly influential in voicing an aspiration for greater church unity, drawing on movements in this direction which were already

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[6] Cit. Clements, *Faith on the Frontier*, 77.

[7] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Report of Commission I: Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 1.

[8] John R. Mott, *The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1912); cf *Carrying the Gospel*, 363.

[9] 'Minutes of the Conference', in *History and Records*, 95-96.

underway in their contexts. They in turn took fresh impetus from the dynamic of the conference. A direct line of continuity runs from the Edinburgh Conference to the formation of the Church of South India (1947), the Church of North India (1970), a single non-denominational Protestant Church in China (1951), and the United Church of Christ in Japan (1941).[10] Though the conference was an exclusively Protestant affair, there were moments when it looked to a wider church unity. Silas McBee, editor of The Churchman, read a letter from Bishop Bonomelli, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Cremona, in which the Bishop wrote that he recognised amongst the Edinburgh delegates elements of faith 'more than sufficient to constitute a common ground of agreement, and to afford a sound basis for further discussion, tending to promote the union of all believers in Christ'.[11]

Dr R. Wardlaw Thompson of the London Missionary Society told the conference: 'I long for the time when we shall see another Conference, and when men of the Greek Church and the Roman Church shall talk things over with us in the service of Christ.'[12] Thus the conference proved to be the widely acclaimed starting point of the twentieth-century ecumenical movement, with a direct line of continuity running through to the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948. 'Edinburgh 1910,' wrote Hugh Martin, 'was in fact a fountain-head of international and inter-church co-operation on a depth and scale never before known.'[13]

Nonetheless, in many respects the expectations of Edinburgh 1910 were disappointed. The world was not evangelised in that generation. The gospel was not carried to the entire non-Christian world. Within a few years of the conference, the energies of the 'Christian world' would be consumed by a war more destructive than any experienced hitherto and a great deal of the worldwide evangelistic effort would be put on hold. Nor would this prove to be a temporary interruption. Edinburgh 1910, which understood itself to be on the brink of a great new surge of missionary advance, in fact proved to be the high point of the movement. Never again would the western Protestant missionary movement occupy centre-stage in the way that it felt it did at Edinburgh. For most of the mission boards and societies represented, the twentieth century would be one of remorseless decline in their operations. Today, moreover, the limitations of the conference's conceptual landscape are plain to see. The framework of thought, the categories of analysis and the forms of language are clearly outdated.

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[10] See Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2009), 310-12.
[11] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity,* Report of Commission VIII (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 220-21.
[12] *Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity,* 216.
[13] Hugh Martin, *Beginning at Edinburgh: A Jubilee Assessment of the World Missionary Conference 1910* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1960), 3.

However, the twentieth century has witnessed a vindication of a fundamental conviction of Edinburgh 1910: that the good news of Jesus Christ can take root in every culture across the world and produce fruit in Church and society everywhere. Edinburgh 1910 proved to be the first glimpse of what Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple would describe as 'the great new fact of our time' – a truly worldwide Christian Church.[14] The great drama of the coming century, in terms of church history, would be the growth of Christian faith in Asia, Africa, Oceania and Latin America. In some respects, this has surpassed even the most sanguine expectations of the 1910 conference. Since this epoch-making vision of the church as a truly global missionary community found its first concentrated expression at Edinburgh in 1910, the unique place of the conference in the history of Christianity is assured. However imperfect its conceptual equipment, the Edinburgh Conference, like no other, anticipated the transformation through which Christianity would become a truly worldwide faith. As Andrew Walls has written: 'The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910, has passed into Christian legend. It was a landmark in the history of mission; the starting point of the modern theology of mission; the high point of the modern western missionary movement and the point from which it declined; the launch-pad of the modern ecumenical movement; the point at which Christians first began to glimpse something of what a world church would be like.'[15]

This volume will follow the story of the International Missionary Council, the direct institutional outcome of Edinburgh 1910. It is important, however, to recognise that the conference also spawned two other strands of the modern ecumenical movement. The first is the Faith and Order movement which deliberately concentrated on the doctrinal and ecclesiological aspects of unity that had been excluded from the discussions of Edinburgh 1910.[16] The moving spirit in the inception of Faith and Order was Bishop Charles H. Brent who had been a delegate at the Edinburgh Conference and was profoundly affected by the experience. In his own words, he 'was converted. I learned that something was working that was not of man in that conference; that the Spirit of God… was preparing a new era in the history of Christianity'.[17] This new era, for Brent, would involve

[14] William Temple, *The Church Looks Forward* (London: Macmillan, 1944), 2-3.
[15] Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, and Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2002), 53.
[16] See Günther Gassmann, 'Faith and Order', in Nicholas Lossky, José Miguez Bonino, John S. Pobee, Tom F. Stransky, Geoffrey Wainwright and Pauline Webb, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 411-13.
[17] Charles H. Brent, cit. W. Richey Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council and its Nineteenth Century Background* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), 134.

the pursuit of doctrinal unity and the bridging of the gulf between Protestant and Catholic Christianity. The second strand of modern ecumenism with roots in Edinburgh 1910 was the Life and Work movement which was concerned with the diaconal dimension of Christian witness.[18] It was inspired by the idea that 'doctrine divides while service unites'. J.H. Oldham, the secretary of Edinburgh 1910, also played a highly influential role in the emergence of the Life and Work movement in the 1920s and 1930s. The formation of the World Council of Churches in the mid-twentieth century was a matter of bringing together these three streams of ecumenical life that had flowed from Edinburgh 1910.

One feature which distinguished Edinburgh 1910 from earlier missionary conferences was the depth of the studies undertaken to prepare for it. Eight Commissions were established in July 1908, each focused on a topic deemed to be of great significance to the missionary movement. Each Commission was composed of a roughly equal number of British and Americans, with a sprinkling of continental Europeans. The membership struck a balance between leaders of the missionary movement and sympathetic scholars. Most of the Commissions used a questionnaire method to consult widely with missionaries in the field. Through a communication effort unprecedented in its scale and ambition, they gathered the accumulated wisdom of the missionary movement in relation to their assigned topics. In the course of this exercise, the Commissions carried out a vast amount of original research which brought unusual authority to their conclusions. Each Commission was given a day to present its report, and delegates had the opportunity to respond with what were then considered very short speeches – maximum seven minutes. The final published versions of the Commission reports include the speeches made by way of response at the conference itself. It is these eight volumes that constitute the documentary outcome of Edinburgh 1910 and from which the following extracts have been culled.

Commission One:
Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World

This was the flagship Commission of the Edinburgh 1910 Conference. Its title, 'Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World', represented the primary focus of the conference. The missionary task was conceived as the 'occupation' of the vast regions of the world from which Christianity was, at the beginning of the twentieth century, still absent. [19] The Commission's Report was to be read in conjunction with the *Statistical Atlas of Christian Mission*, prepared in New York and New Haven. This included a directory

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[18] Paul Abrecht, 'Life and Work', in Lossky et al., *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement,* 612-14.
[19] *Carrying the Gospel*, 58.

of Protestant missionary societies, statistics on the history of the missionary movement, maps of the distribution of Protestant mission throughout the world, and an index of mission stations 'occupied' by foreign missionaries.[20] Information about Roman Catholic and Orthodox missions was also included in a separate section of the Atlas.

The entire document exudes an optimistic sense of momentous opportunity. Communications, railway lines, treaties and trade made the non-Christian world accessible to the 'carrying of the Gospel' as never before. Though the phrase was studiously avoided, much of the tenor of the report reflects a passion for 'the evangelisation of the world in this generation'.[21] This was the watchword which Mott had popularised in his capacity as General Secretary of the World Student Christian Federation. It was, however, not unchallenged in the work of the Commission. An alternative view was stated most succinctly, not in the Report itself, but in an appended letter from Gustav Warneck, the pioneer of mission studies in Germany, who was not present at the conference itself. Addressing himself to Mott, he argued that 'a predilection for the watchword "the occupation of the whole world in this present generation"… can easily miss the most hopeful opportunities'.[22] These lay, in his view, in strengthening local churches. He argued: 'The great lesson which the foreign missionary enterprise of our time has to learn from the history of the expansion of Christianity during the first three centuries is that the principal strength of missions lies in the native congregations… We are at present in that stage of modern missions when the watchword must be the self-propagation of Christianity.[23] The relationship of foreign missions and native churches, and the relative value of each in the missionary enterprise was an issue held in tension throughout the work of Commission One. Another tension revolved around the question of whether it was preferable to aim for the conversion of individuals or communities.

Commission One Report

The Present Possibility of Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World

When in the history of our religion has the Christian Church been confronted with such a wide opportunity as the one now before her in the non-Christian world as a whole? As always, opportunity spells

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[20] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Statistical Atlas of Christian Missions* (Edinburgh: World Missionary Conference, 1910).
[21] See John R. Mott, *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation* (London: Student Volunteer Missionary Union, 1900).
[22] *Carrying the Gospel*, 435.
[23] *Carrying the Gospel,* 434.

responsibility, and this unparalleled openness comes to us as a great test and trial of the reality and living strength of our faith, and of our capacity for comprehensive Christian statesmanship and generalship.

It is possible today as never before to have a campaign adequate to carry the Gospel to all the Non-Christian world *so far as the Christian Church is concerned*. Its resources are more than adequate. There are tens of millions of communicant members. The money power in the hands of believing Christians of our generation is enormous. There are many strong missionary societies and boards in Europe, America, Australasia and South Africa, and they have accumulated a vast fund of experience, and have developed a great variety of helpful methods and facilities through generations of activity throughout the world. Surely they possess directive energy amply sufficient to conceive, plan and execute a campaign literally worldwide in its scope? The extent, character and promise of the native Christian Church make it by no means an inefficient part of the Body of Christ.

Attention should be called to the abounding energy and tremendous possibilities of the inspiring movements recently called into being to facilitate the realisation of the aims of the missionary propaganda; for example, the Student Volunteer Movement; the more comprehensive World Student Christian Federation; the Foreign Departments of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations; the Young People's Missionary Movement; the Laymen's Missionary Movement; and the efficient women's missionary societies; the various Forward Movements within different Christian communions; the army of youth in the Sunday Schools, and various young people's societies and guilds. The Holy Spirit has certainly been preparing and marshalling the forces for a campaign commensurate with the missionary responsibility of the Church. Above all these are the superhuman resources: the dynamic power of the Gospel of Christ; the unrealised possibilities of intercession; the triumphant power of holy lives – lives unreservedly yielded to the sway of the risen Christ; and the presence of Christ Himself in His Church by His Spirit, the One who is able to subdue all things unto Himself. Thus, as the followers of Christ look outward over the great areas of the non-Christian world, and then turn to survey the resources of Christendom, and to gaze by faith upon their superhuman resources, can they question the possibility today of making Christ known to all people?[24]

The Urgency in View of Present Tendencies and Movements in the Non-Christian Religions

The non-Christian religions are losing their hold on certain classes. Missionaries who have been on the field from twenty to forty years bear

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[24] *Carrying the Gospel*, 10-11.

testimony that the influence of the non-Christian religions, especially over the educated classes, is waning, whether they contrast the power of these religions today with what it was a generation ago, or whether they contrast the place and influence of these religions with that of Christianity.[25]

The Urgency in View of the Plastic Condition of Non-Christian Nations

The Asiatic peoples, following the leadership of Japan, have awakened from their long sleep. Through the whole of Asia a ferment is in process which has spread from the intellectual leaders and is fast taking possession of the masses of the people themselves. It affects over three-fourths of the human race, including peoples of high intelligence and ancient civilisation. The leaders are concerned with the question of enlightenment, of intellectual and social freedom, of economic development, and of national efficiency. In all history there has not been a period when such multitudes of people were in the midst of such stupendous changes, social, commercial, industrial, educational and religious.[26]

Making Christ Known: Fundamental Requirements

There must be united planning and concerted effort on the part of the missionary forces of the Church. We fall back frankly in front of this task if it must be faced by a divided Christendom. We approach it with calmness and confidence if the true disciples of Jesus Christ stand together as members of a common family. It is our deep conviction that a well considered plan of co-operation in the missionary work of the Societies represented in this hall, entered into and carried out with a sense of our oneness in Christ, would be more than equivalent to doubling the present missionary staff.

The great task of making Christ known to all mankind will not be achieved without a great enlargement of the evangelistic forces of the Churches on the mission fields themselves. The evangelisation of the world as we have come to see it increasingly, is not chiefly a European and American enterprise, but an Asiatic and African enterprise. Whatever can be done should be done which will result in still further developing the power of initiative, of aggressive evangelism, and of self-denying missionary outreach on the part of the Christians of Asia and Africa, and in raising up an army of well qualified native evangelists and leaders.

The most crucial problem in relation to evangelising the world is the state of the Church in the Christian countries. The missionary enterprise after all is the projection abroad of the Church at home. At this time of the shrinkage of the world, the closeness of that relationship is startlingly close.

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[25] *Carrying the Gospel*, 11.
[26] *Carrying the Gospel*, 25.

We are frank to concede that it is futile to talk about making Christ known to the world in this generation or any generation unless there be a great expansion of vitality in the members of the Churches of Christendom.[27]

Beyond doubt the most fundamental requirement of the missionary enterprise is a greater appropriation of the power of the Spirit of God. Important as are those aspects of the undertaking which deal with the statistics, the machinery and the strategy of missions, the leaders of the movement should concern themselves far more with the spiritual dynamics of missions. All workers in foreign missions should seek a fresh and constant realisation of the truth that they are fellow-workers with God.[28]

Commission Two:
The Church on the Mission Field

As was already apparent from passing allusion in Commission One, the question of 'the Church on the mission field' was both an energising and a challenging theme for the conference. On the one hand, it was a measure of the achievement of the missionary movement that indigenous churches were emerging throughout Asia and Africa in areas where Christianity had been unknown until the arrival of western missionaries during the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the vitality and growing confidence of these emergent churches posed the question as to what would be their relationship to the 'mother' churches to whose missionary work they owed their origins. To critics, both at the conference itself and subsequently, the celebration of the emergence of 'the Church on the mission field' was not combined with trust and confidence in its capacity to take the initiative in the organisation of church life and witness. Despite giving recognition to the missionary initiative and potential of 'the Church on the mission field', the Report does not examine this in any detail. It concentrates instead on ecclesial issues of constitution and membership, on the edification and education of its members, the training and employment of workers, the character and spiritual fruitfulness of Christian life, and the need for Christian literature and theology that will support the development of these 'younger churches' into full maturity.

The Commission chairman, John Campbell Gibson, had an intimate knowledge of the Church in China, having served in southern China since 1874 under the auspices of the English Presbyterian Mission. It was, however, the representatives of 'the Church on the mission field' who offered the most telling remarks. Taking up the Commission's metaphor of choice which likened the relationship of missions and churches to that of parent and child, V.S. Azariah of India trenchantly observed that 'we have

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[27] *Carrying the Gospel*, 404-05.
[28] *Carrying the Gospel*, 370.

a new generation of Christians who do not wish to be treated as children'.[29] The Chinese delegate, Cheng Ching Yi, looked to a day when the tensions evident at the conference would be transcended and it would be recognised that 'all Churches of Christ are dependent first upon God and then upon each other'.[30] Such a vision was little developed in the Commission's Report. Nonetheless, it proved to be a suggestive document as it looked to the day when a framework of 'mission' and 'church' would be obsolete.

Commission Two Report

Significance of the Church on the Mission Field

It is perhaps one of the most encouraging signs, both of the progress of mission work itself, and of the advance which has been made in the thought of the Church at home with regard to it, that 'The Church on the Mission Field' now occupies so prominent a position in the discussion of mission questions and methods.[31]

What we desire to concentrate the mind of the Conference upon is this view, not details of polity and organisation, but the fact that questions of polity and organisation are impressing themselves upon the minds of Christian folk all over the world in the mission field, and that is an epoch-making fact. That is to say, you recognise that the Church on the Mission Field is a sphere of labour in which you are no longer dealing with little scattered companies of unimportant people, converts under the wing and under the charge of a missionary; it is now a complex body, which has in some countries already attained, and in others is fast attaining, a high degree of organisation and corporate life. The point on which we desire to fix your attention is this great view of the corporate life of the young Church in the Mission Field, because the recognition of this fact we consider to be of vital importance in the conduct of all foreign mission work. You have now what we begin to call not a little but a great Church in the Mission Field.

We have now to think of the Church on the mission field not as a by-product of mission work, but as itself by far the most efficient element in the Christian propaganda. The words of Christian people, spoken to their own countrymen in all lands, are the most efficient, as well as the most

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[29] V.S. Azariah, 'The Problem of Cooperation between Foreign and Native Workers', *History and Records*, 306-15.

[30] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *The Church in the Mission Field*, Report of Commission II (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 352.

[31] *The Church in the Mission Field,* 2.

extensive, preaching of the Gospel, and their lives are everywhere the most conspicuous and conclusive evidence of its truth.[32]

It should be remembered, however, that that our use of the phrase 'mission field' is inexact. The whole world is the mission field, and there is no Church that is not a Church in the mission field. Some Christian communities are younger and some are older, but that is all the difference. The Commission has perforce accepted the popular but inexact usage of calling only those regions 'the mission field' where the Church has been more recently planted, and where its history falls, roughly speaking, within the last two centuries.[33]

The Church on which we report presents itself no longer as an inspiring but distant ideal, nor even as a tender plant or a young child, appealing to our compassion and nurturing care. We see it now as an actual Church in being, strongly rooted, and fruitful in many lands. The child has, in many places, reached, and in others is fast reaching, maturity; and is now both fitted and willing, perhaps in a few cases too eager, to take upon itself its full burden of responsibility and service.

For these reasons we lay emphasis on the questions of organisation, Church membership, discipline and edification, the training and employment of workers, the development of the new life within the Church in character and spiritual fruitfulness, and its deepening and strengthening by means of an adequate Christian literature in all its departments.[34]

The Extent of the Church on the Mission Field

Perhaps the simplest and yet most impressive way of realising the wide fellowship in worship and service of the Church of God, is to take into account what happens week by week in the course of the Lord's Day. The day first dawns about sunset on our Saturday, in longitude 180 degrees east of Greenwich, and the first inhabited country where the day's call to worship is heard and answered is in the Fiji Islands, in the heart of the Pacific. The period is not very remote when these islands were typical of the darkest depths of heathenism; now the Fijian Church leads the world in worship on the Lord's Day.

It is followed in New Zealand by the Christian section of the remnant of the Maori race, and next come the worshipping thousands of the aborigines of Australia, in Christian fellowship with as many Polynesian labourers from their island homes, and Christian immigrants from the ancient seats of their race. Close upon these follow the Christians of New Guinea, gathered out of a wild and savage race, and won at a heavy cost of precious life by Europeans and Polynesian fellow-labourers.

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[32] *The Church in the Mission Field,* 2.
[33] *The Church in the Mission Field,* 4.
[34] *The Church in the Mission Field,* 3.

From New Guinea the day passes with hardly an interval to Japan, where a vivid contrast is presented. Here the Christian Church is found, not amongst barbarous tribes, but in the midst of an ancient civilisation. In Japan too, the opposition to the entrance of the Gospel was fierce and long continued, being unhappily intensified, in the time of the earlier Roman missions, by the political complications into which the missions were drawn. Now we can rejoice over hundreds of thousands of Christian worshippers, who have made the name of Christ to be known and honoured throughout this reconstructed Empire, and are bearing a worthy part in working out the great future of their race.

One hour later the Church of Manchuria begins its worship; and here we find a Christian community which has passed through fire and water, repeatedly scattered and broken up by war and persecution, and coming out of these sufferings to enter almost at once into a movement of spiritual revival of strange power. Almost contemporaneous with the worship, of Manchuria is that of the Korean Churches. It has been gathered in a field long closed against the Gospel and its whole history falls within the lifetime of one generation. Next in order of time come the worshippers of the Philippine Islands, and with these is associated an old and interesting Christian community in the Moluccas and the Celebes Islands.

In close succession to the Philippines comes Borneo, with its contingents of Christian Dyaks, Malays and Chinese; and the rich island of Java, where, too, a worshipping Church is found, though feeble as yet, amid the millions not yet evangelised.

Long before the day has traversed the length of Java it has begun in China and Formosa,[35] and over a vast territory are scattered congregations which – to speak only of those represented at the Shanghai Conference – number at least 200,000 communicant members and a Christian community of one million souls. A little earlier than Java, the day has begun in Mongolia, but although evangelistic journeys have been made in its wide territory, Mongolia is still silent, and its scattered population takes no part in the day's service of Christian worship.

With China may be associated Siam,[36] the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, closely followed by Burma and Assam, where multitudes of souls continue the strains of Christian worship.

But in these longitudes, too, occur the great blank spaces of Tibet and Turkestan, in which as yet scarcely a single voice of Christian worship is found. Immediately on Burma follows the great Christian Church of India and Ceylon, whose yearly increase is more than four times as rapid as that of the total population, and which is rapidly gathering into Christian fellowship even the long despised pariahs of the South.

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[35] Now Taiwan.
[36] Now Thailand.

As the day passes over the western frontier of India, it enters the small but solid blocks of untouched ground in Baluchistan and Afghanistan. For them apparently the time of evangelistic effort and triumph has not yet begun.

Immediately in their rear comes the old kingdom of Persia, with its great history of literary and political glory, where only a small proportion of its interesting people acknowledge Christ as Lord; while in Arabia also another name has usurped the place due to His alone, and a few of the 'desert rangers' yet bow the knee to Him.

Passing over Arabia, the day almost immediately enters upon Africa, one of the wildest and most varied of all the mission fields. The old tradition that Africa was the home of wonders has been fully maintained in the history of the Church, both in the islands of its eastern coast, and within the borders of the continent itself.

First on the eastern threshold the martyr Church of Madagascar hails the return of the Lord's Day. But the Church, planted at many points with untold labour and sacrifice, maintains across the intervals, through Livingstonia[37] and Uganda to Congoland and Old Calabar,[38] the far-reaching succession of Christian worship, and hands on the day of rest from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic, its day of worship coinciding with that of the old Mother Churches of Europe.

Greenland in the far north, with its Christian Church, fills up the interval between Africa and Europe on the east of the Atlantic, and the Americas on the west. So by Eskimos and Aleutians and American Indians, by Christian negroes in the West Indies and the United States, and by Patagonians in the farthest south, joining with all the American Churches, the strain of worship is continued unbroken, till finally, when the day has completed its long circuit, it ends, as it began, in the Pacific Ocean, and the last lingering worshippers in the worldwide House of God are the Christian people of Samoa and the Friendly Islands.[39] It is these simple people of the Islands – savages a century ago – who first greet the Lord's Day with their songs of praise, and it is they who close it with their lingering prayers.

It is inspiring to reflect how the younger Christian communities make good the lack of service of the older, and the older join with the younger, so that throughout the Lord's Day, from the rising of the sun to the going down of it, incense and a pure offering ascends unceasingly to God, land answering to land as each in turn takes up the chorus.[40]

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[37] A mission station of the United Free Church of Scotland in northern Malawi.

[38] A town and mission centre of the United Free Church of Scotland in eastern Nigeria.

[39] Now Tonga.

[40] *The Church in the Mission Field,* 6-9.

Commission Three:
Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life

Almost universally, education was seen as integral to the missionary task. The particular line of enquiry assigned to Commission Three was based on a broad view of the purpose of missionary education which saw it as leavening, like yeast, the entire life of each nation with Christian beliefs and values. In tension with such a view was a more church-centred approach which put the priority on the formation of leadership for the emerging indigenous churches. Both perspectives were accommodated within the Report with the balance of emphasis falling more to the latter. The Report also acknowledged the directly evangelistic role of education which was emphasised by many of the missionary correspondents.

Framed by an Introduction and Conclusion, the Report consists of nine chapters: the initial five are regional surveys, summarising the responses of missionaries in India, China, Japan, Africa and 'Muhammedan lands in the Near East' to the Commission's questionnaire; the final three chapters deal with thematic issues centring upon on training – both industrial and educational – and literature. Between the two parts of the Report, Chapter Seven, entitled 'The Relating of Christian Truth to Indigenous Thought and Feeling', comprised the heart of the enquiry. The Report is inspired by a vision of indigenous Christianity, coming to expression under the guidance of national leaders, educated and trained in their own vernacular. The catholicity of the Church could come to full expression, argued the Report, only when the faith was appropriated by each nation in terms which were true to its own particular character.

The veteran Scottish educational missionary, William Miller, Principal of Madras Christian College from 1877 to 1907, was unable to attend the conference on account of old age and infirmity but he circulated a paper which robustly defended the diffusionist strategy which had marked the contribution of Scottish Colleges of higher education in India since their beginnings under the influence of Alexander Duff from the 1830s.[41] While Commission Chairman Charles Gore accorded great respect to the argument advanced by Miller, he made it clear that it was not one which the Commission could accept. The education and formation of leaders for the emerging indigenous churches took priority, in the estimation of the Commission, over the diffusion of Christian values and principles throughout the wider society.

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[41]'Extracts from Pamphlet by Dr Miller of Madras, circulated among delegates attending the Conference', World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life,* Report of Commission III (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 441-46.

Commission Three Report

The subject of education in missionary work is of special and far-reaching importance. No one, who knows the history of missions, can doubt that missionaries were pioneers of education wherever they went, and it is hardly possible to exaggerate the debt of gratitude which is due to them for their labours in education, nor can it be doubted how important a part education has played in the process of evangelisation. At the same time, education, as pursued under missionary auspices, has exhibited certain weaknesses in its methods, and is exposed to certain perils.[42]

1. There has been a tendency, especially in certain lands and districts, to denationalise converts, that is, to alienate them from the life and sympathies of their fellow-countrymen, so as to make it possible to suggest that Christianity is a foreign influence, tending to alienate its converts from the national life.

2. Missionary education, as carried out during the last fifty years under the influence of English-speaking missionaries, naturally shared the weakness of their educational methods at home. It has become a commonplace that much of our education in the home-lands has been futile, because it is not sufficiently been a training for life. It is coming to be recognised among us that education needs to be directed far more consciously and deliberately towards preparing boys and girls for domestic and social life and service; that it ought to be a training and stimulating of the whole nature of the child, and not merely or chiefly the imparting of information, or an appeal to the memory.

3. There has been an astonishing awakening of national consciousness among the peoples of all the regions we are specially considering. In some countries, as in Japan and China, this national consciousness has shown itself in the development of national systems of education under Government auspices. In other countries, those under English Government, the English authority has thrown itself vigorously into the development of educational policy, and there has resulted an immense extension of educational effort under Government control with the resources of Government behind it. There has arisen hence a peril that missionary education, having much smaller resources at its command, should come to be of an inferior character, and should fall out of the main stream of educational progress.

4. If the native Churches are to become independent, self-governing Churches, it is a matter of chief importance that leaders should be provided and trained.

5. It is necessary to reconsider the question of the whole training of missionaries, and to enquire whether the missionary staff should not be enriched in every country, and for every denomination of Christians, with a much larger supply of properly equipped and trained teachers.

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[42] *Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life,* 6.

6. If missionary education is not, in its plant and equipment, to fall behind the education conducted under Government auspices, there is need of much fuller co-operation between the different Christian bodies.[43]

The Importance of Seeking to Develop an Indigenous Christianity

Though the original home of Christianity is, as it were, the half-way house between East and West, the modern missionaries have represented strongly defined or intensely western forms of Christianity. There has thus been a gulf, very difficult to bridge, between the whole mental equipment of the modern – especially the Anglo-Saxon – missionary and the people of the East. And on the whole it must be said that, though there have been among the missionaries men of great genius, as well as great zeal, yet singularly little attention was paid by the pioneers, and even until today, on the whole, singularly little attention has been paid to presenting Christianity in the form best suited to the Oriental spirit.[44]

The aim of Christian missionaries should be not to transplant to the country in which they labour that form or type of Christianity which is prevalent in the lands from which they have come, but to lodge in the hearts of the people the fundamental truths of Christianity, in the confidence that these are fitted for all nations and classes, and will bear their own appropriate and beneficent fruits in a type of Christian life and institution consonant with the genius of each of the several nations.

The modern missionary enterprise is wholly right in its increasing tendency to avoid attacking needlessly the ethical systems current amongst the people for whom it labours, and instead to commend and conserve all that is good in their thought and practice. It is thus best prepared to add to this good the higher and larger truths which Christianity has to present. If in some respects the practice of the non-Christian peoples is better than that which is common among Christian nations, this also should be freely, even if sadly, confessed.[45]

We are convinced that, though foreign evangelists should study to present Christianity in the form best suited to its appropriation by orientals, yet the work of 'acclimatising' will be done in the main by native teachers; and from this point of view we desire to urge not only, as we have already done in other connections, that the training of native pastors and teachers is the pre-eminently important work of Christian missions, but also that profound study and attention should be given to the point of how they are to be trained, so that their training may not tend to denationalise them or to

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[43] *Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life,* 6-8.
[44] *Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life,* 245.
[45] *Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life,* 264.

occupy their minds with distinctively western elements and controversies of religion.[46]

In particular, we desire to lay the greatest emphasis on the importance of giving religious teaching, not only of the elementary kind, but as far as possible throughout, in the vernacular. We feel certain that those of our witnesses are right who believe that religion can only really be acclimatised in the heart of the natives of any country if it finds expression in their native language – the language of their homes. And we feel sure that a theology, which is really indigenous as well as properly Christian and Biblical, must develop a native terminology, an end which is only likely to be attained where the vernacular is used for the expression of religious ideas. Again, we are sure that the greatest pains must be taken as far as possible to use all that is available in the literature of the nation to provide preparation for a distinctively Christian learning and literature, and it must never be left out of sight that an indigenous Christian Church means a native Christian literature by competent native writers. We cannot conceal from ourselves that a quite fresh effort seems to be required in this, the primary task of the evangelist, namely, the raising up of properly equipped and instructed native Churches and of native leaders who shall have not temptation to feel that they are alienated from the life and aspiration of their nation in becoming Christians.'[47]

A Vision of Truly National Churches

A universal religion, a catholic religion, needs a common message such as is contained in the Apostles' Creed, and as is recorded in the Bible, but a common message comprehended by very different and various peoples and individuals, each with very different gifts, so that each in receiving the one message, brings out some different or special aspect of the universal truth or character which lies in the common religion. So it is, and only so, that the glory and honour of all nations are brought within the light and circle of the Holy City; so it is alone that the real breadth and catholicity of life is brought out.

We look around, we see the profound and wonderful qualities of the Indian and the Chinese, and the Japanese and the Africans, and we are sure that when the whole witness of Christianity is borne, when Christ is fulfilled in all men, each of these races and nations must have brought out into the world a Christianity with its own indigenous colour and character, and that the rising up of any really national Church will be to us, who remain, who were there before, life from the dead. We regard this question as central. We start from this. Are we by means of education, training truly national Churches to stand each on its own basis, and bring out that aspect

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[46] *Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life,* 265-66.
[47] *Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life,* 373.

of Christian truth and grace which it is the special province of each separate race to bring out?[48]

Commission Four:
The Missionary Message in relation to Non-Christian Religions

This was the most strikingly original of all the Commission Reports and the one which attracts the greatest interest today, described by Kenneth Cracknell as 'one of the great turning points in the Christian theology of religion'.[49] It is remarkable for the degree to which it scotches the idea that western missionaries were iconoclasts bent on the eradication of existing religions in order to impose their own understanding of Christianity. On the contrary, the Report consistently argues that the appropriate attitude of the Christian missionary to the non-Christian religions is one of sympathetic understanding. Decisive for the innovative and ground-breaking work of the Commission was the choice of the Chairman. Mott and Oldham opted not for a recognised missionary leader but for the Professor of Systematic Theology at the United Free Church College in Aberdeen, David Cairns. As Cracknell observes: 'The choice of a theologian suggests already that Mott and Oldham were looking for something more than a competent survey of the world's religions.'[50]

The guiding theology of the Report is attributable primarily to the work of two missionaries of the London Missionary Society: T.E. Slater and J.N. Farquhar, the latter described by Andrew Walls as 'the most considerable Indologist produced by the missionary movement'.[51] Anticipating his soon-to-be-published and highly influential work, The Crown of Hinduism,[52] Farquhar's extensive response to the questionnaire developed the idea of fulfilment which saw Hinduism as India's Old Testament which prepared the way for the coming of Christ and found its fulfilment in Him. This allowed him both to engage Hinduism with deep understanding and profound sympathy, and to regard it as being fulfilled and therefore superseded by the coming of Christ. As he would conclude his magnum opus: 'In [Jesus Christ] is focused every ray of light that shines in Hinduism. He is the Crown of the faith in India.'[53] The Commission applied the paradigm of fulfilment to other non-Christian religions also. This allowed it to recognise their positive features, such as the civic and moral order of Confucianism, or Buddhism's detachment from material

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[48] *Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life,* 406-07.
[49] Kenneth Cracknell, *Justice, Courtesy and Love: Theologians and Missionaries Encountering World Religions 1846-1914* (London: Epworth Press, 1995), xi.
[50] *Justice, Courtesy and Love,* 187.
[51] A.F. Walls, 'Farquhar, John Nicol', in Nigel M. de S. Cameron (ed), *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 315.
[52] J.N. Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism* (London: OUP, 1913).
[53] Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism*, 458.

desire. Islam was the religion which was hardest to accommodate in this paradigm. The Commission made the case for an irenic Christian encounter with non-Christian religions which would present the gospel as the fulfilment of their own inner hopes and yearnings. The 'schoolmaster to Christ' replaced the 'soldier of the cross' as the guiding metaphor for the missionary in the theology of Commission Four. Nonetheless, particularly through the influence of the Madras-based Scottish missionary A.G. Hogg, the supremacy of the Christian revelation and its unique redemptive power were unambiguously stated in its conclusions.[54]

Commission Four Report

Main Conclusions

1) We are all agreed that Christianity is the final and absolute religion. We believe this on what we were convinced were adequate grounds before we compared Christianity with the other religions of the world. The effect of that comparison has been to confirm and solidify this conviction. And it is precisely because we hold this conviction that we believe we dare take the most generous and fearless attitude towards all the other religions. We thought it best to compare the best in each pagan religion with the best in Christianity. Just because we hold so firmly to the finality and absoluteness of the Christian faith, we dare go further than any other religion dare go, in laying down our goods for comparison with any other goods in the world.

2) After all, the question that is before us is not whether we believe that Christianity is the final and absolute religion, but how are we going to get the world to believe it. The question is not whether we are prepared to call Christianity supreme, but how we are really going to make it supreme, and how get it accepted as such by all the world. That is the second conviction, not on what ground do we believe that Christianity is the final and absolute religion, but how may we induce religious men on the other side of the world to share our conviction?

3) The third point is the point of the reaction of the contact of Christianity with the non-Christian religions and peoples, not upon Christianity, but upon our apprehension and conceptions of Christianity. No one of us believes that we have the whole of Christian truth. If we believed that we had the whole of this truth, that would be the surrender of our conviction that Christianity is the final and absolute religion. How is it possible for us in a small fragment of the long corporate experience of humanity, a few races in a mere generation of time, to claim that we have gathered all the truth of the inexhaustible religion into our own personal comprehension and experience? We know that we have not, by reason of

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[54] See further, Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 222-27.

the primary and fundamental conviction we hold of the value of Christianity. We see this also as we lay Christianity over against the non-Christian religions of the world. We discover, as we do so, truths in Christianity which we had not discerned before, or truths in a glory, in a magnitude, that we had not before imagined. We begin to see that only a Christianity understood by universal application to known life can avail to meet the needs of human life in any community or nation. Only a Gospel that is laid down upon all the life of man will enable it to deal with any of the problems of mankind. These problems are in their sense universal problems, and they can never be dealt with until we deal with them with a Gospel understood from its world application and known as a comprehensive world power.

4) Not only is it necessary that we should have a world-conquering gospel, a gospel understood by applying it to all the life of man in order to deal with our problems in the world anywhere, but we need an immense deepening and quickening of the Christian life at home. We can carry no message save the message that we have and we come here upon the great need of the missionary enterprise today. Our appeal has been not that we should seek in the non-Christian religions for truths which are not in Christianity, but that we should seek in Christ the truth which we have not yet known, and the power which we have not yet experienced, but which is there for the Church in all the fullness of God in the day of her faith and obedience.[55]

The Attitude of the Missionary

Does the evidence not disclose that we are face to face today with a new and formidable situation which is too great for our traditional thoughts of God? We seem to be looking into the great workshop of history. We discern the forces at work which make nations and make religions. We see the clash of the great historic religions; we see the forming of a new world. Something very vast, something very formidable, something very full of promise and wonder is there if we have the eyes to see it. But inevitably the question arises, Whether the Church has within itself, resident within it, the forces to meet this great emergency? Is it equal to the providential calling? Here is the very heart of the whole matter, the one great question of destiny.

Do we not need the broadening and deepening of all our conceptions of the living God, the deepening and liberating of all our thoughts of what He has done for us in Christ, of what by His Providence and His Spirit He is ready to do for us in this day of destiny and of trial? Do we not above all other things need the intensifying of the sense of the living God? For us this can only mean a new discovery of God in Christ. It is this motive which has

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[55] *The Missionary Message,* 324-26.

set us on our quest, this search for the hidden riches of God in Him. We are persuaded that in the religions of the world we have the utterance of human need and that the answer to that long need and prayer of humanity is found in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Spirit.[56]

The true attitude of the Christian missionary to the non-Christian religions should be one of true understanding and, as far as possible, of sympathy. That there are elements in all these religions which lie outside the possibility of sympathy is, of course, recognised, and that in some forms of religion the evil is appalling is also clear. But nothing is more remarkable than the agreement that the true method is that of knowledge and charity, that the missionary should seek for the nobler elements in the non-Christian religions and use them as steps to higher things, that in fact all these religions without exception disclose elemental needs of the human soul which Christianity alone can satisfy, and that in their higher forms they plainly manifest the working of the Spirit of God. On all hands, the merely iconoclastic attitude is condemned as radically unwise and unjust.

But along with this generous recognition of all that is true and good in these religions, there goes also the universal and emphatic witness to the absoluteness of the Christian faith. Superficial criticism might say that these two attitudes are incompatible, that if Christianity alone is true and final, all other religions must be false, and that as falsehoods they should be denounced as such. Deeper consideration of the facts leads us to the conviction that it is precisely because of the strength of their conviction as to the absoluteness of Christianity that our correspondents find it possible to take this more generous view of the non-Christian religions. They know that in Christ they have what meets the whole range of human need, and therefore they value all that reveals that need, however imperfect the revelation may be. One massive conviction animates the whole evidence that Jesus Christ fulfils and supersedes all other religions, and that the day is approaching when to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.[57]

The spectacle of the advance of the Christian Church along many lines of action to the conquest of the five great religions of the modern world is one of singular interest and grandeur. But at least as remarkable as that spectacle of the outward advance of the Church is that which has also been revealed to us of the inward transformations that are in process in the mind of the missionary, the changes of perspective, the softening of wrong antagonisms, the centralising and deepening of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the growth of the spirit of love to the brethren and to the world. Once again the Church is facing its duty, and therefore once more the ancient guiding fires begin to burn and shine.[58]

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[56] *The Missionary Message,* 294.
[57] *The Missionary Message,* 267-68.
[58] *The Missionary Message,* 273-74.

Commission Five:
The Preparation of Missionaries

Training for missionary service is the subject with which Commission Five was concerned. Chairman of the Commission was Professor Douglas Mackenzie – born of Scottish missionary parents in South Africa, Edinburgh-educated, Professor of Systematic Theology in Chicago, and from 1904 the President of Hartford Seminary Foundation which was already pioneering the professional training of missionaries in the United States, combining theological and regional studies with character formation. The Commission gathered evidence from the United States, Britain, Germany and Scandinavia, and from a wide cross-section of missionaries. It brought to the conference the conviction that the quality of the missionary was the decisive factor in the achievement of world evangelisation. As Douglas Mackenzie expressed it: 'The whole matter on the human side of it hinges on the quality of the missionary... The quality of the missionary will triumph over the absence of money. The quality of the missionary therefore becomes a supreme question for this Conference.'[59]

Like the conference as a whole, the Commission was deeply impressed by the fact that the financial and human resources urgently needed on the mission field were available within 'the home church'. It sought to make the case that these resources needed to be mobilised for world mission as never before. Another recurrent theme was the observation that the level of co-operation which was being achieved on the mission field was often eluding missionary societies in their home countries. Missionary training was seen as an area which cried out for a higher degree of co-operation. The Commission is notable for the attention which it paid to the training of women missionaries. Their role was understood to extend far beyond 'women's work for women' towards the fulfilment of a vision of women building up the entire fabric of national life. In terms of training inspired by this wide-ranging vision, the example cited was the Women's Missionary College in Edinburgh whose Principal, Annie Small, was one of the four women Commissioners. An Appendix to the Report describes the philosophy of the College.[60]

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[59] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *The Preparation of Missionaries*, Report of Commission V (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 300.
[60] *The Preparation of Missionaries*, 250-52.

Commission Five Report

General Features of All Missionary Training

The spiritual or essentially Christian part is that by which the soul, drawn out of itself, lives in God – in the first place, by love for Him, which is its central principle; secondly, by faith in Him which is the basis of all Christian work; thirdly, by hope in Him, as the End of all activity. All these are ways in which God rather than self becomes the actual centre of life. For that very reason they are purely the gift of God. No act of the self can win them, and it follows that no training can give them, though it may remove some obstacles in the way of their development.

There are, besides, special considerations which have to be taken into account in the spiritual training of a missionary. He has to be ready in case of necessity to face the tremendous spiritual dangers of isolation among heathen surroundings. He must know how to face great strain and heavy responsibility without the support of visible Christian fellowship, and to maintain a high level of spiritual life without the continual renewing which is supplied under normal conditions by the ordinances of common worship.[61]

A missionary more than most men has the need and opportunity of cherishing all his life long the peculiar grace that belongs to a teachable spirit. Any course of preparation which fails to produce in the missionary candidate the humility and the hopefulness of the patient learner, has failed at the foundation. It has failed to impart the right personal attitude.[62]

The question of manner presents peculiar difficulties. The white man so instinctively feels that he is the lord of creation, that it is hard for him, no matter how Christian he may be, to get over the idea that men of a different colour are his inferiors. He is apt to be brusque and peremptory. He is always in a hurry and impatient of delays. His very kindness is apt to have an element of condescension, of which he may not be conscious but which the native is quick to detect. Blunders of tact may be almost as serious as want of sympathy. It is difficult, but at the same time most important, always to remember that no man who cannot control his temper can hope to exert spiritual influence in the mission field.[63]

A missionary is powerless to help a people whom he cannot love. All preparation, therefore, which has for its aim the development of a power of mutual understanding between ourselves and all with whom we come in contact, the quickening of our perception of the good points in our neighbours and associates which comes from the determination to look always for the Christ in every man, is directly missionary preparation. It

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[61] *The Preparation of Missionaries*, 100.
[62] *The Preparation of Missionaries*, 101-02.
[63] *The Preparation of Missionaries*, 103.

must tend to build up a habit of generous appreciation both of the glories of ancient civilisation and of the childlike and, therefore, Christ-like elements in the character of the backward races. It will deepen reverence for all things reverent and honour for all things honourable, without blinding the eyes to the evil that must be eradicated. It will make it possible, when the time comes for a genuine identification of interests, to exhibit a love even for a strange people which shall be over-mastering, unfeigned and personal.[64]

Women's Share in Christian Missions

No thoughtful student of the missions of the Christian Church will deny the supreme importance of women's share in them. Women must be missionaries if it were only that they may testify to gracious uplifting love of their Lord, if it were only that the long chain of courageous, patient, loving missionaries may be unbroken. But there is far more than the historic call. A vast proportion of any population would have to be left without the message, if there were no women to present it. The Christian life would be very partially manifested if the womanly characteristics were absent from a missionary settlement. The Christian Church, the Christian nation, might indeed be organised but could not be built up apart from the education and training of the womanhood of each community into Christian ideals of wifehood, motherhood, leadership; and this only Christian women can supply. And if it be remembered that the wives and mothers of one generation are the true moral founders of the whole community of the next, it must be acknowledged that the character and preparation of the women who are to be commissioned to train them are matters of the gravest consideration.[65]

Proposals for the Establishment of Central Institutions

The evidence laid before the Commission has shown that there is a practically unanimous recognition of the need for more specialised preparation of missionaries for their work and for their particular mission field. The preparation is taken to include (1) a literary and scientific study of languages, (2) a knowledge of the religious history and sociology of special races, (3) acquaintance with the general principles and laws of missionary enterprise and method. It is equally clear that the necessity cannot be adequately met by existing institutions, or by Societies separately. The co-operation of Missionary Societies is essential, and it is a hopeful and guiding sign that while the necessity of which we speak is recognised on every hand, there have been very numerous and spontaneous

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[64] *The Preparation of Missionaries*, 104.
[65] *The Preparation of Missionaries*, 147.

indications of a desire for co-operation on the part of experienced representatives of many Societies and Churches.[66]

Commission Six:
The Home Base

Fundamental to the conceptual framework of the conference was the understanding that there was a 'home base' in western Europe and North America and a 'mission field' in Asia and Africa. The task of Commission Six was to examine the means by which the 'church at home' might adequately discharge its responsibility for the evangelisation of the world. It thus addressed one of the primary concerns of the conference: that the churches of the western world might step up their commitment to foreign mission in order to exploit the unique moment of opportunity which now presented itself. James Levi Barton, from the United States, chaired Commission Six. The Commission's espousal of a highly managerial approach makes it a very American report in its provenance, principles and prognoses. As David Dawson has commented, 'pragmatism reigned'.[67] Nonetheless, the Commission is marked by an acute awareness of the spiritual dimension of the missionary movement and the need for renewed vigour at the spiritual level.

The titles of its eighteen chapters indicate that the subject was understood as 'scientific'. not merely practical: 'missionary intelligence' and 'the science of missionary societies' are the terms that define the opening and concluding chapters of the Report, setting out the conceptual framework in which issues of missionary recruitment, funding, home leadership and administration are discussed. 'The science of the home base' and 'the science of the operation of Missionary Societies' were to be understood as essential to the science of missions as a whole – a science yet in its infancy, to which the Report aspired to make a formative contribution, as demonstrated by the inclusion of an extensive bibliography of missionary publications.[68] The hope of the Commission was that a more sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of mission would translate into increased active support among the 'home churches'. The Report recognised the growing contribution of women to mission, both in the home churches and overseas. However, its influential recommendation that, in the interests of efficiency, separate women's missionary organisations should be integrated into the mainstream (male-run) organisations has been

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[66] *The Preparation of Missionaries*, 181.
[67] David G. Dawson, 'The Church and the Edinburgh Missionary Conference', in *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. XXXIX No. 2 (April 2011), 168.
[68] See World Missionary Conference, *The Home Base of Missions*, Report of Commission VI (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 333-558.

criticised for stifling women's initiative and leadership in overseas mission.[69]

Commission Six Report

The Spiritual Resources of the Church

In dealing with the Home Base of Missions, the Commission is concerned with the whole subject of the means by which the Church at home may adequately discharge its responsibility for the evangelisation of the world. It is evident that this problem is not one of machinery, but of life. The mere multiplication of machinery does not necessarily increase power. The subject which has been entrusted to the Commission to investigate drives us back at every turn to the question of the spiritual condition of the home Church. Has that Church sufficient vitality for the tremendous task to which it is called? Wherever a belief is intensely and passionately held, it naturally and inevitably propagates itself. It does not need wealth or numbers to cause it to spread. Repeatedly in history one man with a conviction has been more powerful than a mighty host. The Christian Church, if it were possessed, mastered, and dominated by the faith which it professes, could easily evangelise the world. When, therefore, we direct our attention to the Home Base of Missions, we realise that the fundamental problem is that of the depth and sincerity of the religious experience of the Church, the quality of its obedience, the intensity and daring of its faith.[70]

Any view of the conduct of the work of the Church that does not place supreme reliance upon prayer is at variance with the entire teaching of the New Testament. No thoughtful reader of the Gospels can fail to recognise the pre-eminent place which Jesus Christ gave to prayer both in His teaching and in the practice of His own life. The greatest leaders of the missionary enterprise have been men of prayer. 'Prayer is power; the place of prayer is the place of power; the man of prayer is the man of power.'[71]

The Science of Missionary Societies

A general desire has been expressed by eminent missionary leaders on both sides of the Atlantic that some arrangement may be made which will result not only in a continuous systematic study of missionary questions and problems, but which will draw together the active missionary forces of the world in the consideration of questions of common interest. The hope is

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[69] See Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 312-16; Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 303-07.
[70] *The Home Base of Missions*, 6.
[71] *The Home Base of Missions*, 7-8.

freely expressed that provision may be made for embodying the conclusions reached in this Conference, in some form that will make them permanently valuable, and thus present to the Christian world the spectacle of systematic and scientific co-operation in the work of Missionary Societies in all communions such as will command the confidence of all, raise to the maximum the efficiency of the great missionary enterprise, and present to the non-Christian world the spectacle of the united advancing forces of Christendom. They will even go further than this and say that it would seem to be a mistake if, out of this Conference, there should not emerge some form of organisation or organisations that will be competent to deal with this matter and produce some general and permanent Committee, international and interdenominational in character, to which the Missionary Societies of the world shall look, to whose work all will contribute, and from which all will receive direct benefit.[72]

The Fundamental Value of Missions to the Church

The value of missions to the remote nations of the earth can never be computed in human figures. It can be expressed only in terms of eternity. But however valuable this is in the new and renewed intellectual, social and moral life imparted to peoples who were sitting in ignorance and moral darkness, and however much the mission work of last century has cost in the expenditure of life and money for the advance of the Kingdom of God in the regions beyond, the reflex influence upon the Churches engaging in this work, and upon individuals who have given themselves in whole or in part to it, is well worth the cost. We may go even farther and say that, but for the new life that has come to the Church of Christ through the effort it has put forth to evangelise the world, the very life of the Church itself would have been imperilled. Foreign missions are saving the Church to itself and to the world.[73]

We have come to the conclusion in our investigations that the Church of Christ here at home is dependent for its continuance upon the part it has in missionary work. We can never understand our own Holy Scriptures until they are interpreted to us through the language of every nation under heaven. We can never know our Lord Jesus Christ in fullness and in the length and breadth of His love until He is revealed to the world in the redeemed life and character of men out of every race for which He died.[74]

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[72] *The Home Base of Missions*, 252.
[73] *The Home Base of Missions*, 267.
[74] *The Home Base of Missions*, 296.

Commission Seven:
Missions and Governments

An original theme for a missionary conference was taken up by Commission Seven which examined the interrelation of missions and governments. The 21-member Commission predominantly consisted of distinguished laymen of wide experience in public and foreign affairs: ten British, six US-American, three German, one Norwegian and one Canadian. Chairman of the Commission was Lord Balfour of Burleigh – Scottish Tory grandee, cabinet minister and Presbyterian elder – who also served as president of the conference as a whole. The Commission adopted the conceptual framework of a hierarchy of civilisation, with Europe and North America setting the benchmark for high civilisation and other nations being assessed on how close they were to meeting this standard. Japan was considered to have the most civilised of non-Christian governments while at the other end of the scale was 'the absolutely independent savage chief'.[75] In determining how missions should relate to the government in any given context the Commission argued that account must be taken of the degree of civilisation attained both by the people and the government of the territory concerned. The higher on the scale the responsible government, the more missions could reasonably appeal for protection and redress.

Part One, 'A Survey of Existing Conditions in Various Mission Fields', drafted by the British members, was based on an unusually small sample of missionary correspondents – only forty-one. It examined relationships between missions and governments in the various mission fields in what it understood to be a descending order of hierarchy: Japan, China, India, the Dutch East Indies, 'Mohammedan Lands', Mid-Africa and Southern Africa. Part Two, drafted by the American members who had extensive political but little missionary experience, extrapolated 'Principles and Findings', and applied them to a range of problems that recur in mission-government relationships across the regions. No challenge was offered to the colonial system which prevailed in much of Asia and Africa at this time but the Report did offer sharply critical comment on such injustices as the opium trade, liquor traffic and human rights abuses in the Congo.

However varied the contexts, the Report recommended that missions should, as a matter of principle, relate to governments wherever possible in a conciliatory and reasonable manner. It affirmed a consensus that missionaries should have nothing to do with opposition political movements. Governments were regarded as having received their authority from God and therefore as being entitled to respect and co-operation from missions. At the same time, governments were urged to be mindful of the

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[75] World Missionary Conference,1910*, Missions and Governments*, Report of Commission VII (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 88-89.

debt they owed to missions and of all that was contributed by missionaries to the elevation of the people.

Commission Seven Report

Varieties of Governments

We may divide mission lands roughly into five groups: (a) those of low civilisation, but independent; (b) those of higher civilisation, and independent; (c) those of low civilisation, under Christian rule or influence; (d) those of higher civilisation under Christian rule or influence; (e) those of the highest international rank.

The absolutely independent savage chief, representative of group (a), has disappeared; and the ethical and prudential rules governing the dealings of missionaries with such potentates, though intensely interesting as a study of character, need not occupy the attention of this Commission.

Under group (e) we may mention, as a conspicuous instance, Japan. However different in spirit and in detail her civilisation may remain from that of Western nations, she has entered into equal external relations with the leading Powers of the world, and has established such internal order and toleration that problems of mission policy, *in relation to government*, have ceased to exist in any acute form. Christian Missions enjoy a freedom of action greater than that which they possess in some lands under Christian rule, and though doubtless there are laws and regulations which some would like to see changed, Christian Missions find no grievous political obstacles in their way.

There remain group (b) which may be illustrated by Persia and China, group (c) illustrated by the African Protectorates, and group (d) illustrated by India.[76]

In countries like Persia, Missions are conducted under a Government which is not in sympathy with their operations, and where freedom of conscience – the right and duty of the individual in matters of religion – is, generally speaking, an unintelligible term, and toleration (in the Western sense) seems a violation of religious obligation. In China there is more intellectual toleration, but a standing suspicion of the Church itself as an organisation and also as the presumed organ of Foreign Powers. Missionaries cannot and do not under such circumstances expect official countenance of their work, and can only ask for freedom of action. If that freedom is denied, or circumscribed, missionaries must, for the time being, accept the situation, however earnestly they may strive to modify the

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[76] *Missions and Governments*, 88-89, italics original.

official attitude. They must work under these restrictions or not work at all.[77]

We now take up the case of countries inhabited by races of low civilisation, and ruled or dominated by Christian Powers, as in the African Protectorates and colonies. In this case Missions may fairly expect, not only freedom of action, but even the countenance and encouragement of the civil power on the ground of the proved value of the missionary enterprise to civilisation, peace and humanity. Here there is no independent Government to be respected; there is no sensitive community, united by a great history or a great religion, to be approached with circumspection. Civilisation and religion come to them almost indistinguishably from the one power, and Missions and Governments may work in the closest sympathy. There should be little controversy here as to the duty of mutual support; and there would be none except for the regrettable fact that not all Colonial Governments have made the welfare of the people the ruling principle in their administration.[78]

Some modification of these principles must be made in countries of the last group which come under our consideration, namely, those in which Christian rule has been established over peoples of considerably advanced civilisation. Political independence may be lost, while many institutions and the religion of the people remain intact; and so long as these are left intact, the people may remain comparatively quiescent. In such circumstances, even Governments with the highest ideals must make innovations cautiously; and in Governments with lower ideals, caution may easily degenerate into cowardice and unfaithfulness. Missions may be excluded or severely restricted, because they are controversial in their operations and revolutionary in their effects. In such circumstances, what can missionaries ask as of right? We do not think they can ask for more than freedom of action. Freedom of action we do consider they are entitled to expect, as of moral right, from any Christian Government.[79]

Missionaries and Loyalty

The missionary is usually concerned with two Governments, that of the country from which he has come, and that of the country in which he works. And he must be regardful of his duty to both. The unanimity with which missionaries of all Societies, living under Governments of the most varied kinds, insist upon the paramount duty of respect for government is remarkable. It may, therefore, be assumed that when missionaries, or Mission Boards, or Conferences protest against the act of any Government or its agents, as affecting unfavourably either their own rights or the

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[77] *Missions and Governments*, 89.
[78] *Missions and Governments*, 90.
[79] *Missions and Governments*, 91.

welfare of the people, their action is not to be attributed to disloyalty or hostility to the administration. Few, indeed, are the cases in which missionaries find themselves out of all sympathy with the general policy of any Government. But claiming, as they do, justice for themselves and for their converts, and having a deep interest in the welfare of all the people, they do, from time to time, fall into difficulties with the civil power or its subordinate agents, when they consider that official actions are in plain violation of justice or humanity.[80]

Social and Political Aspirations

In the evidence before us there is abundant proof of awakened political and social aspirations throughout the world. Movements towards the realisation of national life are found everywhere, and cannot but affect mission work, more especially in the many mission lands where the missionary belongs to a dominant race. The duty of missionaries to the civil authorities, their devotion to the welfare of the people, and their responsibility for the training of the young Christian communities, make the ascertaining of the precise line to be followed in time of political stress a difficult task for them. We have no hesitation in endorsing the missionary opinion, which is practically unanimous on the following points: (1) Missionaries should have nothing to do with political agitation. This is outside their sphere, and engaging in it can only harm their work. (2) It is their duty to teach and practise obedience to settled government. (3) It is at the same time their duty to exercise their influence for the removal of gross oppression and injustice, particularly where the Government is in the hands of men of their own race. It may be added that missionaries have not parted with their intelligence, nor have they lost their rights as citizens of enlightened communities, so that they cannot but form convictions as to the wisdom or unwisdom of the 'colonial policy' they see in operation around them. These convictions it may be their duty on proper occasions to press with all the influence they can command upon the attention of the State officials responsible, provided that in so doing they keep clear of association with any political movement.[81]

Some Public Questions

The Commission believe that they represent the feeling of missionaries and the supporters of Missions in recording: (1) their conviction that the traffic in opium should cease, unless under the restrictions proper for a dangerous drug; (2) their regret that the history of this traffic in China has brought discredit upon Christian Missions by associating them in the Chinese mind,

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[80] *Missions and Governments*, 93.
[81] *Missions and Governments*, 95.

through the action of some Western Governments, with the spread of opium; (3) their sympathy with the Chinese Government in the steps at present being taken to restrict the use of opium; (4) their hope that the British Government will act in full harmony with the Chinese Government; (5) their hope that the British Imperial and Indian Governments may be able to meet the financial difficulties created by the cessation of the opium revenue, in a way which shall not increase the taxation of the mass of the people in India nor injure the Feudatory States concerned.[82]

We are of the opinion that the claims of humanity and the rights of Missions have been so flagrantly and continuously violated by the Government of the Congo State (now taken over by Belgium), that an appeal for action should be made by the Conference to all the Powers which were signatories to the General Act of Berlin.[83]

Commission Eight:
Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity

The mandate of Commission Eight represented one of the two central aims of the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference. 'Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World' (Commission One) necessitated 'Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity' if the goal of 'plant[ing] in every non-Christian nation one united Church of Christ'[84] was to be achieved. Commission Eight addressed this latter concern. It was the most ecumenically focused of the Edinburgh 1910 Commissions – though the word 'ecumenical' does not appear in the Report – and it justified the conference's subsequent reputation as the 'symbolic beginning of the modern ecumenism'.[85] The need for greater co-operation and unity had been laboured in Report after Report to the point where Commission Eight brought to expression an aspiration which energised and united the conference.

An experienced Scottish colonial administrator, Sir Andrew Fraser, formerly governor of Bengal, chaired the Commission. The Commission included four bishops, and church mission boards were as strongly represented as autonomous missionary societies. Although the Commission took evidence from only ninety-five correspondents – considerably fewer than most other Commissions – they included a larger percentage of persons who could speak on behalf of the missionary boards and societies that they represented. While avoiding any semblance of speaking on behalf

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[82] *Missions and Governments*, 116-17.
[83] *Missions and Governments*, 121.
[84] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity,* Report of Commission VIII (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 131.
[85] Michael Kinnamon and Brian Cope (eds), *The Ecumenical Movement: an Anthology of Key Texts and Voices* (Geneva: WCC, 1997), 1.

of churches, or of addressing them officially, the Report went beyond recommending greater co-operation for the sake of missionary effectiveness to affirm moves towards the attainment of visible unity by indigenous national churches on the mission field, and to evoke an anticipation of what this might mean for the 'home churches'.

The Report divided its subject into five main chapters: Comity, Conferences, Joint Action, Federation and Union, and Co-operation at the Home Base. The chapters were mainly descriptive in character. However, they were introduced and concluded with two chapters that gave an insightful analysis of the hindrances and horizons of co-operation and unity. Twelve appendices comprise an invaluable archive of documents relating to the promotion of unity among churches, and co-operation between churches and missions in Asia – China, India, the Philippines and Japan. These supported the main argument of the Report: that Christians in these regions were 'the first to recognise the need for concerted action and closer fellowship',[86] and that their pioneering action called for 'hearty sympathy (on the part of western churches) with the movements toward unity in the mission field.'[87]

The recommendation to form a permanent Continuation Committee was unanimously approved by the conference plenary on 21 June 2010. The foundation on which the International Missionary Council would stand had been laid – though on account of the First World War its creation was delayed until 1921. Following the unanimous vote, the delegates joined together in singing the doxology: 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'[88]

Commission Eight Report

It is more than ever incumbent upon the Christian Church to realise its responsibility to carry the Gospel to the lands which are now open to receive it, and to guide the awakening nations to God in Christ. For the accomplishment of this overwhelming task, it seems essential that the Christian Church should present a united front. Its divisions are a source of weakness and impair the effectiveness of its testimony to the one Gospel of the Son of God which it professes. The issues are so great that there can be no trifling in the matter. The evangelisation of nations, the Christianising of empires and kingdoms, is the object before us. The work has to be done now. It is urgent and must be pressed forward at once. The enterprise calls for the highest quality of statesmanship, and for the maximum of efficiency in all departments of the work. It is not surprising that those who are in the front of this great conflict, and on whose minds and souls the gravity of the

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[86] *Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity,* 133.
[87] *Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity,* 144.
[88] *History and Records*, 98.

issues presses most immediately, should be the first to recognise the need for concerted action and closer fellowship.[89]

Federation and Union

It is natural that the converts of each Mission should be instructed in the doctrines, and organised according to the polity, of the Church to which that Mission owes its origin. As separate Christian communities, however, thus begin to grow up in a non-Christian country, the question presents itself whether these communities shall be allowed to remain isolated and distinct, or whether it is not the aim of all missionary work to plant in each non-Christian nation one undivided Church of Christ.

That the latter is the ideal which is present to the minds of the great majority of missionaries is evident from the movements in the direction of unity, which are taking place in many mission fields, and which find notable expression in the unanimous declaration of the members of the Centenary Missionary Conference at Shanghai in 1907, that in planting the Church of Christ on Chinese soil, it was their desire 'only to plant one Church under the sole control of the Lord Jesus Christ, governed by the Word of the living God, and led by His guiding Spirit'. It is probable that all would not agree as to the form in which the unity referred to in the foregoing declaration should find expression, but that the statement of the goal to be aimed at should be so clear and explicit is a fact of far-reaching significance.

Not only is the ideal of a united Church taking more and more definite shape and colour in the minds of foreign missionaries at work in non-Christian lands, but it is also beginning under the influence of the growing national consciousness in some of these countries to capture the imagination of the indigenous Christian communities, for whom the sense of a common national life and a common Christianity is stronger than the appreciation of differences which had their origin in controversies remote from the circumstances of the Church in mission lands. The influence of this national feeling is most powerful in China.[90]

Comity

In the meantime there is much that we can do of a practical kind to prepare the way for the larger unity that is to come. It is very desirable that Missions working in the same area should agree on a common plan to secure the most effective occupation of the field and to avoid overlapping and waste.[91]

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[89] *Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity,* 132-33.

[90] *Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity,* 83-84.

[91] *Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity,* 139-40.

The Possibility of International Co-operation

These observations cannot be confined to the Societies of any one country. The operations in the foreign field are often carried on in the same country, and even side by side, by agents representing Churches and Societies of different Christian nations. And the movements towards unity and co-operation in the mission field include missionaries of different nationalities. Therefore not only the Missionary Societies in a single country, but Missionary Societies throughout the world, must be in as close communion as possible with one another. Accordingly it appears to us that the adoption in some form of the proposal to create an International Committee that would serve as a medium of communication between all Missionary Societies is absolutely necessary for the carrying out of any statesmanlike and concerted plan for the evangelisation of the world.[92]

We recommend that a Continuation Committee be appointed, such as can deal effectively with any duties that may be relegated to it; that it be international and representative, reflecting in this respect the comprehensive character of the Conference itself; and that it be instructed to deal with the same range of subjects as the Conference, and on the same lines and under the same restrictions.[93]

The value of such a body will, as we believe, be more than the sum of the values of the individual pieces of work which it may accomplish. It will be the standing witness of a great idea, a lasting reminder of a great piece of religious experience, and an abiding monument of our belief in the Divine guidance that has led us already so much further than we dared anticipate in the direction of co-operation and the promotion of unity, and will yet lead us further still if only we continue steadfast in this faith, in this hope, and in this fervent charity.[94]

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[92] *Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity,* 144.
[93] *Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity,* 145-46.
[94] *Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity,* 148.

JERUSALEM 1928:
MISSION AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- The First World War provoked fresh thinking – the idea of mission as conquest now obsolete
- The 'younger churches' of Asia and Africa significantly represented
- Mission distanced from the framework of western colonialism
- Recognition of the advance of secularism in the western context
- New sensitivity to adherents of other faiths balanced with confidence in the gospel
- Social and economic change in tension with evangelism and church growth

The only formal outcome of Edinburgh 1910 was the formation of the Continuation Committee under the leadership of John Mott as Chairman and J.H. Oldham as Secretary. Its responsibility was 'to confer with the Societies and Boards as to the best method of working toward the formation of such a permanent International Missionary Committee as is suggested by the Commissions of the Conference and by various missionary bodies apart from the Conference'.[1] Within two years the Continuation Committee helped form the Conference of British Missionary Societies with its membership of forty missionary societies. The two bodies shared single premises in London, suitably named Edinburgh House. This initiative pointed the way which would be followed in many other countries also. The First World War (1914-1918) retarded the development of international missionary co-operation, but within three years of the war's end, in 1921, the International Missionary Council was constituted at Lake Mohonk in New York State, USA, with Mott as the first Chairman, and Oldham and the American A.L. Warnshuis as its first Secretaries.[2] With headquarters in London (Edinburgh House) and New York, its membership included 14 interdenominational missionary associations and 16 interdenominational field bodies.

The second notable achievement of these years was the launching of the International Review of Missions in 1912. The journal, edited by Oldham, was dedicated to continuing Edinburgh 1910's emphasis on the disciplined study of mission. As Kenneth Scott Latourette commented: 'The Review immediately took its place as the outstanding supra-confessional

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[1] *History and Records*, 96.
[2] See William Richey Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council and its Nineteenth Century Background* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), 202-43.

international journal in the field of missions. Its wide range of contributors and reviewers, from many lands and differing ecclesiastical and theological traditions, its extensive bibliographies, and its annual surveys of world mission, covering as they did Roman Catholic as well as Protestant developments, contributed notably to the nourishment of the ecumenical spirit.'[3] It has continued to appear regularly and is unsurpassed as a barometer of thinking about mission over the past century.[4]

The first full meeting of the International Missionary Council took place in Jerusalem in 1928. This gathering saw 'the younger churches' much more widely represented than they had been at Edinburgh, revealing the direction of travel for the coming century. Of the 250 participants, more than fifty were nationals from 'the mission field'. 'Among them,' recalled Richey Hogg, 'one saw a bright yellow Indian sari, the blue silk gown of a Chinese scholar, here a fez, there a turban… here was gathered the first truly representative, global assembly of Christians in the long history of the church.'[5] The voices of 'national' leaders were influential and made it clear that the time had come for the indigenous churches to take responsibility for mission in their contexts. This would mean a change of role for the 'missions', involving the handover of property and mission staff coming under the authority of the churches with which they served. Taking advantage of the Jerusalem venue, the IMC also seized the opportunity to establish fraternal relationships with Orthodox Churches, another initiative which would have far-reaching effects.

It also meant that the division of the world into 'Christian' and 'non-Christian' on geographical, territorial terms had already become obsolete. The vitality and maturity of the churches on the 'mission field' on the one hand, and the growing secularism of the so-called 'Christian world' on the other, made it plain that a Christendom understanding of the world was no longer serviceable. The challenges involved in mission to a secularised western world were registered for the first time at Jerusalem. 'We go to Jerusalem,' stated Rufus Jones in an influential address, 'not as members of a Christian nation to convert other nations which are not Christian, but as Christians within a nation far too largely non-Christian, who face within their own borders the competition of a rival movement as powerful, as dangerous, as insidious as any of the great historic religions.'[6] There was

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[3] Kenneth Scott Latourette, 'Ecumenical Bearings of the Missionary Movement and the International Missionary Council', in Ruth Rouse and Stephen C. Neill (eds), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, 4th edition (Geneva: WCC, 1994), 351-402.

[4] See *International Review of Mission,* 100.393 (November 2011), 'A Century of Ecumenical Missiology'; particularly Brian Stanley, 'Edinburgh 1910 and the Genesis of the *IRM*', 149-59.

[5] Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations*, 244.

[6] *The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Non-Christian Systems*, Report of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, 24th March-8th

also a much sharper awareness of the dangers posed to the missionary enterprise by the risk of being complicit in colonialism. Far more than had been the case at Edinburgh, a hermeneutic of suspicion was applied to the relationship between the missionary enterprise and the global domination of the West. This led to greater sensitivity to the pitfalls facing western-based missions and a determination to ground mission on a theological and Christological basis. Rather than thinking of the advance of Christian mission simply in quantitative terms, there was a new attention to the qualitative aspect. This would have far-reaching effects. As Jooseop Keum comments: 'Since Jerusalem, the two different approaches, the quantitative and qualitative concepts of mission, have become a missiological backbone of the division between ecumenical and evangelical perspectives in mission.'[7]

The Jerusalem conference followed the pattern of Edinburgh in commissioning comprehensive preparatory studies. These studies had already started to deconstruct the terms on which the Edinburgh Conference had been held. Whereas Edinburgh 1910 had worked on an assumption of agreement about the content of the Christian message, by the time of Jerusalem 1928 this was an issue which was very much in question. The First World War had badly shaken confidence in western civilisation as the embodiment of the gospel, prompting critical reflection on the substance of the Christian message. Metaphors of warfare and conquest no longer seemed appropriate in relation to other faiths. In fact, delegates such as W.E. Hocking were inclined to think much more in terms of mutual understanding and co-operation between the different faiths, a trend which would soon find more extensive expression in the Laymen's Foreign Mission Enquiry of 1932-33.[8] Others were alarmed by this new direction of thought and feared that the missionary movement was moving towards syncretism. European continental delegates met with John Mott in Cairo two days before the conference to express such misgivings.[9] There was a new sharpness to the challenge of how to be irenic towards people of other faiths without undermining confidence in the gospel of Christ. The Council Statement, drafted by William Temple, at that time Archbishop Designate of York and later Archbishop of Canterbury, and Robert Elliot Speer, long-

April 1928, Vol. I (London: OUP, 1928), 273; cit. Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations*, 247.

[7] Jooseop Keum, 'Beyond Dichotomy: Towards a Convergence Between the Ecumenical and Evangelical Understanding of Mission in Changing Landscapes', in Margunn Serigstad Dahle, Lars Dahle and Knud Jorgensen (eds), *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 386.

[8] See W.E. Hocking (ed), *Rethinking Missions: a Laymen's Inquiry After One Hundred Years* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1932); *Laymen's Foreign Mission Enquiry, Supplementary Series*, 7 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1933).

[9] Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations*, 242.

serving Secretary of the American Presbyterian Mission, sought to reflect a new sensitivity to adherents of other faiths while strongly affirming the core of Christian belief.

Another major point of tension was the question of how far Christian mission should be concerned with effecting change in the social and economic order as opposed to an exclusive concentration on personal conversion and the growth of the church. Again, Anglo-Saxon perspectives on social witness contrasted with continental Europeans' insistence that the focus on eternal salvation must not be compromised. The preparatory studies revealed a broadening scope of enquiry, including such topics as religious education, race conflict, industrialisation and rural problems. This widening of the understanding of mission was energising for some but others feared that this rethinking of Christian mission in terms of its engagement with the political and economic structures of society was moving in the direction of the 'social gospel' and losing its evangelistic edge. Theologically, this found expression in intense debate about the meaning of the 'Kingdom of God'. While some spoke in terms of humans building the Kingdom of God, others insisted that it was God's kingdom. This tension was recognised, though perhaps not resolved, in the reference in the Council's Statement to working 'in preparation for the coming of the Kingdom of God in its fullness'.[10]

Jerusalem 1928: Statement on the Christian Message

Our Message

Our message is Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of what God is and of what man through Him may become. In Him we come face to face with the ultimate reality of the universe; He makes known to us God our Father, perfect and infinite in love and in righteousness; for in Him we find God incarnate, the final, yet ever-unfolding, revelation of the God in whom we live and move and have our being.

We hold that through all that happens, in light and in darkness, God is working, ruling and over-ruling. Jesus Christ, in His life and through His death and resurrection, has disclosed to us the Father, the Supreme Reality, as almighty Love, reconciling the world to Himself by the Cross, suffering with men in their struggle against sin and evil, forgiving them as they, with forgiveness in their own hearts, turn to Him in repentance and faith, and creating humanity anew for an ever-growing, ever-enlarging, everlasting life.

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[10] *The Christian Life and Message*, 481; see discussion of this phrase in Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 68.

The vision of God in Christ brings and deepens the sense of sin and guilt. We are not worthy of His love; we have by our own fault opposed His holy will. Yet that same vision which brings the sense of guilt brings also the assurance of pardon, if only we yield ourselves in faith to the spirit of Christ so that His redeeming love may avail to reconcile us to God.

We affirm that God, as Jesus Christ has revealed Him, requires all His children, in all circumstances, at all times and in all human relationships, to live in love and righteousness for His glory. By the resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit, God offers His own power to them that they may be fellow-workers with Him, and urges them on to a life of adventure and self-sacrifice in preparation for the coming of His Kingdom in its fullness.[11]

The Missionary Motive

Questions concerning the missionary motive have been widely raised, and such a change in the habits of men's thoughts, as the last generation has witnessed, must call for a re-examination of these questions.

Accordingly we would lay bare the motives that impel us to the missionary enterprise. We recognise that the health of our movement and of our souls demands a self-criticism that is relentless and exacting.

In searching for the motives that impel us, we find ourselves eliminating decisively and at once certain motives that may seem, in the minds of some, to have become mixed up with purer motives in the history of the movement. We repudiate any attempt on the part of trade or of governments, openly or covertly, to use the missionary cause for ulterior purposes. Our Gospel by its very nature, and by its declaration of the sacredness of human personality, stands against all exploitation of man by man, so that we cannot tolerate any desire, conscious or unconscious, to use this movement for purposes of fastening a bondage, economic, political or social, on any people.

Going deeper, on our part we would repudiate any symptoms of a religious imperialism that would desire to impose beliefs and practices on others in order to manage their souls in their supposed interests. We obey a God who respects our wills and we desire to respect those of others.

Nor have we the desire to bind up our Gospel with fixed ecclesiastical forms which derive their meaning from the experience of the western Church. Rather the aim should be to place at the disposal of the younger churches of all lands our collective and historic experience. We believe that much of that heritage has come out of reality and will be worth sharing. But we ardently desire that the younger churches should express the Gospel through their own genius and through forms suited to their racial heritage.

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[11] *The Christian Life,* Jerusalem, 1928, 480-81.

There must be no desire to lord it over the personal and collective faith of others.

Our true and compelling motive lies in the very nature of the God to whom we have given our hearts. Since He is love, His very nature is to share. Christ is the expression in time of the eternal self-giving of the Father. Coming into fellowship with Christ, we find in ourselves an over-mastering impulse to share Him with others. We are constrained by the love of Christ, and by obedience to His last command. He Himself said, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly,' and our experience corroborates it. He has become life to us. We would share that life.[12]

The Call to the World

To non-Christians also we make our call. We rejoice to think that just because in Jesus Christ the light that lighteneth every man shone forth in its full splendour, we find rays of that light where He is unknown or even is rejected. We welcome every noble quality in non-Christian persons or systems as further proof that the Father, who sent His Son into the world, has nowhere left Himself without witness.

Thus, merely to give illustration, and making no attempt to estimate the spiritual value of other religions to their adherents, we recognise as part of the one Truth that sense of the Majesty of God and the consequent reverence in worship, which are conspicuous in Islam; the deep sympathy for the world's sorrow and unselfish search for the way of escape, which are at the heart of Buddhism; the desire for contact with ultimate reality conceived as spiritual, which is prominent in Hinduism; the belief in the moral order of the universe and consequent insistence on moral conduct, which are inculcated by Confucianism; the disinterested pursuit of truth and of human welfare, which are often found in those who stand for secular civilisation but do not accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Especially we make our call to the Jewish people, whose Scriptures have become our own, and 'of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh', that with open heart they turn to that Lord in whom is fulfilled the hope of their nation, its prophetic message and its zeal for holiness. And we call upon our fellow-Christians in all lands to show to Jews that lovingkindness that has too seldom been shown towards them.

We call on the followers of non-Christian religions to join with us in the study of Jesus Christ as He stands before us in the Scriptures, His place in the life of the world, and His power to satisfy the human heart; to hold fast to faith in the unseen and eternal in face of the growing materialism of the world; to co-operate with us against all the evils of secularism; to respect freedom of conscience so that men may confess Christ without separation

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[12] *The Christian Life,* Jerusalem, 1928, 484-85.

from home and friends; and to discern that all the good of which men have conceived is fulfilled and secured in Christ.

Christianity is not a western religion, nor is it yet effectively accepted by the western world as a whole. Christ belongs to the peoples of Africa and Asia as much as to the European or American. We call all men to equal fellowship in Him. But to come to Him is always self-surrender. We must not come in the pride of national heritage or religious tradition; he who would enter the Kingdom of God must become as a little child, though in that Kingdom are all the treasures of man's aspirations, consecrated and harmonised. Just because Christ is the self-disclosure of the One God, all human aspirations are towards Him, and yet of no human tradition is He merely the continuation. He is the desire of all the nations; but He is always more, and other, than they had desired before they learnt of Him.[13]

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[13] *The Christian Life,* Jerusalem, 1928, 490-92.

TAMBARAM 1938 – THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN A NON-CHRISTIAN WORLD

- Responsibility for mission transferring to indigenous churches
- Focus on the church as agent of mission
- Passion for the unity of the church – for the sake of mission
- Dialectical approach to other religions with stress on discontinuity
- Overshadowed by the rise of Nazism and impending Second World War

The IMC held its second major international conference at Tambaram, near Madras (now Chennai) in south India in 1938. By now, representatives of the 'younger churches' were clearly in a majority with almost half of the 471 delegates coming from Asia and significant delegations from Africa and Latin America. An important backdrop to the conference was the speed at which the relationship between western missions and indigenous churches was changing. By now it was fully apparent that responsibility for mission was transferring to the indigenous churches whose leaders set the tone at Tambaram. This dynamic meant that the Church was very much at the centre of attention. As John Mott stated in his opening address: 'It is the Church which is to be at the centre of our thinking… the Divine Society founded by Christ and His apostles to accomplish His will in the world. It is a worshipping Society, a witnessing Society, a transforming Society – the veritable Body of Christ.'[1]

The Asian delegates in particular brought a passion for church unity, arguing powerfully that the divided state of the church was proving a grave impediment to mission in their contexts. 'The real significance of Madras,' in Richey Hogg's assessment, 'lay in what it was rather than in what it did. It was a unifying event in the life of the whole church – an event which revealed to the churches the fellowship of the church universal. No other experience made so deep an impact on those at Madras as that of the church, of a worldwide community united in love.'[2] At the same time, the conference was marked by a concern for indigenisation of the faith – a theme that would preoccupy generations to come. Another significant contribution to the conference was the work led by Merle Davis on the economic basis of the church and the need for the younger churches to become self-supporting. Meanwhile, a group convened by Bishop Stephen

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[1] John R. Mott, 'The Possibilities of the Tambaram Meeting', in *Addresses and Other Records*, Tambaram Madras Series, Vol. VII (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 4.

[2] Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations*, 301.

Neill highlighted the urgency and importance of the development of theological education with a view to the formation of the leaders required by the younger churches.

The question of the Christian understanding of other religions and its implications for missiology remained prominent. An important part of the preparation for Tambaram was a commission to the Dutch missiologist Hendrik Kraemer to 'state the fundamental position of the Christian church as a witness-bearing body in the modern world, relating this to conflicting views of the attitude to be taken by Christians towards other faiths, and dealing in detail with the evangelistic approach to the great non-Christian faiths'.[3] The result was a book entitled The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World.[4] This volume represented a very different approach to the Laymen's Foreign Mission Enquiry of the early 1930s. The church, Kraemer argued, draws its true identity 'from the apostolic urgency of gladly witnessing to God and his saving and redeeming Power through Christ'.[5] He expressed strong suspicion of any notion that the Kingdom of God would come through human effort, stressing instead the divine initiative.

Nor could Christianity, in Kraemer's view, be regarded as the fulfilment of other religions. Rather, a dialectical approach was required in which the presence and action of God in other religious traditions could be affirmed but where this would always be seen in the light of the unexpectedness and 'discontinuity' of God's decisive action in Jesus Christ. If missionaries lacked the confidence that Jesus was 'the Way, the Truth and the Life', how would they be able to call men and women to costly conversion? 'Cast in one piece,' observed Carl Hallencreutz, 'his book was decisive for "Tambaram 1938". It invited a missiological reorientation as regards "the evangelistic approach to the great non-Christian faiths"'.[6]

The rise of Nazism and the impending Second World War formed an unmistakable background to the conference. China and Japan were already at war, and in this context it was moving to see Chinese and Japanese delegates taking communion together. Kraemer's insistence on the centrality of the apostolic witness was driven, in part, by the need to counter the claims of such false absolutes as fascism, National Socialism and communism. As Timothy Yates comments: 'Neo-pagan darkness was indeed about to descend on Europe: it was a context of sharp polarities, when shades of grey were of little value to embattled Christians. Rather, the need was for the ringing tones of the Barmen Declaration of 1934, for

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[3] IMC Ad Interim Committee Minutes, Old Jordans, 1936; cit. Yates, *Christian Mission*, 108.

[4] Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1938).

[5] Kraemer, *The Christian Message*, vi.

[6] Carl F. Hallencreutz, *Kraemer Towards Tambaram: A Study in Hendrik Kraemer's Missionary Approach* (Uppsala, Sweden: Gleerup, 1966), 307.

Barth's outright rejection of nationalist religion rooted in nature and for Kraemer's concentration on Christ as the Light shining with absolute clarity in a world of darkness, darkness made all the more profound by way of the calls for total allegiance by fascist and communist to the state and its purposes, those pseudo-absolutes Kraemer had condemned with such great effect.[7]

Tambaram 1938

Hendrik Kraemer – Continuity or Discontinuity

The relation of the world of spiritual realities, spread out before us in biblical realism, towards the world which is manifested in the whole range of religious experience and striving is not that of continuity, but of discontinuity. Theologically speaking, 'nature', 'reason' and 'history' do not, if we want to think stringently, afford preambles, avenues or lines of development towards the realm of grace and truth as manifest in Jesus Christ. There are, to be sure, longings and apperceptions in the religious life of mankind outside the special sphere of the Christian revelation, of which Christ, what He is and has brought, may be termed *in a certain sense* the fulfilment. Yet it is mistaken and misleading to describe the religious pilgrimage of mankind as a preparation or a leading up to a so-called consummation or fulfilment in Christ. I did not make this statement in my book because the only way to maintain strongly that the Christian religion contains *the* one way of truth is to isolate it entirely from the whole range of human religious life. Nor is this statement inspired by any desire to minimise or despise the value and significance of much that stirs us in the religious quest of various peoples. It simply follows from respect for the facts. These facts clearly teach us two things of crucial importance. First: even when we recognise that Christ may *in a certain sense* be called the fulfilment of some deep and persistent longings and apprehensions that everywhere in history manifest themselves in the race, this fulfilment, when we subject the facts to a close scrutiny, never represents the perfecting of what has been before. In this fulfilment is contained a radical recasting of values, because these longings and apprehensions, when exposed to the searching and revolutionary light of Christ, appear to be blind and misdirected. That does not detract in the least from the fact that these longings and apprehensions, humanly speaking, are heart-stirring and noble, but if we want to be loyal to the divine reality that has come to us in Jesus Christ, this appreciation, which is simply a matter of justice and honesty in the human plane, must not obscure our eyes to the truth that in Christ all things become new, because He is the crisis of all religions. In

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[7] Yates, *Christian Mission*, 124.

this we recognise that God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ is *contrary* to the sublimest pictures we made of Him before we knew of Him in Jesus Christ. If the word 'reconciliation' has not merely become an edifying term, readily used (or rather, blasphemously abused) because it appears to be a rather successful instrument of arousing a sentiment of numinous awe; if the pronouncement that God was reconciling the world in Jesus Christ to Himself belongs to the core of the Gospel, we cannot escape the conclusion that somehow mankind in its totality is in a state of hostility towards God as He *really is*.

This fundamental discontinuity of the world of spiritual reality, embodied in the revelation in Christ, to the whole range of human religion, *excludes* the possibility and legitimacy of a *theologia naturalis* in the sense of a science of God and man, conceived as an imperfect form of revelation, introductory to the world of divine grace in Christ. The rejection of a *theologia naturalis* as affording the basic religious truths on which the realm of the Christian revelation rises as the fitting superstructure, does not, however, *include* denying that God has been working in the minds of men outside the sphere of the Christian revelation and that there have been, and may be now, acceptable men of faith who live under the sway of non-Christian religions – products, however, not of these non-Christian religions but of the mysterious workings of God's spirit. God forbid that we mortal men should be so irreverent as to dispose of how and where the Sovereign God of grace and love has to act. Yet to represent the religions of the world as *somehow*, however imperfect and crude it may be, a *paidagogos*, a schoolmaster to Christ, is a distorted presentation of these religions and their fundamental structure and tendencies, and a misunderstanding of the Christian revelation. This apprehension of the essential 'otherness' of the world of divine realities revealed in Jesus Christ from the atmosphere of religion as we know it in the history of the race, cannot be grasped merely by way of investigation and reasoning. Only an attentive study of the Bible can open the eyes to the fact of Christ 'the power of God' and 'the wisdom of God' stands in contradiction to the power and wisdom of man. Perhaps in some respects it were proper to speak of contradictive or subversive fulfilment.[8]

The Call of the Church

In this time when brute force stalks the earth, the Church is summoned to bear courageous and unflinching witness to the nations that the base purposes of men, whether of individuals or of groups, cannot prevail against the will of the Holy and Compassionate God. It is commissioned to warn mankind of the judgement which shall assuredly overtake a

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[8] H. Kraemer, 'Continuity or Discontinuity', in *The Authority of the Faith*, Tambaram Madras Series, Vol. I (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 3-5.

civilisation which will not turn and repent. It is under obligation to speak fearlessly against aggression, brutality, persecution and all wanton destruction of human life and torturing of human souls.

Recognising that Christ came to open to all the way of life abundant but that the way for millions is blocked by poverty, war, racial hatred, exploitation and cruel injustice, the Church is called to attack social evils at their roots. It must seek to open the eyes of its members to their implication in unchristian practices. Those who suffer from bitter wrong, it is constrained to succour and console, while it strives courageously and persistently for the creation of a more just society.

Above all, it is called to declare the Gospel of the compassion and pardon of God that men may see the Light which is in Christ and surrender themselves to His service. And all this it must do at any cost, in fidelity and gratitude to Him who at so great cost wrought its salvation.

But the further summons to the Church is to become in itself the actualisation among men of its own message. No one so fully knows the failings, the pettiness, the faithlessness which infect the Church's life, as we who are its members. Yet, in all humility and penitence, we are constrained to declare to a baffled and needy world that the Christian Church, under God, is its greatest hope. The decade since we last met has witnessed the progressive rending of the fabric of humanity; it has witnessed an increasing unification of the body of Christ. As we meet here, from over sixty nations out of every continent, we have discovered afresh that unity is not merely an aspiration but also a fact; our meeting is its concrete manifestation. We are one in faith; we are one in our task and commission as the body of Christ; we are resolved to become more fully one in our life and work. Our nations are at war with one another; but we know ourselves brethren in the community of Christ's Church. Our peoples increase in suspicion and fear of one another; but we are learning to trust each other more deeply through common devotion to the one Lord of us all. Our Governments build instruments of mutual destruction; we join in united action for the reconciliation of humanity. Thus in broken and imperfect fashion the Church is even now fulfilling its calling to be within itself a foretaste of the redeemed family of God which He has purposed humanity to be. The Church itself must stand ever under the ideal of the Kingdom of God which alone can guard it against becoming an end in itself and hold it true to God's purpose for it. By faith, but in deep assurance, we declare that this body which God has fashioned through Christ cannot be destroyed.

Meanwhile, in countless obscure places in the world where, through the centuries, disease and darkness, poverty and fear have reigned, the Christian Church to-day is bringing effective healing, enlightenment, alleviation and a true and living faith.

To all who care for the peace and health of mankind we issue a call to lend their aid to the Church which stands undaunted amidst the shattered

fragments of humanity and works tirelessly for the healing of the nations. And those who already share in its life, and especially its leaders, we summon to redouble their exertions in its great tasks, to speed practical co-operation and unity, to bear in concrete ways the burdens of fellow-Christians who suffer, and above all to take firm hold again of the faith which gives victory over sin, discouragement and death. Look to Christ, to His Cross, to His triumphant work among men, and take heart. Christ, lifted up, draws all men unto Himself.[9]

The Relevance of the Church

We recognise that both in the East and in the West, especially among the younger generation, there are many who are not convinced of the relevance of the Church to the life of the Christian and the spread of the Gospel. We find in many countries those who desire to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord, but do not join in the fellowship of the organised Church, and even more frequently those who, though baptised, do not accept the privileges nor fulfil the duties of membership of the Church. We are aware that there may be circumstances which make it unwise or even impossible for one to join the Church immediately after conversion, but we would ask all Christians who are unaffiliated or only loosely affiliated to the Church to consider the following affirmations:

1. In spite of all its past and present failure to live up to its divine mission, the Church is and remains the fellowship to which our Lord has given His promises, and through which He carries forward His purpose for mankind.
2. This fellowship is not merely invisible and ideal, but real and concrete, taking a definite form in history. It is therefore the duty of all disciples of Christ to take their place in a given Christian Church, that is, one of those concrete bodies in which and through which the Universal Church of Christ, the worldwide company of His followers, is seeking to find expression.
3. It is part of the obedience and sacrifice which Jesus Christ demands of us that we accept participation in the humiliation and suffering which membership of the Church may often mean in actual practice.
4. It is indeed precisely when we realise deeply that there is a gulf between the Church as it is and the Church as Jesus Christ desires it that we shall devote ourselves to the task of vitalising and reforming it from within.

It is the Church and the Church alone which can carry the responsibility of transmitting the Gospel from one generation to another, of preserving its purity and of proclaiming it to all creatures. It is the Church and the Church

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[9] *The Authority of the Faith*, 191-93.

alone which can witness to the reality that man belongs to God in Christ with a higher right than that of any earthly institution which may claim his supreme allegiance. It is within the Church and the Church alone that the fellowship of God's people receives together the gifts which He offers to His children in Word and Sacrament.

We may and we should doubt whether the churches as they are do truly express the mind of Christ, but we may never doubt that Christ has a will for His Church, and that His promises to it hold good. If we desire to live according to that will and to become worthy of those promises we shall accept both the joy and the pain of membership in His Body.[10]

Statement by Delegates from the Younger Churches

During the discussion it became abundantly clear that the divisions of Christendom were seen in their worst light in the mission field. Instances were cited by the representatives of younger churches of disgraceful competition, wasteful overlapping, and of groups and individuals turned away from the Church because of divisions within. Disunion is both a stumbling block to the faithful and a mockery to those without. We confess with shame that we ourselves have often been the cause of thus bringing dishonour to the religion of our Master. The representatives of the younger churches in this Section, one and all gave expression to the passionate longing that exists in all countries for visible union of the churches. They are aware of the fact of spiritual unity; they record with great thankfulness all the signs of co-operation and understanding that are increasingly seen in various directions; but they realise that this is not enough. Visible and organic union must be our goal. This, however, will require an honest study of those things in which the churches have differences, a widespread teaching of the common church membership in things that make for union and venturesome sacrifice on the part of all. Such a union alone will remove the evils arising out of our divisions. Union proposals have been put forward in different parts of the world. Loyalty, however, will forbid the younger churches going forward to consummate any union unless it receives the wholehearted support and blessing of those through whom these churches have been planted. We are thus often torn between loyalty to our mother churches and loyalty to our idea of union. We, therefore, appeal with all the fervour we possess, to the missionary societies and boards and the responsible authorities of the older churches, to take this matter seriously to heart, to labour with the churches in the mission field to achieve this union, to support and encourage us in all our efforts to put an end to the scandalous effects of our divisions, and to lead us in the path of union – the union for which our Lord prayed, through which the world

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[10] *The Growing Church*, Tambaram Madras Series, Vol. II (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 292-93.

would indeed believe in the Divine Mission of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.[11]

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[11] *The Life of the Church*, Tambaram Madras Series, Vol. IV (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 402-03.

WHITBY 1947 – PARTNERSHIP IN OBEDIENCE

- Expectant evangelism – sensing a time of opportunity after years of warfare
- A new sense of equality and mutuality
- Partners in obedience – working together for the fulfilment of God's will

The Second World War intervened before the IMC could hold what had become by tradition an approximately decennial meeting. Post-war austerity meant a smaller gathering than previously. 'Expectant evangelism' was its theme as it sought to return to core business after the disruptions of the war years. Having come through the chaotic environment of wartime, the delegates were determined to focus afresh on the centrality and urgency of the proclamation of the gospel. The small size of the gathering – just 112 delegates – perhaps fostered the intimacy between representatives of the older and younger churches which led to a sense of equality and mutuality such as had never been known before. As it was expressed by a Chinese delegate: 'At Jerusalem and Madras the relationship between older and younger churches was like that between a father and his children. Here it is like that between an older brother and a younger brother.'[1] The result was a new emphasis on 'partnership in obedience' as the keynote of their working together. They understood themselves to be partners in obedience to the will of God in the fulfilment of a common task. Foreign missionary and indigenous pastor were called to work together, on an equal basis, in the task of evangelism. By this time Latin American leaders had become familiar figures in IMC gatherings, their exclusion from Edinburgh 1910 becoming a distant memory.[2]

Partners in Obedience

The task which confronts the churches of the world is one. The commission to that task is one, spoken to all who name the name of Christ. The challenge must be met unitedly.

That a united approach to the common task must be – can be – achieved by the younger and older churches of the world was made abundantly clear at Whitby. An equality, a mutuality, a shared partnership between the younger and older churches was there manifest to a marked degree. There was no need to argue the necessity for more understanding between the

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[1] Cit. Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations*, 340-41.
[2] See further, J. Samuel Escobar, 'The Missiological Significance of Latin American Protestantism', in *International Review of Mission*, 101.393 (November 2011), 232-43.

two. What had once been discussed and hoped for was now a reality. In the very nature of things, there are and will be differences between the younger and older churches. That fact is inescapable. But whereas in the past the relationship has been as that between parent and child, with the frequent recurrence of unhappy paternalism and undue dependence, now in very truth the relationship is one between brothers who recognise that in their common sonship each has responsibilities to the other, and together, for the world. This new partnership in obedience to God's will is part of the tomorrow which the Whitby delegates knew was here.

It was not always so. Western churches, the so-called 'sending' churches, provided the missionaries, supplied the money and supervised its expenditure. Unfortunately too, some missionaries were imbued with an attitude of 'the white man's burden'. Paternalism and the patriarchal missionary at the head of a small Christian community were the all too common results. These, of course, made difficult the widespread development of first-rate indigenous leadership – nationals who could assume full responsibility for the welfare of the Church in their homeland.

On the other hand, there has been frequently among the younger churches a too easy, complacent acceptance of continued dependency. Even today not more than 15 per cent of the local congregations of the younger churches are totally self-supporting. Some of the reasons for this must be considered later. It has been most difficult, also, to claim the ablest men of the younger churches for leadership in the Church. This, too, issues from glaringly evident causes which must be met realistically before any serious advance can be made. 'Colonial churches' have often resulted, with the difficulties that attend any colonial relationship. When in the past representatives of the younger and older churches met together in conference, the lines were clearly drawn between the two. Both shared responsibility for the resultant friction, but each tended to recognise the other's shortcomings only. Naturally, in conference this produced heated discussions. The contrasting unanimity which marked the Whitby meeting has already been noted.

Today the colonial churches are coming of age. Indeed, some of the so-called younger churches in India are actually older than one of the major denominations in the United States, the Disciples of Christ. In fact, the distinction between the terms 'older' and 'younger' became largely obsolete at Whitby, proof of the coming of age of the younger churches. After a few minutes of a fresh nomenclature, it was decided to retain the familiar terms for convenience only.

The war, with accompanying shifts in the financial status of the churches, the shared burdens, and the suffering together of missionaries with younger churchmen; the growing fellowship of the churches in the ecumenical movement; and the changing world scene in which Communism, secularism, religious imperialism, mechanisation, and depersonalisation of life confront older and younger churches equally – at

Whitby all these combined to create a new unity and urgency. In this changed relationship the whole problem of effecting mutuality disappeared. Instead younger and older together in an accomplished reciprocity undertook to outline a single programme to do no less than carry the Gospel to the whole world. This was the difference between Madras [Tambaram] and Whitby.

Evangelism, the evangelisation of the whole world – expectant evangelism in the face of an unprecedented massing of forces opposed to Christianity – this is the one, immediate, supreme challenge confronting the Church today. This is not the special task of the younger churches, nor of the older churches, but of both. World evangelism – the evangelisation of every area of life by men and women ablaze with the fire of God, torches flaming with the Gospel of Christ – is the task of the Church. The compelling urgency of a world whose agony now may drive it to one blinding flash of atomic death leaves the Church no time for considered alternatives. The Church has but one choice, like it or not, meet it or not. The very desperation of the world – worse now than during the war – gives to the Church its one unexampled opportunity. It is momentary. But in God's grace the moment has been thrust before the Church. The task – urgent, of unimaginable magnitude, thrilling beyond the comprehension of man's mind – is the fulfilment of the Great Commission.

Confronting an unprecedented world challenge, Whitby categorically declared that all churches together must revive and deepen their own life, that the spiritual nurture of each individual Christian may be strengthened. If the Church is to be the Church, it will be so to the extent that it produces within and without a far-reaching revival. With equal emphasis Whitby asserted the necessity for every local church to inculcate within each member a sense of responsibility as a member of the Holy Catholic Church – the Church Universal. The unsurpassed glory of realised kinship in the ecumenical community of world Christianity is the divine intention for all who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. It was never meant to be the exclusive privilege of the leaders of the churches. But the *sine qua non* for the whole of the larger accomplishment is the training by the churches of every member according to his ability for the work of Christian witness. Wherever that is accomplished, each layman will be bearing his own testimony in seeking the sanctification of the life of the home, in winning the younger generation for Christ, and in permeating the whole common life with Christian principles and ideals. When that witnessing is effective, it will instil in every Christian as a son of God a sense of total stewardship for the maintenance of the existing Church and for the great evangelistic task ahead.

Upon younger and older churches alike, the demand of the hour is to establish pioneer work in all those areas of the world where the Gospel has not yet been preached and where the Church has not yet taken root. But within this partnership in obedience to the Divine Commission, one special

charge is given to the older churches and one to the younger churches. To the older churches the commission is to make compelling to youth the needs of younger churches and to enlist young people in the world mission in numbers far greater than ever before. It must be admitted with shame that among the older churches there are many which have never yet taken seriously the obligation of the Great Commission and accept grudgingly, if at all, the duty to make available their ablest men and women in the work of the younger churches. There are still instances of church leaders discouraging rather than encouraging recruitment among those best suited for missionary service. This must be set right. For the younger churches there is the call to put away once for all every thwarting sense of dependence upon the older churches, and on the true ground of absolute spiritual equality and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, 'to bear their own distinctive witness in the world, as the instrument by which God wills to bring to Christ the whole population of the lands in which they dwell'.[3]

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[3] Kenneth Scott Latourette and William Richey Hogg, *Tomorrow is Here: A Survey of the worldwide mission and work of the Christian Church* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1948), 98-102.

WILLINGEN 1952 – *MISSIO DEI*

- Backdrop of western colonialism in decline and Communist revolution in China
- Mission under question as United Nations signalled era of international co-operation
- Mission reinterpreted as the mission of God rather than an activity of the church
- Church-centred understanding of mission in tension with a broader conception
- Participation, for the first time, of leaders of Pentecostal churches

The global landscape was changing rapidly when the IMC met at Willingen in Germany in 1952. Two world wars had fatally undermined the moral authority of the 'Christian' West. The advent of the United Nations placed a premium on mutual understanding and co-operation among nations and implicitly questioned the role of the Christian missionary enterprise. Colonial rule had come to an end in south Asia and was increasingly under question in Africa. The Communist revolution in China had led to the expulsion of all missionaries from what had been regarded as a premier mission field. Meanwhile the continuing rise of secularism in the West eroded the strength of what had once been the 'home base' of missions. It was a shattering and soul-searching time for missionary leaders. Familiar features were disappearing from the landscape. The outlook was unclear, confusing and threatening. Mission, it appeared, was in crisis. As Max Warren, General Secretary of the Anglican Church Missionary Society, put it: 'We have to be ready to see the day of missions, as we have known them, as having already come to an end.'[1]

The crisis prompted a quest for a deeper theological meaning and justification of mission. The far-reaching result was a new focus on an understanding of mission as the mission of God. Anthropocentric and ecclesiocentric conceptions of mission gave way to theocentric, Christocentric and basileio-centric conceptions. Though the term *missio Dei* was not used at Willingen, it was coined soon afterwards by German missionary leader Karl Hartenstein to describe the main theological emphasis of the conference. This was truly a new departure in the understanding of mission, one which rested on the pioneering theological work of Karl Barth. As David Bosch observed: 'In the new image, mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God… Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the

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[1] Cit. Lesslie Newbigin, 'Mission to Six Continents', in Harold E. Fey (ed), *The Ecumenical Advance: A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 2, 1948-1968*, 3rd edition. (Geneva: WCC, 1970), 178.

world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. There is church because there is mission, not vice versa. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love.'[2]

This new understanding has subsequently been recognised as a decisive paradigm shift for ecumenical missiology and has ever more widely commended itself as a key to understanding the meaning of mission. This led, in turn, to the emergence of consensus about the missionary character of the church. This conviction would soon find its most celebrated expression in the opening words of *Ad Gentes*, the Second Vatican Council's statement on mission: 'The Church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit.'[3] Such an understanding of mission was anticipated by the Willingen Conference.

This theological understanding of mission provided an anchor in changing times. However, it also provoked questions which would be unsettling in the missionary movement. *Missio Dei* was an inspiring but also an ambiguous conception. For some it represented a radically new conception of mission in which the world rather than the church was the primary locus of God's activity. The Dutch missiologist J.C. Hoekendijk was an especially strong critic of the church-centric understanding of mission, and urged that the Kingdom of God should be understood on the much broader basis of the totality of the action of God in the life of the world, particularly within political, cultural and scientific movements of the time.[4] This proved to be a fertile line of thought which would have great influence in the ecumenical movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet it also provoked a reaction from those who feared that the distinct meaning of Christian mission was being dissolved and who continued to view the planting and growth of churches as the core of the missionary project. The Willingen conference worked hard to hold these emphases in tension, particularly by grounding the missionary calling of the church in the Triune life of God and by its oft-quoted dictum that there is no participation in Christ without participation in his mission to the world.

Once again national Christian leaders from the younger churches spoke eloquently of the urgency and importance of church unity. They were acutely conscious that the integrity of mission depended on the unity of the

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[2] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 390.

[3] *Ad Gentes,* §2, Austin Flannery (ed), *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1975), 814; see further, Stephen B. Bevans, 'Mission at the Second Vatican Council: 1962-1965', in Stephen B. Bevans (ed), *A Century of Catholic Mission: Roman Catholic Missiology 1910 to the Present* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 101-11.

[4] See J.C. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1966).

church. The gospel of reconciliation would always sound hollow if it did not give rise to reconciled communities. A significant development at Willingen, in terms of participation, was the presence of Pentecostal leaders. Moreover, they prepared a statement which was submitted by David du Plessis and included in the official record: 'After nearly half a century of misunderstanding and ostracism, for which they recognise they have not been entirely without blame on their own part, the Pentecostal Churches offer their fellowship in Christ to the whole of the Church in this grave hour of her history. They believe they have something to gain by larger fellowship with all who truly belong to Christ. They are greatly encouraged by many worldwide tokens that old prejudices are melting and a new era of mutual appreciation dawning. Brethren, let us receive one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.'[5]

A Statement on the Missionary Calling of the Church

1. The Missionary Situation and the Rule of God

We meet here at Willingen as a fellowship of those who are committed to the carrying out of Christ's commission to preach the Gospel to every creature. Like the great missionary gatherings which have gone before, we face a world largely ignorant of the Gospel. But unlike them, we face a world in which other faiths of revolutionary power confront us in the full tide of victory, faiths which have won swift and sweeping triumphs, and which present to the Christian missionary movement a challenge more searching than any it has faced since the rise of Islam. Amid the world-shaking events of our time, when men's hearts are failing them for fear of the things coming on the earth, what does the Spirit say to the churches about the missionary task?

The answer given to us is this: 'Lift up your heads, because your redemption draweth nigh.' Our word in this dark hour is not one of retreat but one of advance. We have to confess with penitence our share of responsibility for the terrible events of our time. Yet we preach not ourselves but Christ crucified – to human seeming a message of defeat, but to those who know its secret, the very power of God. We who take our stand here can never be cast down by any disaster, for we know that God rules the revolutionary forces of history and works out His purpose by the hidden power of the Cross. The Cross does not answer the world's questions, because they are not the real questions. It confronts the world with the real questions, which are God's questions – casting down all that

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[5] Norman Goodall (ed), *Missions Under the Cross: Addresses delivered at the enlarged meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Willingen, Germany, 1952; with statements issued by the meeting* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1953), 250.

exalts itself in defiance of Him, bringing to nothing the idolatries by which men are deceived, and raising up those who are sunk in disillusionment and despair. Inside the Church and out, men are asking: What is happening to us in our time? We answer this with the word of the Cross, and demand of all men everywhere that they should put their whole trust in Him who was cast out and crucified by men, but was raised by God to the right hand of His power. His rule is hidden but sure, and His word to us is this: 'These good tidings of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end shall come.' The battle is set between His hidden Kingdom and those evil spiritual forces which lure men on towards false hopes, or bind them down to apathy, in difference and despair. There is no room for neutrality in this conflict. Every man must choose this day whom he will serve.

2. The Missionary Obligation of the Church

The missionary movement of which we are a part has its source in the Triune God Himself. Out of the depths of His love for us, the Father has sent forth His own beloved Son to reconcile all things to Himself, that we and all men might, through the Spirit, be made one in Him with the Father in that perfect love which is the very nature of God. In the following affirmations we seek to set forth the nature of the duty and authority which are given to the Church to be His witnesses to all men everywhere:

1. God has created all things and all men that in them the glory of His love might be reflected; nothing therefore is excluded from the reach of His redeeming love.
2. All men are involved in a common alienation from God from which none can escape by his own efforts.
3. God has sent forth one Saviour, one Shepherd to seek and save all the lost, one Redeemer who by His death, resurrection and ascension has broken down the barrier between man and God, accomplished a full and perfect atonement, and created in Himself one new humanity, the Body of which Christ is the exalted and regnant Head.
4. On the foundation of this accomplished work God has sent forth His Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, to gather us together in one Body in Him, to guide us into all truth, to enable us to worship the Father in spirit and in truth, to empower us for the continuance of His mission as His witnesses and ambassadors, the first fruits and earnest of its completion.
5. By the Spirit we are enabled both to press forward as ambassadors of Christ, beseeching all men to be reconciled to God, and also to wait with sure confidence for the final victory of His love, of which He has given us most sure promises.

We who have been chosen in Christ, reconciled to God through Him, made members of His Body, sharers in His Spirit, and heirs through hope of His Kingdom, are by these very facts committed to full participation in His mission to the world. That by which the Church receives its existence is that by which it is also give its world mission. 'As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.'

3. The Total Missionary Task

God sends forth the Church to carry out His work to the ends of the earth, to all nations, and to the end of time.

1. The Church is sent to every inhabited area of the world. No place is too far or too near. Every group of Christians is sent as God's ambassadors to the people in its immediate neighbourhood. But its responsibility is not limited to its neighbourhood. Because Christ is King of kings and Saviour of the world, each group of Christians is also responsible for the proclamation of His Kingship to the uttermost parts of the earth.

2. The Church is sent to every social, political and religious community of mankind, both to those near at hand and to those far off. It is sent to those who deny or rebel against the reign of Christ; and no weakness, persecution or opposition may be allowed to limit this mission. Such are the conditions which the Church must expect for its warfare. Faithfulness to Christ will require the Church to come to grips with the social, political, economic and cultural life of the people to whom it is sent.

3. The Church is sent to proclaim Christ's reign in every moment and every situation. This means that the mission of the Church forbids it to drift or to flee before the events of our time. At one and the same moment, opportunities for advancing the mission of the Church lie alongside the catastrophic destruction of that mission. Because the Church is sent forth to do its work until the completion of time, and because Christ is the only One sent forth to judge and redeem the life of men, the Church is bidden in its mission to seek out the moments of opportunity and to interpret the catastrophes as the judgements of God which are the other side of His mercy.

The Church is thus compelled by the terms of its charter not merely to build up its life where it is and as it is, but also to go forth to the ends of the earth, to all nations, and to the completion of time. The mission of the Church will always transcend boundaries, but these can no longer be identified with national boundaries and certainly not with any supposed line between the 'Christian West' and the 'non-Christian East'. The mission involves both geographical extension and also intensive penetration of all spheres of life.

The call to missionary service may come to any believer in any church anywhere in the world. If and when that call comes, he is bound to leave land and kindred, and go out to do *that* missionary job. The Church is like an army living in tents. God calls His people to strike their tents and go forward. And Christ's promise holds that He will be with them even to the end of the world.

4. Solidarity with the World

The Church's words and works, its whole life of mission, are to be a witness to what God has done, is doing, and will do in Christ. But this word 'witness' cannot possibly mean that the Church stands over against the world, detached from it and regarding it from a position of superior righteousness or security. The Church is in the world, and as the Lord of the Church identified Himself wholly with mankind, so must the Church also do. The nearer the Church draws to its Lord, the nearer it draws to the world. Christians do not live in an enclave separated from the world; they are God's people in the world.

Therefore the Church is required to identify itself with the world, not only in its perplexity and distress, its guilt and its sorrow, but also in its real acts of love and justice – acts by which it often puts the churches to shame. The churches must confess that they have often passed by on the other side while the unbeliever, moved by compassion, did what the churches ought to have done. Wherever a church denies its solidarity with the world, or divorces its deeds from its words, it destroys the possibility of communicating the Gospel and presents to the world an offence which is not the genuine offence of the Cross.

5. Discerning the Signs of the Times

Our Lord bade His disciples discern the signs of the times. To human sight this may be a time of darkness and confusion. But eyes opened by the Crucified will discern in it sure signs of God's sovereign rule. We bear witness to the mighty works of His Spirit among us in many parts of the Church since we met together at Whitby. We believe that the sovereign rule of Him who is Saviour and Judge of all men is no less to be discerned by eyes of faith in the great events of our day, in the vast enlargements of human knowledge and power which this age is witnessing, in the mighty political and social movements of our time, and in countless personal experiences of which the inner history cannot be revealed until the Last Day. Above all, we are encouraged by our Lord Himself to discern at such a time as this His summons to us to go forward.

When all things are shaken, when familiar landmarks are blotted out, when war and tumult engulf us, when all human pride and pretension are humbled, we proclaim anew the hidden reign of our crucified and ascended

Lord. We summon all Christians to come forth from the securities which are no more secure and from boundaries of accepted duty too narrow for the Lord of all the earth, and to go forth with fresh assurance to the task of bringing all things into captivity to Him, and of preparing the whole earth for the day of His Coming.[6]

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[6] Goodall, *Missions Under the Cross*, 188-92.

ACHIMOTA 1957-58 – CHURCH AND MISSION

- Debate on whether the IMC should integrate with the WCC
- Theological argument that church and mission belong together
- Concern that passion for mission might be swamped by ecclesiastical agendas
- Tension between traditional understanding of evangelism and broader conceptions
- Leadership training paramount – establishment of the Theological Education Fund

When the World Council of Churches was formed in 1948, the International Missionary Council was formally 'in association'. Soon the question was raised as to whether the two global bodies should be integrated. With Tambaram having brought a clear understanding that responsibility for mission lies primarily with the church, there was a strong theological argument in favour of integration. A WCC meeting at Rolle in 1951 had adopted an influential statement on 'The Calling of the Church to Mission and Unity', drafted by Lesslie Newbigin, which argued at a theological level for the indissoluble connection of mission and unity.[1] Others, however, were concerned that a church-centric view of mission was inhibiting missionary initiative. Max Warren, General Secretary of the Anglican Church Missionary Society, argued that, 'Today the gravest embarrassment of the mission societies lies in the actual unwillingness of the younger churches to set them free to perform the tasks for which they properly exist – the pioneering of those new frontiers, not necessarily geographical, which have not yet been marked with a cross.'[2] There were also fears among mission activists that the mission agenda would be swamped by the ecclesial and bureaucratic concerns of a body like the World Council of Churches. This debate came to a head when the IMC met at Achimota, Ghana, at the end of 1957.

As well as wrestling with the question of the best institutional framework in which to advance ecumenical commitment to mission, the Achimota conference was concerned with the very definition of mission. As Mark Laing remarks: 'At one level the debate on integration was about

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[1] See Lesslie Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda: An Updated Autobiography* (Geneva: WCC, 1993), 133-34; Mark T.B. Laing, *From Crisis to Creation: Lesslie Newbigin and the Reinvention of Christian Mission* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 61-69.

[2] Warren, cited by S.C. Graaf van Randwijk, 'Some Reflections of a Mission Board Secretary', in Ronald K. Orchard (ed), *The Ghana Assembly of the International Missionary Council, 28th December to 8th January, 1958* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1958), 94.

organisational structures. But beyond structural obsessiveness lay more searching theological questions on the relationship between mission and church. By the middle of the twentieth century there was a realisation that the Protestant missionary movement had reached a crisis. Factors within and outwith the movement force those engaged in missions to the realisation that missions not only needed to be reorganised, but the concept of mission itself required rehabilitation.'[3] The *missio Dei* thinking which had emerged at Willingen was again prominent. The German missiologist Walter Freytag spoke of how missions had lost their way and suggested that understanding mission broadly as God's reality in this world was the best basis on which to face the future. While some were ready to embrace this new understanding of mission, others espoused a more traditional evangelistic approach. It was a point of divergence which was to have far-reaching effects.

A far-reaching initiative of the Achimota Conference was the establishment of the generously endowed Theological Education Fund which would play a significant role in enabling the development of theological education in the 'younger churches'. In years to come it would foster and resource the training and formation of many of those who were to provide leadership to the ecumenical movement.

The Christian Mission at This Hour

The Christian world mission is Christ's, not ours. Prior to all our efforts and activities, prior to all our gifts of service and devotion, God sent His Son into the world. And He came in the form of a servant – a servant who suffered even to the death of the Cross.

This conviction was emphasised by the Chairman in his opening address. We have seen it to be the only true motive of Christian mission and the only standard by which the spirit, method and modes of Christian missionary organisation must be judged. We believe it is urgent that this word of judgement and mercy should be given full freedom to cleanse and redeem our present activities, lest our human pride in our activities hinder the free course of God's mission in the world.

But we are none the less fellow-workers with Christ in His mission. That is ground for humility, not for pride. For He trusts *us* with *His* mission. 'All power is given to *Me* in heaven and on earth. Go *ye* therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' – not into your own name, nor the name of your Church or culture. Christ trusts us to discharge His mission in His form, the form of a servant, a servant whose characteristics are humility and suffering.

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[3] Laing, *From Crisis to Creation*, 33.

So we are responsible. Each of us in his own place, each local company of Christ's people, each church in its organised life, cannot be Christ's without being His missionary servant. A vague and generalised acceptance of the world mission is no substitute for responsible action in the discharge of missionary obedience.

But we are responsible to one another in Christ. We are called in Him to recognise with gladness that our fellow-Christians, our neighbouring congregations, our sister denominations in our own and other lands, are called by the same missionary Lord, and need the same freedom as we ourselves do to respond to His calling.

There is a tension which can easily become a contradiction – the tension between missionary passion and a due regard for the claims of the Christian fellowship. It has shown itself at many points in our discussions, as we have talked together about the place and function of the missionary, the structure and tasks of the Christian Councils, and especially in our discussion of the proposal that the IMC and the WCC should become one body. We have not seen how the contradiction can be removed. It may well be that the tension is one that is inherent in the Christian life. We have, however, we believe, discerned some points at which the tension can be creative within the fellowship.

Reasons For and Against the Integration of the Two World Bodies

The arguments advanced in favour and against integration may be roughly grouped under five heads, though there can be no hard-and-fast divisions between them.

(1) Integration is the appropriate outcome of the trends of development which have brought the two bodies to their present situations. This trend of historic development was referred to by many speakers, both those who favoured and those who were opposed to integration. Reference was made to: (a) The fact that it was the missionary movement which gave rise to the movement towards unity (both internationally and in the lands of the 'younger' Churches). This point was especially emphasised by several speakers from Councils in Asia. (b) The development of the 'association' of the two bodies, especially in their joint activities, the Churches' Commission on International Affairs, the East Asia Secretariat, the Division of Studies, the 'emergency' activities of the Division of Inter-Church Aid, and the Joint Committee. (c) The concern of both bodies with 'mission and unity'. (d) The increase in common planning in response to specific needs. (e) The geographical and functional overlapping, as more Churches in Asia and Africa become members of the WCC, and as the integration of faith and mission takes place locally, especially in Asia, and in world confessional bodies.

This historical trend was diversely interpreted. For some, it was 'the inherent logic of events'. Others saw in it the result of 'the pressure of the

Holy Spirit'. The latter interpretation was questioned by several (both those favouring and those opposing the plan) on the ground that the integration of the two world bodies was a purely organisational question. For two speakers, the trend implied that 'things had gone too far' for the plan to be opposed even by those who regarded it as a mistake.

(2) Integration was commended for theological reasons, such as: that mission and unity belong together; mission is of the *esse* of the Church; the Church needs mission and missions need the Church; 'theological consistency' requires that the two world bodies should become one. Reference was made to the summary of these theological considerations in the introduction to the Plan, p. 29, viz.:

> A basic and long-forgotten truth is being re-discovered in our time, which might be stated thus: the *unity* of the Church and the *mission* of the Church both belong, in equal degree, to the *essence* of the Church. If Christian churches would be in very truth the Church, they must carry the Gospel into all the world. They must also strive to achieve the unity of all those throughout the world for whom Jesus Christ is Lord. This truth has already become manifest in the life of both the world bodies. It has led them into association with each other and now obliges them to go further. They exist to help the churches to witness to the wholeness of the Gospel and must, therefore, seek to express the wholeness in their own life.

The theological arguments were challenged on the grounds that (1) the question is an organisational one, and the real issue is obscured by being taken into the sphere of theology; (2) 'that mission and unity belong together' says something about church and mission relationships, but not about the relationships of the WCC (which is not a church) and the IMC (which is not a mission); it does not necessarily involve the administrative unity of the two organisations. (3) Church history and the contemporary scene provide evidence that mission can be fulfilled without unity; the most active groups in mission today (amongst whom are some whose work is undoubtedly effective) are Pentecostalists and other 'evangelicals' and the Roman Catholics; yet they are not notable for their concern for unity. (4) It was a tenable theological position that only in mission shall we begin to understand what is the unity which God wants for His Church; this view questions presuppositions about organic unity in current ecumenical discussion.

(3) Integration was commended on the ground that it would put mission at the heart of the ecumenical movement. It would mean that the Churches could not possibly meet together without being faced with their responsibility for mission. Several speakers referred to the importance of the 'younger' Churches as they became members of the WCC, finding mission at its centre. Some considered that integration would facilitate the development by the 'younger' Churches of their missionary outreach; one speaker gave this as the reason for his council's approval of integration for which otherwise it felt no enthusiasm. On the other hand, reference was

made to the fear of some lest 'evangelical zeal' should be sacrificed for the sake of a 'nominal unity'.

(4) Integration was held to be necessary by those who considered that there was no justification for the continued existence of two world bodies. They pointed out that Churches, both 'older' and 'younger', especially those in which the mission was an integral part of the Church organisation, were perplexed by having to deal with two separate world bodies. The continued separation of what belongs together leads to tension and embarrassment in the work of the two bodies themselves, which, it was suggested, would increase the longer the separation continued. Several speakers considered that the bringing of the two bodies together would strengthen the response of Christians to the challenge of non-Christians and of the changes in the social and political scene. Several speakers who had been associated with both the WCC and the IMC spoke of the similarity in the outlook and purposes of the two bodies.

On the other hand, there were those who questioned whether the integration of the two world bodies would in fact reflect the reality of the local relationship of Church and mission in the world generally. Two speakers contended that the cause of mission and the cause of unity could best be served by a continuance of the present relationship of 'association'; several others expressed their doubts of this view. One speaker referred to fear that many had that integration would result in the creation of a 'mammoth organisation'.

(5) The 'Draft Plan' was commended because it would conserve in the new body all that was represented by the IMC Assembly, which was virtually unchanged in the proposed integrated body, and is provided with an interim body to implement its decisions. But one speaker thought the plan implied absorption rather than integration.[4]

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[4] Orchard, *The Ghana Assembly*, 180-81, 157-60.

NEW DELHI 1961 – INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL AND WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

- Integration of IMC and WCC grounded on theological imperative
- WCC constitution amended to reflect the missionary nature of the church
- Growing tensions between 'ecumenicals' and 'evangelicals'
- Interrelation of universal horizon and local congregational expression
- Admission of several Orthodox Churches to membership of the WCC

While there were structural and organisational arguments in favour of the integration of the IMC and the WCC, it was also driven by the theological conviction that church and mission belonged together. For Lesslie Newbigin, IMC General Secretary, the unity of the church was essential to the integrity of mission just as much as its missionary nature was essential to the integrity of the church. There was thus a theological imperative driving the integration process, as well as practical and organisational considerations. This found expression in a change to the 'Basis' of the World Council of Churches at the New Delhi Assembly where integration was formally enacted. Originally, the WCC had identified itself as 'a fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour'. At New Delhi, the verb 'accept' was replaced by 'confess' and a new phrase was added: 'and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Spirit.' This gave the WCC a much more missionary orientation as integration with the IMC was recognised in fundamental constitutional terms.[1]

However, the resistance to integration that had found expression at Achimota had by no means abated. It was viewed with deep suspicion by a growing Evangelical constituency. IMC General Secretary Norman Goodall, estimated that, in 1957, 70% of foreign missionaries were American. Of these only 42% belonged to agencies which related to the National Christian Council of Churches. The other 58% worked with agencies which did not co-operate with the IMC or WCC.[2] This growing Evangelical constituency was forming its own networks which were often

[1] *The New Delhi Report: The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches, 1961* (London: SCM, 1962), 152-59; cit. Laing, *From Crisis to Creation*, 120.
[2] Cit. Laing, *From Crisis to Creation*, 49.

defined by their opposition to the trends evident in the IMC and WCC. The Protestant missionary movement was increasingly marked by a sharp division between 'Ecumenicals' and 'Evangelicals'. As Mark Laing observes: 'The loose, broad-based association the IMC had maintained for decades was fractured, and the relationship between evangelicals and 'ecumenicals' became increasingly polarised and antagonistic.'[3]

Though integration, ironically, was to lead to a fragmentation of the missionary movement, its historic significance cannot be underestimated. As Stephen Neill remarked: 'This was indeed a revolutionary moment in Church history. More than two hundred Church bodies in all parts of the world, assembled in the persons of their official representatives, had solemnly declared themselves in the presence of God to be responsible as Churches for the evangelisation of the whole world. Such an event had never taken place in the history of the Church since Pentecost.'[4] The Assembly gave the following mandate to the Department of World Mission and Evangelism: 'To assist churches, missions and other Christian bodies to recognise and draw the practical conclusions from the fact that:

1. The Christian mission is one throughout the world, for the Gospel is the same and the need of salvation is the same for all men.
2. This world mission has a base which is worldwide and is not confined to the areas once regarded as constituting 'Western Christendom'.
3. The mission implies a reaching out both to one's own neighbourhood and to the ends of the earth.'[5]

This latter point was emphasised in an influential paragraph of the New Delhi report which was drafted by Lesslie Newbigin: 'We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are … reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united *with the whole Christian fellowship in all places* and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.'[6] The interrelation of the universal horizon and the local congregational expression of church life were to be a constant preoccupation of ecumenical missiology in the years to come.

Another influential development at New Delhi was the admission of several Orthodox Churches to full membership of the WCC. From this point onwards their perspectives would exercise growing influence on the ecumenical understanding of mission, through such characteristic themes as

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[3] Mark Laing, 'The Church Is the Mission: Integrating the IMC with the WCC', *International Review of Mission,* 100.393 (November 2011), 218.
[4] Stephen Neill, *The Church and Christian Union* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 108-09; cit. Yates, *Christian Mission*, 157.
[5] Newbigin, 'Mission to Six Continents', 188.
[6] *New Delhi Report*, 116; cit. Laing, *From Crisis to Creation*, 202.

the cosmic character of salvation, the eschatological nature of mission and the duty to incarnate the gospel in every culture.[7] Soon the Second Vatican Council would open the way for greatly increased involvement by the Roman Catholic Church in ecumenical missiology. Though it never became a member-church of the WCC,, from the 1960s the Roman Catholic Church became an influential partner in ecumenical missiological endeavour.

Lesslie Newbigin –
The Missionary Dimension of the Ecumenical Movement

The deepest reason for our coming together lies in the nature of the Gospel itself. As the Central Committee said ten years ago at Rolle:

> The obligation to take the Gospel to the whole world, and the obligation to draw all Christ's people together, both rest upon Christ's whole work and are indissolubly connected. Every attempt to separate these tasks violates the wholeness of Christ's ministry to the world.

And the Central Committee was right, therefore, in drawing attention to the danger of a false use of the word *ecumenical*, a use which omits the missionary dimension and therefore parts company wholly with the original meaning of the word. It is time to say again plainly that the words 'ecumenical' and 'interdenominational' are not synonymous. A meeting among churchmen is not, in itself, an ecumenical occasion. This is not a minor matter. The way we use words eventually shapes the way we act. This is a moment, surely, to remember what the word 'ecumenical' really means.

The Contribution of the IMC to the Integrated World Council

I have sought to remind you of the deep interconnection between our two councils from the very beginning of their histories, and of the source of this interconnection in the nature of the Gospel itself. Mission and unity are two sides of the same reality, or rather two ways of describing the same action of the living Lord who wills that all should be drawn to Himself. But it would be a false simplification to suggest that within the whole ecumenical movement, the IMC stands for mission and the WCC for unity. A moment's reflection on the history of the two councils is enough to dispel the idea. From the Edinburgh Conference onwards, the IMC has been profoundly concerned about unity. No stronger call for visible reunion has come from any meeting than those which were given by the IMC conferences at Tambaram in 1938 and at Willingen in 1952. Perhaps the most massive single piece of ecumenically organised inter-church aid at the present time is the Theological Education Fund of the IMC. And on the

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[7] Anastasios Yannoulatos, 'The Purpose and Motive of Mission', in *International Review of Mission,* 54 (1965), 281-97.

other hand, the World Council of Churches has from the beginning concerned itself deeply with the missionary task – as witness the work of the 2nd Commission at Amsterdam.

Few things have done more to strengthen the understanding of the missionary task of the Church than the work of the WCC's Department on the Laity. Both Councils have been drawn by the logic of the Gospel itself to concern themselves both with the mission of the Church and with its unity. Their coming together is a wholly natural and proper response to the continuing pressure of that logic.

But human structures are never simply visible embodiments of theological principles. They have particular and individual characteristics that arise from their history, from the obedience and disobedience of the many men and women who have shaped them. The IMC is no exception. Rather than speaking only of mission and unity as theological principles, it will be wise at this moment to look at the concrete character of that which is brought from the side of the IMC into the integrated council. Let me suggest three characteristics which seem to me worthy of special attention at this moment in our common history.

1. The original base of the IMC was in the mission boards and societies of the western churches. Of its 17 original member councils, 13 were missionary councils. Today, of course, the majority of the 38 member councils represent the churches in what were formerly called the mission fields, and a great part of the history of the Council during the past 40 years has been concerned with the shift in the centre of gravity from mission boards to younger churches. Nevertheless, it remains true and important that a very great part of the spiritual substance – if I may put it so – which the IMC will bring into the integrated council, is constituted by the foreign missionary movement. This movement is a concrete historical phenomenon of the past 250 years. It has its own particular characteristics arising from its coincidence in time with the movement of colonial expansion from the West, and from other particular historical circumstances. We are familiar with the criticism that can be directed against it. I am not concerned here either with criticism or with defence. It is enough to say in this Assembly that the ecumenical movement owes its existence largely to the missionary movement, and that millions of those whom we here represent owe their existence as Christians to it. My concern here is to draw attention to elements in it which are of permanent importance, and which – with whatever changes of form – must remain part of the essential spiritual substance of any living ecumenical movement.

Among these elements I would place the presence at the heart of missions of a continuing and costly concern for individual people and places, expressed in sustained intercessory prayer, sacrificial giving and personal commitment. The many thousands of people, often poor and hard-pressed by their own troubles, who give regularly and pray constantly for people and causes known only through an occasional meeting or magazine

article, these have given the missionary movement the spiritual force which it has had… New contacts and broad horizons, the vision conjured up by a big international meeting of a worldwide fellowship and a worldwide task – these can be exhilarating and liberating experiences. But for the long haul, for the days and years of routine without which no great enterprise is brought to victory, there can be no substitute for that kind of personal commitment expressed in unremitting intercession, unwearied giving and life-long commitment by which missions have lived for these two hundred years.

2. Secondly, the missionary movement whether in East or West has been above all concerned to reach out beyond the existing frontiers of the Christian fellowship, to *go* to the place where men live without the knowledge of the Gospel, and there to be so identified with those men that they may hear and see, in their own idiom and in the forms of their own life, the grace and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. This impulse to *go* is at the heart of missions and must remain so. It is true that both the starting point of the journey and its end are different now from what they were in the 19th century. The starting point is now everywhere that the Church is, and the end is every place where men are without the knowledge of Christ. Christendom is no longer a geographical area. The very fact that we now bring the affairs of missions right into the heart of the day-to-day life of a World Council of Churches will expose more vividly the impropriety of some ways of thinking and speaking about the missionary journey which still illegitimately survive into the 20th century. The decision that the IMC's studies in the life and growth of the younger churches should now be extended to enable representatives of the younger churches to make parallel studies in the life of the older churches is an example of the kind of changes we must hope for. I hope also that these studies will be followed by real missionary journeys; that the churchmen of Asia and Africa, having studied the spiritual situation of some of the older churches, their conflicts, their victories and their defeats, will be moved to send missionaries to Europe and America to make the Gospel credible to the pagan masses of those continents who remain unmoved by the witness of the churches in their midst. My point is that this impulse to *go*, to reach out beyond the accustomed boundaries for the sake of witness to Him who is Lord of all, has been central to the missionary movement and must remain so in the new circumstances which integration will create. Among the many things which change, this must not change. If we will think for a moment of the multitudes who are out of effective earshot of the Gospel, we shall realise how absurd is the suggestion that the call to go is less urgent than it was when Carey wrote his 'Enquiry' or when St Paul wrote: 'How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall men preach unless they be sent?'

I emphasise this point because there are those who deprecate this emphasis on the command to go, who point to the very large place taken in the Bible by the centripetal as opposed to the centrifugal understanding of

the mission of God's people, to the fact that this mission is a gathering and not just a sending. In certain contexts this reminder is needed: missions are not the whole content of the Church's mission. God's mission is more than the activities called missions. But the activities called missions are an indispensable part (a part, not the whole) of the obedience which the churches must render to God's calling. To quote Walter Freytag, missions have to remind every church 'that it cannot be the Church in limiting itself within its own area, that it is called to take part in the responsibility of God's outgoing into the whole world, that it has the Gospel because it is meant for the nations of the earth'. This remains true in the new situation in which we shall be after integration. The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, which – God willing – will be established immediately after this Assembly, will exist 'to further the proclamation of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to all men to the end that they may turn to Him and be saved'. It will be the task of the Commission within the life of the World Council to press upon every church in every part of the world the obligation to take its share in that task, as an indispensable element without which its own confession of the Gospel would lack something of full integrity.

3. The IMC has been from the beginning of its existence deeply concerned with the issues – spiritual and administrative – which have arisen in the development from mission to Church, and in the relation between older and younger churches. These issues have been deep and often perplexing. There have been – on the positive side – the abiding love, knowledge and concern which the sending boards and societies have had, and continue to have, for the churches which are the fruit of their work, and the reciprocal affection and trust which – thank God – bind these younger churches to those from whom their first knowledge of the Gospel came. There have also been – on the negative side – the strains and stresses that that intimate relation has often entailed. The World Council has made possible a series of relationships between churches in which these strains were absent and everything could begin with all the freshness, the surprise and the delight of first love. It is of God's goodness that this has been so and we can all rejoice in it. The coming together of the IMC and the World Council of Churches means that these two kinds of relationships are to be held increasingly within one continuing fellowship. There will be much to learn on both sides. It will be necessary to remember, and sometimes to say sharply, both that paternalism is a sin which (like all sin) tends to blind the sinner to its existence, and also that paternity is a fact with enduring implications.

It is, I think, not out of place to mention these things in this moment, for it is only if we recognise them and face them in a spirit of mutual forgiveness and forbearance that the integration of our two councils will be fruitful, and that, speaking the truth in love, we shall grow up to Him who is Head of the whole body, and in obedience to Him who is the one Father of us all.

My purpose in speaking of these three matters has been to remind you that we have to think at this moment not only of the mission of the Church in general, but of those particular activities that are called missions, and of the issues with which those involved in these activities have sought to wrestle together in the International Missionary Council. The form of these activities must change with the changing human situation. I am convinced that the step which we are proposing to take at this Assembly will in due course lead to fruitful changes in the pattern of missionary action. Many responsibilities which were carried in the past by the International Missionary Council because it was the only world Christian body able to carry them can now be fruitfully shared with or transferred to other divisions of the World Council of Churches. Relations between churches which were formerly linked through the activity of a mission board can now be diversified through the opening of the many other channels of communication now available. Through all of these changes I hope that the effect will be to make the missionary task stand out more clearly. But this will only come about if there is – along with the administrative integration which is now proposed – a deep-going spiritual integration of the concerns which have been central in our two councils. For those who have been traditionally related to the IMC, this means a willingness to acknowledge that the particular forms and relationships characteristic of the missionary activity of the past two centuries must – like all things human – be held constantly open to the new insights that God may have to give us in the wider fellowship into which we now enter. For the churches which constitute the World Council this means the acknowledgement that the missionary task is no less central to the life of the Church that the pursuit of renewal and unity. No movement is entitled to the use of the word 'ecumenical' which is not committed to taking its share in bearing that witness.

The Missionary Dimension

But God forbid that we should talk in such negatives! Our mission is not a duty but a doxology. 'O give thanks to the Lord for he is good… Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed and gathered from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south' (Ps. 107). How can those whom He has redeemed be silent? They exist only as the first-fruit of His loving purpose for all mankind: how can they pretend otherwise? How can we, who rejoice in this gathering together by the one Lord, think that His plans end with us? How can we think that we are more than mere witnesses of what He is doing? Where is there any light in this dark world – or in our dark minds – except in Him? Where is there any hope of salvation for mankind but in Him? What sort of sense does this world make, if there be not at the heart of it the dying and rising of the Son

of God? What are we in this World Council of Churches but a mere global sectarianism unless we are missionary through and through?

Sixty-six years ago a group of graduates of Madras Christian College sent a letter to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland to thank them for what the College had done. The Assembly's reply thanked them for the letter and spoke of the mutual sharing of gifts between East and West that such sharing of gifts made possible. The Assembly then went on: 'But in that spirit we desire affectionately and above all things to commend you, as our missionaries have done, the Lord Jesus Christ… We have no better claim to Him than you have. We possess nothing so precious – we value nothing so much – we have no source of good so full, fruitful and enduring – we have nothing to compare with the Lord Jesus Christ. To Him we must bear witness. And we should gladly consent that you should cease to listen to us if you would be led to give your ear and your heart to him.'

There is the missionary dimension of any movement, any labour, any programme that bears the name of Christ! Over every phase of it there will be written urgently and insistently 'Don't look at us; look at him'.[8]

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[8] Lesslie Newbigin, 'The Missionary Dimension of the Ecumenical Movement', in *The Ecumenical Review,* 14.2 (1962), 208-15; cit. Kinnamon and Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement*, 343-47.

MEXICO CITY 1963 – WITNESS IN SIX CONTINENTS

- No longer 'sending' and 'receiving' countries – now 'from everywhere to everywhere'
- No longer 'missions' – now 'mission', understood on a broad canvas
- Need for western churches to develop missionary congregations in their own context
- Tensions regarding the action of God through secular structures and/or the church

The first meeting of the former IMC in its new guise as the World Council of Churches Division for World Mission and Evangelism took place in 1963. The integration of church and mission inspired a vision of the church active in mission in every part of the world. The conference was marked by a new perception that the time had now passed in which one could think of the 'home base' and the 'mission field' in distinct geographical terms. Indeed, the conference's focus on the challenges posed by secularism revealed how far the West itself had become a mission field. The question of how western churches shaped by the Christendom model could recover the missionary nature of the church became the focus of a major WCC study on the missionary structure of the congregation.[1] No longer would mission be understood in terms of 'sending' and 'receiving' countries. Instead, it was suggested that the missionary frontier runs around the world as the line that separates belief from unbelief, the unseen frontier which cuts across all other frontiers and presents the universal church with its primary missionary challenge.

Henceforth it would be a matter of mission 'from everywhere to everywhere'. This had far-reaching implications, as Lalsangkima Pachuau observes: 'By eliminating the old religio-geographical boundaries as the norm to define frontiers, the conference also implicitly affirmed cultural plurality and diversity. Since "mission in and to six continents" involves mutuality between Christians of all continents, unity in mission – the enduring theme of ecumenical missiology – came to be understood in a new light, namely, unity in diversity.'[2] A small but significant indication of the changing understanding of mission in this period would come in 1969

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[1] *The Church for Others and The Church for the World: A Quest for Structures for Missionary Congregations* (Geneva: WCC, 1967).

[2] Lalsangkima Pachuau, 'Ecumenical Missiology: Three Decades of Historical and Theological Development (1951-1982)', in Lalsangkima Pachuau, *Ecumenical Missiology: Contemporary Trends, Issues and Themes* (Bangalore: United Theological College, 2002), 29-50.

with the removal of the 's' from the title of the International Review of Missions, so that from that year it appeared as the International Review of Mission.[3] This, as Larsson and Castro explain, 'reflected the change in attitude from "missions", meaning organised missionary work from Western Christendom to what were regarded as non-Christian countries, to "mission" as the task of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church through its members wherever they are located.'[4]

Tensions which had been building in ecumenical missiology were clearly apparent at Mexico City. The conference's most innovative work was done around the question of how to understand the missionary task in the context of what God is doing in the secular events of our time. It struck a note of dialogue: 'The pattern of Christian mission in the secular world must therefore be one of constant encounter with the real needs of our age. Its form must be that of dialogue, using contemporary language and modes of thought, learning from the scientific and sociological categories, and meeting people in their own situations.'[5] However, while some were adventurous in advocating a view of the mission of God that perceived the action of God primarily through secular structures and agencies, others defended the view that the church is the primary sphere where the mission of God finds expression. A parallel tension was evident around the question of how to understand other religions. While some saw the presence and work of God in other religions, others maintained that other religions were demonic and stressed the continuing need for evangelism. The conference sought to take a middle line, emphasising that the gospel of Christ is for all.

The Message

We have been concerned with 'God's Mission and Our Task' and with the witness of the whole Church of Jesus Christ to the whole Gospel of Christ to all men, whatever their race or nation, faith or lack of faith. We are constrained by a fresh awareness of the love of God for all men to send this message.

1. Our world is changing faster than it has ever done before. New patterns of life are taking form for the whole of mankind. In this revolutionary change, science and technology play a decisive part. This means two things: it makes possible for masses of people greater freedom,

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[3] See William H. Crane, 'Dropping the S', in *International Review of Mission,* 58 (1969), 141-44.

[4] Birgitta Larsson and Emilio Castro, 'From Missions to Mission', in John Briggs, Mercy Amba Oduyoye and George Tsetsis, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 3, 1968-2000* (Geneva: WCC, 2004), 125.

[5] Ronald K. Orchard (ed), *Witness in Six Continents: Records of the Meeting of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches held in Mexico City, December 8th to 19th, 1963* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1964), 121.

greater security, more leisure and a more truly human life; but it poses a great question – is technology to be the servant of man or his master? It is a question of life and death for the world.

2. We who know the God of the Bible know that the growing dominion of man over nature is the gift of God, but also that it is a trust to be exercised in responsibility to him. God's Lordship is the sole security of man's freedom.

3. Knowing this:

a.   We affirm that this world is God's world. The very turbulence of contemporary life is a product of man's response, either in obedience or disobedience to the living God. Men may not know this. They may ignore it. But the fact remains that God is Lord not only of creation but also of history. What is happening in the world of our time is under the hand of God, even when men do not acknowledge Him. We are called to a sustained effort to understand the secular world and to discern the will of God in it. This means seeking to know what is in accordance with His purpose and what is under His judgement. Thus we rejoice in all the possibilities for fuller life now open to men, but we affirm that man is only free in God's service, and if he refuses that service he will become the slave of other powers and will end in destroying himself.

b.   We affirm that the God whose world this is has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. He who is head of the Church is Lord of all. His is the name above every name. His love is for all mankind. He has died and risen again for all. Therefore we can go to men of other faiths or to men of one in humility and confidence, for the Gospel we preach is the account of what God has done and still does for all men. All men have the right to know this, and those who do know it are committed to making it known. No one, and least of all Christians, can hold that it does not matter what men believe as long as they believe something. The ultimate issue in human life is precisely who God is, and this we know in Jesus Christ. Christian witness does not rest on any kind of superiority in Christians; it rests wholly on the commission from the Christ, who came for all men, to make Him known to all. Mission is the test of faith.

c.   We affirm that all Christians are called to go forward in this task together. We believe that the time has now come when we must move onwards to common planning and joint action. The fact that Christ is not divided must be made unmistakably plain in the very structure of missionary work. Our present forms of missionary organisation do not openly manifest that fact; they often conceal it. The far-reaching consequences for all churches must be faced.

d.   We thus affirm that this missionary task is one and demands unity. It is one because the Gospel is one. It is one because in all countries the Churches face the same essential task. It is one because every

Christian congregation in all the world is called to show the love of God in Christ, in witness and service to the world at its doors. It demands unity because it is obedience to one Lord, and because we cannot effectively witness to the secularised or to the non-Christian world if we are isolated from one another. We need the gifts God has given to each Church for the witness of the whole Church.

e.   We affirm that inevitably means crossing frontiers. This is true of the Christian missionary, who leaves one culture and one nation to go to people of other cultures to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. Moreover, there is an increasing number of men and women who go to other countries than their own, as Christians, in commerce and industry, or in the professions or government service. This is a two-way traffic, and all such people need the prayerful support of the congregations from which they go out. But there are other frontiers we need to cross: the Christian congregation must recognise that God sends it into the secular world. Christians must take their part in it – in office, factory, school and farm, and in the struggle for peace and a just order in social and racial relationships. In this task they must seek the power of the Holy Spirit to bear witness, by word and by life, to the reality of the living God, in whatever ways are open to them.

We therefore affirm that this missionary movement now involves Christians in all six continents and in all lands. It must be the common witness of the whole Church, bringing the whole Gospel to the whole world. We do not yet see the changes this demands; but we go forward in faith. God's purpose still stands: to sum up all things in Christ. In this hope we dedicate ourselves anew to His mission in the spirit of unity and in humble dependence upon our living Lord.[6]

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[6] Orchard, *Witness in Six Continents*, 173-75.

BANGKOK 1972-73 – SALVATION TODAY

- Re-setting relationships of 'older' and 'younger' churches – moratorium proposal
- New appreciation of distinct cultural identities and contextual theologies
- Balancing socio-political concerns with evangelism and personal conversion
- Evangelicals disturbed by socio-economic emphasis at the expense of evangelism
- Formation by Evangelicals in 1974 of Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

The concerns of the Bangkok CWME conference found expression particularly in the moratorium debate. The 'younger churches' were not so young any more and were determined to assume responsibility for mission in their respective spheres. This would involve the western 'sending' churches in redefining their role. As Wolfgang Günther observes: 'The representatives of the rich Western churches found themselves in the dock as never before.'[1] A provocative proposal was that they should accept for a time a moratorium on missionary appointments so as to provide an opportunity for the indigenous churches to truly assume authority in their own context. This would set the scene for a new era of working in partnership. Soon, for example, the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society would evolve into the Evangelical Community for Apostolic Action (CEVAA) and the London Missionary Society into the Council for World Mission (CWM).

This attempt to re-set the operative relationships in mission was undergirded by a fresh emphasis on contextual theology and a recognition of cultural identities. The conference sought to balance socio-political concerns with a commitment to evangelism and personal conversion. In the judgement of Birgitta Larsson and Emilio Castro, 'To a remarkable extent the Bangkok conference released its participants from the old polarisation between personal and social salvation. A great number of third world participants contributed to this by objecting to being involved in a theological division that had never been their reality… The gospel manifests itself, the Bangkok conference argued, both in the justification of the sinner and in socio-political justice, and thus demands both evangelism

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[1] Günther, 'World Mission Conferences', 531.

and active struggle on behalf of the oppressed. Alone, neither does justice to the reign of God which Jesus announced and inaugurated.'[2]

To many Evangelicals, however, the conference appeared to be heavily biased towards the social and political realm and to lack a sufficiently clear theology of salvation. They had been alarmed by the prominence of social and political concerns at the WCC Assembly at Uppsala in 1968. This was an Assembly which met in the aftermath of student riots in Paris, the communist invasion of Prague, the Vietnam War, the Cultural Revolution in China and the confrontation of fascism and communism in Latin America. It viewed such developments through the lens of a report on a study of the missionary structure of the congregation which decisively departed from a church-centric view of mission in favour of an understanding of mission built around the action of God in society at large. It followed through on Hoekendjik's argument that 'God-church-world' must be replaced by 'God-world-church'.

The calling of the church, on this view, is to participate in God's missionary action which is valid for the whole world and embraces both church and society. In an arresting phrase, it was said that the world must be allowed to provide the agenda for the churches.[3] This means, as Dietrich Werner explains, 'The church does not have a mission, it is itself mission. The structure and aim of its missions are legitimate only in so far as they serve God's mission.'[4] This opened the way to a major focus on the social and political witness of the church which appeared to many Evangelicals to be at the expense of the spiritual dimension.

These concerns informed their approach to the Bangkok conference. Donald McGavran spoke for many when he expressed concern that '"Evangelism" ceases to be proclaiming Jesus Christ by word and deed and persuading men to become His disciples and responsible members of His Church and becomes changing the structures of society in the direction of justice, righteousness and peace… Evangelicals should work and pray that this deliberate debasing of Christian currency cease and that the reformation of social order (rightly emphasised) should not be substituted for salvation'.[5] Bangkok marked a fork in the road between 'Ecumenicals' and 'Evangelicals' – something that was clearly expressed when Evangelicals held the Lausanne Congress the following year and established the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization as

[2] Larsson and Castro, 'From Missions to Mission', 126.
[3] See further, Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 383.
[4] Dietrich Werner, 'Missionary Structure of the Congregation', in Nicholas Lossky et al (ed), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 699-701.
[5] Donald A. McGavran, 'Salvation Today', in Ralph Winter (ed), *The Evangelical Response to Bangkok* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1973), 31; see also Peter Beyerhaus, *Bangkok 73: The Beginning or End of World Mission?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974).

something of an Evangelical parallel to the WCC's CWME. Nonetheless, despite disagreement and distrust, the two sides in this debate continued their dialogue. It found expression through participation in each other's conferences and in a lively debate in the International Review of Mission.[6] Leaders such as Lesslie Newbigin, John Stott, David Bosch, Emilio Castro and Mortimer Arias sought to bridge the gulf.[7]

Report of Section I: Culture and Identity

On Conversion and Cultural Change

1. It is very difficult to describe the existential experience of conversion – whether personal or corporate, as an event or a process – in terms which do justice to rational thinking as well as other levels of consciousness. In order to express this experience, one has to seek other ways of communication than just report language.

Conversion as a phenomenon is not restricted to the Christian community; it finds its place in other religions as well as in certain political and ideological communities; its forms may vary. The content of the experience differs according to the person or to the ideological system within which the person or the group is converted.

Conversion is a comprehensive concept: it changes the person's or the group's thinking, perspectives on reality and action. It relates a person to people who have similar experiences or who are committed to the same person or ideology.

The Christian conversion relates to God and especially to His son Jesus Christ. It introduces people into the Christian community, the structure of which may differ greatly from one culture to another, and which will always include a great variety of persons.

Christian conversion gathers people into the worshipping community, the teaching community and the community of service to all men. Even if Christians are not called out of their culture and separated from the society in which they were born, they still will form cells of worship, or reflection and of service within their original cultures.

Personal conversion always leads to social action, but here again the forms will greatly differ. We heard action reports which gave us some idea how diverse the consequences may be. In the one case, people who had never known an identity of their own formed a very closely-knit group, within which intensive social care for each other developed. When such a group grows, it almost inevitably enters into the full civic life at the local level; if it grows further, it will acquire political power which may align it

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[6] See, e.g. John Stott, 'The Significance of Lausanne', in *International Review of Mission,* 64. 255 (1975), 288-94.
[7] See Laing, *From Crisis to Creation*, 132.

to either conservative or progressive political platforms. Where conversion takes place among the destitute and powerless, the sustaining community will tend to begin to empower the poor and oppressed.

But it is also possible that conversion means a calling out of people, away from what is regarded as an oppressive power structure or even away from a type of social action which is regarded as dehumanising or superficial.

It is important that the community of those converted to Christ is so sustained by the study of Scripture and the work of service that renewal of the conversion experience is possible.

Our group was unanimous in thinking that conversion is always related to the place and the circumstances where it occurs; therefore we recommend that detailed study be made of the form and consequences of conversion in different situations.

The relation between conversion and social change may be clear, but the relation between social change and conversion is much less easily described. It may be that secular conversion experiences remind the Christian community of elements in their own life which need to be renewed; it may also be that conversion phenomena within a new cultural situation will force Christians back on their unique identity and make them oppose the cultural development; their conversion in such situations is away from the prevailing cultural situation. To generalise about these various possibilities would hardly be helpful.

2. Everywhere people are seeking for new experiences of community, whatever the name: cultural revolution, sub-culture or counter-culture. The relation of the Christian community to such a search cannot be described without serious consideration of each of these scenes. We have learned in our group that the line between culture, sub-culture and even counter-culture is not as sharp as these groups themselves often proclaim. People move from one to the other without observing strict sociological or theological rules.

It is difficult to describe 'the community in Christ and in the Holy Spirit' in this context. We played with the concept of the Christian community itself as a counter-culture; but we abandoned this idea because it cut us off too definitely from the communities of men of which we are also a part. Only in extreme cases may we be called to shake the dust of the city from our shoes; usually we shall have to live in a somewhat dialectical relationship, participating with a certain hesitation, identifying ourselves while keeping our critical distance. This dialectic should not hinder us from being fully engaged with others in the search for justice and freedom. Our identity is in Christ and with Him we identify ourselves; by Him also we may be withdrawn. The criteria for so tender a relationship are taught us only when we let the Scriptures continuously surprise us and keep our communion with the Lord and His people.

3. The manifestations of God are always surprising. Basically there is no realm of life and no situation where He cannot reveal Himself. We believe that He is present in His whole creation. But we do not want to make this belief an operative principle for pointing out exactly where He is at work, lest we say: here is the Messiah, or there is the Messiah, when He is not there.

Although we expect His presence with men and although we know that the Spirit translates the groaning of all mankind into prayers acceptable to God, we believe that this insight is more a reason to worship His freedom than an invitation to build our theological theories. Our preoccupation is with the revealed Christ and with the proclamation of Him as He has been made known to us. Scripture tells us that Christ identifies Himself with the poor and that the Spirit translates the groaning of men; this may indicate the direction in which we are invited to move but it does not give us power to pinpoint the details of His presence. The observation that Christ-like action and insights which we know from the Gospels are also present among other groups does not give us the right to claim such groups for Christ; it should lead us deeper into the process of our own conversion and bring us to worship Our Lord even more humbly. He asked us to follow Him, not to spy on Him.

Report of Section II

1. The Mission of God

In the power of the Spirit, Christ is sent from God, the Father, into this divided world 'to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of God's favour' (Luke 4:18). Through Christ, men and women are liberated and empowered with all their energies and possibilities to participate in His Messianic work. Through His death on the Cross and His resurrection from the dead, hope of salvation becomes realistic and reality hopeful. He liberates from the prison of guilt. He takes the inevitability out of history. In Him the Kingdom of God and of free people is at hand. Faith in Christ releases in man creative freedom for the salvation of the world. He who separates himself from the mission of God separates himself from salvation.

The salvation which Christ brought, and in which we participate, offers a comprehensive wholeness in this divided life. We understand salvation as newness of life – the unfolding of true humanity in the fullness of God (Col. 2:9). It is salvation of the soul and the body, of the individual and society, mankind and 'the groaning creation' (Rom. 8:19). As evil works both in personal life and in exploitative social structures which humiliate

humankind, so God's justice manifests itself both in the justification of the sinner and in social and political justice.

As guilt is both individual and corporate, so God's liberating power changes both persons and structures. We have to overcome the dichotomies in our thinking between soul and body, person and society, human kind and creation. Therefore we see the struggles for economic justice, political freedom and cultural renewal as elements the total liberation of the world through the mission of God. This liberation if finally fulfilled when 'death is swallowed up in victory' (1 Cor. 15:55). This comprehensive notion of salvation demands of the whole of the people of God a matching comprehensive approach to their participation in salvation.

2. Salvation and Liberation of Churches and Christians

Many Christians who for Christ's sake are involved in economic and political struggles against injustice and oppression ask themselves and the churches what it means today to be a Christian and a true church. Without the salvation of the churches from their captivity in the interests of the dominating classes, races and nations, there can be no saving church. Without liberation of the churches and Christians from their complicity with structural injustice and violence, there can be no liberating church for mankind. Every church, all Christians, face the question of whether they serve Christ and His saving work alone, or at the same time also the powers of inhumanity. 'No man can serve two masters, God and Mammon' (Matt. 6:24). We must confess our misuse of the name of Christ by the accommodation of the churches to oppressive powers, by our self-interested apathy, lovelessness and fear. We are seeking the true community of Christ which works and suffers for His Kingdom. We seek the charismatic church which activates energies for salvation (1 Cor. 12). We seek the church which initiates actions for liberation and supports the work of other liberating groups without calculating self-interest. We seek a church which is the catalyst of God's saving work in the world, a church which is not merely the refuge of the saved but a community serving the world in the love of Christ.

3. Salvation in Four Dimensions

Within the comprehensive notion of salvation, we see the saving work in four social dimensions:

a.   Salvation works in the struggle for economic justice against the exploitation of people by people.

b.   Salvation works in the struggle for human dignity against political oppression of human beings by their fellow men.

c.   Salvation works in the struggle for solidarity against the alienation of person from person.

    d.   Salvation works in the struggle of hope against despair in personal life.

In the process of salvation, we must relate these four dimensions to each other. There is no economic injustice without political freedom, no political freedom without economic justice. There is no social justice without solidarity, no solidarity without social justice. There is no justice, no human dignity, no solidarity without hope, no hope without justice, dignity and solidarity. But there are historical priorities according to which salvation is anticipated in one dimension first, be it the personal, the political or the economic dimension. These points of entry differ from situation to situation in which we work and suffer. We should know that such anticipations are not the whole of salvation, and must keep in mind the other dimensions while we work. Forgetting this denies the wholeness of salvation. Nobody can do in any particular situation everything at the same time. There are various gifts and tasks, but there is one spirit and one goal. In this sense, it can be said, for example, that salvation is the peace of the people in Vietnam, independence in Angola, justice and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, and release from the captivity of power in the North Atlantic community, or personal conversion in the release of a submerged society into hope, or of new lifestyles amidst corporate self-interest and lovelessness.

4. Means and Criteria of Saving Work

Speaking of salvation realistically, we cannot avoid the question of proper means. The means are different in the four dimensions referred to. We will produce no economic justice without participation in, and use of, economic power. We will win no political freedom without participation, and discriminating use of, political power. We cannot overcome cultural alienation without the use of cultural influence. In this framework we discussed the physical use of liberating violence against oppressive violence. The Christian tradition is ambiguous on this question because it provides no justification of violence and no rejection of political power. Jesus' commandment to love one's enemy presupposes enmity. One should not become the enemy of one's enemy, but should liberate him from his enmity (Matt. 5:43-48). This commandment warns against the brutality of violence and reckless disregard of life. But in the cases of institutionalized violence, structural injustice and legalized immorality, love also involves the right of resistance and the duty 'to repress tyranny' (Scottish Confession) with responsible choice among the possibilities we have. One then may become guilty for love's sake, but can trust in the forgiveness of

guilt. Realistic work for salvation proceeds through confrontation, but depends, everywhere and always, on reconciliation with God.[8]

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[8] *Bangkok Assembly 1973: Minutes and Report of the Assembly of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism* (Geneva: WCC, 1973), 75-78, 88-90; cit. Kinnamon and Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement*, 354-58.

MELBOURNE 1980 – GOOD NEWS FOR THE POOR

- Affirmation of the poor – the church's relation to the poor crucial for mission
- New models of mutuality and ecumenical sharing of resources
- Evangelicals critical of social concern weakening evangelism and church growth
- Renewed confidence in the church as the instrument of the mission of God

Emilio Castro opened the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism Conference at Melbourne in 1980 with the words: 'The era of world missions is over; the era of world mission is beginning.'[1] It was a captivating vision, yet there was frustration that older patterns of power and control persisted and progress with the ecumenical sharing of resources was slow. The 1970s had seen the London Missionary Society transformed into the Council for World Mission and the Paris Missionary Society transformed into Cevaa – Communauté d'Eglises en Mission – both seeking to move from a model of mission, 'from the West to the rest', to one of mutuality and mission 'from everywhere to everywhere'. Despite such inspiring initiatives, however, the mainstream of church life in many contexts appeared little concerned by the need to share resources in the interests of the one mission of God. In this context, Melbourne sought to highlight the issue of poverty and the question of what it would mean for the churches to represent good news for the poor. This was the era of Liberation Theology and the conference proved receptive to its emphases. Emilio Castro suggested that its affirmation of the poor was the 'missiological principle par excellence' and the church's relationship with the poor 'the missionary yardstick'.[2]

Whatever the merits of this attempt to retrieve biblical teaching on poverty and to think through the contemporary implications of God's bias to the poor, it created a negative reaction among Evangelicals who were now organized under the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, formed in 1974. Melbourne was criticized for having a deep passion for the poor but not for the lost, and for having more concern for the renewal of the church than with the evangelistic mobilization of congregations for mission.[3] Despite the attempts of the conference to balance the

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[1] Larsson and Castro, 'From Missions to Mission', 127.
[2] Emilio Castro, *Freedom in Mission: The Perspective of the Kingdom of God* (Geneva: WCC, 1985), 151; cit. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 435.
[3] Larsson and Castro, 'From Missions to Mission', 138-39.

proclamation of the gospel with social commitment and action, many Evangelicals were unconvinced and continued to feel that Christian witness was being diluted in the ecumenical movement by excessive preoccupation with social and political concerns. Melbourne, however, did see a renewed confidence in the church as the instrument of the mission of God after two decades when the action of God in the world had been at the centre of attention in ecumenical thinking about mission.

The Record of God's Preference

The Kingdom of God which was inaugurated in Jesus Christ brings justice, love, peace, and joy and freedom from the grasp of principalities and powers, those demonic forces which place human lives and institutions in bondage and infiltrate their very textures. God's judgement overturns the values and structures of this world. In the perspective of the kingdom, God has a preference for the poor.

Jesus announced at the beginning of His ministry, drawing upon the Word given to the prophet Isaiah, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor…' (Luke 4:18). This announcement was not new; God had shown His preference for the poor throughout the history of Israel. When Israel was a slave in Egypt, God sent Moses to lead the people out to the land which He had promised, where they established a society according to God's revelation given through Moses, a society in which all were to share equally. After they had come into the land, God required them to remember that they had once been slaves. Therefore, they should care for the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner within their gates, their debtors, their children, their servants and even their animals (Deut. 5:13-15; 15:1-18). Time and again the prophets had to remind Israel of the need to stand for the poor and oppressed and to work for God's justice.

God identified with the poor and oppressed by sending His Son to live and serve as a Galilean speaking directly to the common people; promising to bless those who met the needs of the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoner; and finally meeting death on a cross as a political offender. The good news handed on to the Church is that God's grace was in Jesus Christ, who 'though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich' (2 Cor. 8:9).

Poverty in the Scriptures is affliction, deprivation and oppression. But it can also include abundant joy and overflow in liberality (2 Cor. 8:1-2). The Gospel which has been given to the Christian Church must express this continuing concern of God for the poor to whom Jesus has granted the blessing of the kingdom. Jesus' option for the poor shows how the Kingdom of God is to be received. The poor are 'blessed' because of their longing for justice and their hope for liberation and a life of human dignity.

The Good News to the rich affirms what Jesus proclaims as the Gospel for the poor, that is, a calling to trust in God and His abundant mercy. This is a call:

- to renounce the security of wealth and material possessions which is, in fact, idolatry;
- to give up the exploiting power which is the demonic feature of wealth; and
- to turn away from indifference and enmity toward the poor and toward solidarity with the oppressed.

The coming of the kingdom as hope for the poor is thus a time of judgement for the rich. In the light of this judgement and this hope, all human beings are shown to have been made less than human. The very identification of people as either rich or poor is now seen to be a symptom of this dehumanization. The poor who are sinned against are rendered less human by being deprived. The rich are rendered less human by the sinful act of depriving others.

The judgement of God thus comes as a verdict in favour of the poor. This verdict enables the poor to struggle to overthrow the powers that bind them, which then releases the rich from the necessity to dominate. Once this has happened, it is possible for both the humbled rich and the poor to become human, capable of response to the challenge of the kingdom.

To the poor this challenge means the profound assurance that God is with them and for them. To the rich it means a profound repentance and renunciation. To all who yearn for justice and forgiveness Jesus Christ offers discipleship and the demand for service. But He offers this in the assurance of victory and in sharing the power of His risen life. As the kingdom in its fullness is solely the gift of God Himself, any human achievement in history can only be approximate and relative to the final goal – that promised new heaven and new earth in which justice abides. Yet that kingdom is the inspiration and constant challenge in all our struggles.

We wish to recommend the following to the churches:

Become *Churches in Solidarity with the Struggles of the Poor*

The poor are already in mission to change their own situation. What is required from the churches is a missionary movement that supports what they have already begun, and that focuses on building evangelizing and witnessing communities of the poor that will discover and live out expressions of faith among the masses of the poor and oppressed.

The churches will have to surrender their attitudes of benevolence and charity which have marked their relations to the poor; in many cases this will mean a radical change in the institutional life of the missionary movement. The churches must be ready to listen to the poor, to hear the Gospel from the poor, to learn about the ways in which they have helped to make them poor.

Ways of expressing this solidarity are several, but each must be fitted to the situation of the poor and respect their leadership in the work of evangelization and mission. There is the call to act in support of the struggles of the poor against oppression. This means support across national boundaries and between continents, without neglecting the struggles within their own societies. There is the call to participate in the struggle themselves. To free others of poverty and oppression is also to release the bonds that entangle the churches in the web of international exploitation. There is the call to become churches of the poor. Although not all will accept the call to strip themselves of riches, the voluntary joining of church members in the community of the poor of the earth could be the most telling witness to the Good News.

Join the Struggle against the
Powers of Exploitation and Impoverishment

Poverty, injustice and oppression do not voluntarily release their grip on the lives of the poor. Therefore, the struggle against the powers that create and maintain the present situation must be actively entered. These powers include transnational corporations, governments and the churches themselves and their missionary organisations where they have joined in exploitation and impoverishment. In increasing numbers, those who will claim the rewards that Jesus promised to those who are persecuted are those who join the struggle against these powers at the side of the poor.

Establish a New Relationship with the Poor inside the Churches

Many of the poor belong to the churches, but only the voices of a few are heard or their influence felt. The New Testament churches were taught not to be respecters of persons but many churches today have built the structures of status, class, sexual and racial division into their fellowship and organization. The churches should be open to the presence and voice of the poor in their own life. The structures of mission and church life still must be changed to patterns of partnership and servanthood. This will require a more unified mission outreach that does not perpetuate the wastefulness and confusion of denominational divisions. The lifestyles of both clergy and lay leaders need to be changed to come closer to the poor. The churches, which now exploit women and youth, will need to create opportunities for them to participate in leadership and decision-making.

Pray and Work for the Kingdom of God

When the churches emphasize their own life, their eyes are diverted from the Kingdom of God, the heart of the Lord's message and the hope of the poor. To pray for the kingdom is to concentrate the church's attention on

what God is trying to give to His whole creation. To pray for the kingdom will enable the churches to work more earnestly for its development, to look more eagerly for its signs in human history and to await more patiently its final consummation.[4]

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[4] 'Melbourne Conference Section Reports – Good News for the Poor', *International Review of Mission* (October 1980-June 1981), 69. 276-77, 388-90, 395-96; see also *Your Kingdom Come: Mission Perspectives – Report on the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, Melbourne, Australia, 12th-25th May 1980* (Geneva: WCC, 1980).

1982 MISSION AND EVANGELISM:
AN ECUMENICAL AFFIRMATION

- A convergence document – both social witness and personal conversion
- Trinitarian understanding of mission
- The Kingdom of God a key motif in interpreting mission
- Witness integral to the experience of faith itself
- Church unity urgently needed – for the sake of the credibility of Christian witness

This document emerged from an attempt to build bridges between the Ecumenical Movement and the Evangelicals during the 1970s. It was a conciliatory document designed to encompass the characteristic concerns of each side in what had been a highly divisive debate. How could the justice issues which had been so prominent in the WCC during the 1960s and 1970s be related to the traditional missionary outreach of the churches and the evangelistic task of calling people to personal faith in Jesus Christ? During the preparations for the Melbourne 1980 Conference, CWME, as its Director Emilio Castro explained, 'engaged in a long and fruitful conversation with churches of all confessions and regions, assessing the priorities for our missionary obedience today.'[1] The result was a re-balancing of the understanding of mission to complement prophetic social witness with insistence on the importance of decision and personal conversion, leading to a life of service. After the Melbourne Conference Castro wrote a first draft which was widely circulated and discussed before the draft document was ready for a first reading by the WCC Central Committee in July 1981.[2] Finally, the Affirmation was approved by the Central Committee in July 1982, the only official statement on mission and evangelism to be adopted by the WCC until *Together towards Life* in 2012.

With a Trinitarian basis and Christological concentration it sought to break down false dichotomies between the spiritual gospel and the material gospel. A clear commitment to the proclamation of the gospel was complemented by prophetic engagement with questions of social justice. Concern with social and political issues is balanced with an unequivocal affirmation of the centrality of the church in God's divine economy. 'To appreciate the value and motive of this affirmation,' suggests Lalsangkima

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[1] Emilio Castro, 'Foreword', in *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* (Geneva: WCC, 1983), v.
[2] Jean S. Stromberg, 'Ecumenical Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism – A Review', *International Review of Mission,* 90.358 (2001), 243-52, at 244.

Pachuau, 'one needs to recognize the pains of the transition, the longing for a deeper theology of mission that would provide ground for doing mission in the new age, and the efforts and difficulties involved in developing a common perception and comprehensive view of mission.'[3] Yet not all are convinced that it succeeded in its objectives. Pachuau finds it to be: '… a hodgepodge of differing ideas and emphases… While each section appears to be clear in itself, the reading of the entire document leaves the reader unclear of its message.'[4] It has also been criticised for having quite minimal statements on controversial matters, such as relationships with people of other faiths, in order to secure the widest possible agreement. Nonetheless, by incorporating the characteristic emphases of both sides, it did play a significant role in bridging the gulf which had opened up between Ecumenicals and Evangelicals during the 1970s. It has been described by Jacques Matthey as 'a genuine convergence document'.[5]

Jean Stromberg has noted four key emphases of the Affirmation: 1) It is thoroughly Trinitarian in its understanding of mission, something she attributes to the influence of Orthodox Churches but also to liberation and contextual theologies. 2) Jesus' announcement of the kingdom, or reign, of God is central to the text – fertile ground for consideration of how a passion for justice and personal conversion might be integrated. 3) Witness is understood as integral to the experience of faith itself – a mature expression of the aspiration underlying the integration of the WCC and IMC twenty years earlier, that church and mission are two aspects of the one reality. 4) The urgency of the call to conversion is linked with the urgent need for church unity. Precisely for the sake of credibility in an unbelieving world, it is urgently required that the church attain the unity for which Christ prayed.[6]

Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation

Preface

The biblical promise of a new earth and a new heaven where love, peace and justice will prevail (Ps. 85:7-13; Isa. 32:17-18, 65:17-25 and Rev. 21:1-2) invites our actions as Christians in history. The contrast of that vision with the reality of today reveals the monstrosity of human sin, the evil unleashed by the rejection of God's liberating will for humankind. Sin, alienating persons from God, neighbour and nature, is found both in individual and corporate forms, both in slavery of the

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[3] Pachuau, 'Ecumenical Missiology', 44.
[4] Pachuau, 'Ecumenical Missiology', 45.
[5] Jacques Matthey, 'Milestones in Ecumenical Missionary Thinking from the 1970s to the 1990s', in *International Review of Mission,* 88.350 (1999), 291-303, at 296.
[6] Stromberg, 'Ecumenical Affirmation', 245-46.

human will and in social, political and economic structures of domination and dependence.

The Church is sent into the world to call people and nations to repentance, to announce forgiveness of sin and a new beginning in relations with God and with neighbours through Jesus Christ. This evangelistic calling has a new urgency today.

In a world where the number of people who have no opportunity to know the story of Jesus is growing steadily, *how necessary it is to multiply the witnessing vocation of the church!*

In a world where the majority of those who do not know Jesus are the poor of the earth, those to whom He promised the Kingdom of God, *how essential it is to share with them the Good News of that kingdom!*

In a world where people are struggling for justice, freedom and liberation, often without the realization of their hopes, *how important it is to announce that God's kingdom is promised to them!*

In a world where the marginalized and the drop-outs of affluent society search desperately for comfort and identity in drugs or esoteric cults, *how imperative it is to announce that He has come so that all may have life and may have it in all its fullness (John 10:10)!*

In a world where so many find little meaning, except in the relative security of their affluence, *how necessary it is to hear once again Jesus' invitation to discipleship, service and risk!*

In a world where so many Christians are nominal in their commitment to Jesus Christ, *how necessary it is to call them again to the fervour of their first love!*

In a world where wars and rumours of wars jeopardize the present and future of humankind, where an enormous part of natural resources and people are consumed in the arms race, *how crucial it is to call the peacemakers blessed, convinced that God in Christ has broken all barriers and has reconciled the world to himself (Eph. 2:14; 2 Cor. 5:19)!*

This ecumenical affirmation is a challenge which the churches extend to each other to announce that God reigns, and that there is hope for a future when God will 'unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth' (Eph. 1:10). Jesus is 'the first and last, and the Living One' (Rev. 1:17-18), who 'is coming soon' (Rev. 22:12), who 'makes all things new' (Rev. 21:5).

The Call to Mission

1. The present ecumenical 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. 'Evangelization is the test of our ecumenical vocation.'[7]

As 'a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit',[8] the rallying point of the World Council of Churches is the common confession of Jesus Christ. The saving ministry of the Son is understood within the action of the Holy Trinity; it was the Father who in the power of the Spirit sent Jesus Christ the Son of God incarnate, the Saviour of the whole world. The churches of the WCC are on a pilgrimage towards unity under the missionary vision of John 17:21, 'that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.'[9]

2. Already in the Old Testament the people of Israel were looking forward to the day of peace where God's justice will prevail (Isa. 11:1-9). Jesus came into that tradition announcing that the Kingdom of God was at hand (Mark 1:15), that in Him the reality of the kingdom was present (Luke 4:15-21). God was offering this new justice to the children, to the poor, to all who labour and are heavy laden, to all those who will repent and will follow Jesus. The early Church confessed Jesus as Lord, as the highest authority at whose name every knee shall bow, who in the cross and in the resurrection has liberated in this world the power of sacrificial love.

3. Christ sent the disciples with the words; 'As the Father has sent me, even so I send you' (John 20:21). The disciples of Jesus were personal witnesses of the risen Christ (1 John 1:2-3). As such they were sent — commissioned apostles to the world. Based on their testimony which is preserved in the New Testament and in the life of the Church, the Church has as one constitutive mark its being apostolic, its being sent into the world (Appendix I). God in Christ has equipped the Church with all gifts of the Spirit necessary for its witness. 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8).

4. The book of Acts tells the story of the expansion of the early Church as it fulfils its missionary vocation. The Holy Spirit came upon that small Jerusalem community on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-39), in order that through them and through others who were to believe in Christ through their word (John 17:20), the world may be healed and redeemed.

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[7] Philip Potter's speech to the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops. Rome, 1974.
[8] Constitution of the World Council of Churches.
[9] Constitution of the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism.

The early Church witnessed to its Risen Lord in a variety of ways, most specially in the style of life of its members. 'And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved' (Acts 2:46-47) (Appendix 2). Through the persecutions suffered by the early Christians, the word spread spontaneously: 'Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word' (Acts 8:4). The apostles then came to confirm the faith of those who had accepted the Word of God (Acts 8:14-17). At other times, the word spread through more explicit and purposeful ministries. The church in Antioch organized the first missionary trip. Barnabas and Paul were sent by the church in response to the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-4). Time and time again, the church was surprised by God's calling to face entirely new missionary situations (Acts 8:26; 10:17; 16:9-10).

5. Jesus Christ was in Himself the complete revelation of God's love, manifested in justice and forgiveness through all aspects of His earthly life. He completed the work of the Father. 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work' (John 4:34). In His obedience to the Father's will, in His love for humanity, He used many ways to reveal God's love to the world: forgiving, healing, casting out demons, teaching, proclaiming, denouncing, testifying in courts, finally surrendering His life. The Church today has the same freedom to develop its mission, to respond to changing situations and circumstances (Appendix 3). It is sent into the world, participating in that flow of love from God the Father. In that mission of love (Matt. 22:37) through all aspects of its life, the Church endeavours to witness to the full realization of God's kingdom in Jesus Christ. The Church is called, like John the Baptist, to point towards the 'Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' (John 1:29).

The Call to Proclamation and Witness

6. The mission of the Church ensues from the nature of the Church as the Body of Christ, sharing in the ministry of Christ as Mediator between God and His Creation. This mission of mediation in Christ involves two integrally related movements – one from God to Creation, and the other from Creation to God. The Church manifests God's love for the world in Christ – through word and deed, in identification with all humanity, in loving service and joyful proclamation; the Church, in that same identification with all humanity, lifts up to God its pain and suffering, hope and aspiration, joy and thanksgiving in intercessory prayer and eucharistic worship. Any

imbalance between these two directions of the mediatory movement adversely affects our ministry and mission in the world.

Only a Church fully aware of how people in the world live and feel and think can adequately fulfil either aspect of this mediatory mission. It is at this point that the Church recognizes the validity and significance of the ministry of others to the Church, in order that the Church may better understand and be in closer solidarity with the world, knowing and sharing its pains and yearnings. Only by responding attentively to others can we remove our ignorance and misunderstanding of others, and be better able to minister to them.

At the very heart of the Church's vocation in the world is the proclamation of the Kingdom of God inaugurated in Jesus the Lord, crucified and risen. Through its internal life of eucharistic worship, thanksgiving, intercessory prayer, through planning for mission and evangelism, through a daily lifestyle of solidarity with the poor, through advocacy even to confrontation with the powers that oppress human beings, the churches are trying to fulfil this evangelistic vocation.

7. The starting point of our proclamation is Christ and Christ crucified. 'We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles' (1 Cor. 1:23). The Good News handed on to the Church is that God's grace was in Jesus Christ, who 'though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich' (2 Cor. 8:9).

Following human wisdom, the wise men from the Orient who were looking for the child went to the palace of King Herod. They did not know that 'there was no place for Him in the inn' and that He was born in a manger, poor among the poor. He even went so far in His identification with the poverty of humankind that His family was obliged to take the route of political refugee to Egypt. He was raised as a worker, came proclaiming God's caring for the poor, announced blessedness for them, sided with the underprivileged, confronted the powerful and went to the cross to open up a new life for humankind. As His disciples, we announce His solidarity with all the downtrodden and marginalized. Those who are considered to be nothing are precious in God's eyes (1 Cor. 1:26-31). **To believe in Jesus the King is to accept His undeserved grace and enter with Him into the Kingdom, taking sides with the poor struggling to overcome poverty. Both those who announce Jesus as the Servant King and those who accept this announcement and respond to it are invited to enter with Him daily in identification and participation with the poor of the earth.**

With the Apostle Paul and all Christian churches, we confess Christ Jesus, 'who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even

death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil. 2:6-11).

But Christ's identification with humanity went even more deeply, and while nailed on the cross accused as a political criminal, He took upon Himself the guilt even of those who crucified Him. 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34). The Christian confession reads, 'For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God' (2 Cor. 5:21). The cross is the place of the decisive battle between the powers of evil and the love of God. It uncovers the lostness of the world, the magnitude of human sinfulness, the tragedy of human alienation. The total self-surrendering of Christ reveals the immeasurable depth of God's love for the world (John 3:16).

On this same cross, Jesus was glorified. Here God the Father glorified the Son of Man, and in so doing confirmed Jesus as the Son of God (John 13:31). The early Christians used many analogies to describe what they had experienced and what they believed had happened. The most striking picture is that of a sacrificed lamb, slaughtered but yet living, sharing the throne, which symbolized the heart of all power and sovereignty, with the living God himself.'[10]

It is this Jesus that the Church proclaims as the very life of the world because on the cross He gave His own life for all that all may live. In Him misery, sin and death are defeated once for ever. They cannot be accepted as having final power over human life. In Him there is abundant life, life eternal. **The Church proclaims Jesus, risen from the dead. Through the resurrection, God vindicates Jesus, and opens up a new period of missionary obedience until He comes again** (Acts 1:11). The power of the risen and crucified Christ is now released. It is the new birth to a new life, because as He took our predicament on the cross, He also took us into a new life in His resurrection. 'When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come' (2 Cor. 5:17) (Appendix 4).

Evangelism calls people to look towards that Jesus and commit their life to Him, to enter into the kingdom whose king has come in the powerless child of Bethlehem, in the murdered one on the cross.

Ecumenical Convictions

9. In the ecumenical discussions and experience, churches with their diverse confessions and traditions and in their various expressions as

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[10] *Your Kingdom Come,* CWME Conference, Melbourne, 1980, 210.

parishes, monastic communities, religious orders, etc., have learned to recognize each other as participants in the one worldwide missionary movement. *Thus, together, they can affirm an ecumenical perception of Christian mission expressed in the following convictions under which they covenant to work for the Kingdom of God.*

1. Conversion

10. The proclamation of the Gospel includes an invitation to recognize and accept in a personal decision the saving lordship of Christ. It is the announcement of a personal encounter, mediated by the Holy Spirit, with the living Christ, receiving His forgiveness and making a personal acceptance of the call to discipleship and a life of service. God addresses Himself specifically to each of His children, as well as to the whole human race. **Each person is entitled to hear the Good News**. Many social forces today press for conformity and passivity. Masses of poor people have been deprived of their right to decide about their lives and the life of their society. While anonymity and marginalization seem to reduce the possibilities for personal decisions to a minimum, God as Father knows each one of His children and calls each of them to make a fundamental personal act of allegiance to Him and His kingdom in the fellowship of His people.

11. While the basic experience of conversion is the same, the awareness of an encounter with God revealed in Christ, the concrete occasion of this experience and the actual shape of the same differs in terms of our personal situation. **The calling is to specific changes, to renounce evidences of the domination of sin in our lives and to accept responsibilities in terms of God's love for our neighbour.** John the Baptist said very specifically to the soldiers what they should do; Jesus did not hesitate to indicate to the young ruler that his wealth was the obstacle to his discipleship.

Conversion happens in the midst of our historical reality and incorporates the totality of our life, because God's love is concerned with that totality. Jesus' call is an invitation to follow Him joyfully, to participate in His servant body, to share with Him in the struggle to overcome sin, poverty and death.

12. The importance of this decision is highlighted by the fact that God Himself through His Holy Spirit helps the acceptance of His offering of fellowship. The New Testament calls this a new birth (John 3:3). It is also called conversion, *metanoia*, total transformation of our attitudes and styles of life. Conversion as a dynamic and ongoing process 'involves a turning *from* and a turning *to*. It always demands reconciliation, a new relationship both with God and with others. It involves leaving our old security behind (Matt. 16:24) and putting ourselves at risk in a life of

faith'.[11] It is 'conversion *from* a life characterized by sin, separation from God, submission to evil and the unfulfilled potential of God's image, *to* a new life characterized by the forgiveness of sins, obedience to the commands of God, renewed fellowship with God in Trinity, growth in the restoration of the divine image and the realization… of the love of Christ…'[12]

The call to conversion, as a call to repentance and obedience, should also be addressed to nations, groups and families. To proclaim the need to change from war to peace, from injustice to justice, from racism to solidarity, from hate to love, is a witness rendered to Jesus Christ and to His kingdom. The prophets of the Old Testament addressed themselves constantly to the collective conscience of the people of Israel, calling the rulers and the people to repentance and to renewal of the covenant.

13. Many of those who are attracted to Christ are put off by what they see in the life of the churches as well as in individual Christians. How many of the millions of people in the world who are not confessing Jesus Christ have rejected Him because of what they saw in the lives of Christians! **Thus the call to conversion should begin with the repentance of those who do the calling, who issue the invitation.** Baptism in itself is a unique act, the covenant that Christians no longer belong to themselves but have been bought for ever with the blood of Christ and belong to God. But the experience of baptism should be constantly re-enacted by daily dying with Christ to sin, to themselves and to the world and rising again with Him into the servant body of Christ to become a blessing for the surrounding community.

The experience of conversion gives meaning to people in all stages of life, endurance to resist oppression, and assurance that even death has no final power over human life because God in Christ has already taken our life with him, a life that is 'hidden with Christ in God' (Col. 3:3).

2. The Gospel to all Realms of Life

14. In the Bible, religious life was never limited to the temple or isolated from daily life (Hos. 6:4-6; Isa. 58:6-7). The teaching of Jesus on the Kingdom of God is a clear reference to God's loving lordship over all human history. We cannot limit our witness to a supposedly private area of life. The lordship of Christ is to be proclaimed to all realms of life. In the Great Commission, Jesus said to His disciples: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore,

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[11] *Your Kingdom Come*, 196.
[12] *Confessing Christ Today*, Reports of Groups at a Consultation of Orthodox Theologians, 8.

and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age' (Matt. 28:19-20). The Good News of the kingdom is a challenge to the structures of society (Eph. 3:9-10; 6:12) as well as a call to individuals to repent. 'If salvation from sin through divine forgiveness is to be truly and fully personal, it must express itself in the renewal of these relations and structures. Such renewal is not merely a consequence but an essential element of the conversion of whole human beings.'[13]

15. 'The Evangelistic Witness is directed towards all the *ktisis* (creation) which groans and travails in search of adoption and redemption… The transfiguring power of the Holy Trinity is meant to reach into every nook and cranny of our national life… The Evangelistic Witness will also speak to the structures of this world: its economic, political and societal institutions… We must re-learn the patristic lesson that the Church is the mouth and voice of the poor and the oppressed in the presence of the powers-that-be. In our own way we must learn once again "how to speak to the ear of the King", on the people's behalf… Christ was sent for no lesser purpose than bringing the world into the life of God.'[14]

16. In the fulfilment of its vocation, the Church is called *to announce* Good News in Jesus Christ, forgiveness, hope, a new heaven and a new earth; *to denounce* powers and principalities, sin and injustice; *to console* the widows and orphans, healing, restoring the brokenhearted; and *to celebrate* life in the midst of death. In carrying out these tasks, churches may meet limitations, constraints, even persecution from prevailing powers which pretend to have final authority over the life and destiny of people.

17. In some countries there is pressure to limit religion to the private life of the believer – to assert that freedom to believe should be enough. The Christian faith challenges that assumption. The Church claims the right and the duty to exist publicly – visibly – and to address itself openly to issues of human concern. 'Confessing Christ *today* means that the Spirit makes us struggle with… sin and forgiveness, power and powerlessness, exploitation and misery, the universal search for identity, the widespread loss of Christian motivation, and the spiritual longings of those who have not heard Christ's name. It means that we are in communion with the prophets who announced God's will and promise for humankind and society, with the martyrs who sealed their confession with suffering and

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[13] *Breaking Barriers*, 233.
[14] *Confessing Christ Today*, 10, 3.

death, and also with the doubtful who can only whisper their confession of the Name.'[15]

18. The realm of science and technology deserves particular attention today. The everyday life of most children, women and men, whether rich or poor, is affected by the avalanche of scientific discoveries. Pharmaceutical science has revolutionized sexual behaviour. Increasingly sophisticated computers solve problems in seconds for which formerly a whole lifetime was needed; at the same time they become a means of invading the privacy of millions of people. Nuclear power threatens the survival of life on this planet, while at the same time it provides a new source of energy. Biological research stands at the awesome frontier of interference with the genetic code which could – for better or for worse – change the whole human species. Scientists are, therefore, seeking ethical guidance. Behind the questions as to right or wrong decisions and attitudes, however, there are ultimate theological questions: what is the meaning of human existence? the goal of history? the true reality within and beyond what can be tested and quantified empirically? The ethical questions arise out of a quest for a new worldview, a faith.

19. The biblical stories and ancient creeds do furnish precious insights for witnessing to the Gospel in the scientific world. Can theologians, however, with these insights, help scientists achieve responsible action in genetic engineering or nuclear physics? It would hardly seem possible so long as the great communication gap between these two groups persists. Those directly involved in and affected by scientific research can best discern and explicate the insights of Christian faith in terms of specific ethical positions.

Christian witness will point towards Jesus Christ in whom real humanity is revealed and who is, in God's wisdom, the centre of all creation, the 'head over all things' (Eph. 1:10; 22-23). This witness will show the glory and the humility of human stewardship on this earth.

3. The Church and its Unity in God's Mission

20. To receive the message of the Kingdom of God is to be incorporated into the body of Christ, the Church, the author and sustainer of which is the Holy Spirit (Appendix 5). The churches are to be a sign for the world. They are to intercede as He did, to serve as He did. **Thus Christian mission is the action of the body of Christ in the history of humankind – a continuation of Pentecost. Those who through conversion and baptism accept the Gospel of Jesus partake in the life of the body of Christ and participate in an historical tradition.** Sadly, there are many betrayals of this high calling in the history of the churches. Many who are attracted to the vision of the

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[15] *Breaking Barriers*, 48.

kingdom find it difficult to be attracted to the concrete reality of the Church. They are invited to join in a continual process of renewal of the churches. 'The challenge facing the churches is not that the modern world is unconcerned about their evangelistic message, but rather whether they are so renewed in their life and thought that they become a living witness to the integrity of the Gospel. The evangelizing churches need themselves to receive the Good News and to let the Holy Spirit remake their life when and how he wills'[16] (Appendix 6).

21. The celebration of the eucharist is the place for the renewal of the missionary conviction at the heart of every congregation. According to the Apostle Paul, the celebration of the eucharist is in itself a 'proclamation of the death of the Lord until he comes' (1 Cor. 11:26). 'In such ways God feeds His people as they celebrate the mystery of the Eucharist so that they may confess in word and deed that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'[17] (Appendix 7).

The eucharist is bread for a missionary people. We acknowledge with deep sorrow the fact that Christians do not join together at the Lord's table. This contradicts God's will and impoverishes the body of Christ. The credibility of our Christian witness is at stake.

22. Christians are called to work for the renewal and transformation of the churches. Today there are many signs of the work of the Holy Spirit in such a renewal. *The house gatherings of the Church in China or the Basic Ecclesial Communities in Latin America, the liturgical renewal, biblical renewal, the revival of the monastic vocation, the charismatic movement, are indications of the renewal possibilities of the Church of Jesus Christ.*

23. In the announcement to the world of the reconciliation in Jesus Christ, churches are called to unite. Faced with the challenge and threat of the world, the churches often unite to defend common positions. **But common witness should be the natural consequence of their unity with Christ in His mission.** The ecumenical experience has discovered the reality of a deep spiritual unity. The common recognition of the authority of the Bible and of the creeds of the ancient Church and a growing convergence in doctrinal affirmations should allow the churches not only to affirm together the fundamentals of the Christian faith, but also to proclaim together the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world. In solidarity, churches are helping each other in their respective witness before the world. In the same solidarity, they should share their spiritual and material resources to announce together and clearly their common hope and common calling.

24. 'Often it is socially and politically more difficult to witness together since the powers of this world promote division. In such situations

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[16] Philip Potter's Speech to the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops, Rome, 1974.
[17] *Your Kingdom Come*, 206.

common witness is particularly precious and Christ-like. Witness that dares to be common is a powerful sign of unity coming directly and visibly from Christ and a glimpse of His kingdom.'[18]

The impulse for common witness comes from the depth of our faith. 'Its urgency is underlined when we realize the seriousness of the human predicament and the tremendous task waiting for the churches at present.'[19]

25. It is at the heart of Christian mission to foster the multiplication of local congregations in every human community. The planting of the seed of the Gospel will bring forward a people gathered around the Word and sacraments and called to announce God's revealed purpose.

Thanks to the faithful witness of disciples through the ages, churches have sprung up in practically every country. **This task of sowing the seed needs to be continued until there is, in every human community, a cell of the kingdom, a church confessing Jesus Christ and in His name serving His people.** The building up of the Church in every place is essential to the Gospel. The vicarious work of Christ demands the presence of a vicarious people. A vital instrument for the fulfilment of the missionary vocation of the Church is the local congregation.

26. The planting of the Church in different cultures demands a positive attitude towards inculturation of the Gospel. Ancient churches, through centuries of intimate relations with the cultures and aspirations of their people, have proved the powerful witnessing character of this rooting of the churches in the national soil. 'Inculturation has its source and inspiration in the mystery of the Incarnation. The Word was made flesh. Here flesh means the fully concrete, human and created reality that Jesus was. Inculturation, therefore, becomes another way of describing Christian mission. If proclamation sees mission in the perspective of the Word to be proclaimed, inculturation sees mission in the perspective of the flesh, or concrete embodiment, which the Word assumes in a particular individual, community, institution or culture.'[20]

Inculturation should not be understood merely as intellectual research; it occurs when Christians express their faith in the symbols and images of their respective cultures. *The best way to stimulate the process of inculturation is to participate in the struggle of the less privileged for their liberation. Solidarity is the best teacher of common cultural values.*

27. This growing cultural diversity could create some difficulties. In our attempt to express the catholicity of the Church we may lose the sense

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[18] *Common Witness*, 28.
[19] *Common Witness*, 28.
[20] *SEDOS Bulletin,* 81.7.

of its unity. **But the unity we look for is not uniformity but the multiple expression of a common faith and a common mission.**

'We have found this confession of Christ out of our various cultural contexts to be not only a mutually inspiring, but also a mutually corrective exchange. Without this sharing, our individual affirmations would gradually become poorer and narrower. We need each other to regain the lost dimensions of confessing Christ and to discover dimensions unknown to us before. Sharing in this way, we are all changed and our cultures are transformed.'[21]

The vision of nations coming from the East, the West, the North and the South to sit at the final banquet of the kingdom should always be before us in our missionary endeavour.

4. Mission in Christ's Way

'As the Father has sent me, even so I send you' (John 20: 21). The self-emptying of the servant who lived among the people, sharing in their hopes and sufferings, giving His life on the cross for all humanity – this was Christ's way of proclaiming the Good News, and as disciples we are summoned to follow the same way. 'A servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him' (John 13:16).

Our obedience in mission should be patterned on the ministry and teaching of Jesus. He gave His love and His time to all people. He praised the widow who gave her last coin to the temple; He received Nicodemus during the night; He called Matthew to the apostolate; He visited Zacchaeus in his home; He gave Himself in a special way to the poor, consoling, affirming and challenging them. He spent long hours in prayer and lived in dependence on and willing obedience to God's will.

An imperialistic crusader's spirit was foreign to Him. **Churches are free to choose the ways they consider best to announce the Gospel to different people in different circumstances. But these options are never neutral. Every methodology illustrates or betrays the Gospel we announce. In all communications of the Gospel, power must be subordinate to love.**

29. Our societies are undergoing a significant and rapid change under the impact of new communication technologies and their applications. We are entering the age of the information society, characterized by an ever-increasing media presence in all relationships, both interpersonal and intersocial. Christians need to rethink critically their responsibility for all communication processes and redefine the values of Christian communications. In the use of all new media options, the communicating church must ensure that these instruments of

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[21] *Breaking Barriers*, 46.

communication are not masters, but servants in the proclaiming of the Kingdom of God and its values. As servants, the new media options, kept within their own limits, will help to liberate societies from communication bondage and will place tools in the hands of communities for witnessing to Jesus Christ.

30. Evangelism happens in terms of interpersonal relations when the Holy Spirit quickens to faith. Through sharing the pains and joys of life, identifying with people, the Gospel is understood and communicated.

Often, the primary confessors are precisely the non-publicized, unsensational people who gather together steadfastly in small caring communities, whose life prompts the question: 'What is the source of the meaning of your life? What is the power of your powerlessness?', giving the occasion to name THE NAME. Shared experiences reveal how often Christ is confessed in the very silence of a prison cell or of a restricted but serving, waiting, praying church.

Mission calls for a serving church in every land, a church which is willing to be marked with the stigmata (nailmarks) of the crucified and risen Lord. In this way the church will show that it belongs to that movement of God's love shown in Christ who went to the periphery of life. Dying outside the gates of the city (Heb. 13:12), He is the high priest offering Himself for the salvation of the world. Outside the city gates the message of a self-giving, sharing love is truly proclaimed; here the Church renews its vocation to be the body of Christ in joyful fellowship with its risen Lord (1 John 3:16).

5. Good News to the Poor

31. There is a new awareness of the growing gap between wealth and poverty among the nations and inside each nation. It is a cruel reality that the number of people who do not reach the material level for a normal human life is growing steadily. An increasing number of people find themselves marginalized, second-class citizens unable to control their own destiny and unable to understand what is happening around them. Racism, powerlessness, solitude, breaking of family and community ties are new evidences of the marginalization that comes under the category of poverty.

32. **There is also a tragic coincidence that most of the world's poor have not heard the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; or they could not receive it, because it was not recognized as Good News in the way in which it was brought. This is a double injustice: they are victims of the oppression of an unjust economic order or an unjust political distribution of power, and at the same time they are deprived of the knowledge of God's special care for them. To announce the Good News to the poor is to begin to render the justice due to them. The Church of Jesus Christ is called to preach the**

Good News to the poor following the example of its Lord who was incarnated as poor, who lived as one among them and gave to them the promise of the Kingdom of God. Jesus looked at the multitudes with compassion. He recognized the poor as those who were sinned against, victims of both personal and structural sin.

Out of this deep awareness came both His solidarity and His calling to them (Matt. 11: 28). His calling was a personalized one. He invited them to come to Him, to receive forgiveness of sins and to assume a task. He called them to follow Him, because His love incorporated His respect for them as people created by God with freedom to respond. He called them to exercise this responsibility towards God, neighbours and their own lives. **The proclamation of the Gospel among the poor is a sign of the Messianic kingdom and a priority criterion by which to judge the validity of our missionary engagement today** (Appendix 8).

33. This new awareness is an invitation to rethink priorities and lifestyles both in the local church and in the worldwide missionary endeavour. Of course, churches and Christians find themselves in very different contexts: some in very wealthy settings where the experience of poverty as it is known to millions in the world today is practically unknown, or in egalitarian societies where the basic needs of life seem to be assured for almost everybody, to situations of extreme poverty. **But the consciousness of the global nature of poverty and exploitation in the world today, the knowledge of the interdependence between nations and the understanding of the international missionary responsibility of the Church – all invite, in fact oblige, every church and every Christian to think of ways and means to share the Good News with the poor of today.** An objective look at the life of every society, even the most affluent and those which are, theoretically, more just, will show the reality of the poor today in the marginalized, the drop-outs who cannot cope with modern society, the prisoners of conscience, the dissidents. All of them are waiting for a cup of cold water or for a visit in the name of Christ. **Churches are learning afresh through the poor of the earth to overcome the old dichotomies between evangelism and social action. The 'spiritual Gospel' and 'material Gospel' were in Jesus one Gospel.**

34. **There is no evangelism without solidarity; there is no Christian solidarity that does not involve sharing the knowledge of the kingdom which is God's promise to the poor of the earth. There is here a double credibility test: 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; but Christian participation in the struggles for justice which does not point towards the promises of the kingdom also makes a caricature of a Christian understanding of justice.**

A growing consensus among Christians today speaks of God's preferential option for the poor.[22] We have there a valid yardstick to apply to our lives as individual Christians, local congregations and as missionary people of God in the world.

35. This concentration point, God's preferential option for the poor, raises the question of the Gospel for all those who objectively are not poor or do not consider themselves as such. It is a clear Christian conviction that God wants all human beings to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, but we know that. while God's purpose is for the salvation of all, He has worked historically through the people of Israel and through the incarnation of His own son Jesus Christ. While His purpose is universal, His action is always particular. What we are learning anew today is that God works through the downtrodden, the persecuted, the poor of the earth. And from there, He is calling all humanity to follow Him. 'If any one would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me' (Matt. 16: 24).

For all of us, the invitation is clear: to follow Jesus in identification and sharing with the weak, marginalized and poor of the world, because in them we encounter Him. Knowing from the Gospel and from historical experience that to be rich is to risk forfeiting the kingdom, and knowing how close the links are, in today's world, between the abundance of some and the needs of others, Christians are challenged to follow Him, surrendering all they are and have to the kingdom, to a struggle that commits us against all injustice, against all want. The preferential option for the poor, instead of discriminating against all other human beings, is, on the contrary, a guideline for the priorities and behaviour of all Christians everywhere, pointing to the values around which we should organize our lives and the struggle into which we should put our energy.

36. There is a long experience in the Church of voluntary poverty, people who in obedience to their Christian calling cast aside all their belongings, make their own the fate of the poor of the earth, becoming one of them and living among them. Voluntary poverty has always been recognized as a source of spiritual inspiration, of insight into the heart of the Gospel.

Today we are gratefully surprised, as churches are growing among the poor of the earth, by the insight and perspective of the Gospel coming from the communities of the poor. They are discovering dimensions of the Gospel which have long been forgotten by the Church. The poor of the earth are reading reality from the other side, from the side of those who do not get the attention of the history books written by the conquerors, but who surely get God's attention in the book of life. Living with the poor

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[22] Catholic Bishops Conference, Puebla, 1979, para 1134.

and understanding the Bible from their perspective helps to discover the particular caring with which God both in the Old and in the New Testament thinks of the marginalized, the downtrodden and the deprived. We realize that the poor to whom Jesus promised the Kingdom of God are blessed in their longing for justice and in their hope for liberation. They are both subjects and bearers of the Good News; they have the right and the duty to announce the Gospel not only among themselves, but also to all other sectors of the human family.

Churches of the poor are spreading the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ in almost every corner of the earth. The richness and freshness of their experience is an inspiration and blessing to churches with a centuries-old history. The centres of the missionary expansion of the Church are moving from the North to the South. **God is working through the poor of the earth to awaken the consciousness of humanity to His call for repentance, for justice and for love.**

6. Mission in and to Six Continents

37. **Everywhere the churches are in missionary situations.** Even in countries where the churches have been active for centuries we see life organized today without reference to Christian values, a growth of secularism understood as the absence of any final meaning. The churches have lost vital contact with the workers and the youth and many others. This situation is so urgent that it commands priority attention of the ecumenical movement. The movement of migrants and political refugees brings the missionary frontier to the doorstep of every parish. **The Christian affirmations on the worldwide missionary responsibility of the Church will be credible if they are authenticated by a serious missionary engagement at home.**

As the world becomes smaller, it is possible even for Christians living far away to be aware of and inspired by faithful missionary engagement in a local situation. Of special importance today is the expression of solidarity among the churches crossing political frontiers and the symbolic actions of obedience of one part of the body of Christ that enhance the missionary work of other sectors of the Church. So, for example, while programmes related to the elimination of racism may be seen as problems for some churches, such programmes have become, for other churches, a sign of solidarity, an opportunity for witness and a test of Christian authenticity.

Every local congregation needs the awareness of its catholicity which comes from its participation in the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ in other parts of the world. Through its witnessing stance in its own situation, its prayers of intercession for churches in other parts of the world, and its sharing of persons and resources, it participates fully in the world mission of the Christian Church.

38. This concern for mission everywhere has been tested with the call for a moratorium, a halt – at least for a time – to sending and receiving missionaries and resources across national boundaries, in order to encourage the recovery and affirmation of the identity of every church, the concentration on mission in its own place and the freedom to reconsider traditional relations. The *Lausanne Covenant* noted that 'the reduction of foreign missionaries and money in an evangelized country may sometimes be necessary to facilitate the national church's growth and self-reliance and to release resources for unevangelized areas'.[23] Moratorium does not mean the end of the missionary vocation nor of the duty to provide resources for missionary work, but it does mean freedom to reconsider present engagements and to see whether a continuation of what we have been doing for so long is the right style of mission in our day.

Moratorium has to be understood *inside* a concern for world mission. **It is faithfulness of commitment to Christ in each national situation which makes missionary concern in other parts of the world authentic. There can never be a moratorium of mission, but it will always be possible, and sometimes necessary, to have a moratorium for the sake of better mission.**

39. The story of the churches from their earliest years is the story of faithfulness in their respective localities, but also the story of the carrying of the Gospel across national and continental boundaries: first from Jerusalem to Judaea and Samaria, then to Asia Minor, Africa and Europe, and now to the ends of the earth. Christians today are the heirs of a long history of those who left their home countries and churches, apostles, monastics, pilgrims, missionaries, emigrants, to work in the name of Jesus Christ, serving and preaching where the Gospel had not yet been heard or received. With the European colonization of most of the world and later on with the expansion of the colonial and neo-colonial presence of the western powers, the churches which had their bases mainly in the West have expanded their missionary service to all corners of the earth.

Surely, many ambiguities have accompanied this development and are present even today, not least the sin of proselytism among other Christian confessions. Churches and missionary organizations are analysing the experience of these past centuries in order to correct their ways, precisely with the help of the new churches which have come into being in those countries. **The history of the Church, the missionary people of God, needs to continue. Each local parish, each Christian, must be challenged to assume responsibility in the total mission of the Church. There will always be need for those who have the calling and**

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[23] *Lausanne Covenant*, No. 9.

the gift to cross frontiers, to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to serve in His name (Appendix 9).

40. Out of this sense of being the whole Church in mission, we recognize the specific calling to individuals or communities to commit themselves full-time to the service of the church, crossing cultural and national frontiers. **The churches should not allow this specialized calling of the few to be an alibi for the whole Church, but rather it should be a symbolic concentration of the missionary vocation of the whole Church.** Looking at the question of people in mission today, 'We perceive a change in the direction of mission, arising from our understanding of the Christ who is the centre and who is always in movement towards the periphery. While not in any way denying the continuing significance and necessity of a mutuality between the churches in the northern and southern hemispheres, we believe that we can discern a development whereby mission in the eighties may increasingly take place within these zones. We feel there will be increasing traffic between the churches of Asia, Africa and Latin America among whose numbers both rich and poor are counted. This development, we expect, will take the form of ever stronger initiatives from the churches of the poor and oppressed at the peripheries. Similarly among the industrialized countries, a new reciprocity, particularly one stemming from the marginalized groups, may lead to sharing at the peripheries of the richer societies. While resources may still flow from financially richer to poorer churches, and while it is not our intention to encourage isolationism, we feel that a benefit of this new reality could well be the loosening of the bond of domination and dependence that still so scandalously characterizes the relationship between many churches of the northern and southern hemispheres respectively.'[24]

7. *Witness among People of Living Faiths*

41. Christians owe the message of God's salvation in Jesus Christ to every person and to every people. Christians make their witness in the context of neighbours who live by other religious convictions and ideological persuasions. **True witness follows Jesus Christ in respecting and affirming the uniqueness and freedom of others.** We confess as Christians that we have often looked for the worst in others and have passed negative judgement upon other religions. We hope as Christians to be learning to witness to our neighbours in a humble, repentant and joyful spirit (Appendix 10).

42. **The Word is at work in every human life. In Jesus of Nazareth the Word became a human being. The wonder of His**

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[24] *Your Kingdom Come*, 220-21.

ministry of love persuades Christians to testify to people of every religious and non-religious persuasion of this decisive presence of God in Christ. In Him is our salvation. Among Christians there are still differences of understanding as to how this salvation in Christ is available to people of diverse religious persuasions. But all agree that witness should be rendered to all.

43. Such an attitude springs from the assurance that God is the creator of the whole universe and that He has not left Himself without witness at any time or any place. **The Spirit of God is constantly at work in ways that pass human understanding and in places that to us are least expected. In entering into a relationship of dialogue with others, therefore, Christians seek to discern the unsearchable riches of God and the way He deals with humanity.** For Christians who come from cultures shaped by another faith, an even more intimate interior dialogue takes place as they seek to establish the connection in their lives between their cultural heritage and the deep convictions of their Christian faith.

44. Christians should use every opportunity to join hands with their neighbours, to work together to be communities of freedom, peace and mutual respect. In some places, state legislation hinders the freedom of conscience and the real exercise of religious freedom. Christian churches as well as communities of other faiths cannot be faithful to their vocation without the freedom and right to maintain their institutional form and confessional identity in a society and to transmit their faith from one generation to another. In those difficult situations, Christians should find a way, along with others, to enter into dialogue with the civil authorities in order to reach a common definition of religious freedom. With that freedom comes the responsibility to defend through common actions all human rights in those societies (Appendix 11).

45. **Life with people of other faiths and ideologies is an encounter of commitments. Witness cannot be a one-way process, but of necessity is two-way; in it Christians become aware of some of the deepest convictions of their neighbours. It is also the time in which, within a spirit of openness and trust, Christians are able to bear authentic witness, giving an account of their commitment to the Christ, who calls all persons to Himself.**

Looking Towards the Future

46. Whether among the secularized masses of industrial societies, the emerging new ideologies around 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.

47. The missionary vocation of the Church and its evangelistic calling will not resist the confrontation with the hard realities of daily life if it is not sustained by faith, *a faith supported by prayer, contemplation and adoration.* 'Gathering and dispersing, receiving and giving, praise and work, prayer and struggle – this is the true rhythm of Christian engagement in the world.'[25] Christians must bring their hearts, minds and wills to the altar of God, knowing that from worship comes wisdom, from prayer comes strength, and from fellowship comes endurance. 'To be incorporated into Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit is the greatest blessing of the kingdom, and the only abiding ground of our missionary activity in the world.'[26] The same Lord who sends His people to cross all frontiers and to enter into the most unknown territories in His name, is the one who assures: 'I am with you always, to the close of the age.'

Appendices

1. Now, the Gospel was given to the Apostles for us by the Lord Jesus Christ: and Jesus the Christ was sent from God. That is to say, Christ received His commission from God, and the Apostles theirs from Christ. The order of these two events was in accordance with the will of God. So thereafter, when the Apostles had been given their instructions, and all their doubts had been set at rest by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, they set out in the full assurance of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom. And as they went through the territories and townships preaching, they appointed their first converts-after testing them by the Spirit – to be bishops and deacons for the believers of the future.

(Clement of Rome, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 42, p. 45)

2. The difference between Christians and the rest of mankind is not a matter of nationality, or language, or customs. Christians do not live apart in separate cities of their own, speak any special dialect, nor practise any eccentric way of life. The doctrine they profess is not the invention of busy human minds and brains, nor are they, like some, adherents of this or that school of human thought. They pass their lives in whatever township – Greek or foreign – each man's lot has determined, and conform to ordinary local usage in their clothing, diet and other habits. Nevertheless, the organization of their community does exhibit some features that are remarkable, and even surprising. For instance, though

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[25] *Your Kingdom Come*, 205.
[26] *Your Kingdom Come*, 204.

they are residents at home in their own countries, their behaviour there is more like that of transients: they take their full part as citizens, but they also submit to anything and everything as if they were aliens. For them, any foreign country is a motherland, and any motherland is a foreign country. Like other men, they marry and beget children, though they do not expose their infants. Any Christian is free to share his neighbour's table, but never his marriage bed. Though destiny has placed them here in the flesh, they do not live after the flesh: their days are passed on the earth, but their citizenship is above in the heavens. They obey the prescribed laws, but in their own private lives they transcend the laws. They show love to all men – and all men persecute them. They are misunderstood and condemned; yet by suffering death they are quickened into life. They are poor, yet making many rich; lacking all things, yet having all things in abundance. They are dishonoured, yet made glorious in their very dishonour; slandered, yet vindicated. They repay calumny with blessings, and abuse with courtesy. For the good they do, they suffer stripes as evil-doers: and under the strokes they rejoice like men given new life. Jews assail them as heretics, and Greeks harass them with persecutions: and yet of all their ill-wishers there is not one who can produce good grounds for his hostility.

To put it briefly, the relation of Christians to the world is that of a soul to the body . . .

(*The Epistle to Diognetus*, points 5 and 6)

3. There is no single way to witness to Jesus Christ. The Church has borne witness in different times and places in different ways. This is important. There are occasions when dynamic action in society is called for: there are others when a word must be spoken: others when the behaviour of Christians one to another is the telling witness. On still other occasions the simple presence of a worshipping community or man is the witness. These different dimensions of witness to the one Lord are always a matter of concrete obedience. To take them in isolation from one another is to distort the Gospel. They are inextricably bound together, and together give the true dimensions of evangelism. The important thing is that God's redeeming Word be proclaimed and heard.

(*Theological Reflection on the Work of Evangelism*, 1959)

4. Through Christ, men and women are liberated and empowered with all their energies and possibilities to participate in His Messianic work. Through His death on the Cross and His resurrection from the dead hope of salvation becomes realistic and reality hopeful. He liberates from the prison of guilt. He takes the inevitability out of history. In Him the Kingdom of God and of free people is at hand. Faith in Christ releases in man creative freedom for the salvation of the world. He who separates himself from the mission of God separates himself from salvation.

(*Bangkok Assembly*, 1973, p. 88)

5. Those who take part in the life of Christ and confess Him as Lord and Saviour, Liberator and Unifier, are gathered in a community of which the author and sustainer is the Holy Spirit. This communion of the Spirit finds its primary aim and ultimate purpose in the eucharistic celebration and the glorification of the Triune God. The doxology is the supreme confession which transcends all our divisions.

(*Breaking Barriers*, p. 48)

6. As Monseigneur Etchegaray said to the Synod a few days ago: 'A church which is being renewed in order more effectively to evangelize is a church which is itself willing to be evangelized… We lack not so much the words to say to people as credible persons to say the Word.' ('Une eglise qui se renouvelle pour mieux evangeliser est une eglise qui accepte d'être evangelisée elle-même… Il nous manque moins de paroles à dire aux hommes que d'hommes credibles pour dire la parole.')

(Philip Potter's speech to the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops, Rome, 1974)

7. There are times and places where the very act of coming together to celebrate the Eucharist can be a public witness. In certain states, Christians may be discouraged from attending such worship or being penalized for it. We hear of those who come together at great risk, and whose courage reveals to those around them how precious is this sacrament. In other situations the Eucharist may be an open-air witness so planned that many may see it. Such a joyful celebration as this may offer fresh hope in cynical, secular societies. There is, at the Lord's table, a vision of God which draws the human heart to the Lord… Each Christian minister and congregation has to seek this understanding, and we can only give some indications: where a people is being harshly oppressed, the Eucharist speaks of the exodus or deliverance from bondage. Where Christians are rejected or imprisoned for their faith, the bread and wine become the life of the Lord who was rejected by men but has become 'the chief stone of the corner'. Where the church sees a diminishing membership and its budgets are depressing, the Eucharist declares that there are no limits to God's giving and no end to hope in Him. Where discrimination by race, sex or class is a danger for the community, the Eucharist enables people of all sorts to partake of the one food and to be made one people. Where people are affluent and at ease with life, the Eucharist says, 'As Christ shares his life, share what you have with the hungry.' Where a congregation is isolated by politics or war or geography, the Eucharist unites us with all God's people in all places and all ages. Where a sister or brother is near death, the Eucharist becomes a doorway into the kingdom of our loving Father.

(*Your Kingdom Come*, pp. 205-06)

8. The proclamation of the Gospel to the poor is a sign of the new age inaugurated by Jesus Christ. As witnessed in the Scriptures, the

situation of the poor, and what the Holy Spirit can do among them, is a wonderful locus for the manifestation of God's love and power. This implies that evangelization to the poor, with the poor, for and by the poor, must be considered one of the churches' highest priorities.

(*Towards a Church in Solidarity with the Poor*, p. 26)

9. The proclamation of the Good News is a continual necessity and all people, believers and unbelievers, are challenged to hear and respond since conversion is never finished. We acknowledge and gladly accept our special obligation to those who have never heard the Good News of the kingdom. New frontiers are continually being discovered. Jesus our Lord is always ahead of us and draws us to follow Him, often in unexpected ways. The Christian community is a community on the way, making its proclamation, both to itself and to those beyond its fellowship, even as it shows forth its other marks 'on the way'.

(*Your Kingdom Come*, p. 195)

10. Christians engaged in faithful 'dialogue in community' with people of other faiths and ideologies cannot avoid asking themselves penetrating questions about the place of these people in the activity of God in history. They ask these questions not in theory, but in terms of what God may be doing in the lives of hundreds of millions of men and women who live in and seek community together with Christians, but along different ways. So dialogue should proceed in terms of people of other faiths and ideologies rather than of theoretical, impersonal systems. This is not to deny the importance of religious traditions and their interrelationships but it is vital to examine how faiths and ideologies have given direction to the daily living of individuals and groups and actually affect dialogue on both sides.

Approaching the theological questions in this spirit Christians should proceed…

- with repentance, because they know how easily they misconstrue God's revelation in Jesus Christ, betraying it in their actions and posturing as the owners of God's truth rather than, as in fact they are, the undeserving recipients of grace;

- with humility, because they so often perceive in people of other faiths and ideologies a spirituality, dedication, compassion and a wisdom which should forbid them making judgements about others as though from a position of superiority; in particular they should avoid using ideas such as 'anonymous Christians', 'the Christian presence', 'the unknown Christ', in ways not intended by those who proposed them for theological purposes or in ways prejudicial to the self-understanding of Christians and others;

- with joy, because it is not themselves they preach; it is Jesus Christ, perceived by many people of living faiths and ideologies as prophet, holy one, teacher, example;

- but confessed by Christians as Lord and Saviour, Himself the faithful witness and the coming one (Rev. 1:5-7);
- with integrity, because they do not enter into dialogue with others except in this penitent and humble joyfulness in the Lord Jesus Christ, making clear to others their own experience and witness, even as they seek to hear from others their expressions of deepest conviction and insight. All these would mean an openness and exposure, the capacity to be wounded which we see in the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and which we sum up in the word 'vulnerability'. (*Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies,* pp. 11-12)

11. The attitude of the churches to the ongoing revivals or reassertions of institutional religions will have to vary according to the specific situation. In some countries the situation of the churches has become extremely difficult, particularly where the revival has led to erosion of civil liberties including, in some cases, the freedom of religion.

- The prayer of the worldwide church must be that the Christians in those situations may find strength in the Holy Spirit to witness for the Kingdom of God in humility and endurance, that oppression can be met with love and that God may use their sufferings to bring about a renewal of their own Christian faith.
- We express our solidarity with them as with all oppressed people.
- In all situations of religious conflicts the churches are called upon to help their individual members to re-examine their own basic loyalties and to understand better their neighbours of other faiths. On all accounts, the churches must try to find meeting points in their contexts for dialogue and co-operation with people of other faiths. The above-mentioned criteria as well as the common cultural heritage and a commitment to national unity and development could be the starting points for a mutual witness in dialogue. This presupposes a mind of openness, respect and truthfulness in the churches and among their members towards neighbours of other faiths, but also courage to give an account of the hope we have in Jesus Christ as our Lord.
- As has been pointed out in the Guidelines on Dialogue, received by the Central Committee of the WCC, Jamaica 1979, a dialogical approach to neighbours of other faiths and convictions is not in contradiction with mission. Our mission to witness to Jesus Christ can never be given up. The proclamation of the Gospel to the whole world remains an urgent obligation for all Christians and it should be carried out in the spirit of our Lord, not in a crusading and aggressive spirit.
- 'Let us behave wisely towards those outside our number; let us use the opportunity to the full. Let our conversation be always

full of grace and never insipid; let us study how best to talk with each person we meet' (Col. 4:5-6). (*Your Kingdom Come,* pp. 187-188)

SAN ANTONIO 1989 – MISSION IN CHRIST'S WAY

- God's unconditional will to gather up and renew all things in Christ
- Present pain and struggle of people on the periphery
- The Church as a sign and foretaste of God's purpose for all creation
- Creative tension between confidence in Christ and respect for other faiths
- Attempts to build better relationships with Evangelicals

The CWME conference held at San Antonio in Texas, USA, in 1989 attempted to recognise tensions in the understanding and practice of mission and to take these forward in a way of life and a form of action which were true to the incarnation of Christ. It attempted to bring together the advocates of differing approaches to mission in an active commitment to follow Christ. 'Creative tension' was a key phrase. The conference theme was: 'Your will be done: mission in Christ's way'.

Christopher Duraisingh suggested that three 'concentration points' can be discerned in the proceedings of the conference. 'They are God's unconditional will to gather up and renew all things in Christ, the present pain and struggle of people at the periphery and the provisional experience of the church as a sign and foretaste of God's purpose for all creation.'[1] The conference has also been remembered for its formulation of an understanding of the relationship of Christianity with other faiths, a perennial theme in ecumenical mission conferences. In an oft-quoted sentence it stated: '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.'[2] It acknowledged that there was a tension built into this understanding but argued that it is a tension to be respected rather than resolved.

At the same time as the WCC conference convened in San Antonio, Evangelicals gathered in Manila for 'Lausanne II'. The division in the Protestant missionary movement was plain to see. However, significant attempts at bridge-building were taking place and there were voices at San Antonio urging that in future parallel conferences on the same site be arranged.[3] A letter to this effect was signed by 160 Evangelical delegates at San Antonio, a harbinger of rapprochement.

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[1] Christopher Duraisingh, 'Editorial', in *International Review of Mission,* 89.313 (1990), 3.
[2] Frederick R. Wilson (ed), *The San Antonio Report. Your Will be Done: Mission in Christ's Way* (Geneva: WCC, 1990), 32.
[3] See Yates, *Christian Mission*, 226.

Message of the Conference

In the name of the Triune God,
  Creator of heaven and earth
  Saviour and Comforter,
people gathered from all parts of the world
  in San Antonio, Texas, USA,
as a Conference on World Mission and Evangelism
  of the World Council of Churches,
under the theme: YOUR WILL BE DONE – MISSION IN CHRIST'S WAY.
The two most significant trends of this conference were
the spirit of universality (catholicity) of the gathering,
and its concern for the fullness of the gospel, namely:
to hold in creative tension
  spiritual and material needs
  prayer and action
  evangelism and social responsibility
  dialogue and witness
  power and vulnerability
  local and universal.
Mirror of that diversity,
San Antonio is a multicultural city
where many strands meet, clash and intermingle:
  Hispanic, Anglo-Saxon, black, indigenous peoples, others.
In this context, the gathered people looked ahead to 1992,
the five hundredth anniversary of the conquest of the Americas,
a time when the gospel message was brought to these lands
  under the auspices of colonial powers,
which often distorted Christian love with violence and oppression.
The heirs and survivors of the indigenous people recall this date with bitterness.
This past cannot be undone, but
reparation must be done to redeem the future,
and the hands of all people must join
  to weave a new world community.
Concerned with the discernment of the will of God in today's world,
the representatives of the churches gathered in San Antonio,
and spoke about shared signs of hope and renewal.
They celebrated the new opportunity
  for religious expression in many socialist countries.
They realized that the Holy Spirit,
  Spirit of truth, freedom, communion and justice,
is at work today in different parts of the world.
Communities, and even entire nations, in unexpected ways,
are involved in self-examination, repentance, renewal

and struggle for justice,
turning to the Living God,
stressing the infinite value of human dignity,
and turning to one another to make peace.
For all this,
we rejoice in the Spirit;
we thank the living God,
and in these signs we hear a new call to faith
    And see a new challenge for mission and evangelism.
At the same time,
Christ is still suffering in many parts of the world,
and is waiting for our concrete response:
solidarity and action.
We have heard many voices of anguish and pain:
    voices of poor and oppressed peoples,
    voices of women who suffer discrimination,
    voices of youth challenging injustice in church and society,
    voices of children who suffer innocently in body, mind and spirit,
    voices of victims of foreign intervention and militarism,
    voices of those who are discriminated against and violated because of
race,
    voices of those who are being destroyed by nuclear abuse,
    voices of people suffocating under the burden of external debt,
    voices of indigenous peoples yearning for self-determination,
    voices of refugees and displaced persons,
    voices of hunger for food and for meaning in life,
    voices of anger at blatant violation of human rights,
    voices of longing for liberation and justice,
    voices of solidarity in the quest for a new human community.
We also heard of the voiceless suffering of religious communities
    whose right to exist is denied constitutionally, as is the case in Albania.
In the study of Holy Scripture,
    in worship and prayer,
    in self-examination and penitence,
we have sensed anew
    the urgent voice of God calling us to love mercy
            to act justly
            and to walk humbly with our God.
This is a time for repentance,
    to make reparation
    to turn to the living God.
Judgement begins in the household of God.
In faithfulness to God's will,
it is time for a new commitment to a Mission in Christ's Way,
and prayer, witness and action,

in the power of the Holy Spirit.
God calls us, Christians everywhere, to join in:
 proclaiming the Good News of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ;
 acting in solidarity with those who suffer and struggle for justice and
human dignity;
 sharing justly the earth's resources;
 bearing witness to the gospel through renewed communities in mission.
To those who hear or experience a twisted or partial gospel,
 or no gospel at all:
Mission in Christ's Way calls us by deed and word
to share the wholeness of the gospel,
 the love of God revealed in the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ.
To churches and nations where divisions, barriers and enmities prevail:
 Mission in Christ's Way calls us to strive
 for unity with justice as a basis for effective mission.
To peoples of wonderfully diverse cultures across the earth:
 Mission in Christ's Way calls us to extend understanding and respect,
 relating the gospel of Christ to these cultures with sensitivity.
To persons of other religious faiths of the world:
 Mission in Christ's Way calls us to listen to and respect their beliefs,
 witness our faith to them in word and deed,
 seek with them for peace and justice.
To young people and all those resisting injustice and war,
 facing repression and death:
 Mission in Christ's Way calls us to solidarity in the struggle for life,
 turning hopelessness into strength.
To those whose land and livelihood are taken away, despoiled or polluted:
 Mission in Christ's Way calls us to resist all that violates human rights,
 that basic justice may extend to all.
To those who suffer and whose life is threatened, exploited, shattered or
oppressed:
 Mission in Christ's Way calls us to commit all in our power
 to defend life in all its fullness
 and self-determination for every human being, community and nation.
Proclamation of the kingdom,
 of hope for the whole creation
 of a Mission in Christ's Way,
is not just an affirmation,
but a way of life.
We are called to concrete acts of faithfulness,
 a living expression of the prayer that Christ has taught us:
   'YOUR WILL BE DONE'

Witness among People of Other Living Faiths

25. In reaffirming the 'evangelistic mandate' of the ecumenical movement, we would like to emphasize that we may never claim to have a full understanding of God's truth: we are only the recipients of God's grace. Our ministry of witness among people of other faiths presupposes our *presence* with them, *sensitivity* to their deepest faith commitments and experiences, *willingness* to be their servants for Christ's sake, *affirmation* of what God has done and is doing among them, and *love* for them. Since God's mystery in Christ surpasses our understanding and since our knowledge of God's saving power is imperfect, we Christians are called to be *witnesses* to others, not judges of them. We also affirm that it is possible to be non-aggressive and missionary at the same time – that it is, in fact, the only way to be truly missionary.

26. 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. At times the debate about salvation focuses itself only on the fate of the individual soul in the hereafter, whereas the will of God is life in its fullness even here and now. We therefore state: (a) that our witness to others concerning salvation in Christ springs from the fact that we have encountered Him as Lord and Saviour and are hence urged to share this with others; and (b) that in calling people to faith in Christ, we are not only offering personal salvation but also calling them to follow Jesus in the service of God's reign.

27. We have paid attention to the complex debate about the relationship between *witness* and *dialogue*. We recognize that both witness and dialogue presuppose two-way relationships. We affirm that witness does not preclude dialogue but invites it, and that dialogue does not preclude witness but extends and deepens it.

28. Dialogue has its own place and integrity and is neither opposed to nor incompatible with witness or proclamation. We do not water down our own commitment if we engage in dialogue; as a matter of fact, dialogue between people of different faiths is spurious unless it proceeds from the acceptance and expression of faith commitment. Indeed, life with people of other faiths and ideologies is by its very nature an encounter of commitments. In dialogue we are invited to listen in openness to the possibility that the God we know in Jesus Christ may encounter us also in the lives of our neighbours of other faiths. On the other hand, we also see that the mutual sharing with people of other faiths in the efforts for justice, peace and service to the environment engages us in dialogue – the dialogue of life. We wish to commend that, in recognition that all humankind is responsible before God and the human family.

29. In affirming the dialogical nature of our witness, we are constrained by grace to affirm that 'salvation is offered to the whole creation through Jesus Christ' (Tambaram II). 'Our mission to witness to Jesus Christ can never be given up' (Melbourne, p. 188). We are well aware that these convictions and the ministry of witness stand in tension with what we have

affirmed about God being present in and at work in people of other faiths; we appreciate this tension, and do not attempt to resolve it.

30. We affirm our unequivocal endorsement of the principle and practice of religious freedom. We are aware that many people are discriminated against, harassed and even persecuted for their faith, often when they have converted from one faith to another; we deplore this and every manifestation of religious or ideological fanaticism. We commend to our Christian communities all those who suffer for their faith, whatever their religious persuasion may be.[4]

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[4] Wilson, *The San Antonio Report*, 20-24, 32-33.

SALVADOR DE BAHIA 1996 – GOSPEL AND CULTURE

> - Respect for cultural integrity in post-Cold War world
> - Need to critique and challenge cultural expression on a gospel basis
> - Creative tension between contextuality and catholicity
> - Need for responsible relationships in mission; avoidance of proselytism
> - Attention to the witness of local congregations
> - Participation of indigenous peoples, women and youth

The interrelationship of gospel and culture had been an influential theme at Bangkok in 1973 but it was taken up in the new context of the 1990s at Salvador de Bahia, in Brazil, in 1996. The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union had ushered in a new world order in which cultural and ethnic factors underlay many conflicts. It was clear by this time that each culture had to discover its own way of expressing the gospel rather than replicating western models. Respect for cultural integrity was a strong emphasis at Salvador de Bahia but it also emphasised the need to critique and challenge cultural expression on the basis of the gospel, and to be open to other identities. 'The special emphasis of Salvador lies,' suggested Jacques Matthey, 'in the affirmation of the ambiguity of each culture… All cultures need to be approached with both love and understanding and with a critical eye and spirit… When encountering a culture, the gospel illuminates parts of it and challenges others, especially when they lead to oppression, in justice and violence. Salvador laid much emphasis on the real danger of exclusivist ethnic politics: in such situations, the gospel becomes captive and alienated by a wrong sense of struggle for identity.'[1] The conference explored the creative tension between contextuality and catholicity. In a global context of violence, fragmentation and the destruction of community, the conference met under the title 'Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures'.

The conference was marked by a conscious effort to hear the voices of those who had been excluded from earlier gatherings, such as Christians from the global South, indigenous peoples, women and youth. The inclusion of significant numbers of young people was an innovative feature of the conference. Lesslie Newbigin had suggested that, '… the only possible hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation which believes it',[2] and the Salvador conference gave considerable attention to the life of the

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[1] Jacques Matthey, 'Salvador among the World Mission Conferences of this Century', in *International Review of Mission,* 86.340-41 (1997), 20-21.
[2] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (London: SPCK, 1989), 232.

local congregation. A particular challenge at this level was posed by large-scale migration which was presenting congregations with the challenge of how to be inclusive of people arriving from other contexts and cultures

Structural issues which make for oppression and call for liberation were prominent in the discussions and reinforced by a visit to a quay where slaves taken from Africa disembarked for hundreds of years. The conference was also aware that Christian mission can also be guilty of abuse of power. Attention was given to proselytism as an unwelcome and invalid form of evangelism which jeopardises common Christian witness.[3] A key question, as Christopher Duraisingh suggested, is: 'If the unity of the church and its witness to the gospel of reconciliation are inseparably related and if the hope to which Christians are called is one, how may the churches promote responsible relationships in mission that witness to God's purpose to reconcile all things into unity in Christ?'[4]

Conference Message

The conference on world mission and evangelism has met in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, at a significant moment in history – the approach of the end of the century and of a new millennium.

Soon after the start of this century, the first comprehensive ecumenical mission conference took place in Edinburgh. It stated: 'The work [of mission] has to be done now. It is urgent and must be pressed forward at once.' The work of mission, however, did not turn out to be straightforward. Within four years of that conference the world was engulfed in war. Since then, it has known massacres and mass deportations, another World War, the development of new forms of colonialism, life under nuclear threat, the destruction of ecosystems by human greed, the growth and collapse of the Soviet bloc, violent and separatist ethnic struggles, rampant capitalism leading to an ever-greater gap between rich and poor.

We believe that it is still the church's primary calling to pursue the mission of God in God's world through the grace and goodness of Jesus Christ. Yet this mission, history-long, worldwide, cannot be seen in narrow ways – it must be an every-member mission, from everywhere to everywhere, involving every aspect of life in a rapidly changing world of many cultures now interacting and overlapping.

In conference here in Salvador, we have sought to understand better the way in which the gospel challenges all human cultures and how culture can

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[3] A product of the conference, published the following year, is 'Towards Common Witness: A Call to Adopt Responsible Relationships in Mission and to Renounce Proselytism', in *'You are the Light of the World': Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 39-58.

[4] Christopher Duraisingh (ed), *Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures* (Geneva: WCC, 1998), xiii.

give us a clearer understanding of the gospel. It would be difficult to find a more appropriate venue for such a conference. Brazil has the second largest population of people of African origin of any nation. Salvador is a microcosm of the world's diversity of cultures and spiritualities. Yet this very place made us aware of the pain and fragmentation that comes from the racism and lack of respect for other religions that still exist in sectors of the Christian churches.

The theme of the conference was 'Called to One Hope – The Gospel in Diverse Cultures'.

The hope of the gospel is expressed in the gracious coming of God in Jesus of Nazareth. From the day of Pentecost this hope manifests itself as the fruit of faith and in the struggle of the community of faith. It reaches out to all people everywhere. This conference has been a foretaste and impulse of this hope.

In the conference we have experienced much which has given us such hope:

- the wide diversity of peoples and churches represented (in Edinburgh in 1910 the large majority of the participants were European or North American; in Salvador over 600 Christians of a wide spectrum of cultures from almost 100 nations participated in the life of the conference);
- the genuine attempt which has been made to listen and to share ways and wisdom across cultures;
- the thrill of participating in the life of a community where the voices of young and old, women and men, from Christian churches around the globe have all been speaking out;
- the willingness of the churches and mission agencies to admit past failures and to refuse to engage in stereotyping, and the determination to stay together and work together for the good of our common mission;
- the solidarity of standing at the dockside in Salvador where, for 300 years, the African slaves who were still alive after their capture and deportation were unloaded. By the 'Stone of Tears' together we wept tears of repentance;
- the encouragement of participating in the rhythm of daily worship where the honouring and use of different sounds and languages did not result in a divisive and confusing 'babel', but rather gave a hint of the unity and inspiration of a Pentecost;
- the privilege of sharing for a short time in the life of a continent and people with a rich cultural history and a diversity of religious spirituality, whose churches are responding to the challenges of social change and poverty through the embodiment of gospel hope.

It is our profound hope that this last great mission conference of the twentieth century has clearly illuminated that for the gospel to be most fruitful needs to be both true to itself, and incarnated in the culture of a

people. We have had a first-hand experience of seeing and hearing Christians from many diverse cultures expressing their struggles and hopes.

- We have heard the cries of pain from indigenous peoples who have faced the near extermination of their communities and cultures, and we have marvelled at their resilience and their determination to make connections between their indigenous spirituality and their Christian faith so that their identity is not divided.
- We have heard the longing of women around the world for a real partnership in church and society.
- We have listened to the voices of young Christians telling us that they do not wish to be objects of the church's mission but full partners in the work of mission, particularly in relating the faith to the energy and aspirations of youth culture today.
- We have learned from our Latin American hosts the importance of 'doing' theology which seeks to create a 'community called church', which is rooted in the life of the people amongst whom the church is set, and which shows itself, for example, in their response to the plight of the street children in their cities.
- We have heard the voices of Christians in the Pacific who seek mutuality with their Christian partners from the West, insisting that full partnership in mission is reciprocal, not paternalistic.
- We have heard the anger of African people, Afro-Caribbean people, Afro-Latino people and African people of North America at the horror of slavery, and we have heard how the faith, though presented to them in distorted forms, became the hope of liberation. We have admired their determination not to be trapped in a lament over history but to co-operate together in a strengthened partnership between African people and people of the African diaspora.
- We have been moved by the stories of disaster and disease which led one speaker from Africa to say, 'Times are ripe for flirting with hopelessness', and we have been astonished at the strength and determination of African Christians, women in particular, to share the pain of their people, and to combat despair and plant the seeds of both food and hope.
- We have benefitted from hearing of the long-term experience of Asian Christians of living a life of Christian discipleship in multi-faith societies, sometimes as vulnerable and threatened minority groups. We have also heard of a surge of grassroots missionary activity.
- We have been moved by the experiences of Christians in the Middle East living with the privilege and pain of life in a 'holy land' torn apart by division and injustice, and their indignation at the way in which biblical texts are misinterpreted so that their culture is blemished and some are made to feel strangers in their own land.

- We have admired the commitment of those from the Orthodox and other local churches in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe now determined, in the new atmosphere of religious freedom, to serve their people in such way that the faith which sustained many through times of persecution might now be an equal blessing in times of new challenge. We have heard their protest at the ways in which rich foreign Christian groups are seeking to proselytize their people.
- We have recognized the caution of Christians in Germany about being too ready to see God's spirit in all human cultures, growing out of their painful memories of how churches risked becoming captive to Nazi ideology in a previous generation.
- We have heard how the churches, against the background of the post-modern background influencing much of western Europe, are studying the phenomenon of secularism and engaging with those turning from traditional faith and seemingly seeking a private 'pick-and-mix' spirituality.
- We have heard reports of the growing localism of North American churches which, while strengthening their commitment to mission and evangelism in their own context, may lead to an isolation and insulation from global realities.
- We have shared the concern of many at how the global free-market economy seems to exercise sovereign power over even strong governments, and how the mass media disseminate worldwide images and messages of every description which influence – and, some believe, undermine – community and faith.
- We have discussed how, perhaps as a reaction to these developments, new fundamentalisms are emerging in all world faiths, adding to the divisions in an already fractured world.
- We have heard how Christians in many places around the globe are engaging in serious dialogue with people of other faiths, telling the Christian story, listening attentively to the stories of others, and thus gaining a clearer and richer understanding of their own faith and helping to build a 'community of communities' to the benefit of all.

In such ways we have recognized how the church engages in mission with cultures around the globe today. What then would we want to emphasise from this conference?

- The church must hold on to two realities: its distinctiveness from, and its commitment to, the culture in which it is set. In such a way the gospel becomes neither captive to a culture nor alienated from it, but each challenges and illuminates the other.
- Perhaps as never before, Christians in mission today need to have a clear understanding of what God has done in history through Jesus Christ. In this we have seen what God requires of individuals, communities and structures. The biblical witness is our starting

point and reference for mission and gives us the sense of our own identity.

- We need constantly to seek the insight of the Holy Spirit in helping us better to discern where the gospel challenges, endorses or transforms a particular culture.
- The catholicity of a church is enhanced by the quality of the relationships it has with churches of other traditions and cultures. This has implications for mission and evangelism, and calls for respect and sensitivity for churches already located in the place concerned. Competitiveness is the surest way to undermine Christian mission. Equally, aggressive evangelism which does not respect the culture of a people is unlikely to reflect effectively the gracious love of God and the challenge of the gospel.
- Local congregations are called to be places of hope, providing spaces of safety and trust wherein different people can be embraced and affirmed, thus manifesting the inclusive love of God. For congregations in increasingly plural societies, inclusion of all cultural groups which make up the community, including those who are uprooted, marginalized and despised, is important. Strengthening congregations through a spirituality which enables them to face the vulnerability involved in this openness is critical.
- Small steps which involve risk and courage can break through barriers and create new relationships. Such steps are available to us all. They can be the 'miracle' which changes a church or community's self-image and enables new God-given life to break forth.

Music at the conference has had a rhythm, a harmony, a beat. In a place with a deep African tradition it is natural that in our worship the beat of the drum has frequently been the vehicle to carry our souls to resonate with the beat of God's love for us and for all people. With hearts set on fire with the beat of mission and a prayer on our lips that many will share with us in being 'Called to One Hope', and take and find 'the Gospel in Diverse Cultures', we commend the fruits of the conference to Christians and churches everywhere. Our profound hope is that they too may be renewed in mission for the sharing of the knowledge of Christ, to the glory of the triune God.[5]

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[5] Duraisingh, *Called to One Hope*, 20-25.

ATHENS 2005 – HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

- After 9/11 attack in New York – increasing violence, fragmentation, exclusion
- Calling of church to work for reconciliation, healing and fullness of life in Christ
- First CWME conference to be hosted in a predominantly Orthodox country
- Participation of Evangelical, Pentecostal and independent church movements
- Reconciliation of *missio Dei* approach with *missio Ecclesiae* approach
- Fresh attention to the Holy Spirit, and to the ecological dimension of mission

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In May 2005 a WCC conference on World Mission and Evangelism was held in a predominantly Orthodox country for the first time. This not only influenced the style of the conference but demonstrated the influence of Orthodox theology on ecumenical missiology in regard to the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, worship, healing and reconciliation.[1] It was also marked by a diversity of participation and a deliberate move to include representatives of growing parts of world Christianity which had not always been represented at major ecumenical events. As Ruth Bottoms, Moderator of CWME, commented: 'For me, one of the great gifts and joys of the conference was that by the grace of God the Spirit built community amongst the participants over our days together. Given the wide range of people represented, with a Roman Catholic delegation fully participating as well as those from Pentecostal and evangelical churches and movements not necessarily in membership of the World Council of Churches, this in itself was significant.'[2] This prompted the adoption of a different style to earlier Conferences. There were no long reports intended to be received or adopted by the conference plenary. Instead, the emphasis was on 'creating spaces for sharing, dialogue, debate, listening, presenting experiences and case studies or theological reflections.'[3]

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[1] See Jacques Matthey (ed), *Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile! Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities – Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 9-16, 2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2008).
[2] Matthey, *Come Holy Spirit*, 9.
[3] Matthey, *Come Holy Spirit*, 25.

An important development detected by Jacques Matthey, CWME Secretary, was the attempt that was made to reconcile a missio Dei approach with missio Ecclesiae:

> Since the International Missionary Council (IMC) Conference in Willingen in 1952, the wide missio Dei perspective gained in importance in the ecumenical movement, in reaction to narrower or exclusively ecclesiocentric formulations of the missionary task. It was essential indeed to liberate Christian witness from narrow perspectives, as if the Triune God's presence in, and availability to, the world was manifested only inside the visible frontiers of existing church life. The whole 'oikumene' as inhabited world, and ultimately the whole creation, was to become the horizon and space for God's challenging and life-enabling presence. Ecumenical missiology widened its scope to include social, political and religious movements or institutions in its vision of history moving towards the accomplishment of God's promises of peace and justice. It did so in some extreme formulations by neglecting the specific purpose and mission of the church, disregarding the spiritual needs of persons and communities, and uncritically referring to a linear western perspective on time and history, considered as 'progress'.[4]

Without sacrificing the depth and range brought to missiology by the *missio Dei* perspective, the Athens conference saw renewed attention to the centrality of the church in the mission of God.

As the conference title suggests, fresh attention was given to the Holy Spirit – a move which would prove to be significant for ecumenical missiology. The ecological dimension of mission received serious attention as awareness of the issues posed by climate change was rising. Matthey also discerned: 'a more humble approach to what Christians and churches can accomplish in the world today than seemed to have been the approaches in earlier CWME conferences… Humanity cannot "heal the world" nor create "shalom". We have to acknowledge our limitations and thus we call on God: "Come, Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile!"'[5]

A prominent feature on the changing landscape was the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers in New York in 2001 and the 'war on terror' which followed. A time of globalization with increasing violence, fragmentation and exclusion brought sharper focus and new energy to the calling of the church to receive, celebrate, proclaim and work for reconciliation, healing and fullness of life in Christ. The conference offered a summary overview of the current missiological situation and expressed a missiological response to it in terms of prayer and commitment.

Summary Overview of Current Missiological Context

After the Cold War era, the world order has moved towards a unified market, which, accompanied by social and cultural phenomena, is usually

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[4] Matthey, *Come Holy Spirit*, 330.
[5] Matthey, *Come Holy Spirit*, 328-29.

referred to by the term 'globalization'. The bipolar political economic ideology has become a monopolar neo-liberal one, in which the market becomes the main reference all over the world and the measure for judging values, social achievements and even human beings and communities themselves. Partly in reaction to the risk of cultural levelling by the leading market forces and the media, new conflict areas emerged, among and within nations, often with a cultural, ethnic or religious background. These developments modify local and regional political alliances and tend to reinforce the control of the power centres of western societies over the world.

In this context, missiology needs to focus anew intentionally on Christ's life-affirming ministry as an alternative and a means of resistance to political, economic and religious trends and forces leading to oppression, alienation and death. Witnessing to the fullness of life in Christ leads Christians and churches to consider the whole of creation as the horizon of mission. The basis and framework of Christian mission must be consistently Trinitarian, based on and related to the work of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, from the beginning of creation to the end of time. There is particular urgency to better understand the role of the Spirit in church and world and to work out the consequences for mission in practice.

Reconciliation appears to be a central term, describing God's forgiveness given in Christ, the intention of God's own presence and action in the world, and the vision of the final aim of God's mission (*missio Dei*). Authentic reconciliation is costly and cannot easily be reached if separated from justice, truth about responsibilities, love for enemies and forgiveness. It has personal, community, social and ecological dimensions. It implies healing from past and present wounds, from injustice and guilt, at personal, community and social levels.[6]

Come, Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile

Calling on the Spirit, we confess that mission is not ours.

Mission is the mission of the triune God, the creator of heaven and earth, whose purpose is that all may have fullness of life.

In Jesus Christ, God laid the basis for real reconciliation and healing, overcoming all enmity and evil.

God the Holy Spirit is continually present and active as healer and reconciler in church and world.

So we believe that God makes it possible to:

Repair broken relationships between

    God and human beings

    People and people

    Churches and churches

    Nations and nations

    Humanity and creation

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[6] Matthey, *Come Holy Spirit*, 28.

Overcome enmity and violence
We hope to see many signs of:
Health, balance and wholeness of life:

    For individuals
    For whole communities
    For humanity
    For creation

We call on God the Spirit: heal and reconcile, empower us, so that as persons and communities, we may receive, become and share signs of forgiveness, peace, justice and unity, and renounce sin, enmity, violence, injustice and divisions.

Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities

At this time in a globalized context, God entrusts and commissions us with a message of healing and reconciliation.[7] The crucified and resurrected Christ invites us to participate in God's mission. It is **our mission** to form healing communities in celebration, witness, mutual love, forgiveness and respect, and to intervene in peace-building, reconciliation processes and healing of memories in society, overcoming violence wherever we can.

Our being, and our way of being together, needs to reflect our vision of reconciliation.
We are called
to create and multiply safe spaces, hospitable to those who are stigmatized, lost, searching for meaning, solidarity and community,
and to journey as and with victims of violence and sin towards reconciliation and justice.

Reconciliation and healing need to be experienced within communities (member to member), between communities where brokenness exists, and in humanity's relationship with creation.

By using the term 'communities' (instead of 'Community' as referring to the Church) we want to affirm the plurality and the diverse nature of the communities in which we live.[8]

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[7] These themes are more fully elaborated in two documents of the Athens Conference: 'Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation', in *'You are the Light of the World': Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 90-128; and 'The Healing Mission of the Church', in *'You are the Light of the World'*, 129-62.

[8] Matthey, *Come Holy Spirit*, 23-24.

EDINBURGH 2010: WITNESSING TOGETHER

> - Representatives of all traditions of Christianity share in centenary conference
> - A moment of celebration, healing and convergence of the missionary movement
> - Extensive study process offering comprehensive analysis of mission themes
> - Significant shared understanding reflected in the *Common Call*

The approach of the centenary of Edinburgh 1910 prompted an attempt in Scotland to take account of Christian mission a century after the epoch-making conference.[1] This in turn led to a meeting in mid-2005 to consider what might be done internationally in regard to the Edinburgh 1910 centenary. The twenty people who came together had no formal authority but were broadly representative of world Christianity. The nine themes they identified provided the structure for the Edinburgh 2010 study process and eventually shaped the 'Common Call' issued by the Edinburgh 2010 Conference.[2] A General Council formed in 2007 to take responsibility for this initiative included representatives from every stream of world Christianity including the Orthodox, Catholics, Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Independents as well as the Protestant descendants of the bodies which participated in Edinburgh 1910. Jooseop Keum highlights the significance of this: 'For the first time in mission history, representatives of all traditions of Christianity and global mission actors gathered together to celebrate the centenary.'[3] This new convergence was also apparent in the emergence of the Global Christian Forum, which met for the first time in Nairobi in 2007. Like Edinburgh 2010, it minimized formal commitment and maximized width of participation and the building of relationships.

Not only did the delegates to the Edinburgh 2010 conference enjoy their fellowship but they found that they could join in affirming a shared understanding of Christian mission. Among the notes they struck are the following:

- The missionary mandate is reaffirmed, indeed its urgency is emphasised, but it is recognised that authenticity is paramount and

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[1] See David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now* (Oxford: Regnum, 2009).

[2] See Kenneth R. Ross, 'Edinburgh 2010: The Common Call', in *Forum Mission*, Band 7 (2011), 192-202.

[3] Keum, 'Beyond Dichotomy', 395.

mission must be practised in a way which resonates with people's experience.

- Recognising plurality in regard to religious conviction, a fine balance is struck between affirming the uniqueness of Christ and maintaining an open and hospitable attitude towards those who adhere to other faiths and belief-systems.
- On the basis that God often chooses to work through the young and that many people have their most formative religious experiences in their earliest years, young people are viewed not only as the objects but also as the subjects of mission.
- The natural environment is recognised as a legitimate focus of concern in the practice of mission. Indeed, there is a broadening of the understanding of mission to embrace the renewal of the whole creation and the fulfilment of all things in Jesus Christ.
- Mission is understood as being critically engaged with the prevailing power structures. God's identification with those on the receiving end of unjust exercise of power spurs mission practitioners to work for a transformation of power.
- The spiritual character of mission is emphasised, with the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit finding expression in relation to such areas as mass migration, reconciliation in situations of conflict and the cry for healing at all levels.
- Formation of leaders is a major focus, with concern to move away from the exclusively cerebral approach of the European Enlightenment towards approaches which are more holistic, inclusive and empowering.
- The biblical call to unity is reaffirmed, with a recognition that, while structural unity remains elusive, this is no excuse for failing to develop common witness, to create collaborative models of working and to be healing and reconciling communities.

Edinburgh 2010 brought together probably the widest spectrum of world Christianity ever to engage in a shared global project of mission study. It arrived at a remarkable moment when representatives of so many different sectors of the world church were able to affirm an incisive statement of the meaning of Christian mission for our time. It has a particular significance for ecumenical missiology. Jooseop Keum comments: 'An analysis of the Common Call produced at the Edinburgh Conference shows that positions defended over decades by WCC have now become somewhat common ground: missio Dei, empowerment and humility, creation as the scope of mission, holistic content of the Gospel, mission from everywhere to everywhere, unity and mission… Indeed, Edinburgh 2010 was a moment of celebration, healing and convergence of the missionary movement. At the

same time, The Common Call highlighted the evangelical concern for 'the uniqueness of Christ' and for conversion.'[4]

The *Common Call*

The *Common Call* of Edinburgh 2010 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, in the following terms:

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

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[4] Keum, 'Beyond Dichotomy', 396.

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.[5]

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[5] Kirsteen Kim and Andrew Anderson (eds), *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Today and Tomorrow* (Oxford: Regnum, 2011), 1-2.

2012 TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE

The end of the first decade of the 21st century proved to be a propitious time to offer a re-assessment of Christian mission. Besides the *Common Call* and accompanying study process of Edinburgh 2010, the *Cape Town Commitment* was adopted by the third Lausanne Congress later the same year. Two years later, the World Council of Churches adopted a new mission affirmation *Together towards Life* and Pope Francis issued his encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*. Section 3 of this book includes the full text of *Together towards Life* (*TTL*), together with extensive analysis, including comparison with the other major mission documents that emerged around the same time.

At this point, for the sake of completeness, it is necessary to recognize that the adoption of *TTL* marked, in institutional terms, the completion of the century of ecumenical missiology that began with Edinburgh 1910. The document was shaped by a major CWME conference held in Manila in March 2012, adopted by the WCC Central Committee later that year and presented to the tenth Assembly of the WCC at Busan, South Korea, in 2013. As a comprehensive statement of the meaning of Christian mission it attempts to draw together all that has been learned in the course of one hundred years of ecumenical missiology. The journey, of course, will continue and the pilgrims who pursue it will always stand to benefit from knowledge of its earlier stages.

SECTION TWO

CORE THEMES ACROSS A CENTURY

Introduction

In Section Two the authors from different social locations within the global South and North seek to interrogate selected missional themes that have emerged from people's engagement with global threats to life. The changing landscape of mission since 1910 has resulted in different epochs, shaped by global political, socio-economic and religio-cultural upheavals. The shift in the population strength of Christianity from the global North to the global South and mapped in Section Three has resulted in Christianity journeying from being a predominantly western religion to becoming a global religion with different contextual expressions. No longer is there any global centre that manages the missional spread of the faith.

People everywhere are setting the agenda and the themes identified in this section reflect that agenda. They are presented in an order that speaks to the era when they became urgent agenda item for ecumenical discussions. The first three articles on 'Evangelism', 'Church, Mission and Unity' and 'Worship' appeared as early agenda items for discussions because they fitted into the inner ecclesial discourse of the ecumenical agenda. Pertinent questions emerged on the ecumenical understanding and practice of these four themes. Ecumenical reflections on *Evangelism* allowed room for different interpretations in some core areas of Christian belief and use of language that is broad and leaves space for further questions and clarifications to be sought. Of major importance is the emphasis on evangelism not becoming proselytism. The focus on *Church, Mission and Unity* gives an insider perspective of the journey made in finding the tensions, challenges and opportunities encountered. The diversity in the theologies that undergird *worship* liturgies is argued to be the result of the missional journey made by churches. Those within the global North exhibited worship that reflected their contextual theological controversies and those in the global South being motivated by questions about inculturation and contextualization in their quest for authentic meaning in their worship experiences.

The next five articles interrogate themes of 'Healing', 'Culture', 'Other Faiths', 'Formation' and 'Discipleship'. The chapter on *Healing* describes the many ways in which churches during the past century have demonstrated the commitment of their ministry and mission to a holistic and comprehensive understanding and practice of health and healing. The question of the relationship between gospel and *Culture* is always a crucial one for the understanding and practice of mission – as demonstrated in an engrossing chapter on this topic. An insightful discourse on *Other Faiths* provides a critical mapping of the complex and multi-layered relationship between mission and other faiths. The ecumenical focus on *Formation* argues for leadership development that embodies life-affirming mission and transformative action in the world that embodies in-depth research, reflection and debate. Christian *Discipleship* is presented as an important

ecumenical agenda that concerns what constitutes authentic following of 'mission in Christ's way'.

The rise of new nation-states in the post-colonial era of the late 1950s and early 1960s saw ecumenical themes changing to include: 'Partnership and Resource Sharing', 'Contextualization' and 'Transformation'. An overview of the ecumenical *Partnership and Resource Sharing* is mapped out to illustrate how this important missional stewardship phenomenon is embraced as a justice matter that must be addressed by all churches that wish to participate in *missio Dei*. The focus on contextualization outlines the dynamics that are involved in the inculturation process of the gospel and ecclesial communities in diverse contexts. *Transformation* of people's lives and the context in which they live and work has permeated all ecumenical explorations of key themes.

Finally, the essays on 'Justice', 'Margins', 'Environment', 'Gender' and 'Migration' trace the contemporary challenges facing the ministry and mission of the church and offer some fresh analysis and responses that are needed. However, one could posit that *these final themes* constitute the pivotal undergirding agenda that are informing missiological hermeneutics on the identity, vocation and witness of the ecclesial community in the world.

EVANGELISM

Claudia Währisch-Oblau

'Evangelism is missionary activity which makes explicit and unambiguous the centrality of the incarnation, suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ 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.'[1]

This definition of evangelism is found in *Together towards Life,*[2] a 2012 ecumenical affirmation on mission and evangelism drawn up by theologians from all major Christian traditions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical and Pentecostal). After a century of often controversial and even acrimonious discussion, it marks a broad consensus in the understanding of what evangelism means. Nevertheless, once one starts to look closer at what is being said here, it becomes obvious that the phrasing allows quite different interpretations depending on theological decisions not mentioned here. What exactly is meant by 'the centrality of the incarnation, suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ'? What is 'the saving grace of God'? How exactly is this 'good news'? And finally, what is 'an experience of life in Christ'?

Part of the problem is that the ecumenical discussion has mostly been about 'mission', and often used the term 'evangelism' to mean the same thing.[3] It is only fairly recently that a tendency can be observed to describe evangelism as one part or aspect of mission, as in *Together towards Life*.

'Evangelism' is derived from the Greek word εὐαγγελίζω, bringing or proclaiming good news. In the broadest sense, the term means to make

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[1] *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (Geneva: WCC, 2012), §80.

[2] *TTL*, §80.

[3] 'Confusion about ecumenical evangelism results in part from the interchangeability of key terms in ecumenical documents.' This is the summary of Priscilla Pope-Levison, 'Evangelism in the WCC. From New Delhi to Canberra', in James A. Scherer and Steven B. Bevans (eds), *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 2: Theological Foundations* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994). See also David Bosch, 'Evangelism: Theological Currents and Cross-Currents Today', in Paul W. Chilcote and Laceye C. Warner (eds), *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008). A somewhat different assessment can be found in Dietrich Werner, 'Evangelism from a WCC Perspective: A Recollection of an Important Ecumenical Memory, and the Unfolding of a Holistic Vision', in *International Review of Mission*, 96.382/383 (2007), 183-203.

known the Gospel (εὐαγγέλιον), the good news of Jesus Christ, with an implication that this is done through language, i.e. proclamation or sharing.

But what is the motivation for evangelism, who actually is the actor, what is the message, what is the aim or goal, and how should it be done? These are the basic questions to be answered in a theology of evangelism.

In reviewing the history of the theological discussion on evangelism, it can be helpful to work with two basic distinctions:[4] is evangelism a distinct practice of the church, or is it a quality of all Christian practice, or possibly both? And if we look at it as a distinct practice, do we understand it first and foremost as a *productive* activity, meaning that it is defined and evaluated by its outcome (i.e. conversions, however those may be understood), or is it understood as a *virtue*, a praxis that is faithful to God's reign and guided by the fruits of the Holy Spirit, such as love, hope, faith, humility, patience and courage, and therefore evaluated by its faithfulness? We should keep these questions in mind as we look at the discussion on evangelism in the last one hundred years.

Evangelism as Enlarging Christendom

'The present is the time of all times for the Church to undertake with quickened loyalty and sufficient forces to make Christ known to all the non-Christian world.'[5] The first World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 believed it possible to evangelize the whole world within one generation, if only churches would mobilize all their resources and follow the best scientific methods.[6] Clearly, this evangelism was the white Christian's burden: Of the 1,215 official delegates at the conference, only 19 came from the global South.[7] And equally clearly, evangelism aimed to enlarge Christendom as it was understood in the global North through the growth of existing and the foundation of new churches. In the report of Commission I, 'Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World', we find a detailed analysis of the conditions for evangelism in different parts of the world and a technical approach to the work to be done. The urgency of the task comes from the fact that the entire world is now in easy reach and non-Christian cultures are in flux. Non-Christian religions are seen as obstacles to be overcome, different missionary methods evaluated as to their efficiency, and strategies for the future developed.

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[4] These considerations are based on Bryan P. Stone, *Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006).

[5] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Report of Commission I: Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 362.

[6] See Report of Commission I, and also Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 3-5.

[7] Stanley, *Edinburgh 1910*, 12.

There is little reflection about the message and the content of the Gospel. The language is one of conquest, military metaphors abound, and there is no clear distinction between the Gospel and western civilization.

Pragmatic Approaches to Evangelism

In this sense, the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference was the first embodiment of what could be termed a pragmatic approach to evangelism which is still going strong more than one hundred years later and strongly dominated by American organizations.[8] The aim of evangelism is to make as many converts as possible, to 'save souls', to 'win people for Christ'. The motivation for this approach is often, if not always, so clearly expressed, a theology that sees all those who have no 'personal relationship to Christ' as 'lost', facing damnation and eternal suffering in hell.[9] 'Winning people for Christ' usually also means adding them as members to one's own church, denomination or group, and the growth of the church is more or less equated with the strengthening of God's reign over the world. As a productive activity, evangelism is planned and evaluated following an instrumental logic: what methods are effective in bringing about conversions? How can such methods be developed, taught and possibly improved?[10] Evangelism here basically becomes a marketing strategy for a North Atlantic-dominated Evangelical Christendom.

The culmination of this marketing approach is found in the church growth movement inspired by Donald McGavran and C. Peter Wagner, and developed at the Fuller Theological Seminary School for World Mission.[11] Universal 'principles' were determined, each of which, 'when properly interpreted and applied, contributes significantly to the growth of churches and denominations'.[12] Looking at just one of them, the 'homogeneous unit', shows how a marketing approach to evangelism can actually collide with

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[8] See, for example, the global reach of US-based organizations like Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ: www.cru.org), or Evangelism Explosion (http://evangelismexplosion.org).

[9] So phrased in the faith statement of Evangelism Explosion: http://evangelismexplosion.org/about-us/statement-of-faith. Cru has different wording, but the same theology: www.cru.org/about/statement-of-faith.htm.

[10] To see just two examples of this approach, look at a classic: Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell Publishing, 1963, 1964, 1993), and a current bestseller: Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015).

[11] See, among many others, Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth,* 3rd edition, revised and edited by C. Peter Wagner (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990); Donald A. McGavran, *Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005 [1955]); C. Peter Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1989).

[12] Donald A. McGavran and Win Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth* (New York, Harper & Row, 1977), 15.

the content of the Gospel message: McGavran observed that 'people like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers'[13] and therefore suggested that where 'marked differences of color, stature, income, cleanliness, and education are present', people should be evangelized by 'their own kind of people' and find a church 'whose members look, talk, and act like themselves',[14] completely disregarding the basic experience of the early church that the Gospel message overcomes such separations.[15]

Early Pentecostal Practice: Evangelism in the Power of the Spirit

But an evangelism driven by the urge to make as many converts as possible does not necessarily have to result in a pragmatic approach, as is shown by early Pentecostal evangelism.[16] From the 1906 revival in Azusa Street,[17] missionaries, convinced that the Holy Spirit had called and given them the gift of foreign languages (*xenolalia*), set out for countries as far apart as Japan, China or Argentina. With little money and basically no preparation, and not discouraged by the eventual discovery that they did not speak the language of the people they wanted to reach, they preached a 'full' Gospel encompassing salvation, healing, and baptism in the Spirit, and expected the power of the Holy Spirit to convince people. Pentecostals shared with the mainline Protestants assembled in Edinburgh the sense of urgency of the missionary task, enhanced in their case by a strong expectation of Christ's imminent return which compelled them to save as many as possible from damnation.[18] Consequently, itinerant preaching and healing became the method of choice. Living simply and with the local people, Pentecostal evangelists expected and experienced signs and wonders to validate their message and saw many people becoming Christians. New

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[13] McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth,* 46.

[14] McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth,* 167.

[15] See René Padilla, *The Unity of the Church and the Homogeneous Unit Principle*, in Wilbert Shenk (ed), *Exploring Church Growth* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010). A further critique came from David Bosch, 'Church Growth Missiology', in *Missionalia,* 16.1 (1988), 13-24. For a concise summary of the critical debate on the church growth movement, see Darrell L. Guder, 'Evangelism and the Debate Over Church Growth', in *Interpretation,* 48.2 (April 1994), 145-55; also Gary McIntosh (ed), *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004).

[16] For background on this paragraph, see Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (London: SCM, 2007).

[17] For a detailed account of this revival, see Cecil M. Robeck Jr, *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival. The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

[18] See also L.G. McClung Jr, 'Evangelism', in Stanley M. Burgess (ed.), *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (revised and expanded edition, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

local converts (some of whom had first been evangelized by Protestant missionaries) quickly took charge of developing congregations which in many cases soon developed into independent, indigenous churches.[19]

It is unfortunate that this early Pentecostal practice has been little reflected in ecumenical discussions on evangelism, as a number of issues debated over decades found a paradigmatically different treatment here. Pentecostal missionaries relied on the power of the Holy Spirit rather than on strong organizations or ample financing, they were usually poor, they abstained from hegemonial control of their mission fields, and they brought a holistic Gospel which included physical healing and spiritual empowerment.

Evangelism and Non-Christian Religions

It was not until the late 1920s that a controversial debate began on the question of evangelism and non-Christian religions. This topic dominated discussions at both the World Mission Conferences in Jerusalem in 1928 and in Tambaram in 1938, and came up time and again later.[20] The basic question was: is Christianity uniquely true and should therefore replace other religions, or is it the fulfilment of the best values of the non-Christian religions? In the first case, evangelism would have to show the uniqueness of Christianity in contrast to other religions, while in the latter, a dialogue approach was seen as appropriate. Or, was there just one universal faith in a supreme being which was simply being expressed in different religious forms, so that all religions should work together to fight secularism, making evangelism obsolete? This radical position was taken by a 1932 report under the title 'Re-Thinking Missions'[21] which stated that Christian missionaries were called to live in co-existence with other faiths and work towards the aim that all religions would eventually grow together in the 'completest [*sic!*] religious truth'.[22]

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[19] Just two examples: Paul Wei, one of the founders of the True Jesus Church in China, originally worked with the London Mission. (Deng Zhaoming, 'Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations', in Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang (eds), *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Asian Christianity* (Oxford: Regnum, and Baguio City: APTS Press, 2005). Joseph Ayodele Babalola, the founder of Christ Apostolic Church in Nigeria, was born into an Anglican family. (David Oyaliwola, 'Joseph Ayodele Babalola', in *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*: www.dacb.org/stories/nigeria/babalola2_joseph.html).

[20] James L. Cox, 'Jerusalem 1928: Its Message for Today', in *Missiology: An International Review,* 9.2 (April 1981), 139-53. See also Harold Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001).

[21] William E. Hocking (ed), *Re-Thinking Mission: A Laymen's Enquiry After One Hundred Years* (New York/London: Harper & Brothers, 1932).

[22] Hocking, *Re-Thinking Missions,* 65.

In preparation for the Tambaram conference, Dutch missionary Hendrik Kraemer wrote a statement entitled 'The Christian Message in a non-Christian World',[23] insisting on the 'radical discontinuity' between religions, which are simply human efforts, and 'God's acts of revelation and salvation' presented in the Bible. 'Evangelization, proselytism and conversion… belong to the core of the missionary enterprise.'[24] Rejecting the idea that God was at work in non-Christian religions, Kraemer was at the same time critical of Christianity and imperialistic mission and suggested an approach that combined 'evangelism, adaptation, and service'.[25]

Kraemer's viewpoint was rejected at Tambaram by many[26] and the question was not resolved[27] but in the end, the conference, which for the first time had a majority of delegates from the 'younger churches', defended the continued need for evangelism, though it called for a dialoguing and listening approach.[28]

The question underlying this discussion was, of course, whether God saved only Christians, or whether his salvation extended to other religions. The WCC mission conference at San Antonio in 1989 finally suggested a consensus which can be summarized as follows: 'We cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot put any limit to God's saving power. There is a tension between these affirmations which we acknowledge and cannot resolve.'[29] The ongoing study work on this issue shows how the line of reasoning has changed. Rather than discussing absolute truth, a 2006 WCC study paper speaks of

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[23] Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938).

[24] Kraemer, *The Christian Message,* 296.

[25] Kraemer, *The Christian Message,* 302.

[26] Jan van Lin, *Shaking the Fundamentals: Religious Plurality and Ecumenical Movement* (Amsterdam/New York: Editions Rodopi, 2002), 206-08. See also Richard J. Plantinga, 'Missionary Thinking about Religious Plurality at Tambaram 1938: Hendrik Kraemer and His Critics', in Lamin Sanneh and Joel Carpenter (eds), *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West and the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[27] 'As to whether the non-Christian religions… may be regarded as in some sense or to some degree manifesting God's revelation, Christians are not agreed.' *The World Mission of the Church. Findings and Recommendations of the Meeting of the International Missionary Council, Tambaram, Madras, India, Dec. 12-29, 1938* (London: International Missionary Council, no date), 52.

[28] *The World Mission of the Church*, 31-63.

[29] Quoted from https://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/cwme/history. The phrasing in the actual document from San Antonio is more complicated: see Frederick R. Wilson (ed), *The San Antonio Report. Your Will be Done: Mission in Christ's Way* (Geneva: WCC, 1990), 31-33.

religious traditions as personal 'journeys' and 'pilgrimages'.[30] The study continues: 'We need to acknowledge that human limitations and limitations of language make it impossible for any community to have exhausted the mystery of the salvation God offers to humankind. … It is this humility that enables us to say that salvation belongs to God, God only. We do not possess salvation; we participate in it. We do not offer salvation; we witness to it. We do not decide who would be saved; we leave it to the providence of God.'[31] Clearly, within the WCC, evangelism is now understood as an activity that can only be evaluated by its faithfulness to the Gospel, and not by numbers of conversions.

Evangelism and Socio-Political Action – the Evangelical-Ecumenical Divide

From the 1950s to the early 1970s, the term 'evangelism' was rarely found in WCC documents. This may be a consequence of the development of the concept of *missio Dei*, the mission of God, which was first formulated at the 1952 conference of the International Missionary Council in Willingen.[32] *Missio Dei* means that mission is first and foremost God's action, the sending of his son with the aim of establishing the lordship of Christ over the whole redeemed creation. 'Out of the depths of his love for us, the Father has sent forth His own beloved Son to reconcile all things to Himself.'[33] In this mission, the church simply participates – she is an instrument of mission, not its goal. While in general terms this concept was and remains broadly consensual, it quickly turned out that it was possible to interpret it in completely different ways. One could understand the Kingdom of God as an eschatological, discontinuous new creation into which people entered by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ – in which case the church had the role of proclaiming this, i.e. to evangelize – or see the Kingdom as God's radical transformation of the world to be achieved gradually, not only through the work of the church, but also through political and social action aiming at *shalom*, peace with justice, in

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[30] *Religious Plurality and Christian Self-Understanding* Geneva: WCC, 2006): https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2006-porto-alegre/3-preparatory-and-background-documents/religious-plurality-and-christian-self-understanding, Section 44.

[31] *Religious Plurality and Christian Self-Understanding*, Sections 46-7.

[32] The term *missio Dei* to sum up this new concept actually was used only after the conference: 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).

[33] 'A Statement on the Missionary Calling of the Church', reprinted in *International Review of Mission,* 92.367 (October 2003), 606-09, 607.

which case evangelism was replaced by or redefined as participation in liberating and reconciling action.[34]

The latter position soon dominated WCC discussions. A 1967 WCC report, 'The Church for Others',[35] described evangelism as the church discovering God at work in secular movements working towards *shalom* and joining them. Similarly, the World Mission Conference in Bangkok 1973 under the theme 'Salvation Today' saw salvation at work in the struggles for economic justice against exploitation, human dignity against oppression, solidarity against alienation, and hope against despair in personal life,[36] and hardly ever mentioned the term 'evangelism'.[37]

Evangelicals blamed the WCC as giving up evangelism altogether[38] and came together to formulate their own alternative concept. The 1974 Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization brought together participants from over 150 countries[39] and resulted in the *Lausanne Covenant*[40] which defined evangelism as 'the whole church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world',[41] binding together 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'[42] with action for justice, reconciliation and liberation. 'Evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty.'[43] But as the ensuing debate among Evangelicals showed very clearly, the inherent logic of the *Lausanne Covenant* was the primacy of evangelism with the goal of

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[34] There is a plethora of literature on the concept of *missio Dei*, and there is no room in this chapter for even an overview of the debate. Influential representatives of the two alternatives in the 1960s were Georg F. Vicedom, *The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission,* trans. Gilbert A. Thiele and Dennis Hilgendorf (St Louis, MO: Concordia Press, 1965) and Johannes C. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press 1966). See also *International Review of Mission,* 92.367, particularly the summaries of the discussion by Jacques Matthey, 579-87, and by Wilhelm Richebächer, 588-605.

[35] *The Church for Others – Two Reports on the Missionary Structure of the Congregation* (Geneva: WCC, 1967).

[36] *Salvation and Social Justice,* Report of Section II, CWME Assembly, Bangkok, 1973, Chapter 3. Reprinted in Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope (eds), *The Ecumenical Movement. An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices* (Geneva: WCC and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997). See also David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 406.

[37] See Pope-Levison, 'Evangelism in the WCC', 129-30.

[38] See Ralph D. Winter (ed), *The Evangelical Response to Bangkok* (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1973).

[39] See www.lausanne.org/gatherings/congress/lausanne-1974

[40] *The Lausanne Covenant*, 1974: www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant

[41] *Lausanne Covenant*, Section 6.

[42] *Lausanne Covenant*, Section 4.

[43] *Lausanne Covenant*, Section 5.

saving people from eternal damnation, while socio-political action was seen as dealing with a world that was anyhow going to end with the coming of God's Kingdom.[44]

Following Bangkok and Lausanne, missiologists from evangelical and ecumenical backgrounds worldwide engaged in heated discussions about the relationship between evangelism and socio-political action.[45] The crux of the issue was, of course, how to understand salvation: was it salvation *out of* the world, or the salvation *of* the world? And if the latter, were peace, justice and reconciliation a foretaste of the *shalom* of the Kingdom radically discontinuous with human history, or was history developing towards it?

'Good News for the Poor': Evangelism in Holistic Mission

The split between Evangelicals and Ecumenicals notwithstanding, dialogue between the two sides never stopped.[46] A number of Evangelicals also remained active within WCC structures, and the 1975 Nairobi Assembly of the WCC, similarly to Lausanne, spoke about 'the whole Gospel for the whole world by the whole church'.[47]

In ecumenical documents, the discussion in the 1980s and 1990s centred on an understanding the Gospel as 'good news for the poor', tying together the spiritual and political aspects of a holistic evangelism. The 1982 WCC

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[44] Valdir Steuernagel, *The Theology of Mission in its Relation to Social Responsibility within the Lausanne Movement* (Chicago, IL: Lutheran School of Theology, 1988).

[45] See, for example, Alan J. Bailyes, 'Evangelical and Ecumenical Understandings of Mission', in *International Review of Mission,* 85.339 (1996), 485-503. Al Tizon, 'Evangelism and Social Responsibility: The Making of a Transformational Vision', in Margunn Serigstad Dahle, Lars Dahle and Knud Jørgensen (eds), *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014). Erhard Berneburg, *Das Verhältnis von Verkündigung und sozialer Aktion in der evangelikalen Missionstheorie* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1997), lists the following relationship models within evangelical theology: 1. Social action is a watering down of evangelism; 2. Social action is a betrayal of evangelism; 3. Social action is evangelism; 4. Social action is a bridge for evangelism; 5. Social action is an illustration of evangelism; 6. Social action is the result or consequence of evangelism; 7. Social action is a partner of evangelism; 8. Social action and evangelism are equally important and two aspects of the one mission of the church.

[46] Jooseop Keum, 'Beyond Dichotomy: Towards a Convergence between the Ecumenical and Evangelical Understanding of Mission in Changing Landscapes', in Dahle, Dahle and Jørgensen, *The Lausanne Movement.*

[47] Martien E. Brinkman, *Progress in Unity? Fifty Years of Theology in the World Council of Churches: 1945-1995. A Study Guide* (Louvain: Peeters Press and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1995), 157ff.

document, 'Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation',[48] used 'mission' and 'evangelism' more or less interchangeably, and while rejecting 'the old dichotomies between evangelism and social action',[49] spoke of the invitation to faith and discipleship as well as Christian participation in the struggles for justice.[50] Similarly, the term 'conversion' was applied both to a personal acceptance of 'the saving lordship of Christ'[51] and to the 'change from war to peace, from injustice to justice, from racism to solidarity, from hate to love'.[52] How the Kingdom of God and salvation relate to this world was never clearly spelt out. The World Mission Conference in San Antonio confirmed: 'The 'material gospel' and the 'spiritual gospel' have to be one… There is no evangelism without solidarity; there is no Christian solidarity that does not involve sharing the message of God's coming reign.'[53] A document published by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in 2000, 'Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today',[54] finally and explicitly differentiated the terms 'mission' and 'evangelism' as follows: 'Mission' is understood in a holistic way as encompassing both sharing the news of the Gospel by word (*kerygma*), deed (*diakonia*), prayer and worship (*leiturgia*), and the everyday witness of the Christian life (*martyria*), and building up and strengthening people in their relationship with God, each other and creation. Evangelism, 'while not excluding the different dimensions of mission, focuses on explicit and intentional voicing of the gospel, including the invitation to personal conversion to a new life in Christ and to discipleship'.[55]

Evangelicals, meanwhile, took up the challenge by theologians from the South not to overlook the state of the world in their zeal to save souls, and developed a theology of 'mission as transformation'[56] which integrates 'proclamation, evangelism, church planting and social transformation in a seamless whole of Christian mission'.[57] Mission as transformation means

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[48] *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* (Geneva: WCC, 1982), Chapter 5, Sections 31-36. Reprinted in *'You are the Light of the World'. Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC 2005), available online at:
www.mission2005.org/fileadmin/files/mission_statements_web.pdf
[49] *Ecumenical Affirmation,* Section 33.
[50] *Ecumenical Affirmation,* Sections 34-35.
[51] *Ecumenical Affirmation,* Section 10.
[52] *Ecumenical Affirmation,* Section 11.
[53] *The San Antonio Report*, *Your Will Be Done: Mission in Christ's Way,* F.R. Wilson (ed) (Geneva, WCC, 1990), 26.
[54] *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today,* reprinted in *'You Are the Light of the World'.*
[55] *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today,* Section 7.
[56] Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, *Mission as Transformation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009).
[57] Samuel and Sugden, *Mission as Transformation*, back cover.

'an integral relation between evangelism and social change'.[58] Here now, Evangelicals also shift from an understanding of evangelism as producing converts to an understanding of evangelism as faithful witness.

Pentecostal voices were not much heard in this debate (or were – in my opinion wrongly – subsumed under 'Evangelical'). This is probably due to the fact that there was, in the 1980s and 1990s, very little written academic Pentecostal mission theology. But, as Miroslav Volf showed, coining the term 'material salvation', Pentecostal and charismatic evangelism built on an understanding of salvation which, while not 'political', encompassed physical healing, deliverance and liberation as an expression of and a contribution to God's ultimate redemption.[59]

Evangelism and the Church

The ecumenical discussion with its focus on the Kingdom of God in the 1970s and 1980s tended to look at the church very critically. As an instrument witnessing to the Kingdom of God, its shortcomings were glaring. The report of the 1980 World Mission Conference in Melbourne saw the church entangled with capitalism and neo-colonialism and therefore an obstacle to evangelism.[60] But in another section, the report described the church as 'witness to the Kingdom'[61] which had to proclaim the word of God: 'The story of God in Christ is the heart of all evangelism, and this story has to be told, for the life of the present church never fully reveals the love and holiness and power of God in Christ. The telling of the story is an inescapable mandate for the whole church.'[62] This double implication is clear: the church is called to be evangelistic, even though it will always be flawed in conveying the message.

In somewhat similar terms, Pope Paul VI, in his 1976 encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi*,[63] confirmed evangelism as the essential mission of the

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[58] Chris Sugden, *Gospel, Culture and Transformation* (Oxford: Regnum 2000), 23.

[59] Miroslav Volf, 'Materiality of Salvation: An Investigation in the Soteriologies of Liberation and Pentecostal Theologies', in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies,* 26.3 (1989).

[60] E.g. the Report of Section III, 'The Churches and the Poor', *International Review of Mission,* 69.276-77, 539-42. See David Bosch, 'The Melbourne Conference: Between Guilt and Hope', in *International Review of Mission,* 69. 276-77, 394-96.

[61] *Your Kingdom Come: Melbourne, 1980. World Conference on Mission and Evangelism*, reprinted in James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans, *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 1: Basic Statements* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 27-35, Chapter III. See also James A. Scherer, 'Church, Kingdom and *Missio Dei*: Lutheran and Orthodox Correctives to Recent Ecumenical Mission Theology', in Charles van Engen et al (ed), *The Good News of the Kingdom: Mission Theology for the Third Millenium* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock 1993)*,* 87-88.

[62] *Your Kingdom Come,* III, 2.

[63] *Evangelii Nuntiandi.* Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI promulgated on 8th December 1975: www.papalencyclicals.net/Paul06/p6evan.htm.

church while declaring, at the same time, the need of the church itself to be re-evangelized so as to become an appropriate witness.[64]

While Catholics and Ecumenicals looked at the shortcomings of the church, Evangelicals focused mainly on the churches' opportunities in evangelism. This became particularly evident at the Lausanne Movement's conference in Pattaya, Thailand, also in 1980. The role of the church in evangelism was that of a herald which had to speak, and little thought was given to a broader understanding of witness by its life. In addition, the church was defined in exclusivist terms, making nominal (and possibly even all) Catholics and Orthodox legitimate objects of evangelism.[65]

Orthodox influences in the 1980 documents of the WCC opened up a new perspective on the evangelistic role of the church. The 1982 Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism spoke of the 'evangelistic vocation of the church' which was fulfilled, first of all, 'through its internal life of Eucharistic worship, thanksgiving, intercessory prayer', and only then through 'planning for mission and evangelism' and 'a daily life-style of solidarity with the poor'.[66] Sharing in the ministry of Christ as mediator between God and his creation, the church also offered up 'the world's pain and suffering to God in the context of its worship, specifically in intercessory prayer and the Eucharist'.[67] Clearly, Orthodox theology helped to shape an ecumenical understanding of evangelism as a quality of all what the church does, however fragmented and imperfect that may be.

In recent years, ecumenical documents have reflected the role of the church in evangelism in more practical ways. The 2012 WCC Affirmation *Together towards Life*[68] has a whole chapter on local congregations, describing their 'crucial role' in contextualizing the Gospel message and 'forming a community marked by the presence of the risen Christ'.[69] And Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium*,[70] speaks of the church as a pilgrim people which is the 'agent of evangelism', pointing out the 'evangelizing power of popular piety'.[71]

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[64] See also Paul W. Chilcote and Laceye C. Warner, 'Introduction', in Chilcote and Warner, *The Study of Evangelism,* xxiii.

[65] David Bosch, 'Behind Melbourne and Pattaya – a Typology of Two Movements', in *IAMS Newsletter,* 1980/16-17/21.

[66] *Ecumenical Affirmation,* Section 6.

[67] *Ecumenical Affirmation,* Section 6.

[68] *TTL.*

[69] *TTL,* §72-78.

[70] *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium of the Holy Father Francis* (Rome: Vatican, 2013):
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

[71] *Evangelii Gaudium,* §122-26.

Evangelism and Culture: The Issue of Contextualization

The question how the Gospel relates to culture is an enormously complex one and, while discussed particularly at the 1996 World Mission Conference in Salvador de Bahia,[72] has not been resolved satisfactorily. The problem here is: what is meant by 'Gospel', and what by 'culture'? A popular misunderstanding sees contextualization as condensing the Gospel message into a few abstract, 'universal' truths to be 'translated' into different cultures which are seen as clearly defined entities. The Gospel may then change the culture, but the culture cannot change the Gospel.

But in fact, the Gospel comes to us in a variety of already contextual testimonies (i.e. the Gospels and letters), writings shaped by certain cultures and a certain time. For Paul, e.g. the underlying paradigm of the Gospel is the salvation of sinners, while for the Gospel of John, the underlying paradigm is that Jesus came to bring life in its fullness. Neither paradigm is exclusive of the other, but each shapes the reading and understanding of the story of Jesus Christ in certain ways. At the same time, cultures are neither clearly delineated nor static, and always consist of both elements which correspond to the Gospel message and elements which contradict it. Evangelism, in consequence, must be a dynamic process of a continuously renewed communal searching of how the story of Christ can be told[73] for a particular people in a particular place at a particular time – a process in which the 'new' understanding of the Gospel by those who are being evangelized will change both the evangelizing church and the cultural context it lives in. The question of 'syncretism'[74] – a mixture of the Gospel with other elements which darken its message – is one that can never be answered once and for all, but needs to be continuously considered and negotiated. *Together towards Life* remains rather vague when seeing the Gospel 'taking root' in different cultures, challenging, endorsing or transforming them 'for the sake of life',[75] while critically

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[72] The conference documents are published in Christopher Duraisingh (ed), *Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures* (Geneva: WCC ,1998).

[73] Note that telling a story is very different from presenting a propositional truth! James Smith has written convincingly about the need for narratives in Christian formation, and the same need exists in evangelism: James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

[74] There is no room in this short chapter for a deeper discussion on syncretism. In WCC documents, it is often pointed out that the accusation of syncretism is used against churches and movements which deviate from 'Western' forms of Christianity. A good short overview of the ecumenical debate is found in James A. Maxey, *From Orality to Orality: A New Paradigm for Contextual Translation of the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 21-28. For an evangelical debate on this issue, see Gailyn Van Rheenen (ed), *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996).

[75] *TTL,* §100.

noting – in view of the connection of evangelism with colonial powers – that 'evangelism by those who enjoy economic power or cultural hegemony risks distorting the gospel'.[76]

It is worth noting here that some widespread practices of contextual evangelism are almost completely ignored within ecumenical documents even though they are hotly debated among Evangelicals and Pentecostals.[77] A case in point is the 'power evangelism'[78] practised by, among others, indigenous West African Pentecostal churches.[79] People who live in constant fear of demons and witchcraft, and blame them for every problem from illness through unemployment to marital problems, are told that Christ can free and protect them, and that the power of the Holy Spirit can change their lives from poverty to fullness.[80]

Evangelism in the 21st Century: Broad Consensus, New Challenges

Why evangelize, and how, and towards what goal? Ecumenical consensus is that evangelism is a consequence of what God has done, of his love and the renewal and joy he gives.[81] An evangelism so motivated will work 'in

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[76] *TTL,* §98.

[77] This is even more remarkable when one considers that those practices have been developed at the margins, and *TTL* has a whole chapter on 'Mission from the Margins'.

[78] The actual term 'power evangelism' may go back to American John Wimber; see John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Evangelism* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1986); but the practice started among Pentecostals and charismatics in the global South and is strongly influenced by traditional religion. See J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, 'Pulling Down Strongholds: Evangelism, Principalities and Powers and the African Pentecostal Imagination', in *International Review of Mission,* 96. 382/383, 306-21.

[79] As far as I could ascertain, the practice is not mentioned in any of the official WCC documents. J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu's paper, 'Pulling down Strongholds' seems to be the only case of this topic being discussed at an ecumenical gathering.

[80] For background reading on these issues, see Henning Wrogemann and Claudia Währisch-Oblau (eds), *Witchcraft, Demons and Deliverance – A Global Conversation on an Intercultural Challenge* (Münster, Germany: LIT-Verlag, 2015). For a Pentecostal discussion on this kind of evangelism, see Katherine Attanasi and Amos Yong, *Pentecostalism and Prosperity: The Socio-Economics of the Global Charismatic Movement* (New York: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2012). Evangelicals deal with this in *The Cape Town Commitment: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action* (Cape Town: The Lausanne Movement, 2011), downloadable from www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment, Section IIE.5.

[81] The Evangelical *Cape Town Commitment* sees mission and evangelism as motivated by love – the love of the Triune God, of the Gospel, of the world, of the people (*The Cape Town Commitment: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action* (Cape Town: The Lausanne Movement, 2011): www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment).   The   Apostolic   Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* of Pope Francis speaks of the joy of the Gospel which

Christ's way';[82] it will be humble, relational, dialogical and respectful of other religions and different cultural practices.[83] Talking about the Christ we love means that we are not introducing a propositional truth, but telling a story about what God has done for the world in Christ and about the Kingdom we hope for, inviting people to follow Christ and letting their lives be changed. How we talk about this is always shaped by our own context, but may be understood differently according to the context of the person listening. The worldwide church, flawed as it is, is the prime witness to the Gospel in what it preaches and what it does, but it also acknowledges that God is at work outside and before it, and gladly identifies the traces of this work. Evangelism is not only an occasional activity, but a constitutive practice of a 'missional' church which is open to change and receptive to newcomers.[84] Evangelism is an expression of discipleship and aims at it, knowing that conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit.[85]

It is unfortunate that these theological considerations often have little to do with what happens on the ground. Evangelism as practised by Protestant or Pentecostal local congregations all over the world far too frequently follows the old American model, introducing the Gospel via the 'Four Spiritual Laws'[86] in personal encounters or via 'evangelism crusades'. Other Pentecostal and charismatic churches engage in power evangelism, proclaiming a message that promises health and wealth to those who believe in Christ.[87] How the ecumenical consensus on evangelism can be translated into practices and materials which will actually be put to use by the majority of Christians at the grassroots remains an open challenge.

Evangelism today is no longer the white Christian's burden but has become truly globalized. Koreans evangelize in Tanzania, Brazilians in the Philippines, and Nigerians in Ukraine. As all of them are active in areas

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overflows into evangelism (*Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium of the Holy Father Francis* (Rome: Vatican, 2013):
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html). And *TTL* sees evangelism flowing from the experience of God's love, redemption and renewal.
[82] *TTL,* §86-92.
[83] See also *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World. Recommendations for Conduct* (2011): https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world.
[84] Acts 10–15 shows paradigmatically that evangelism changes not only those who are evangelized, but the evangelizers as well.
[85] See also Paul W. Chilcote and Laceye C. Warner, 'Introduction', in Chilcote and Warner, *The Study of Evangelism.*
[86] This little tract has been translated into dozens of languages and has sold many millions of copies. The text can be found at http://crustore.org/four-laws-english.
[87] This generalization may be too broad, but builds on my 25 years of experience with local churches in Asia, Africa and Europe.

where churches already exist, the question of 'proselytism', motivating members of one church or denomination to join another one, will become ever more urgent. Can churches with very different theologies and practices live together in one area, accept each other, and even co-operate in evangelism? And are existing churches ready to be re-evangelized by missionaries from a different context and tradition?[88]

At the end, I would like to suggest looking at Luke 10:1-9 as a biblical model for evangelism in the 21st century. Jesus sends his disciples without money or material protection, and asks them to become the guests of those whom they want to evangelize.[89] Twice he tells them to eat what they are offered, a potent image of an outreach that is totally dependent on the addressees and accepts what they have to offer before offering something to them. Such evangelism is vulnerable, trusting in God's power and people's goodwill, but it stands under the promise that God will do great things.

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[88] This is one of the questions raised by the 'reverse mission' from the global South to the global North: see Claudia Währisch-Oblau, *The Missionary Self-Conception of Pentecostal/Charismatic Church Leaders from the Global South in Europe: Bringing Back the Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

[89] This is in marked contrast to common practices and theologies of evangelism as hospitality which aim at inviting people into our community. These theologies are valuable as hospitality is a vanishing virtue in many parts of the world, but could do well to be complemented by a theology of being guests.

CHURCH, MISSION AND UNITY

Jacques Matthey

The topic will be addressed in three parts which should ideally be read in parallel: co-operation in mission, church and mission, and finally mission and unity. There is overlap between them and inevitably, the reader will also find links with other chapters of this book.[1] The chronological ordering of issues does not imply that these pertain to that period only.

Co-operation in Mission

With regard to missionary co-operation, the twentieth century was shaped by two partly contradictory dynamics in the Protestant world.[2]

The first leads to more co-operation. This was the clear purpose of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference, in particular of its Commission VIII. Experiences on the 'mission fields' had proved the need for working together in order to avoid duplication and excessive competition, and to enhance efficiency of the Christian testimony among peoples of other or no religion. The need for comity arrangements was particularly urged by the few, but influential, Asian delegates who pointed to the disaster of division for witness in their regions. Edinburgh was a step forward insofar as the organisers had succeeded in calling evangelical Protestants and high church Anglicans to debate on the practicalities of mission, thus enlarging the range of participants in comparison with earlier international mission conferences. Edinburgh however had very few contacts with Roman Catholic or Orthodox churches.[3]

The 1910 event became historic in particular thanks to its decision to create a continuation committee that soon set up the *International Review*

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[1] For a more detailed study of various perspectives related to mission and unity, one must refer to John Gibaut and Knud Jörgensen (eds), *Called to Unity for the Sake of Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014).

[2] Cf Jacques Matthey, 'Continuités et ruptures entre les deux conférences d'Edimbourg 1910 et 2010', in *Perspectives missionnaires,* No 60 (2010/2), 21-37.

[3] Cf the introduction to the report of Commission VIII: World Missionary Conference 1910*, Report of Commission VIII, Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity, with supplement: presentation and discussion of the report in the Conference on 21st June 1910* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 1-11. Recent presentations of Edinburgh 1910 and its preparations include: Keith Clements, *Faith on the Frontier – A Life of J.H. Oldham* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark and Geneva: WCC, 1999); Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2009).

of Missions (IRM). Regular meetings plus a theological review were to become essential instruments for dialogue, the exchange of news and reflections on mission theory and practice. The International Missionary Council (IMC), created in 1921, and the national mission councils which made up its membership, strengthened their co-operation, including that with other ecumenical movements, such as Life and Work. Following the creation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948,[4] there was intensive dialogue and cross-fertilisation with the IMC and mission councils, leading to the integration of both bodies in 1961 and a decisive widening of the scope of co-operation, more and more including Orthodox churches and, after Vatican II, also Roman Catholic mission organisations with whom there were many studies on common witness.[5] Contacts with individual Pentecostals increased from the 1950s on,[6] without yet leading to lasting or real co-operation.

The second dynamic tended to more separation in mission work. After 1910, some of the most conservative movements, influenced by the fundamentalist approach, distanced themselves from the IMC,[7] seen as too liberal and political. The increased links between IMC and WCC after World War II and the widening of the understanding of mission in the 1950s reinforced uneasiness with such developments among Evangelicals. Some IMC member councils disagreed with the plans to merge IMC and WCC, and despite a good majority of councils voting for integration, the debate on the wisdom of closer links with more ecumenical circles never ceased.[8] Theological and socio-political developments in the 1960s

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[4] IMC and WCC in formation had already created together the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) in 1946.

[5] Cf. among others: Joint Working Group between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church, 'The Challenge of Proselytism and the Calling to Common Witness', 25th September 1995, in J. Gros, H. Meyer and W.G. Rush (eds), *Growth in Agreement II, Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, and Geneva: WCC, 2000), 891-99; WCC, 'Towards Common Witness: A Call to Adopt Responsible Relationships in Mission and to Renounce Proselytism', document commended by the 1997 WCC Central Committee to all member-churches, in Jacques Matthey (ed), *You are the Light of the World: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 39-58.

[6] Walter Hollenweger described the early contacts between Pentecostals and ecumenical representatives in the chapter on 'ecumenical roots' in his major work on Pentecostalism. Noteworthy are the pages on David J. Du Plessis, who participated in the 1952 Willingen IMC conference, later also in WCC assemblies. See W. J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 350-56.

[7] Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 320-24.

[8] Mark Laing, *From Crisis to Creation: Lesslie Newbigin and the Reinvention of Christian Mission* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012). Laing presents in detail the

reinforced Evangelicals' critiques of the WCC. In 1974 the debate reached a peak with the organisation of a worldwide mission event in Lausanne, Switzerland, and the creation of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (Lausanne Committee). Thanks to the strong influence of Latin American Evangelicals and the wisdom of some of Lausanne's leadership, the break was not total. The *Lausanne Covenant*, extremely critical of WCC positions as expressed in the Uppsala Assembly of 1968 and the Bangkok mission conference of 1973, offered nonetheless some points of connection with a recognition of the importance of witness also in the socio-political field.

Indeed, from the mid-1970s on, signs of common understanding re-emerged in the debates. One year after the 1974 *Lausanne Covenant*, Pope Paul VI published the encyclical *Evangelii nuntiandi* that was inspirational, thanks to its holistic approach. In the aftermath of the 1980 Melbourne conference, the WCC and its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME)[9] faced up to the challenge of Liberation Theology, the Evangelical critique and the Roman Catholic integral approach in a synthetic affirmation that became, like the other mentioned documents, a cornerstone for new approaches to co-operation.[10]

It took many years to build up new trust and deconstruct false images on all sides. One example of this was the letter sent by participants at the CWME San Antonio conference to those attending the Manila Lausanne meeting, pointing to similarities in convictions that should break the barriers. Still, for many years, the two competing mission movements, Lausanne and CWME, have continued to organise mission conferences at regional or world levels, sometimes during the same year.[11] Among the signs of increasing dialogue, one should mention the Stuttgart consultation and declaration on evangelism by representatives of Evangelical mission bodies, such as Lausanne or the World Evangelical Fellowship and of CWME in 1987.[12] Contacts with the Pentecostal-charismatic world

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debates on integration within IMC, in particular also the position of conservative evangelicals.

[9] In 1961, following integration, there was in the WCC a Division on World Mission and Evangelism with a Divisional Committee. The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) was the name for what we would now call the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism. After the 1973 Bangkok mission conference and the 1975 Nairobi Assembly of the WCC, the names were changed in the by-laws. The Divisional Committee became the CWME Commission, and the Commission was renamed Conference.

[10] Cf. Jacques Matthey, 'Mission et évangélisation dans l'optique de Lausanne, Rome et Genève', in *Perspectives Missionnaires*, 10 (1985), 36-50.

[11] Melbourne and Pattaya in 1980, San Antonio and Manila in 1989. In 2010, Lausanne held its third major world meeting (after Lausanne and Manila) despite the holding of the common 2010 Edinburgh conference.

[12] Published in Raymond Fung (ed), *A Monthly Letter on Evangelism,* 10/11, October-November 1987 (Geneva: CWME, 1987).

remained difficult or non-existent for much too long a time. There were exceptions to that, e.g. in 1980 with a study process and a consultation bringing together in Bossey, Switzerland, senior leaders of WCC and of some of the main charismatic churches and movements.[13] Bilateral dialogues by the Roman Catholic Church allowed for theological debates with Pentecostals. At WCC level, it was only from the 1990s onwards that really significant contacts started again, resulting in the creation of a dialogue group between the WCC and individual Pentecostals in the year 2000. CWME had, since its creation, left the door open for delegates from non-WCC member-churches, both at commission and conference levels. Following the debates within WCC on a new common understanding and vision of ecumenism and the changed ecclesial landscape of world Christianity, mission work in WCC opened the door even more to co-operation in its programmatic work also with Evangelicals and Pentecostals, which became particularly visible in the 2005 Athens conference on healing and reconciliation.[14]

The discussions and processes leading to the creation of the Global Christian Forum (GCF) are the latest example of a successful approach to unity through co-operation. The GCF succeeded in bringing together Christians and leaders from nearly all significant traditions, thanks to careful building of trust and a renewed dialogue method.[15] Mission issues feature regularly in GCF meetings. The GCF process also contributed to the possibility of a common planning and organisation of the Edinburgh centenary conference and its study process. Edinburgh 2010 showed a growing willingness to co-operate in mission, based on common convictions expressed in the documents and the message. It did not succeed in bringing to the table all major segments of world Christianity, but a larger part than was possible at earlier meetings. Frontier missions stood aside and other parts of the Christian family, such as many charismatic churches and movements, were not really represented. Unfortunately, too many other church world events took place that same year, including the Lausanne Cape Town conference, so that the witness of Edinburgh 2010 to unity in mission was weakened. Nevertheless, two years later and for the

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[13] A. Bittlinger (ed), *The Church is Charismatic. The World Council of Churches and the Charismatic Renewal* (Geneva: WCC, Renewal and Congregational Life, 1981).

[14] Jacques Matthey (ed), *Come Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile! Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2008). Since 1999, there was also CWME participation in meetings of the Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA).

[15] Meetings of the GCF emphasise the sharing of personal faith stories by participants. Huibert van Beek (ed), *Revisioning Christian Unity: The Global Christian Forum* (Oxford: Regnum, 2009) contains the records of the first Global Christian Forum gathering in Limuru, Kenya, in 2007, and a brief survey of proceedings leading to that first worldwide GCF gathering.

very first time in history, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and the WCC were able to publish an important document on mission together.[16]

Mission and Church

It is well known that Edinburgh 1910 could take place only because debates on ecclesiology had been banned from the conference. What people are less aware of, however, was the intensity and wisdom of the debates precisely on ecclesiology in Commission VIII.

Delegates attending its meetings discerned two clearly conflicting views on church matters. One group considered that agreement in faith on matters such as the Trinity, the forgiveness of sins, life everlasting, and Christian scripture as authority and guide, were sufficient as conditions for real unity, while other matters, as important as they might be, were to be classified as secondary and subordinate. In the opinion of a second group of delegates, matters of church order could not be considered secondary, but were a means of grace essential to the understanding of divine revelation and had to be shared in mission to new Christians. The commission agreed to include the discussion in its report to the conference plenary.[17] I refer to it mainly to point to the awareness people had right at the beginning of the ecumenical movement that ecclesiological issues did matter for a proper reflection on mission.

The issue became prominent after 1948 and the intense contacts between IMC and WCC. A milestone was the definition of ecumenism reached at the WCC Central Committee in Rolle, Switzerland, in 1951: 'We would especially draw attention to the recent confusion in the use of the word "ecumenical". It is important to insist that this word… is properly used to describe everything that relates to the whole task of the whole Church to bring the Gospel to the whole world. It therefore covers equally the missionary movement and the movement towards unity, and must not be used to describe the latter in contradistinction to the former… Our concern in this study is the recovery in thought, in action, and in organization, of the true unity between the Church's mission to the world (its Apostolate) and the Church's obligation to be one.'[18] This position became the basis for the negotiations towards integration of IMC and WCC, realised in 1961.

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[16] 'Christian Witness in a multi-religious World: Recommendations for Conduct', in *Resource Book, WCC Tenth Assembly, Busan, 2013* (Geneva: WCC 2013), 77-81. The document is referred to in *TTL,* §90.

[17] World Missionary Conference 1910, *Report of Commission VIII*, 131-39. See also Samuel Kobia, 'Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity: A World Council of Churches Perspective', in David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Edinburgh 2010. Mission Then and Now* (Oxford: Regnum, 2009), 241-42.

[18] WCC, *Minutes and Reports of the Fourth Meeting of the Central Committee, Rolle (Switzerland), August 4-11, 1951* (Geneva: WCC, 1951), 65.

There were serious debates on the relevance of integration. On one hand, it was understood as the embodiment of theological convictions such as the one reached in Rolle, meaning that the church bears responsibility for mission and that the visible unity of the church matters for mission, as well as mission for the visible unity of the church. Following 1961, several mission bodies ceased to exist as independent organisations and became church departments. It was hoped that such institutional reformation would both strengthen missionary outreach and empower local churches for witness.[19] International mission structures were transformed into bodies of church co-operation. Partnership in mission was to happen between independent churches, acting in full responsibility, and not any more between a church in the South and a mission organisation in the North.

On the other hand, fears were expressed that integration into church structures could limit missionary freedom and jeopardise the interdenominational and international character of some of the main missionary societies. Why should mission work become dependent on church hierarchy priorities? This was a power issue, but also a theological dispute on the balance between two ministries: mission militants tend, in a centrifugal dynamic, to cross barriers and form new communities that lead to new inculturations and interpretations of the gospel. Their witness can contribute to a questioning of the existing understanding of unity and harmony of a particular church or community. Bishops or church presidents often understand the ministry of unity in the sense of keeping existing communion structures and habits. For them, mission work can be experienced as disturbing and counter-productive.

These problems were heavily debated in the years preceding the decision in favour of integration. Mission bodies with strong Evangelical theology and spirituality were hesitant to join the WCC as a church body, and within WCC, mainly Orthodox churches feared that integration would enhance proselytism. Many of these questions remain relevant in the debate between churches and mission departments or para-church structures.[20] In a post-modern and globalised world, however, the issue has moved from strictly structural debates to the consideration of complementary roles and criteria for authentic relationships. 'While para-church movements can find accountability and direction through ecclesial mooring, para-church structures can help churches not to forget their dynamic apostolic character.'[21]

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[19] The remarkable CWME study on the missionary structure of the congregation was an attempt to empower the witness of local communities as a consequence of integration. It influenced in particular congregations in the Western world.

[20] In 1980 I was of the opinion that Melbourne had reached a maximum of integration. Cf. Jacques Matthey, 'Integration of Church and Mission: the Challenge of Melbourne', in *International Review of Mission* (October 1981), 259-66.

[21] *TTL,* §64. CWME, the main embodiment and champion of integration has *de facto* since 1961 offered a space for dialogue and co-operation between WCC

Integration highlighted the importance of the United/Uniting church movement which always understood itself as a support for mission. Based on an understanding of unity as organic unity, overcoming denominational differences, these churches have played an essential role in the ecumenical movement by pushing the issue of church and mission and the need for a vision of unity as a core element of mission theology.[22]

In the 1990s, the term 'missional church' emerged in the North American discussion with the intention of joining ecclesiological and missiological perspectives within a *missio Dei* approach and discerning their impact on local churches' self-understanding and witness.[23] Soon this became a lively and creative international network of people concerned with witness of churches in post-modern contexts, with influence both on Evangelical and ecumenical thinking on church and mission within a *missio Dei* approach.[24]

Key to the debates on the relationship between church and mission is the connection between Faith and Order (F&O) and CWME. The relationship between these two WCC commissions, both indirect outcomes of Edinburgh, has not always been warm and respectful. However, when they were co-operating, this had a positive influence on the WCC's struggle for unity. Only more recent examples can be shared here.[25] In the mid-1980s, both commissions entered such a period of co-operation and dialogue following the publication of two major papers, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) and the *Ecumenical Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism* (EA). In the debates, CWME would emphasise diversity in

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member-churches, earlier IMC member-councils, churches not related to WCC, and a large spectrum of mission and para-church structures. The progressive enlargement of membership possibilities in CWME's by-laws testifies to the increasing openness to quite diverse mission actors. In that sense, the criteria mentioned in §64 replace earlier moves towards full structural integration at national or regional levels.

[22] Thomas Best, 'United and Uniting Churches as Models of Mission and Unity', in Gibaut and Jörgensen, *Called to Unity*, 141-53. cf. *TTL*, §68.

[23] Darrell Guder (ed), *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

[24] Reference is made to 'The Gospel and our Culture Network'. Martin Reppenhagen, 'The Missional Church and the "Homo areligiosus"', in Viggo Mortensen and Andreas Nielsen (eds), *Walk Humbly with the Lord: Church and Mission Engaging Plurality* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2010), 167-83. In the same book, Darrell Guder also criticises the fact that 'missional' has become a buzzword and reformulates the original intention of the introduction of that terminology. Darrell Guder, 'Theological Formation for Missional Practice', in Mortensen and Nielsen, *Walk Humbly*, 307-08.

[25] On the recent convergence between F&O and CWME, cf. also John Gibaut, 'From Unity and Mission to Koinonia and Missio Dei: Convergences in WCC Ecclesiology and Missiology towards Edinburgh 2010', in Gibaut and Jörgensen, *Called to Unity*, 73-88.

unity and a contextualised approach to church and mission, rooted in a kenotic Christology, whereas F&O leant more weight on unity in diversity, the theological basis for ordained ministry, and the reference to the classical confessions of faith, traditions and ecclesiologies. Common convictions were also reached, as is best illustrated by the following quote: 'Mission belongs to the very nature of the church. Mission is also the response of a community of faith and love to the action of the Triune God, Creator of all, who calls the community members to be disciples and sends them forth into the world. All aspects of the church's life… Worship, witness, service… are shaped by the missionary nature and vocation of its very life.' This is taken from a group report submitted to the F&O Plenary Commission in Budapest 1989![26]

Following the Canberra Assembly, co-operation between both commissions became less intense until a fresh start was made in 2000, which introduced fifteen years of close dialogue and increasingly common understanding on some basics such as the reference to *missio Dei*, the specific role of the church in God's mission, the apostolic dynamics of church and Christian life, a holistic understanding of witness and its scope, increasingly including not only the whole of humanity, but also the whole of creation.[27] CWME gave more attention to ecclesiological issues than it had done in past, when it had a tendency to oppose a *missio Dei* theology to an approach emphasising the witness of the church.[28] F&O's study processes pointed much more often to mission than was the case in earlier papers. The specificities of each methodology did not disappear, F&O still giving more attention to the classical ecclesiological differences that had grown out of historical traditions, in particular the denominational ones, whereas CWME rooted its reflections more clearly in contextual or liberational theologies, and gave more attention to developments in the Evangelical and Pentecostal movements.[29] The result of such intense collaboration and dialogue is visible in the two reference documents adopted in 2012 by the WCC Central Committee and presented to the 2013

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[26] Thomas Best (ed), *Faith and Order 1985-1989. The Commission Meeting at Budapest 1989* (WCC Faith and Order Paper No. 148 (1990)), 285.

[27] Cf. the concluding remarks on the common consultation in Höxter-Brenkhausen in 2000 by F&O and CWME which I wrote, as secretary of the CWME, together with Alan Falconer, director of F&O: 'Editorial', in *International Review of Mission,* 90.358 (July 2001), thematic issue on ecclesiology and mission, 227-31.

[28] Around the same period, the World Evangelical Fellowship's (now the World Evangelical Alliance) Missions Commission also gave more attention to ecclesiological considerations when reflecting on mission. See W.D. Taylor (ed), *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker and WEF, 2000).

[29] The most recent developments within F&O, and in particular the nomination of a new director from the global South, could increase the similarities in theological approaches between the two commissions.

Busan Assembly: *The Church – Towards a Common Vision* and *Together towards Life – Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*.

Mission and Unity

Already at Edinburgh 1910, some were convinced that unity was not only a condition for missions' success, but also an aim of mission: '… for the achievement of the ultimate and highest end of all missionary work – the establishment in these non-Christian lands of Christ's one Church – real unity must be attained.'[30]

Several contributions of mission work and theology to the search for the visible unity of the church have already appeared in the first parts of this chapter. Other specific mission approaches to unity also deserve attention. Major mission agencies were, at least within Protestantism, structurally interdenominational and overcame also national barriers up to a certain degree. As such, they embodied aspects of visible unity which were out of reach for many individual churches. In those cases where from the 1970s onwards such mission agencies could transform themselves into church communions in and for mission, the link between church and mission unity was even strengthened. Unfortunately, cultural and economic developments summarised under the term 'post-modernity' increasingly challenge the relevance of such church communities for mission. Charity regulations favour individualism and denominationalism also in mission.[31]

Cross-cultural missionaries or fraternal workers, in particular when they assume their ministry as servants, abandoning earlier dominating roles, are also visible signs of the catholicity of the church, of unity over cultural or national, more seldom of denominational, barriers. This sign-role gives them lasting value in terms of mission and unity in North and South, even when or where their technical competences might no longer be needed.

Evangelism is most closely related to unity. Indeed, evangelism can even be considered the test of true ecumenism.[32] This is particularly the case when evangelism is understood as calling to faith in Christ and to

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[30] World Missionary Conference 1910, *Report of Commission VIII*, 5.

[31] In 2002, CWME and three historic mission bodies, Cevaa – Community of Churches in Mission, the Council for World Mission and the United Evangelical Mission together convened a major consultation that allowed for a reflection on the lasting value of, and new challenges to, their vision and practice of partnership in mission: *International Review of Mission,* 91.363 (October 2002), Toward the Fullness of Life: Intercontextual Relationships in Mission. That same consultation provided important thematic input for the planning of the 2005 World Mission Conference.

[32] An expression used several times by Philip Potter, late CWME director and WCC General Secretary. Cf. Jacques Matthey, 'Evangelism, still the Enduring Test of our Ecumenical – and Missionary Calling', in *International Review of Mission,* 96, Nos 382/383 (July/October 2007), 355 (see also references in footnote 1).

discipleship as a member of a church. Authentically ecumenical evangelism happens when such calling respects existing churches and leaves interested non-church-related persons free to choose the community they want to join, which may not necessarily be the church of the evangelist. Such evangelism truly contributes to unity, but requires at least some recognition of authentic Christian teaching and life in other churches. The related and much debated issue is the distinction between evangelism and proselytism, the latter being seen in mission matters as the major obstacle to unity. It is not the task of this chapter to go into details. Suffice to refer to the bilateral dialogues between the Roman Catholic Church and Pentecostals in the 1990s, where commonalities and differences appeared clearly. The Pentecostal team in the dialogues affirmed that 'proselytism is a disrespectful and uncharitable recruitment of committed members of Christian communities by persons from other Christian communities… All those who have not repented, believed and are not following Christ are to be evangelized'.[33] Most could agree with parts of the definition, but not with the understanding of who can be considered an authentic church member, due to differing ecclesiologies and soteriologies.

After the IMC Willingen Conference in 1952, missiological perspectives opened up to renewed consideration of God's own mission, encompassing a much larger horizon than just church co-operation or unity. Social, racial and economic issues entered the agenda of missiology with unprecedented weight, although in authentic heritage from earlier IMC debates. WCC priorities such as the Programme to Combat Racism, the struggle for human rights in opposition to dictatorial regimes, increasing attention to the plight and agency of the poor, both in and outside churches, development and gender issues, but also the new interreligious dialogue programme, led mission theologies to consider unity as a challenge not only for Christians, but for the whole of humanity.[34] Unity as a goal of God's own mission in the world brought Christians and churches to involve themselves in witness to and with the world on a large scale, encompassing all mentioned conflict areas.[35] The horizon for unity was nothing less than the Kingdom of God. These developments grew also in the Roman Catholic Church and among open Evangelicals, particularly in the global South. At times, concern for

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[33] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Ad Ultimum Terrae: Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness in the Roman Catholic Pentecostal Dialogue (1990-1997)* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999), 204-05. This remains the key study on that most important dialogue and as such also on major issues related to evangelism and proselytism.

[34] The same is true for F&O. Following the Uppsala Assembly in 1968, F&O launched a major study process in 1971 on 'The Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind', revived in Lima in 1982 under a new heading. See *Church and World: The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community* (Geneva: WCC Faith and Order Paper No. 151 (1990)).

[35] *TTL,* §45.

the unity of churches lost visibility, at least in missiology linked with the WCC, in particular where the notion of ecumenism would be enlarged to mean dialogue and relationships with people of all religions.[36] In more recent years, the issue of inclusivity has increasingly shaped the debate on mission and unity.

Several very active networks related to CWME enriched the approach towards inclusivity and unity, both in church and society.[37] As one embodiment of the year-long study process on Gospel and Cultures, the multicultural ministry network helped to face challenges resulting from mission and migration for church communities in terms of the capacity of people from different cultural backgrounds to live and celebrate God together. Due to the ever-increasing number of migrants all over the world, this challenge to unity will become key in any future missiology.[38] In terms of social justice, the Urban and Rural Mission network (URM) never ceased to challenge missiologists and mission practitioners to consider justice as a pre-condition for genuine unity, both in church and society.[39] Most of these concerns are shared by the networks of Indigenous Peoples who in addition draw on age-old wisdoms also for the inclusion of nature, environment and creation in the understanding of mission and unity.

The contribution of the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) to the issue of mission and unity deserves special mention. Together with F&O, EDAN undertook a serious study on challenges brought by people living with disability to church community life and service. Without due consideration of the physical, economic and spiritual needs of people living with disability, without thankful attention to and reception of their specific and unique gifts by the community, no authentic unity can be attained. '(The church) is an earthly reflection of a divine unity that is at the same time worshipped as Trinity. It is a community of people with different yet complementary gifts. It is a vision of wholeness as well as of healing, of caring and of sharing at once… Every child and every adult, those with disabilities and those without disabilities alike, will bring

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[36] In my personal view, an unfortunate terminological development. 'Wider ecumenism' should be restricted to contacts and co-operation with all churches and Christian movements that are not participating in the classical ecumenical movement. For the other, essential, mission mandate, it is clearer to refer to 'Interreligious dialogue' or 'interreligious relations'.

[37] *TTL,* §14.

[38] See, among many other books, Jehu J. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom. Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008); Sebastian C.H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008), on this matter in particular the last chapter.

[39] D. Mukarjee and K. Labi, 'Urban Rural Mission' in N. Lossky, J.M. Bonino, J. Pobee, T.F. Stransky, G. Wainwright, P. Webb (eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement,* 2nd edition (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 1182-1184. The URM network was related programmatically to CWME until 2009.

specific and special gifts and talents to the church… thus we can truly be 'A Church of All and for All' – a church which reflects God's intention for humankind.'[40]

The EDAN interim statement refers and contributes to late twentieth and early twenty-first century developments in the search for mission and unity. Since the early 1990s, the term *koinonia* has shaped ecclesiological reflections on unity.[41] Around the period of the 1991 Canberra Assembly, mission started to be understood in terms of healing and reconciliation, leading to this being a strong emphasis in the years 2000-2005. If God's mission aims at uniting all that exists, reconciling all in Christ through means that only God fully knows, then unity and reconciliation are the core of the gospel message.[42] Unity should not only be understood in terms of a means to give credibility to the gospel. It is the content of the mission of the church to point to Christ's offer of personal reconciliation with God, to discern where the Holy Spirit empowers people of all convictions to heal wounds of divisions, to strive for human and social community, and to overcome all barriers on the way to visible church unity. The reflection on political reconciliation processes highlighted the conditions that allow for reconciliation in justice, avoiding false peace and disillusionment. In turn, this also brought wisdom to the difficulties and conditions involved in the struggle for church unity – these are to be understood as processes of reconciliation. In such a perspective, it is part of the church's mission to struggle for visible unity, if the gospel is to have any meaning for a world in conflict.[43]

As *TTL* rightly hints, the various aspects of unity are interdependent. Neglecting one might jeopardise the other: 'Attempts to achieve unity must be in concert with the biblical call to seek justice. Our call to do justice may sometimes involve breaking false unities that silence and oppress. Genuine unity always entails inclusivity and respect for others.'[44]

The enlargement of the vision of God's mission that started in the 1950s reached a provisionally final stage in including the whole of creation in the understanding of the relation between mission and unity: 'There is a need to open up our reflections on church and unity to an even wider

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[40] 'A church of All and for All. An Interim Statement', in A.S. Fritzson and S. Kabue, *Interpreting Disability: A Church of All and for All* (Geneva: WCC, 2004), §85 and 89. A more recent EDAN statement, taking into account the way in which churches responded to the challenges, is in process of revision.

[41] The term became prominent at the 1991 Canberra Assembly of the WCC. Cf. also Gibaut, 'From Unity and Mission to Koinonia'.

[42] See the CWME study document for Athens, 'Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation', in Matthey, *You are the Light of the World*, 90-126. Cf. also *TTL*, §19 and 20.

[43] Jacques Matthey, 'Some reflections on the significance of Athens', in Matthey, *Come Holy Spirit*, 327-41.

[44] *TTL*, §69.

understanding of unity: the unity of humanity and even the cosmic unity of the whole of God's creation.'[45] Both the common message issued by the 2010 Edinburgh Conference and the recent WCC mission document – as well as Evangelical, Orthodox and Catholic positions – now include creation as an integral part of God's and our mission. Unity then provides the horizon of our faith and hope in referring to the eschatological restoration of creation, the elimination of all suffering and evil, and the full communion of all that exists with God. 'The Triune God invites the whole creation to the Feast of Life, through Jesus Christ who came 'that they may have life, and may have it in all its fullness' (John 10:10, REB), through the Holy Spirit who affirms the vision of the reign of God, 'Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth!' (Isaiah 65:17, KJV).'[46]

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[45] *TTL,* §61.
[46] *TTL,* §112.

WORSHIP

Ruth A. Meyers

Over the course of the twentieth century, renewal of worship has gone hand-in-hand with the ecumenical movement. By the end of the century, the diversity of liturgical expression that emerged in western Christianity during the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation had begun to coalesce in a common liturgical structure shared among a number of worshipping traditions.[1] Christians from many different traditions are more open than ever to borrowing texts, music and ritual practices from one another. Yet the rise of Pentecostalism has also meant a continuing breadth of Christian worship practices and patterns.

These liturgical developments proceeded in large measure apart from twentieth-century missiological scholarship and practice. Anglican scholar J.G. Davies began his 1966 book *Worship and Mission* with the lament that 'worship and mission are treated as two totally distinct objects of theological investigation; they are placed in isolated compartments without possibility of cross-fertilization and without the question of their unity being raised at all'.[2] By the end of the twentieth century, however, the situation had begun to change, as Lutheran liturgical scholar Thomas Schattauer noted: 'Much recent reflection about liturgy and mission has been motivated by questions about inculturation or contextualization in those parts of the world that have received patterns of worship from European and North American missionaries. The advent of a post-Christian era in the West has encouraged significant reflection about the forms of worship appropriate to this new missional situation.'[3]

The Liturgical Movement

Beginning in the early twentieth century, a grassroots liturgical movement spread through Europe and North America, fostering renewal and revitalization of worship in Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran

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[1] Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 645-51; Clayton J. Schmit, *Sent and Gathered: A Worship Manual for the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 57-78.

[2] J.G. Davies, *Worship and Mission* (New York: Association Press, 1967 [1966]), 9.

[3] Thomas H. Schattauer, 'Liturgical Assembly as Locus of Mission', in T.H. Schattauer (ed), *Inside Out: Worship in an Age of Mission* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press), 1.

churches, and to some extent in churches in the Reformed and Methodist traditions. Building upon a rediscovered biblical theology of the church as the mystical body of Christ, leaders of the liturgical movement sought to foster active participation of the entire assembly in worship and to deepen Christian commitment in the world as a visible outworking of the assembly's worship. Although a connection between worship and mission was implicit in the aims of the liturgical movement, leaders of the movement did not explain the evangelical and social implications of worship in terms of mission.[4]

The liturgical movement first flourished in Benedictine abbeys on the European continent: Solesmes in France, Beuron and Maria Laach in Germany, and Maredsous and Mount Cesár in Belgium. It quickly moved beyond the monastery walls. In an address given at the 1909 Malines Conference, Lambert Beauduin from Mount Cesár called for translation of the Latin missal so that the laity could understand and so participate and be formed by the liturgical texts. A Liturgical Week at Louvain, Belgium, followed in 1911, and during Holy Week 1914, the abbey of Maria Laach held a Liturgical Week for lay people. A decade later, the Roman Catholic liturgical movement was launched in the United States at the Benedictine Abbey of St John's in Collegeville, Minnesota.

Development of liturgical scholarship was a key element of the liturgical movement. Discoveries of ancient documents yielded new understandings of the early development of Christian liturgy. New journals and other publications explored the history and theology of liturgy. The classic text *Das christliche Kultmysterium* by Odo Casel, monk of Maria Laach, set forth a theology of the paschal mystery of Christ crucified and risen, a mystery made present in liturgical celebration.[5] *The Shape of the Liturgy* by Anglican Benedictine Gregory Dix identified a fourfold shape of the eucharist (take the bread and wine, bless them, break the bread, give the bread and wine) common to ancient Christian liturgies.[6] Both a theology of paschal mystery and Dix's emphasis on structure have had widespread ecumenical influence.

The liturgical movement went far beyond monasteries and the halls of academia. Lutheran scholar Frank Senn explains, 'The path-breaking work

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[4] For example, in *Worship in Transition: The Liturgical Movement in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Continuum, 1995), John Fenwick and Bryan Spinks note the concurrence of the liturgical movement and the ecumenical movement (Introduction, 3-4), and the characteristics of the liturgical movement that they identify include 'an emphasis on proclamation and social involvement' (Chapter 1, 10-11), but Fenwick and Spinks never mention mission explicitly in their discussion of characteristics.

[5] Odo Casel, *Das christliche Kultmysterium* (Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1932); English trans. *The Mystery of Christian Worship and Other Writings* (Westminster Press, MD: Newman Press and London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962).

[6] Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre Press, 1945).

of the monasteries was disseminated into the wider church through well-attended conferences, congresses, and institutes; and by the work of associations, clubs, centres, and societies that studied the liturgy, published tracts and monographs, conducted conferences and workshops, and modeled liturgical celebrations.'[7] In the Church of England, the Parish Communion movement emerged during the 1930s, as texts by Anglicans Henry de Candole and Gabriel Hebert encouraged a renewed understanding of the corporate nature of eucharistic celebration, drawing from the theology of the Roman Catholic liturgical movement.[8] A decade later, the Parish and People movement in England disseminated the ideas of the liturgical movement. In the Episcopal Church in the United States, Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission was founded in 1946 with similar aims. In the United States during the 1950s, Lutheran liturgical renewal flourished, its leaders borrowing styles of architecture, music, ceremony and vestments from Anglican tradition, and liturgical renewal movements also began in Reformed and Methodist churches.[9]

The Second Vatican Council

In a watershed moment for twentieth-century liturgical renewal, on 4th December 1963, the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church promulgated its first conciliar document, the 'Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy'.[10] The theological principles of the liturgical movement and their practical outworking are evident throughout. A theology of the church as the body of Christ undergirds the document: 'In the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the mystical body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the head and his members.'[11] Liturgy is at the centre of the life of the church, 'the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed' and 'the fount from which all her power flows'.[12] Hence liturgy requires 'full, conscious, and active participation' by all the faithful.[13]

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[7] Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 620.

[8] Henry de Candole, *The Church's Offering: A Brief Study of Eucharistic Worship* (1935); H. de Candole, *The Sacraments and the Church: A Study of the Corporate Nature of the Church* (1935); A. Gabriel Hebert, *Liturgy and Society: The Function of the Church in the Modern World* (London: Faber & Faber, 1935); A. G. Hebert (ed), *The Parish Communion: A Book of Essays* (London: SPCK, 1937).

[9] Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 624-25.

[10] Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Solemnly Promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI, 4th December 1963: www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html (accessed 28th July 2015; hereafter cited as *SC*).

[11] *SC* para 7.

[12] *SC* para 10.

[13] *SC* para 14.

The introductory paragraphs of the Constitution acknowledge the relationship of liturgy with evangelism ('Before men can come to the liturgy, they must be called to faith and to conversion') and to 'the works of charity, piety, and the apostolate'.[14] But neither evangelism nor Christian ministry in the world are acknowledged as aspects of mission, and most of the document focuses on reform of the liturgy. The council called for revision of liturgical books, including texts as well as rubrics guiding ceremonial action. While Latin would remain the foundational liturgical language for the Roman Church, translation into the vernacular would be permitted, and the liturgy could be adapted to different cultures.

Following the promulgation of the Constitution, revision of liturgical books began. A new missal was published in 1970, and regional conferences of bishops were directed to prepare editions in the vernacular.[15] The post-Vatican II reforms adopted many liturgical elements introduced in other churches during the sixteenth-century reformations, including use of the vernacular; a new emphasis on scripture, preaching and congregational song; and communion with both bread and wine. In the late twentieth century, many Protestant churches were influenced by the theology articulated in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and subsequent reforms.[16]

A notable outcome of the post-Vatican II reforms is the emergence of an ecumenical lectionary. In its guidance for revision of the eucharistic liturgy, the Constitution directed, 'The treasures of the bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word.'[17] Proposals for multi-year sequences of readings were advanced during the 1950s in European liturgical centres, owing to the rise of biblical scholarship as well as liturgical studies that show the significance of scripture in Sunday worship and the liturgical year in ancient churches. In 1969, the new three-year *Lectionary for Mass: Sundays and Feast Days* was approved and mandated for use beginning on the first Sunday of Advent 1971.[18]

Soon after the Roman Catholic Church introduced the *Lectionary for Mass*, several North American church bodies adapted it for their own use. Commentaries and homiletical resources soon followed, and pastors began to gather in ecumenical study groups. But each body that introduced the lectionary also revised it in some way. In 1978, the Consultation on Common Texts, an ecumenical body formed in North America in the mid-

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[14] *SC* para 9.

[15] Fenwick and Spinks, *Worship in Transition*, 66-68.

[16] James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993), 147.

[17] *SC* para 51.

[18] Fred Kimball Graham, 'Introduction', in Consultation on Common Texts, *The Revised Common Lectionary, Twentieth Anniversary Annotated Edition* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), xiii-xv.

1960s to develop agreed English-language versions of commonly used liturgical texts, turned its attention to lectionary issues. Their work led to the *Common Lectionary* in 1983, and a process of study and trial use resulted in the 1993 *Revised Common Lectionary*. This lectionary has been adopted in many churches throughout the world, extending far beyond English-speaking churches.[19] It has fostered ecumenical conversation as well as the development of worship resources, and it has encouraged Christians from different worshiping traditions to recognize a common biblical heritage, thus contributing to a renewal of mission thinking.

Worship and Culture

From its origins in the first century, Christianity has taken root in different cultural contexts, and those diverse contexts have influenced Christian worship. In recent decades, scholars have increasingly recognized a complex relationship between worship and culture.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy called for provision for 'legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples, especially in mission lands, provided that the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved'.[20] In its discussion of specific reforms, the document mentioned only the possibility of adapting elements of indigenous initiation rites in mission lands; the provision of a shorter baptismal rite, particularly for use by catechists in mission lands; and the incorporation of local music traditions.[21] Here, mission is understood as an expansion from the geographical centre of Rome to the global South and East.

While the Constitution called for adaptation of worship, theologians soon began using the neologism 'inculturation'. Roman Catholic theologian Anscar Chupungco defined liturgical inculturation as 'the process whereby the texts and rites used in worship by the local church are so inserted in the framework of culture, that they absorb its thought, language, and ritual patterns'. But, he continued, 'the cultural elements to be assimilated must undergo a critical evaluation.'[22] In contexts where the local culture differs significantly from that of the Roman rite, Chupungco called for liturgical creativity, that is, the composition of new liturgical texts and ritual elements.[23]

Recognition of the need for liturgical inculturation was not solely a concern of Roman Catholics. In the ecumenical openness of the late twentieth century, scholars and leaders in other churches also began to

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[19] Graham, 'Introduction', xviii-xxv.

[20] *SC* para 38.

[21] *SC* paras 65, 68, 119.

[22] Anscar Chupungco, *Liturgies of the Future: The Process and Methods of Inculturation* (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1989), 29.

[23] Chupungco, *Liturgies of the Future*, 34-35.

explore the relationship between worship and culture.[24] In the mid-1990s, the Lutheran World Federation undertook a global study on worship and culture, bringing together an international and ecumenical group of scholars in a series of consultations. The second of these consultations resulted in the Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, which asserted:

> Christian worship relates dynamically to culture in at least four ways. First, it is transcultural: the same substance for everyone everywhere, beyond culture. Second, it is contextual: it varies according to the local situation (both nature and culture). Third, it is counter-cultural, challenging what is contrary to the gospel in a given culture. Fourth, it is cross-cultural: it makes possible sharing between different local cultures.[25]

By presenting a nuanced overview of the complex relationship between worship and culture, the Nairobi Statement makes a significant contribution to contemporary missiological imperatives to discern God's Spirit at work in local culture[26] and to challenge aspects of local culture that contradict the gospel.

Many of the efforts towards inculturation of worship in the late twentieth century focused on the need to inculturate worship in non-western contexts, not only in the global South and East but also in diaspora communities in the global North. Christians began to recognize that what had been considered universal forms of worship were actually reflections of the European cultures from which the missionaries came. Some Christians have made deliberate efforts to contextualize their worship so that it is a more authentic expression of the local context.[27]

As Christians in the global North have begun to recognize their post-Christendom context, some churches are exploring appropriate forms of worship in this emerging context. Acknowledging the need for local congregations to respond to their own contextual realities, *Together*

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[24] See, for example, the findings and essays from a 1989 International Anglican Liturgical Consultation in David R. Holeton (ed), *Liturgical Inculturation in the Anglican Communion, including the York Statement 'Down to Earth Worship'* (Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 15; Nottingham, UK: Grove Books, 1990); Maren C. Tirabassi and Kathy Wonson Eddy, *Gifts of Many Cultures: Worship Resources for the Global Community* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1995).

[25] Lutheran World Federation, 'The Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture' (1996), in Gláucia Vasconcelos Wilkey (ed), *Worship and Culture: Foreign Country or Homeland?* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2014), 138.

[26] *TTL,* §27.

[27] For example, in video recordings in *The Dancing Church around the World* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2004), Thomas Kane shows the use of indigenous music and dance in churches in Africa, Spain, the South Pacific and the United States. Charles Farhadian (ed), *Christian Worship Worldwide: Expanding Horizons, Deepening Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2007) includes several case studies of Roman Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical congregations in the non-Western world.

towards Life notes, 'in the secularizing global North, new forms of contextual mission such as "new monasticism", "emerging church", and "fresh expressions", have redefined and revitalized churches… Some churches in the global North now meet in pubs, coffee houses, or converted movie theatres.'[28]

Contributions from Eastern Orthodoxy

In recent decades, Orthodox theologians have pointed out the integral relationship between the Divine Liturgy (the eucharist) and mission. Describing mission as 'the liturgy after the liturgy', Orthodox theologian Ion Bria explains, 'The 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'.[29] This impulse towards mission is grounded in the theological understanding of liturgy as an entrance into the presence of the Triune God and a celebration of the heavenly liturgy. Encountering the divine presence in worship, Christians are transformed and then sent forth to embody this presence in the world.[30]

While affirming the importance of Christian witness in the world, Bria also points out that 'under the burden of despotic and totalitarian regimes, the *Kyrie eleison* of the modest and sometimes hidden Sunday liturgy was the only collective cry for truth, love, and mercy'.[31] In such desperate circumstances, the celebration of the eucharist is itself an act of witness, a proclamation of God's eternal saving love and God's promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Such witness in the face of dire circumstances can remind Christians in every time and place that their gathering for worship is also a form of witness, a proclamation of the significance of God's reconciling love.

Bria is not uncritical of his Orthodox tradition. He notes a decreased involvement of people in liturgy and the communion, an ignorance of the Bible, and an attachment to ancient languages that are no longer spoken by the people. He also underscores the importance of challenging unjust structures of society, an imperative that Orthodox Christianity has sometimes ignored.[32] Bria calls for a renewed ecclesiology of communion,

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[28] *TTL,* §72.
[29] Ion Bria, *The Liturgy after the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective* (Geneva: WCC, 1996), 20.
[30] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), 295.
[31] Bria, *The Liturgy after the Liturgy*, 22.
[32] Bria, *The Liturgy after the Liturgy*, 23-24.

connecting the proclamation of the reign of God and 'the building up of the body of Christ in history as sacrament of the kingdom'.[33]

In addition to a communion ecclesiology that shapes mission, Orthodox understandings and practices of liturgy have offered insights to western Christians. As the liturgical movement developed in the West, its leaders found in Eastern Orthodoxy reminders of ancient liturgical practices, including regular celebration of the eucharist by the community and the use of diverse languages. Western Christians have also borrowed more directly from Eastern practices. The Church of South India, an organic union of Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists, introduced an epiclesis (invocation of the Spirit) and acclamations by the people as well as the passing of the Peace from the Syrian Orthodox liturgy of St James. Eucharistic Prayer 4 in the 1970 Roman missal is an adaptation of the anaphora of St Basil, and several churches in North America have included versions of this prayer in their contemporary worship books.[34]

Pentecostal Worship

Alongside developments in Roman Catholic and Protestant churches rooted in the sixteenth-century reformations, by the middle of the twentieth century Pentecostalism had become a major worldwide influence. The Pentecostal tradition emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century, erupting in the Azusa Street revival led by William Seymour in Los Angeles, California. 'Hundreds received baptism of the Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues; hundreds were healed; and thousands came to observe the spectacle and remained to praise God for the work they saw before their eyes.'[35] Elements of the Pentecostal revival have roots in earlier Protestant traditions, particularly the nineteenth-century Methodist Holiness movement, and Pentecostal-type movements also appeared in Asia beginning in the mid-nineteenth century.[36] But Pentecostals understand their life and worship to be shaped primarily by the apostolic church, especially as depicted in the book of Acts.

Pentecostalism spread quickly throughout the world, becoming rooted in South America, Africa, Europe and Asia. In many places, Pentecostals have incorporated elements of indigenous religious traditions into their worship. A key characteristic is the gift of tongues, not only speaking in tongues but also interpretation and discernment of the Spirit in what is spoken. Healing, another gift of the Spirit, is often part of worship. Foot washing as well as water baptism and the Lord's Supper are usually understood as scriptural ordinances rather than as sacraments. Baptism of the Holy Spirit, evidenced

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[33] Bria, *The Liturgy after the Liturgy*, 26.

[34] Fenwick and Spinks, *Worship in Transition*, 95-98.

[35] James F. White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox, 1989), 195.

[36] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 273.

by speaking in tongues, is considered a higher gift than baptism with water, and the gift may then be practised not only in the assembly for worship but also in personal prayer.

Pentecostals value spontaneity in worship, and although predictable patterns usually develop, outbursts of the Spirit may occur during preaching or prayer, or at any other moment. Prayer is rarely scripted. Any member of the assembly may voice prayer, whether in ordinary speech or in tongues. Sometimes many members of the assembly speak prayer simultaneously. Praying with one or both arms uplifted is common. Testimony to God's saving action, whether in one's own life or in that of another, may be voiced in the form of a prayer of thanksgiving.

Pentecostals believe that the various gifts of the Spirit are given to individuals for building up the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12), and as a result worship is highly participatory. Moreover, the distribution of the gifts of the Spirit cuts across lines of race, class, gender and every other human division, including laity and clergy. For the first half of the twentieth century, 'Pentecostals were those who were on the lowest rung of the social and economic order; they were oppressed and impecunious'.[37] Many congregations have worshipped in storefront churches, a context that not only suits budgetary needs but also provides a familiarity and accessibility, hospitable especially to those who may be on the margins. The storefront context is also well-suited to the mission emphasis of Pentecostalism, taking its cue from the Spirit-driven mission in Acts.

In the 1960s, the Pentecostal movement burst into mainline American churches when an Episcopal priest, Dennis Bennett, announced that he had received the gift of tongues.[38] Within a few years, this charismatic renewal made its way to Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches. While initially many in those churches responded with hostility, gradually most accepted neo-Pentecostals. Elements of Pentecostal worship, such as speaking in tongues, spontaneous acclamations during preaching, spontaneous prayer, and prayer and song with uplifted arms, are now accepted in some mainline congregations.[39] Nevertheless, Mennonite scholars Eleanor Kreider and Alan Kreider have recently suggested that 'many Western Christians need to learn from the Pentecostals that the Spirit is at work during the services, as worship leaders allow for spontaneity as well as structure'.[40]

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[37] White, *Protestant Worship*, 197.

[38] See Dennis Bennett, *Nine O'Clock in the Morning* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1970).

[39] Telford Work, 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Worship', in Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (eds), *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 581.

[40] Alan Kreider and Eleanor Kreider, *Worship and Mission after Christendom* (Scottsdale, PA, and Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 2011), 128.

Ecumenical Convergence: *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*

The 1927 Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order marked the beginning of multilateral ecumenical dialogue on questions of theology, sacraments and ministry that had been divisive for western Christianity since the sixteenth-century reformations. Over the next fifty years, a process of study involved local churches and members of what in 1948 became the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. Decades of patient, careful dialogue culminated in Lima, Peru, at the 1982 meeting of the Faith and Order Commission, which adopted *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (*BEM*) as a statement of doctrinal convergence. The *BEM* statement was widely distributed to churches around the world, and the Faith and Order Commission invited official responses from churches at the highest appropriate level of authority; six volumes of these responses were subsequently published.[41]

The Preface to *BEM* ties the study to mission in the twentieth century: 'As the churches grow into unity, they are asking how their understandings and practices of baptism, eucharist and ministry relate to their mission in and for the renewal of human community as they seek to promote justice, peace and reconciliation. Therefore our understanding of these cannot be divorced from the redemptive and liberating mission of Christ through the churches in the modern world.'[42] Here the document reflects theological understandings of mission as they emerged in the twentieth century. Mission is not the expansion of the church from a geographic centre, but rather is the redemptive and liberating work of Christ in which churches engage in their particular contexts.

In the section on the eucharist, *BEM* describes worship as an act of mission: 'The very celebration of the eucharist is an instance of the Church's participation in God's mission in the world.' That same mission takes place in the world through proclamation, service and 'faithful presence'. This mission is not limited to designated missionaries, but rather the entire eucharistic community 'is nourished and strengthened for confessing by word and action the Lord Jesus Christ who gave his life for the salvation of the world'. The imperative for mission challenges the separate communion tables of Christians: 'Insofar as Christians cannot unite in full fellowship around the same table to eat the same loaf and drink from the same cup, their missionary witness is weakened at both the individual and corporate levels.'[43]

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[41] Max Thurian (ed), *Churches Respond to BEM,* 6 vols (WCC Faith and Order Paper Nos 129, 132, 135, 137, 143, 144 (1986)).

[42] Preface, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (WCC Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (1982)), vi; hereafter referred to as *BEM*.

[43] *BEM*, Eucharist paras 25, 26.

The Preface to *BEM* gives a nod to culture, claiming that the 'driving force [for the *BEM* text] is frequently contextual and contemporary'.[44] But the document says little about the intersection of worship and culture.[45] A decade later, the Ditchingham Report set forth principles and criteria for liturgical inculturation.[46] This report also links worship and mission, asserting that a recognition of their 'indissoluble relationship', along with theological convergence and liturgical renewal, were creating 'the momentum driving the churches towards koinonia in worship'.[47]

21st Century Challenges

Contemporary theologies of mission propose that mission is multi-dimensional, consisting of a number of elements. Some theologians include liturgy among the tasks of mission.[48] This perspective requires a dynamic model that understands worship as both an enactment of mission and an experience of empowerment for Christian mission in the world.[49] Led by the Spirit, Christians 'participate in the mission of love that is at the heart of the life of the Trinity'.[50]

As one dimension of mission, worship celebrates and enacts God's mission of reconciling love and justice. Christian assemblies who understand their worship as a form of mission practise radical hospitality, welcoming all and offering a foretaste of the reign of God. Their worship transforms them into being just communities practising radical hospitality in the world.[51] Worship is also prophetic, challenging unjust structures and proclaiming a vision of God's redemptive love. Christians who recognize that 'worship (*leitourgia*) is inextricably linked with witness (*martyria*), service (*diakonia*), and fellowship (*koinonia*)' engage actively in 'the

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[44] *BEM*, Preface, vi.

[45] See *BEM*, Baptism, Commentary on para 21, regarding 'misunderstandings' of baptism in particular contexts; and *BEM*, Eucharist, Commentary on para 28, regarding the question of the use of local food and drink.

[46] Ditchingham Report (Ditchingham, UK, August 1994), paras 39-41; https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/ecumenical-movement-in-the-21st-century/member-churches/special-commission-on-participation-of-orthodox-churches/sub-committee-ii-style-ethos-of-our-life-together/ditchingham-report-faith-and-order (accessed 31st July 15).

[47] Ditchingham Report, para 26.

[48] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 350-51; Schattauer, 'Liturgical Assembly as Locus of Mission', 1-19.

[49] In a recent book, I propose two such models: a Möbius strip and a spinning top. See Ruth A. Meyers, *Missional Worship, Worshipful Mission: Gathering as God's People, Going Out in God's Name* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2014), 34-36, 40-45, and passim.

[50] *TTL,* §18.

[51] *TTL,* §46-47.

liturgy after the liturgy', going forth from their assemblies to do God's work in the world.[52]

Mission is also multi-directional.[53] Christians in every part of the world are coming to understand that mission takes place in their neighbourhoods. Moreover, as mission increasingly takes place *from* the margins rather than *to* the margins,[54] Christians are experiencing the richness of a plurality of cultures that is a gift of the Spirit. Where diverse cultural communities worship together, 'culture can engage one another authentically and… culture can enrich the gospel'.[55] The complex relationship of worship and culture explicated in the Nairobi Statement suggests that worship is both particular and universal, uniting all in Christ while celebrating God's presence in diverse contexts.

Finally, a renewed appreciation of mission offers the possibility of deeper union among Christians and churches. 'Mission spirituality that flows from liturgy and worship reconnects us with one another and with the wider creation.'[56] In weekly public worship, Christian assemblies bring together people who have been engaging in mission in the world and now carry with them the needs and hopes of the world. Empowered by the Spirit and in communion with one another, worshippers offer praise, proclaim the good news of God's steadfast mercy and love revealed in Christ, and offer intercession for the needs of the world. Many assemblies also gather around the eucharistic table, where all are welcomed and fed. The assembly then goes forth, the Spirit leading them to continue to participate in God's mission in the world.[57] Christians may worship in different ways, with different cultural expressions, yet a common commitment to the mission of God unites them with one another and with all creation.

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[52] *TTL,* §17, 74, 85. See Schmit, *Sent and Gathered*, 43-55.
[53] *TTL,* §106.
[54] *TTL,* §6.
[55] *TTL,* §100.
[56] *TTL,* §104.
[57] Meyers, *Missional Worship, Worshipful Mission*, 43.

HEALING

Manoj Kurian

In 1948, the Constitution of the World Heath Organisation defined health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'.[1] The definition continues to elaborate the phenomenon of health as a fundamental human right: 'The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.' In 1989, the Christian Medical Commission of the World Council of Churches offered the following definition of health to the WCC's central committee: 'Health is a dynamic state of well-being of the individual and society, of physical, mental, spiritual, economic, political, and social well-being – of being in harmony with each other, with the material environment and with God.'[2]

The Christian understanding of health, healing and the healing ministry is related to the Christian understanding of salvation and the realization of the reign of God. This realization is the 'new creation' that the biblical prophets announced and anticipated as 'shalom'. Shalom can be described as an ultimate state of reconciled and healed relationships between creation and God, between humanity and God, humanity and creation, and between humans as individuals and as groups or societies. Each act of healing is a sign of the realization of shalom.

Healing in the Ministry of Jesus

According to the Gospel of John, only some of the miracles and actions of Jesus Christ were recorded (John 21:25). Of the thirty-seven miracles performed by Jesus recorded in the Gospels, twenty-seven were related to healing – including four that involved raising from the dead, five that related to food and abundance, and five that illustrated his power over nature.

Apart from the fact that healing was a central feature of Jesus's ministry, he also wanted his followers to continue his work and endowed them with

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[1] World Health Organisation, *Constitution of the World Health Organisation*, 1948: www.who.int/governance/eb/constitution/en/

[2] World Council of Churches, *Healing and Wholeness – The Churches' Role in Health*, Report of a study by the Christian Medical Commission (Geneva: WCC, 1990): http://difaem.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Publikationen/Dokumente_AErztliche_Mission/healing_wholeness.pdf

the authority to do so. The missionary instruction in each of the first three (synoptic) gospels connects the proclamation of the word of God with deeds, and explicitly mentions the healing ministry:

> He (Jesus) called to him the twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity… These twelve Jesus sent out, charging them… 'Preach as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of God is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.'[3]

His disciples followed suit.

> Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.[4]

The early church took Jesus' healing ministry seriously, and Christianity affirms the centrality of the church as a healing community and proclaims Christ as the healer of the world.[5] The mentoring and training, grounded in love, which Jesus gave his disciples, ensured that the gospel reached across the continents. The mandate was given to his disciples and therefore to all of us, is to heal (Matthew 10:1) as part of the holistic mission of Christ. His teachings were so revolutionary that he said that his followers could achieve even greater things than him (John 14:11-13). The followers of Christ believed that they are not alone and work in the eternal and practical perspectives that the Lord Jesus provided.

The hallmarks of the healing nature of the Lord Jesus Christ include:

- His compassionate and approachable nature where he touched many people (Luke 18:15, 16)
- His sensitivity to the needs of people, especially the vulnerable, where he was 'touched' and responded by healing (Luke 8:42b-48)
- His willingness to listen and openness to change (Mark 7:24b-30)
- His unwillingness to accept delay in the alleviation of suffering (Luke 13:10-13)
- His authority over traditions and evil forces, and his willingness to empower others by sharing this authority (Mark 6:1-3, 7, 53, 56)
- His teaching that one needs to step outside one's comfort zone and empathize (the Beatitudes)
- Serving and loving others as oneself (John 13:34-35)

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[3] Matthew 10:1, 5, 7.
[4] James 5:14-16.
[5] DIFAEM and WCC, 'Witnessing to Christ today: Promoting health and wholeness for all', German Medical Mission (DIFAEM) and WCC, 2010: www.difaem.de/fileadmin/dev-difaem/files/Publikationen/Grundsatzarbeit/Witnessing_to_Christ_today.pdf

- Seeing the divinity of the other and the sanctity of serving the marginalized (Matthew 25:31-40)
- Considering the whole community as part of the one body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12).

Healing in the Ministry of the Church

The church, from its earliest days, defined its ministry and mission as one that offers wholesome life-giving healing in response to people's diverse needs. Indeed, a significant factor in the growth of the early church was the fact that it presented itself as a healing movement and agent in the societies within which it took root with the gospel. Its distinctive attitude to the sick, the weak and the vulnerable marked it out and found expression particularly through the monastic movement. Through wars, epidemics and all the vicissitudes of human life, Christianity across the centuries has been marked by its commitment to healing ministry, which has taken many different forms. The Athens conference of CWME, held in 2005, paid special attention to the church's call to be a healing community. As one of its preparatory papers affirmed:

> It belongs to the very essence of the church – understood as the body of Christ created by the Holy Spirit – to live as a healing community, to recognize and nurture healing charisms and to maintain ministries of healing as visible signs of the presence of the kingdom of God.[6]

A fundamental change occurred with the rise of modern science, technology and medicine in the western world during the eighteenth century and beyond. New discoveries and developments provided medicine with effective means to cure diseases and the church with new possibilities for rediscovering its healing ministry. At the same time, medicine came to be understood technically as the application of knowledge to cure malfunctioning of body or mind. This could lead to a less holistic understanding and to neglect of the spiritual dimension. Nonetheless, as knowledge of effective healing methods increased, Christians felt a moral duty to provide these opportunities to all people in need. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many missionary societies believed that it was an essential part of their role to provide healing for the sick in the countries where they were operating.

Mission societies perceived that health care institutions could reach many people with the gospel. The effectiveness of the healing methods supported the credibility of the proclamation of the good news of Jesus

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[6] Preparatory Paper No. 11 'The Healing Mission of the Church', in Jacques Matthey (ed), *Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile! Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities – Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 9-16, 2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2008), 91-112 at 103.

Christ. Through the missionary movement, Christian charity contributed to the construction of hospitals and clinics in many different countries of the global South. At the beginning of modern medical missions, an important motivation to create health care institutions was also the need to protect the health of the missionaries who suffered from many diseases unknown in their countries of origin.[7] By the middle of the twentieth century, the societies had founded hospitals, dispensaries and leprosariums all over the world. These establishments provided scientifically based medicine and contributed significantly to the health care systems of many countries.[8] Currently, faith-based organizations (FBOs) are among the major health providers in developing countries, providing, for example, an average of some 40% of health services in sub-Saharan Africa. FBOs' core values lead them to offer compassionate care to people with a long-term commitment to societies, closely aligning with community needs.[9]

At the same time, it has to be recognised that Christian mission was closely connected with the western colonial rule which prevailed in much of Africa and Asia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In many instances, the colonised were dispossessed of their land, cultures, livelihoods and industry, and were reduced to fuelling the industrial revolution of the colonial powers. Conversion to the Christian faith in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia did not protect millions of local people from the brutal impact of colonisation that impoverished their societies. In the role of coloniser, western Christians saw it as their moral duty to civilise those they encountered. Part of their civilising programme was western education, which often resulted in the colonised adopting the coloniser's language, culture and worldview and losing their own.[10] In many colonised regions, local knowledge on healing was negatively impacted as missionaries worked against traditional healers, associating them with indigenous faiths and superstitions and as impediments to the missionary enterprise. These actions drove traditional medicine underground.[11]

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[7] See Christopher H. Grundmann, 'Gesandt zu heilen. Aufkommen und Entwicklung der Ärztlichen Mission im neunzehnten Jahrhundert', in *Missionswissenschaftliche Forschungen,* Bd. 12, Gütersloh, 1992.

[8] Christoph Benn and Erlinda Senturias, 'Health, Healing and Wholeness in the Ecumenical Discussion', in *International Review of Mission,* 90.356/357 (2001), 7-25.

[9] See Ted Karpf and Alex Ross (eds), *Building From Common Foundations, The World Health Organization and Faith-Based Organizations in Primary Healthcare*, World Health Organization, 2008.

[10] Musa Dube, 'Consuming a Colonial Cultural Time Bomb: Translating Badimo into Demons in the Setswana Bible (Matthew 8.28-34, 15.22, 10.8)', in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament,* 73 (1999), 33-59, at 34.

[11] Fhumulani M. Mulaudzi, 'Synergy between Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Modern Health Care System and Scientific Research – A Vision for the 21st Century', in *HEALTH SA GESONDHEID,* 6.4 (2001), 14-20.

However, the healing ministry of the mission organisations gave an alternative to the dominant narrative of colonisation. The selfless and sacrificial work of Christian missionary health personnel, establishing health care centres in remote and rural regions, which were neglected by colonial administrations, is a very inspiring testimony and a message of hope. The pioneering work continued to catalyse and mobilise care for whole communities, valuing individuals while seeing the person as part of the larger community. The mission churches provided the roots of vibrant volunteerism and a sense of calling and vocation to those involved in the church-related health services. In the field of health, church-related organisations have pioneered in successfully working against unjust pricing of medicine and campaigning for health for all, and in providing credible and affordable alternates to for-profit health care providers.

Trends in Understanding the Healing Mission of the Church

By the mid-twentieth century, questions were being raised about expenditure on curative medicine and services that accounted for more than 90% of the resources of the healing ministry. The Tübingen I and II Consultations co-organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the German Institute for Medical Mission (DIFÄM), in 1964 and 1968 addressed many of these questions. These processes called for an integrated witness where medical work could be correlated with social work, nutrition, agriculture and community development, recognizing that that medical care was only a component of a diversity of disciplines, all of which were necessary to promote and maintain health. This led to the formation of the Christian Medical Commission (CMC) in 1968. The CMC assisted in the reorientation of the churches' health care – to be evolved into a more comprehensive and community oriented service.

With CMC's close working relationship with the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, the experience of the grassroots in the issues of community health were channelled to the international, inter-governmental body. The churches were able to influence and give quality experiential and experimental input into a joint study process – by the WHO and UNICEF – called, 'Alternative approaches to meeting basic health needs of populations in developing countries'. Health care services were tailored to the needs of the communities with the local population being involved in the formulation of the policy and delivery of the system. This process led to the development of Primary Health Care. The Primary Health Care philosophy stressed an integrated approach to prevention and cure, and promoted health services both for the community and the individual. This was adopted by the WHO in 1977, and implied a radical shift in the priorities of the WHO, with global implications in decentralizing health care and granting greater rights and responsibilities to

people in the management of their health. The contribution of the churches to the evolution of Primary Health Care thinking and practice is a lasting contribution to public health.[12]

In the 1970s, Christian communities began to train village health workers at the grassroots level. Equipped with essential drugs and simple methods, these workers were able to treat most common diseases and to promote the use of clean water and better hygienic conditions. They facilitated the introduction of small health centres that offered low-cost in-patient care, as well as pre-natal and early childhood health services. In these new decentralised health care systems, many mission hospitals began to play an essential role by acting as intermediaries between local village health services and the centralised state-supported hospitals.

Faith-based provision of health services has been a cornerstone of the global response to HIV from the earliest days of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Africa, which has 10% of the world's population, but 25% of the global disease burden, is home to nearly a third of all people living with HIV and AIDS, with some countries in Southern Africa having HIV prevalence rates above 20%. In this context, faith-based health care providers deliver a large proportion of comprehensive HIV care to millions of people on a daily basis. With their holistic engagement and collaboration with communities, they can ensure effective biomedical responses to epidemics and health emergencies. But it has to be noted that many faith-based health services work under severe constraints, especially regarding their workforce.[13] This heroic role of health professionals on the frontlines of dealing with epidemics is further evident from the fact that a significant proportion of the more than 200 doctors, nurses and other health care workers who have died of Ebola since June 2014 worked in hospitals and health centres run by churches.

While specialized health services, and the professionals needed to run them, remain an integral part of Christian mission in many parts of the world, there has recently been a recovery of the place of the local congregation in the healing mission of the church. The Athens CWME conference in 2005 heard that 'the local congregation or Christian community is the primary agent for healing… The way a network of mutual support, of listening and of mutual care is maintained and nurtured in a local congregation expresses the healing power of the church as a whole. All basic functions of the local church have a healing dimension also for the wider community: the proclamation of the word of God as a message of hope and comfort, the celebration of the Eucharist as a sign of

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[12] Socrates Litsios, 'The Christian Medical Commission and the Development of WHO's Primary Health Care Approach', in *American Journal of Public Health,* 94/11 (November 2004), 1884-93.

[13] See B. Schmid, E. Thomas, J. Olivier and J.R. Cochrane, 'The contribution of religious entities to health in sub-Saharan Africa', in African Religious Health Assets Programme (ARHAP), 2008.

reconciliation and restoration, the pastoral ministry of each believer, individual or community intercessory prayer for all members and the sick in particular'.[14]

The worship of the church is in itself a healing ministry: 'Joining the others as a community of believers, being liberated from guilt and the burdens of life, experiencing even unbelievable cures, being enflamed by the experience of singing and of praise, are a tremendously healing experience.'[15] In particular, the celebration of the Eucharist is a healing act at the heart of the life of the church: 'The Eucharistic liturgy provides… the setting and visible expression for God's healing presence in the midst of the church and through her in mission to this broken world.'[16] Spiritual gifts also have a part to play in the healing ministry of the church, and among them is the gift of healing. The report to the Athens CWME conference counselled: 'All gifts of healing within a given community need deliberate encouragement, spiritual nurture, education and enrichment – but also a proper ministry of pastoral accompaniment and ecclesial oversight. Charisms are not restricted to the so-called "supernatural" gifts which are beyond common understanding and/or personal worldview, but hold to a wider understanding in which both talents and approaches of modern medicine, alternative medical approaches as well as gifts of traditional healing and spiritual forms of healing have their own right.'[17]

Recent times have seen a growing recognition that modern western systems of health care represent no more than one strand in a healing mission that comprehensively engages the human situation. Ecumenical thinking has also been challenged by the rise of Pentecostal-Charismatic movements with their emphasis on the spiritual dimension of healing and awareness of the need to cast out evil spirits in certain situations – the ministry of deliverance. The fast growth of Neo-Pentecostalism, Charismatic and prosperity paradigm churches, especially in the global South, is in part due to the emphasis that they placed on what Hansjörg Dilger refers to as 'healing the wounds of modernity'.[18] The negative impact of economic globalisation on the vulnerable economies of the South has resulted in underdeveloped health care systems. The impact of HIV/AIDS especially in Africa and the slow response of government health care systems to address the socio-economic factors that perpetrate the

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[14] Jacques Matthey (ed), *Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile! Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities – Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 9-16, 2005*. Geneva: WCC, 2008., 104.

[15] Matthey, *Come, Holy Spirit*, 106.

[16] Matthey, *Come, Holy Spirit*, 105.

[17] Matthey, *Come, Holy Spirit*, 105.

[18] Hansjörg Dilger, 'Healing the Wounds of Modernity: Salvation, Community and Care in a Neo-Pentecostal Church in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania', in *Journal of Religion in Africa,* 37.1 (2007), 59-83.

disease enabled the response of Christian religious groups that claimed to offer healing to people without hope. Such groups offer the social, spiritual and economic support as forms of their networks of healing and support in urban contexts of suffering.

These pneumatological paradigm churches enter into the meaning systems of traditional culture and cosmologies of healing to declare that God can do the impossible and that faith heals, overcoming evil in all shapes and forms and meeting the needs of contemporary life. Ecumenical understanding has been enriched by learning from these churches.

Equally, ecumenical engagement with issues of justice has sharpened awareness of the reality that individuals are only likely to enjoy good health when they live in a healthy society and a healthy ecology. There is need today for a comprehensive and holistic understanding of health and healing. As stated in the new WCC mission affirmation *Together towards Life* (*TTL*): 'Health is more than physical and/or mental well-being, and healing is not primarily medical. This understanding of health coheres with the biblical-theological tradition of the church, which sees a human being as a multi-dimensional unity, and the body, soul, and mind as interrelated and interdependent. It thus affirms the social, political, and ecological dimensions of personhood and wholeness.'[19]

This creates a mandate for the churches to be engaged in healing mission in a wide range of ways which together meet the challenges of our times. As *TTL* observes: 'The Spirit empowers the church for a life-nurturing mission, which includes prayer, pastoral care, and professional health care on the one hand, and prophetic denunciation of the root causes of suffering, transformation of structures that dispense injustice, and pursuit of scientific research on the other.'[20] This opens up many practical ways in which churches can participate in healing mission, as suggested by *TTL*: 'There are many ways in which churches can be, and are, involved in health and healing in a comprehensive sense. They create or support clinics and mission hospitals; they offer counselling services, care groups, and health programmes; local churches can create groups to visit sick congregation members. Healing processes could include praying with and for the sick, confession and forgiveness, the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and the use of charismatic spiritual gifts.'[21]

Conclusion

The state of global health calls us to act as individuals and as communities to:

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[19] *TTL,* §51.
[20] *TTL,* §50.
[21] *TTL,* §53.

- Challenge and work to overcome poverty, social inequity and injustice;
- Challenge patriarchy and work for the empowerment of women;
- Give greater priority to the welfare of children and mothers;
- Influence the promotion of a positive lifestyle and diet;
- Strive for greater engagement of health-related issues at the community level, and to promote their ownership in finding sustainable solutions;
- Build solidarity and empathy among and across communities;
- Work for greater investment in health and the welfare of communities;
- To see health and healing through the lens of our faith.

Faith communities carry the great legacy of human endeavour, ingenuity and achievement, diversity, culture and wisdom through millennia. With the grace of God, we can collectively mobilize this rich experience and legacy to bring about a positive transformation of society. Our faith and our foundational values dictate that everyone has a fundamental right to health and well-being!

CULTURE

Daesung Lee and Stephen Bevans SVD

Introduction

'Grace supposes culture, and God's gift becomes flesh in the culture of those who receive it.' These are the words of Pope Francis in his 2013 Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, and they are words that reveal the intimate and intricate connection between mission – God's mission, shared by the church – and the ways that human beings make sense of the world, or human culture.[1] If 'God's gift' of the gospel is truly to be received, the way it is witnessed to and proclaimed must take into account the way it is understood in contexts and cultures that may be very different from the contexts and cultures of those who witness and proclaim – missionaries. Indeed, 'culture' is one of the six 'constants' that are always part of the way the church engages in mission as it tries to participate in the work of the triune missionary God. Along with the centrality of Christ and the ecclesial and eschatological nature of mission, along with concerns with the nature of salvation and the nature of the human person, the church's missionary effort needs always to work within and continually grapple with the gift, the challenges, the grace, and the sinfulness of culture.[2]

'Culture', of course, is a notoriously difficult concept to define. Clifford Geertz has famously described culture as a 'system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about an attitude toward life.'[3] Thus a culture is like a web of interconnected values, customs, practices, kinship relationships and the like, creating the 'world' in which people live. Robert Schreiter speaks of this understanding as an 'integrated' approach to culture, and goes on to speak also of 'global' concepts of culture wherein a worldview or meaning structure is not so much inherited as constructed, often as a way of addressing a power imbalance.[4] Bernard Lonergan

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[1] Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*EG*): http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html, 115.

[2] See Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 32-72.

[3] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89, quoted in Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Earthing the Gospel: An Inculturation Handbook for the Pastoral Worker* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 28.

[4] See Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and Local* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 46-61.

distinguishes between 'classicist' and 'empiricist' notions of culture. The former is normative, and would consider other cultures 'primitive' or 'undeveloped'. The latter is simply the way that peoples organize their worlds. In this view of culture, there are no 'high' or 'low' cultures. Cultures are neither normative nor universally valid. Culture is simply the way that peoples have sought and continue to seek to make sense out of their lives in particular situations. While they may be flawed, and in some cases seriously, cultures are basically healthy and good.[5]

What this chapter proposes to do is, in a first part, to survey the ways that culture has been understood in the ecumenical conversation that has been going on in the past one hundred years in the aftermath of the historic 1910 World Mission Conference in Edinburgh. Although it will mainly focus on that conversation within the World Council of Churches (WCC) and its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) – and so include the Orthodox churches – it will also include conversations within Roman Catholicism and Evangelical churches. A second section will focus on an in-depth presentation of the role of culture in the WCC's latest document on mission, *Together towards Life: Mission in Changing Landscapes*. It will then conclude with a sketch of some of the challenges of the dynamic of mission and culture that mission might face in the future.

As the Second Vatican Council proclaimed in one of its most beautiful passages, one of the most important tasks of missionaries is to 'learn, by sincere and patient dialogue, what treasures a generous God has distributed among the nations of the earth', at the same time working 'to refurbish them, to set them free, and bring them under the dominion of God their savior'.[6] This is the dynamic that this chapter will explore, as churches from various traditions have discovered in the last century the importance and challenge of culture in their missionary work.

Mission and Culture in the Ecumenical Movement

The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, 1910

The Report of Commission VII of the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference contained the statement that 'the reproach that missionaries desire to Europeanise the inhabitants of mission lands, if ever true, is now absurdly false'. Brian Stanley observes, however, that such a statement 'was not permitted to affect the fundamental categorization of cultures

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[5] Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Dartman, Longman & Todd, 1972), xi.
[6] Vatican Council II, Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, *Ad Gentes*: www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html, 11.

which provided the organizing framework for the report itself'.[7] That framework categorized civilizations in a way that ranked local cultures from 'low' to 'high',[8] very much under the influence of colonial and Enlightenment thinking, and reflecting the current state of the emerging discipline of anthropology. It was this thinking against which V.S. Azariah protested in his famous speech about racism and prejudice among missionaries in the Indian church, ending with his famous plea for personal relationships between British and Indian Christians: 'Give us FRIENDS!'[9] Nevertheless, as Stanley reports, one delegate from Scotland wrote that 'the spirit of nationalism, so deeply stirring in all lands, found utterance again and again at the Conference'. He went on to say that:

> It is not English speech and English thought on which the new churches in the Mission-field are to be formed: else they would be foreign churches. China, Japan, India must bring their own traditions and their own passion of patriotism into a Church of Christ, truly become also the Church of China, Japan, India. Missions exist to make missions unnecessary.[10]

These words are not exactly focused on culture, since the term and idea had not yet fully emerged at this time. But the emphasis is clear, and such emphasis of respect and autonomy of local traditions and customs would only grow in the years ahead.

1910 to 1961: The International Missionary Council

One of the most significant moves of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference was the establishment of a Continuing Committee that became in 1921 the International Missionary Council (IMC). Its first conference was held in 1928 in Jerusalem, and although the issue of culture was not discussed head on, the conference was notable for the number of indigenous delegates present, and for its discussion of the relationship between the 'younger' and 'older' churches. Especially among the Chinese delegates, there was a call

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[7] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Report of Commission VII* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; and New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d. [1910]), 94; Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 258.

[8] See Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 254-60.

[9] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *History and Records of the Conference Together with Addresses Delivered at the Evening Meetings* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; and New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d. [1910]), 315.

[10] *Life and Work: The Church of Scotland Magazine and Mission Record*, 32:8 (August 1910), 244, quoted in Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 111.

for greater autonomy in church government, with a plea that local churches be recognized *as* churches in their own right.[11]

Culture was also not the immediate issue at the IMC's second conference in Tambaram, Madras, India, in 1938. The issue was the relation of Christianity to other faiths, sparked by W.E. Hocking's and others' more liberal *Rethinking Mission* on the one hand, and Hendrik Kraemer's more conservative *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* on the other, the book issued as a preparation for the conference.[12] The point of debate was whether God was in some way present within religions other than Christianity, an important question for the goodness and holiness of culture, given the close connection of some religions (e.g. Hinduism) with particular cultures (e.g. in India). What became increasingly clear nonetheless was that mission was being done more and more under the direction of local indigenous churches. Although Kraemer's work had strongly attacked the *Volkskirke* movement pioneered by Bruno Gutmann and Christian Keysser in the early years of the century, the contextual nature of that approach was vigorously defended at the conference, despite what some theologians were making of it in Nazi Germany.[13]

As Wesley Ariarajah observes, when the next congress of the IMC took place in Whitby, Canada, in 1947, the world had become a radically different place after six long years of World War. The colonial structure of the world, under the dominance of Europe and North America, was swiftly coming to and end, and with it the rise of nationalism and pride in local cultures. 'This new reality produced the next stage for the debate on gospel and culture.'[14]

Such discussion was rooted, as previously, in the identity of the local churches. But local identity was more than simply having indigenous leadership. It was about recognizing the importance and value of the local culture in which the churches lived and participated in the developments that the new nationalism was promoting. As Ariarajah writes: 'In no way could churches become partners in nation-building if they considered the religion and culture of the majority of the peoples with whom they lived to be in complete 'discontinuity' with their new life in Christ.'[15]

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[11] See Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 66-67.

[12] See William Ernest Hocking (ed), *Rethinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry after One Hundred Years* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932); Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (London, 1938).

[13] On the *Volkskirke* movement, see Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 34-56. On the defence of the movement at Tambaram, see Yates, 102-21.

[14] S. Wesley Ariarajah, *Gospel and Culture: The Ongoing Discussion within the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC, 1994), 10.

[15] Ariarajah, *Gospel and Culture*, 11.

Two ideas emerged in the late 1940s and 1950s (at Whitby in 1947, at Willingen, Germany, in 1952, and at Accra, Ghana, in 1957) that were to have impact on the understanding of the importance of culture in missionary work. The first was the idea of 'partnership', a notion that relativized the importance of the foreign mission sending agencies and once more emphasized the autonomy of the local church, local leadership and local culture. The second was the emergence of the importance of *missio Dei*, an understanding of mission that focused less on the church than on the world. God was working in the *world*, within history, within cultures. The church's task was to work with God in bringing that saving work to visibility.[16] Both concepts, so vital to contemporary missiology, would on the one hand challenge mission to its core in the coming years and, on the other, offer a basis for a continuing appreciation for the role of culture in missionary work.

Integration of the IMC with the World Council of Churches

In 1961, at the third Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which had been inaugurated in 1948, the IMC was fully integrated into this larger body. By this time the call for the importance of cultures had become very clear in the light of growing independence of nations from colonial rule and the continued maturity of local churches. The final report of the Assembly states emphatically that western culture is not to be considered normative, and that such an insistence is actually 'a hindrance to the spread of the gospel and a stumbling block to those of other traditions'.[17] Strongly implied is the mandate to preach the gospel in ways that are relevant and challenging to the cultures that the gospel encounters.

With the integration of the IMC into the WCC, the Division of World Mission and Evangelism (DWME – now the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism or CWME) was created to attend particularly to matters of mission and evangelism. It held its first conference in 1963 in Mexico City on the theme of 'Mission in Six Continents' – again emphasizing the integrity of local, indigenous churches and their missionary identity. No longer was mission simply 'from the West to the rest,' with the western superiority that such an idea implied, but a mission marked by cultural identity and integrity.

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[16] Ariarajah, *Gospel and Culture*, 18-19.
[17] *The New Delhi Report – The Third Assembly of the WCC* (London: SCM, 1962), 98, quoted in Ariarajah, *Gospel and Culture*, 25.

The Second Vatican Council and
Roman Catholicism on Mission and Culture

In this first half of the twentieth century, the relationship between mission and culture was growing and developing within Roman Catholicism as well. The year 1919 saw the first of five 'Mission Encyclicals' written by Popes Benedict XV, Pius XI, Pius XII and John XXIII, all of which emphasized the importance of the education of indigenous clergy, thus implying the importance of the local church and local culture. In 1925 a large-scale exhibit of 'Mission Art' at the Vatican Museum had a far-reaching effect on attitudes towards local cultures in 'mission countries'. In the third of the encyclicals, Pius XII's *Evangelii Praecones*, what missiologist James Kroeger calls its 'greatest novelty' was the Pope's commendation of local customs and 'time-honored observances of pagan peoples'. As the Pope writes: 'The Church does not wish to eradicate any good tradition, artistic production or custom of any people. Its mission is to preserve, elevate and sanctify these things in the spirit of the Gospel.'[18]

The full maturation of this development was reached at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), certainly the most important event in Roman Catholicism, and perhaps the most important religious event in the twentieth century.[19] Already in the first document approved by the Council, its document on liturgy, there was included a substantial section on the adaptation of liturgical practices to various local cultures. Pius XII's words in *Evangelii Praecones* find echo in the document's insistence that the church 'respects and fosters the spiritual adornments and gifts of the various races and peoples. Anything in their way of life that is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error, it studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact'.[20] The Council's Constitution on the Church in the Modern World lays special emphasis on the importance of culture in the church's engagement with the contemporary world. Alluding to the fact that culture has always been important in the church's life and mission, the Constitution insists that culturally sensitive preaching 'ought to remain the law of all evangelization. For thus the ability to express Christ's message in its own way is developed in each nation, and at the same time there is fostered a living exchange between the Church and the

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[18] See James Kroeger, 'Papal Mission Wisdom: Five Mission Encyclicals 1919-1959', in Stephen Bevans (ed), *A Century of Catholic Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 93-100. The quotation from Pius XII is found on 97.

[19] See Robert J. Schreiter, 'The Impact of Vatican II', in Gregory Baum (ed), *The Twentieth Century* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 158; John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press at Harvard University Press, 2008), 1.

[20] Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Divine Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html, 37.

diverse cultures of people'.[21] In the second chapter of the second part of the document there appears for the first time in an official Roman Catholic document an extended reflection on the nature and importance of culture.[22]

The document on the church's mission is also distinguished by a rich and generous understanding of the importance of culture in the church's missionary work. The term 'culture' appears in the document no less than ten times, and while there is always the call to purify and heal the culture of the peoples among whom missionaries work, there is always the encouragement to respect and immerse themselves within that culture as well. In paragraph 9 we hear an echo of Pius XII's words of wisdom in this regard: 'Whatever truth and grace are to be found among the nations, as a sort of secret presence of God, this [missionary] activity frees from all taint of evil and restores to Christ its maker…'[23] As quoted in the introduction to this chapter, paragraph 11 calls missionaries to a 'sincere and patient dialogue' with culture. Paragraph 22 calls for what eventually will be called the inculturation of theology.[24]

Uppsala 1968 and the Emergence of the Lausanne Movement

The 1968 Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden, held in the midst of the great cultural shifts of the 1960s with its optimistic humanism, the sexual revolution, and the widespread student protests in the United States and Europe in the spring of that year, resulted in an atmosphere of radical thinking and rebellion. Led by Dutch theologian Johannes Hoekendijk, cries were raised against the church and its missionary task in favour of a radical understanding of God's mission that bypassed the church and was worked out immediately in the world. In such an understanding, the church needed to get out of the way, or at most point to the work that God was doing in the world. God needs no help in 'articulating himself'.[25]

The reaction to Uppsala by the more conservative Evangelical members of the Assembly was quite strongly negative – so much so that they formed a new body in contrast to the WCC that was eventually called the Lausanne Movement for World Evangelization. Paragraph 10 of the *Lausanne*

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[21] Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*:   www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html, 44.

[22] *Gaudium et Spes*, 53-62.

[23] *Ad Gentes,* §9.

[24] *Ad Gentes,* §11, 22.

[25] Roger Bassham, *Mission Theology: 1948-1975. Years of Worldwide Creative Tension. Ecumenical, Evangelical, and Roman Catholic* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979), 81. See also James A. Scherer, *Gospel, Church, and Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Mission Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1987), 119-21. Here I am following quite closely Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 290-91.

Covenant, the brief document that was the result of the movement's landmark International Congress on World Evangelization in 1974, deals with 'Evangelism and Culture'. Here the document notes the intrinsic connection between 'churches deeply rooted in Christ and closely related to their culture'. Because God created the world, some part of each culture is 'rich in beauty and goodness', but because women and men are fallen, every culture is 'tainted with sin and some of it is demonic'. This short paragraph recognizes that missionary work in the past has often exported western culture rather the gospel, but it charges missionaries today to 'seek to transform and enrich culture, all for the glory of God'.[26] In a significant article about gospel and culture in the Lausanne Movement, Tite Tiénou observes that after the Lausanne Conference, and especially after a significant consultation at Willowbank, Bermuda, in 1978, Evangelicals began publishing widely in the area of contextual theology.[27] Interestingly, however, the second International Congress for World Evangelization in Manila, Philippines, in its *Manila Manifesto* gives scant, if any, attention to the question of culture.[28]

Bangkok and Evangelii Nuntiandi

The Bangkok CWME conference of 1973 is remembered more perhaps by its call for a 'moratorium' on foreign missions, but there was also a clear call for a theology and ministry that was deeply culturally aware and sensitive. 'Proper theology includes reflection on the experience of the Christian community in a particular place, at a particular time.'[29] One can see the influence here of the establishment at the WCC of the Fund for Theological Education (FTE), headed by the Taiwanese theologian Shoki Coe, who was in many ways the one who coined the phrase 'contextual theology'.[30]

The same year as the Lausanne Conference, 1974, saw a Vatican Synod of Bishops that addressed the issue of evangelization. This was in the light

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[26] Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *The Lausanne Covenant,* 10, in James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (ed)*, New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 1, Basic Statements 1974-1991* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 255.

[27] Tite Tiénou, 'Gospel and Cultures in the Lausanne Movement', in Margunn Serigstad Dalle, Lars Dalle and Knud Jørgensen (ed), *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 156-69.

[28] Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization*, the Manila Manifesto*, in Scherer and Bevans (ed), *New Directions 1*, 292-305.

[29] *Bangkok Assembly 1973* (Geneva: WCC, 1973), 74, quoted in Ariarajah, *Gospel and Culture*, 29.

[30] Shoki Coe, 'Contextualizing Theology', in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (eds), *Mission Trends No. 3: Third World Theologies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 19-24.

of deep questioning of the very concept of mission that arose from some of the openness to other religions and the world's cultures that was expressed at Vatican II. The Synod itself was unable to produce a final document, and so asked Pope Paul VI if he would draw their contentious discussions together in a document of his own. The result was, in 1975, the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, a landmark document on mission that continued Vatican II's openness to the world's religions and cultures, and expressed this openness in a particularly powerful way. 'The split between gospel and culture,' Paul VI wrote, is no doubt 'the drama of our time', and so the church must view culture as an ally rather than as an enemy or as something neutral. 'What matters is to evangelize man's culture and cultures (not in a purely decorative way, as it were, by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots) …'[31]

Nairobi 1975 and *Mission and Evangelism*

Two years after Bangkok and a year after *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* the WCC's fifth Assembly in Nairobi spoke powerfully to the fact that 'commitment to Jesus Christ takes different cultural forms. This is an expression of the church's catholicity'. Christians are to relate to culture 'critically, creatively, redemptively'.[32] Ariarajah suggests that the perspective at the Nairobi Assembly 'marks the culmination of a particular entry point into the gospel and culture debate'. In fact, subsequent mission congresses of the CWME have not gone much further in the discussion. The 1980 mission conference in Melbourne, Australia, and the 1983 Vancouver WCC Assembly basically 'point in the same general direction'. Such a direction Ariarajah sums up in six points: the importance of striking roots in culture; the rejection of the normativity of western culture; the importance of a culturally sensitive missionary work; the insistence on the ambiguity of culture and its need for gospel purification; the acknowledgement of culture as a dynamic reality; and the need for mutual learning from various cultures.[33]

The WCC's 1982 document on mission, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* – up until 2012 its only comprehensive statement on mission since the IMC's integration into the WCC in 1961 – has a short but significant statement on the 'inculturation of the gospel'. The document connects such a process of inculturation with the Incarnation, and insists that it is more than an intellectual enterprise, but one of participation in the life of the poor. As the document expresses it, *'Solidarity is the best*

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[31] Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN*): http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html, 20.

[32] David M. Paton (ed), *Breaking Barriers. Nairobi 1975* (Geneva: WCC, 1976), 79, quoted in Ariarajah, *Gospel and Culture*, 33.

[33] Ariarajah, *Gospel and Culture*, 33-34.

teacher of common cultural values'. It also calls for a recognition of the plurality of cultures and their validity, concluding that 'the visions of the nations coming from the East, the West, the North and the South to sit at the final banquet of the kingdom should always be before us in our missionary endeavour'.[34]

At the beginning of the San Antonio mission conference in 1989, then-director of the CWME, Christopher Duraisingh, also connected the question of mission and culture with issues of justice, particularly justice for women. This conference had no particular section on the question of mission and culture, but recognized the mission/culture dynamic as a kind of 'transversal' that ran through the entire conference. While at one level this can be seen as an advance in the discussion of the relationship between mission/gospel and culture, at another, as the report of the CWME at the 1991 Canberra Assembly admitted, there had been no substantial progress in understanding this dynamic.[35]

Salvador de Bahia

The last conference on world mission and evangelism of the twentieth century was held at Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, in 1996, and it specifically focused on 'The Gospel in Diverse Cultures'. The conference 'insisted on the richness of cultural variety as God's gift, but also on the gospel imperative to link the affirmation of one's cultural identity with an openness to other identities'. While recognizing the equality and dignity of all cultures, it also emphasized their ambiguity. 'In its relation with cultures, the gospel may be illuminated, but also obscured', and so mission needs both to be open to culture and to challenge it as well.[36]

Edinburgh 2010, the Cape Town Commitment*, and Evangelii Gaudium*

A search of the proceedings of the Edinburgh 2010 Centennial Celebration reveals that the word 'culture' appears 169 times in various contexts and meanings. It appears in discussions of mission among other faiths, of mission and contemporary secular culture, in the context of today's multicultural world in which the gospel in preached. The theme of culture, however, was not one of the nine 'official' themes of the conference. It was rather, like women's issues, a 'transversal' that ran throughout all the themes. In a real sense, it seems, the issue of mission and culture at Edinburgh 2010 had reached a certain maturity that it pervaded all the discussions there, and was rather taken for granted. It is somewhat

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[34] *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation*, 16-17.
[35] See Ariarajah, *Gospel and Culture*, 43-45.
[36] Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Salvador de Bahia: www.mission2005.org/index23fc.html?id=564&L=&type=98

unfortunate, however, that the theme of culture is not mentioned in the conference's nine-point *Common Call*.[37]

Tite Tiénou admits that little attention was paid to the gospel/culture dynamic in mission in the second Lausanne Congress in 1989 or at Cape Town in 2010 (the Evangelicals' own commemoration of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference). However, he insists, the Lausanne Movement has been 'a major contributor to global and Evangelical conversations on the issue of Gospel and culture'. Tiénou says that the *Cape Town Commitment's* view of the importance of culture in the missionary enterprise can be summed up in one sentence in the text: 'We long to see the Gospel embodied and embedded in all cultures, redeeming them from within so that they may display the glory of God and the radiance of Christ.'[38]

Three weeks after the Tenth General Assembly of the WCC in Busan, South Korea, and the publication of *Together towards Life* (which will be discussed in detail below), the newly-elected Pope Francis issued his extraordinary Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*. The main emphasis of the document was to call the Roman Catholic Church to be a thoroughly missionary church, to be a church of 'missionary disciples' 'for the evangelization of the world rather than for its self-preservation'.[39] Culture, however, plays a significant part in this lengthy document. 'Grace supposes culture,' writes Pope Francis. 'In the Christian customs of an evangelized people, the Holy Spirit adorns the Church, showing it new aspects of revelation and giving it a new face.' He insists that 'we would not do justice to the logic of the incarnation if we thought of Christianity as monocultural and monotonous'. He speaks powerfully of the 'evangelizing power of popular piety', suggesting that it is a *locus theologicus*, a genuine source for theological reflection and pastoral action.[40]

The second section of this chapter will focus exclusively on *Together towards Life*, the 2012 mission statement of the CWME and the latest WCC statement on the relation of mission and culture.

Together towards Life

Together towards Life (*TTL*)[41] is a significant landmark in the history of ecumenical missiology. It addresses most of the issues that have arisen in regard to church and mission since 1910 in a compact statement of 12,500

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[37] See 'Edinburgh 2010 Common Call', in Kirsteen Kim and Andrew Anderson (eds), *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Today and Tomorrow* (Oxford: Regnum, 2011), 1-2.

[38] Tiénou, 'Gospel and Cultures', 169, quoting *The Cape Town Commitment: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action* Part I, paragraph 7.

[39] *EG* 24, 27.

[40] See *EG* 115-118; 122-26.

[41] *TTL*.

words. In regard to the issue of culture, *TTL* is an important milestone. When we focus on the explicit usage of the term 'culture', there are two sections where culture receives extensive attention: first, the section entitled 'Local Congregations: New Initiatives' (§72-79) where the role of local congregations in creating intercultural and multicultural ministry is emphasized; and secondly, the section entitled 'Evangelism and Cultures' (§97-100) where the plurality of cultures is considered as the gift of the Spirit that enriches gospel. However, even when *TTL* does not use the term 'culture' explicitly, by using expressions such as context, world, life-worlds, realities, society, social location, social systems, community of humanity, or *oikoumene*, the issue of culture is treated throughout the entire text of *TTL* as a cross-cutting, transversal theme. Overall, *TTL* offers a very significant paradigm shift in mission's relation with culture by emphasizing these features.

Fullness of Life as the Criterion of Mission and Cultures

The most significant characteristic of *TTL* is that it is founded upon an unmistakably clear theological emphasis on fullness of life as the Triune God's ultimate concern for the world. Life in its fullness functions as the single overarching principle that binds diverse considerations into a coherent whole (§102). The first paragraph of *TTL* makes it clear that God the Creator constantly works in the world to affirm and safeguard life, that affirming life in all its fullness is the ultimate concern of Jesus Christ who is the Life of the world, and that the Holy Spirit is the Life-giver who sustains and empowers life. Accordingly, denial of Life is a rejection of God of Life, and mission is bearing common witness to the vision of abundant life in God (§1). This distinctive theological stance makes *TTL* appealing to diverse Christian traditions in today's world by showing faithful adherence to the Trinitarian Christian tradition and by emphasizing the urgent responsibilities of the church to spread the gospel of Life through mission and evangelism.

A radical shift in the view of culture is also closely related with this theme of life. According to *TTL*, where there is affirmation of life, there is the presence of God. By applying this criterion of the fullness of life, various complicated debates in the past can be aligned around an easily recognizable and agreeable guideline. Through this guideline, *TTL* helps us deal discerningly with diverse controversial issues such as the evaluation of human culture in general, the assessment of specific cultures, and the church's appropriate responses to important cultural changes arising from the introduction of the concepts such as plurality, margins, globalization, and the shift of Christianity's centre of gravity.

A Positive View of Culture

TTL sees culture in very positive light. This is made very clear in the following paragraphs: 'We value each and every human culture…' (§110); 'Respect all people and human cultures…' (§90-c). 'God's Spirit can be found in all cultures that affirm life' (§93). Among the 59 occurrences of word 'culture' in *TTL*, 48 of the cases are used with a positive connotation. This affirmative view of culture is a logical consequence of the aforementioned overarching theological theme of the fullness of life.

However, it is important to note that the positive view of culture is not to be taken categorically. There is considerable subtlety and discernment in *TTL*'s treatment of culture. While it regards human beings' cultural achievements as basically good, contributing to the affirmation of life, it takes a critical stance towards any tendency to value only one's own culture or civilization, which is considered as superior to others. It clearly condemns any tendency to see other cultures as uncivilized or untamed. Enforcement of uniformity is seen as life-denying because it discredits the uniqueness, liveliness and diversity of life (§99).

The long history of the negative view of culture in the church, as exemplified in the debates on gospel versus culture, is related to the naïve conviction that the gospel can be separated from culture. Without any awareness of the pluralist concept of culture or the need to affirm subaltern or marginal cultures, for many Christians it was not easy to recognize the heavy cultural imprint on their own perception of the gospel. Many missionary endeavours operated on the basis of the wrong presupposition that 'Western forms of Christianity are the standards by which others' adherence to the gospel should be judged' (§98). The new cultural awareness informing *TTL* opens up the possibility of acknowledging that God is present in all life-affirming cultures (§22, 27). Mission, then, is 'not to bring God along, but to witness to the God who is already there' (§94), in unfamiliar cultural settings.

From Cultural Uniformity to Appreciation of Diversity and Marginality in Cultures

One of the significant contributions of *TTL*'s view of culture is its appreciation of cultures from diverse contexts, and particularly from the margins. To understand its innovative nature, we need to look back on the history of Christian mission. For many centuries, Christian mission operated on the basis of the geographical expansion of Christian civilization from the centre to the ends of the earth (§5). For many Christians, there was only one standard culture and all other cultures were a hindrance to understanding the gospel (§98) – Lonergan's 'classical' notion of culture. *TTL*'s new view of culture is formulated against the background of the acknowledgement of the church's mistakes and sincere repentance (§33).

The second background for this view of culture has to do with today's changing landscapes. There are many reasons why the old concept of cultural uniformity cannot work any more. *TTL* recognizes the following as crucial changes: increased multicultural interactions as a result of the globalization and the advance of communication technology (§9), the secularization of the global North, the shifting of the centre of gravity of Christianity to the global South and East (§106), large-scale worldwide multi-directional migration (§70), the emergence of many intercultural communities of faith (§100), and the widespread influence of the post-modernism.

The third background for this new view of culture is found in the insights and findings of Cultural Studies, particularly their positive evaluation of subaltern cultures as self-regulating sub-cultures with the potential for resisting and reshaping the dominant culture – Schreiter's 'global' understanding of culture. Such insights have transformed the way culture is understood in related fields. Even though *TTL* does not use sources from Cultural Studies directly, its new view of culture can be understood against the background of changes brought about by advances in Cultural Studies.

TTL's emphasis on the concepts of diversity and margins in cultures signals an important paradigm shift in the history of Christian mission. Diversity is listed as one of four key concepts of mission today (§11). *TTL*'s high regard for diversity is clearly expressed in these passages: 'a plurality of cultures is a gift of the Spirit' because it deepens the understanding of our own faith and our understanding of others (§100); unity in the Holy Spirit is unity in diversity (§66); in the plurality and complexity of today's world 'we acknowledge that there is inherent value and wisdom in diverse life-giving spiritualities' (§93).

The two concepts of margins and diversity stand on the debris of the concepts of centre and uniformity of culture. 'Margins', which is similar to 'the poor and the oppressed' in Liberation Theology, is a broad term. It includes the estranged, the outcast, the untouchable, the sick, the vulnerable, the minority and the underprivileged. Living on the margins means exclusion from justice and dignity (§38). The voices of the margins have been denied by those who are at the centre. The traditional concept of mission was the expansion of the gospel from the centre to the margins. People on the margins were considered merely as the recipients of mission. *TTL* states that these roles are now reversed in mission (§6). The people on the margins have a special gift to discern what is life-affirming and what is life-destroying through their experiences (§107). The cultures of the margins are reservoirs of hope, perseverance, solidarity and collective resistance against evil (§38). Marginalized people 'are agents of mission and exercise a prophetic role which emphasizes that fullness of life is for all' (§107). Through this paradigm shift we come closer to the image of

authentic mission shown in Jesus who embraces and befriends those who are most marginalized in society (§37).

Mission as Counter-Cultural Resistance

Even though *TTL* views cultures in a positive light, such a view is not unconditional. *TTL* is aware of the problems caused by life-denying cultures influenced by evil spirits, the forces of death (§102). Christian mission is called to discern and confront such cultures. In today's world, there are many forms of life-denying cultures: the idol worship in the global free-market economy which promises it will save the world through unlimited economic growth and the accumulation of undue wealth (§7, 108); all forms of discrimination through unjust social structures or stereotypes; any forces that promote falsehood, injustice, oppression (§91); excessive greed and unlimited consumption; and the worship of mammon. Often times, life-denying cultures deceive by presenting themselves as good news. So, Christian mission should develop keen discernment with the help of experts in diverse fields and through the wisdom and insights from the margins. The church needs to reaffirm that the gospel is liberative and transformative (§91).

Transformative mission should resist life-denying cultures which keep expanding their influence over the world. In this sense, mission is counter-cultural resistance against the dominant life-denying cultures (§108). In modern times, fighting against evil is similar to being engaged in a culture war. When evil possesses immense power like the Roman Empire, there will be persecutions and martyrdoms. In any situation, the church ought to remember that authentic mission is faithfully following the example of Christ by carrying the cross and emptying oneself (§92).

TTL's view of culture, distilled in these four characteristics, addresses many difficult issues expressed in the discussions on culture by diverse mission organizations. *TTL*'s view of culture reflects up-to-date scholarship in related fields. *TTL*'s assessment of the changing landscapes of today's world is well substantiated. *TTL* will, surely, become a new ground upon which any further discussions on mission-culture relationships should rely.

TTL is a like a still photo-shot taken from a lengthy video which shows the history of ecumenical missiology. It is taken at a timely moment and aesthetically reflects the images of the important moments from the past to the present time. What are prominent in those images are: the goodness of culture, appreciation of the diversity and marginality of culture, and recognition of the power of evil in the world requiring mission to be counter-cultural resistance. All these are embraced by the principle of fullness of life. We live in a changing (not changed) world. We don't know what kind of unheardof challenges (something like extra-terrestrial intelligence?) awaits us in the future. In due time, we will again have to search for the opportune moment and for the best angle to record the scene.

In the meantime, *TTL* will serve as a hermeneutical horizon within which diverse meaningful vistas can be opened up under the overarching principle of the fullness of life.

Conclusion: The Hopes and Challenges of the Future

In an oft-printed and oft-cited essay, Andrew Walls speaks about a double movement in terms of Christianity and culture, a movement that 'has its origin in the Gospel itself'. On the one hand, there is what Walls calls the 'indigenizing principle' that recognizes that God in Christ takes people where they are and who they are, 'with our group relations; with that social conditioning that makes us feel at home in one part of human society and less at home in another'. On the other hand, however, Walls speaks of 'the pilgrim principle'. Not only does God take people where they are; God takes them to transform them into the people God wants them to be.[42]

One can see this dynamic moving through the whole history of mission, from Paul's struggle and adaptation with Athenian culture in Acts 17, through Justin's discovery of 'seeds of the Word' in Hellenistic philosophy, through Celtic and Benedictine monasticism's preservation of cultural artefacts, to Cyril and Methodius, Matteo Ricci, Samuel Crowther and Henry Venn. This past century in particular has highlighted this dynamic, as is seen from this chapter's account of it in ecumenical conversation since 1910.

What might the future bring? One would hope for greater strides in local expressions of Christianity, from ways to celebrate liturgy to ways of training for ministry and organizing the structure of the church to articulations of theology.

One would hope, as *TTL* implicitly acknowledges, that a greater consciousness of the changing understanding of culture as being more connected with power dynamics in particular situations, especially in terms of marginalized peoples. In this regard, one challenge would be to think more in terms of 'context' – personal and social experiences, social locations, changing and impinging global realities – as well as in terms of culture as such.

One would hope also for a continued search for connecting dialogue with other religious ways, so often inextricably connected with culture, and local cultures themselves.

One would hope, too, for a greater dialogue *among* the Conciliar, Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches. The challenge here is to move away from our denominational silos and begin working together for greater partnership in imagining and bringing about a truly inculturated

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[42] Andrew F. Walls, 'The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture', in Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 7-9.

Christianity. One small step in this regard has been taken in the final number of the *International Review of Mission* for 2015, which attempts to reflect on *Evangelii Gaudium* in dialogue with *TTL* and the *Cape Town Commitment*.[43]

In addition, one could hope that the church would rise to the challenge today of becoming truly *intercultural* in the way it lives its internal community life (*ad intra*) and the way it witnesses to and preaches the gospel (*ad extra*). Interculturality involves a mutually critical interaction between one culture and another, or among various cultures and contexts in a multicultural community or missionary situation.[44]

A final hope, and perhaps the greatest challenge, would be for the churches to engage together in a critical yet open dialogue with secular cultures, particularly those in the West and Australasia. If, to answer Lesslie Newbigin's haunting question positively, the West is to be converted, it will be done as a result of a critically appreciative dialogue with the genuine values and rightful critique of Christianity that secularism articulates.[45]

'Grace supposes culture.' Pope Francis gives us an important watchword for our missionary activity, one that is in itself a resounding and formidable challenge.

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[43] *International Review of Mission*, 104.2 (2015).

[44] In this regard, see Roger Schroeder, 'Interculturality and Prophetic Dialogue', in *Verbum SVD*, 54, 1 (2013), 8-21; Lazar T. Stanislaus and Martin Üffing (ed), *Intercultural Living* (Vol. I) and *Intercultural Mission* (Vol. II) (Sankt Augustin, Germany: Steyler Missionswissenschaftliches Institut, 2015).

[45] Lesslie Newbigin, 'Can the West Be Converted?: www.newbigin.net/ assets/pdf/85cwbc.pdf

OTHER FAITHS

Peniel Rajkumar

Introduction

Since the onset of the modern ecumenical movement – now identified with the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference (WMC)[1] – very few questions have as critically captured the attention of mission studies as the question of 'other faiths'. Starting with John R. Mott's memorable watchword, which set the scene for Edinburgh 1910, 'the evangelization of the world in this generation', to the affirmation that 'dialogue and (interreligious) co-operation for life are integral to mission and evangelism' by the recent ecumenical affirmation on mission and evangelism produced by the World Council of Churches,[2] mission has often been conceived vis-à-vis other faiths, albeit in diverse ways.[3]

Despite its polyvalence, the narrative surrounding mission and the question of other faiths since Edinburgh 1910 has yielded lessons worth rehearsing and revisiting today. This chapter resorts to such rehearsing and revisiting as a way of providing a critical cartography (mapping) of the complex and polysemic (multi-layered) relationship between mission and other faiths which can foster and foreground future discourses on 'mission and other faiths' in a fruitful manner.

The mapping of 'mission and other faiths' in modern ecumenical history is one which can be charted in terms of quests and the questions they provoke(d). Multiple theological quests have sought to make sense of mission vis-à-vis other faiths and out of the interstitial spaces of this interface have emerged many questions which help us to better comprehend the complex intersection of mission and other faiths. A cartography of the relationship between mission and other faiths that focuses on these quests and questions has the potential to capture both the indicative (what mission vis-à-vis other faith is/has been) as well as the imperative (what mission vis-à-vis other faiths ought to be) dimensions of mission.

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[1] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 554.

[2] *TTL,* §110.

[3] Popular Christian perceptions of people of other faiths across mission history have included understanding the other as 'an enemy of God', 'as potential convert', 'as primitive superstition', 'an unfulfilled seeker', 'a storehouse of culture', 'companion in struggle' and 'as a partner in dialogue'. See M. Thomas Thangaraj, 'Religious Pluralism, Dialogue and Asian Christian Responses', in Sebastian C.H. Kim (ed), *Christian Theology in Asia* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 157-78, at 159-62.

Mission and Other Faiths:
A (hi)story of Quests and the Questions They Provoke(d)

Several important quests have been made in modern mission history to engage with the question of other faiths.

Mission over *Dialogue (Edinburgh 1910)*

Though much has been mentioned about the Edinburgh 1910 WMC's preoccupation with the 'evangelisation of the world in this generation' and the emphasis on 'missionary expansionism', less attention has been given to the ground-breaking work of Commission IV of the conference which worked on the theme 'Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions' employing a global questionnaire.[4] Its report, based on the 187 responses received to the questionnaire, was widely hailed at the 1910 conference as 'perhaps the greatest theological achievement of the conference'.[5] Thoroughly unanticipated and completely overwhelming, the responses received posed 'a fundamental challenge to some of the unexamined assumptions and presuppositions about other religious traditions which underpinned the Missionary Conference'.[6] The 'then dominant Anglo-American fulfilment theology of religions – that non-Christian religions were *praeparatio evangelica*' which formed the leitmotif of the Commission's questionnaire and report, was debunked as being neither 'monolithic nor unchallenged' across the world.[7]

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[4] Assuming that the Commission's findings would benefit from experiential evidence from the mission fields, Commission IV embarked on a sound and novel methodology of soliciting responses to important questions concerning Christian relationships with other faiths from local missionaries across the world, employing a questionnaire which was specifically prepared for the purposes of the conference. For a detailed treatment of the work of Commission IV, see chapter 8 of Brian Stanley's *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009). Wesley Ariarajah says: "The questions requested information on number of points about Christian relationships with other religious traditions: What are the doctrines and observances in other faiths that seem to give genuine help and consolation to devotees in their religious life? What are the chief moral, intellectual and social hindrances to their responding to Christianity? What are the points at which people of other religious traditions are dissatisfied with their own religious communities and faith? What are possible points of contact between the Gospel message and religious life of others?" See S. Wesley Ariarajah, 'Interreligious Dialogue and Mission in Protestant Theology', in *Modern Believing,* 51.3 (2010), 38-47, at 39-42.

[5] Peter Phan, 'The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910: Challenges for Church and Theology in the 21st Century, in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* 34.2 (April 1910), 105-08, at 107.

[6] Ariarajah, 'Interreligious Dialogue and Mission', 40.

[7] Phan, 'The World Missionary Conference', 107.

Commission IV ushered in certain significant shifts in missiological thinking concerning other faiths. These included: a) taking other religious traditions 'with the theological seriousness they deserved' without treating them as 'primitive', 'preparatory', 'naturalistic', 'or 'devoid of revelation';[8] b) unanimously commending 'an attitude of openness and humility towards non-Christian religions'[9] and adopting an attitude of 'listening to and learning from the other faiths with a view of grasping their "meaning" for their believers';[10] and c) seeking to understand the doctrinal formulations of other religious traditions, and the spiritual search behind those formulations, instead of dismissing them on the grounds of their incompatibility and inconsistency with the gospel message.[11] Ironically, despite its theological value, the report of Commission IV had little impact on the overall report of the Edinburgh conference and was overridden by the explicit support for John Mott's vision of world evangelisation.[12] One cannot but wonder what the shape of mission would have been had Edinburgh 1910 embraced the voices and visions reflected in these responses to Commission IV's questionnaires.

Mission or *Dialogue*
(Tambaram 1938, Nairobi 1975 and Chiang Mai 1977)

The thinking about mission vis-à-vis other faiths provoked by Commission IV of the Edinburgh 1910 conference resurfaced in the second World Mission Conference in Jerusalem in 1928 which in its message 'articulated an appreciative apprehension' of the truth of other religions as not being discontinuous with the Truth in Christianity.[13] This was followed by the Hocking Commission's report on 'Rethinking Missions' which proposed that 'the relation between religions must take increasingly hereafter the form of a common search for truth'.[14] Alarmed by such liberalism, the

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[8] Ariarajah, 'Interreligious Dialogue and Mission', 41.

[9] Phan, 'The World Missionary Conference', 107.

[10] Ariarajah, 'Interreligious Dialogue and Mission', 41

[11] The overall contributions of Commission IV of Edinburgh 1910 are of salutary value. According to Ariarajah: 'The Commission IV at the Missionary Conference of Edinburgh 1910 was bold enough to think in a radically different way about peoples of other religious traditions. This was made possible because they did their theology on the basis of the reflections of those who were in real dialogue with religions and cultures at the local level. A century later, we are yet to pick up their baton of courage or to harvest the full benefits of their radical re-thinking': Ariarajah, 'Interreligious Dialogue and Mission', 47.

[12] Unfortunately, the original idea of publishing the 187 responses in their entirety had to be reluctantly cancelled in 1911: Phan, 'The World Missionary Conference', 106. See also Ariarajah, 'Interreligious Dialogue and Mission', 42.

[13] Diana L. Eck, 'The Religions and Tambaram: 1938 and 1988', in *International Review of Mission,* 77.307 (July 1988), 375-89, at 379.

[14] W.E. Hocking, *Rethinking Missions* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), 47.

debate on mission and other faiths was reborn in a remarkably exclusive manner in the third conference of the International Missionary Council held at Tambaram, India, in 1938.[15] Dutch missiologist Hendrik Kraemer's complex preparatory document *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World,* while advocating a positive attitude towards other religions, emphasised the radical discontinuity of the gospel with all religions on grounds of 'biblical realism' – something which met with stiff opposition at the conference.[16]

Kraemer outlined the danger of compromising the Christian message in trying to relate to other religions.[17] Thereby, Tambaram brought to the surface a tension between mission and dialogue which has ever since remained a prominent and persistent topic in theological discourses. As Stanley Samartha, the first Director of the WCC's Sub-Unit on Dialogue puts it, 'Underlying the challenge of Tambaram is the difficult but important question of the relation between mission and dialogue in a religiously plural world.'[18] One only needs to read the chapter on 'Dialogue or Mission: Can the Tension be Solved?' in Ariarajah's book *Not Without My Neighbour* to realise that this tension between Mission and Dialogue has ever since been the stuff of 'ecu-lore'.

The tension that Tambaram evoked resurged dramatically in the 'dialogue controversy' at the Nairobi Assembly in 1975. When the WCC's Sub-Unit on Dialogue with People of Other Faiths and Ideologies presented the report of its working group on 'Seeking Community with People of Other Faiths and Ideologies', it met with accusations of betrayal of Christian mission founded on 'the three classical fears' of the missionary movement: 'syncretism', 'compromising the uniqueness of Christ' and 'loss of urgency of mission'.[19] Samartha says that an important issue Nairobi raised for 'careful theological reflection' was: 'Does dialogue blunt

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[15] Gerald Anderson, 'The Theology of the Christian Mission at Edinburgh and Succeeding World Conferences', abstract of a PhD dissertation submitted to Boston University, 1960; Metropolitan Coorilos Geevarghese, 'Towards and Beyond Edinburgh 2010: A Historical Survey of Ecumenical Missiological Developments since 1910', in *International Review of Mission,* 99.390 (April 2010), 6-19, at 8.

[16] See Daryl Balia and Kirsteen Kim (eds), *Edinburgh 2010, Witnessing to Christ Today* (Vol. II), chapter on Theme Two: Christian Mission Among Other Faiths, 34-60, at 36.

[17] Mark Heim, 'Mission and Dialogue: 50 Years after Tambaram', in *The Christian Century,* 105.11 (6th April 1988), 340-43, at 340.

[18] Stanley J. Samartha, 'Mission in a Religiously Plural World: Looking Beyond Tambaram 1938', in *International Review of Mission*, 77.307 (July 1988), 311-24, at 311.

[19] Wesley Ariarajah, *Not Without My Neighbour: Issues in Interfaith Dialogue* (Geneva: WCC, 1999), 102.

the cutting edge of mission? Is it a substitute for proclamation? What is the relation between dialogue, witness and mission?'[20]

Of the various quests to overcome the difficulties caused by the 'mission or dialogue' debate, the theological consultation on 'Dialogue in Community' held in Chiang Mai in April 1977 remains a landmark – not least for 'the wide degree of agreement and mutual understanding' that the consultation statement achieved.[21] Its major points include the rejection of dialogue 'as a secret weapon in the armoury of an aggressive Christian militancy', but rather adopting it as 'a means of living out our faith in Christ in service of community with our neighbours'.[22] Significant is its recognition of the necessity of 'the spirit of dialogue' in giving witness which enabled the participants to 'not see dialogue and the giving of witness as standing in contradiction to one another'. [23] The statement further affirmed:

> Indeed, as we enter dialogue with our commitment to Jesus Christ, time and again the relationship of dialogue gives opportunity for authentic witness. Thus, to the member-churches of the WCC we feel able with integrity to commend the way of dialogue as one in which Jesus Christ can be confessed in the world today; at the same time we feel able with integrity to assure our partners in dialogue that we come not as manipulators but as genuine fellow-pilgrims, to speak with them of what we believe God to have done in Jesus Christ who has gone before us, but who now seek to meet anew in dialogue.[24]

This remarkably fresh theological approach to mission and dialogue was later adapted to form the theological basis of the *Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies* which was adopted at the 1979 Kingston meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC. But to say that Chiang Mai completely resolved the tension between Mission and Dialogue would be far-fetched. The tension continued in remarkable ways!**[25]**

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[20] Stanley J. Samartha, 'Guidelines on Dialogue', in *The Ecumenical Review,* 31.2 (April 1979), 155-62, at 156.

[21] Minutes of the WCC Central Committee held in Geneva 1977, 26.

[22] *Dialogue in Community: Statement and Reports of a Theological Consultation, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 18-27 April 1977* (Geneva: WCC, 1977), 16.

[23] *Dialogue in Community,* 18.

[24] *Dialogue in Community*, 18.

[25] At the commemoration of the fifty years since the Tambaram conference, held in Tambaram in 1988, one of the participants, Mark Heim, said:

A look back at Tambaram 1938 cannot solve the tension between mission and dialogue any more than the meeting fifty years later could clearly point the way towards its future resolution. Yet the participants in Tambaram 1988 may have played some part in broadening the discussion of that tension, and in helping the church to understand that mission and dialogue are parts of one issue, not two isolated and alternate or opposing special interests': Heim, 'Mission and Dialogue', 343.

Mission as *Dialogue:*[26] *Vatican II and Beyond*

A discussion on the relation of mission with other faiths would be incomplete without considering the Second Vatican Council's 'Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christians' – *Nostra Aetate* (*NA*) – proclaimed by his Holiness Pope Paul VI on 28th October 1965.[27]

In many ways, *NA* is an important signpost of the transition of Christian attitudes towards non-Christians in modern mission history. Recognised as a watershed document in inter-faith relations, *NA* has been considered to be 'a conversion to the "providential mystery of otherness" for the life of the church, and as a call to extend and deepen that conversion'.[28] Among the several commendable achievements of *NA* are its positive affirmation of other religions as providing 'answer to the unsolved riddles of human existence' and reflecting a 'ray of that Truth [*radius veritatis*] which enlightens all men (sic)'. [29] Frequently quoted among its affirmations is its declaration that 'the Catholic Church rejects nothing [*nihil reicit*] which is true and holy in these religions'.[30] It is important to note that the theological advancements of *NA* had to be taken into account in the shaping of *Ad Gentes,* the mission declaration that emerged out of Vatican II which clearly emphasised: 'Before the missionary begins his work by witness and preaching, the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, is already active.'[31]

This affirmation questioned the very rationale for missionary activity – 'why bring the good news to a place where it already exists?'[32] The fruit of

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[26] The 1984 document on 'The Attitude of the Church Towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission', produced by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, asserted that Mission includes 'the dialogue in which Christians meet the followers of other religious traditions in order to walk together toward truth and to work together in projects of common concern': paragraph 13. For a full text of the document, visit: www.shinmeizan. com/en/documents/72-2-pontifical-council-for-interreligious-dialogue. See the brief section on 'Mission as Dialogue' in 'Appendix 1 – Theme One: Foundations for Mission', in Emma Wildwood and Peniel Rajkumar (eds), *Foundations for Mission,* Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 279.

[27] For a full text of this brief document see: www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

[28] Mary C. Boys, SNJM, 'What *Nostra Aetate* Inaugurated: A Conversion To The 'Providential Mystery of Otherness', in *Theological Studies,* 74 (2013), 73-104, 73.

[29] *Nostra Aetate,* §2, in Austin Flannery (ed), *Vatican Council II: The Concilliar and Post Concilliar Documents* (revised edition) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1984).

[30] *Nostra Aetate*, §2.

[31] Cited in Kristin M. Colberg, 'The Omnipresence of Grace: Revisiting the Relationship between *Ad Gentes* and *Nostra Aetate* 50 Years Later', in *Missiology: An International Review,* 42.2 (2014), 181-94, at 187.

[32] Vatican II's reflections on other religions had radical implications for mission. As Kristin M. Colberg says: 'Vatican II's assertion that God's grace precedes the presence of missionaries and that it can have a salvific effect apart from any explicit

such an unsettling development however was the realisation of the need for a 'dynamic and renewed view of mission'.[33] It was agreed that 'the council's affirmation of the Christian experience of divine grace as abundant and dynamic does not exclude a strong account of missionary outreach, but demands it'.[34] Thus in many ways Vatican II challenged Christians to articulate mission by acknowledging the intrinsic value of other faiths and in creative fidelity to the gospel of Christ.

Nostra Aetate, which was, in the words of Cardinal Bea, 'an important and promising beginning',[35] triggered a renewed interest within the Roman Catholic Church in connecting Mission with Dialogue – especially among the Asian churches which affirmed dialogue as 'the way of being Church in Asia', 'the method for doing theology in Asia', and 'the mode of the Church's mission'.[36] The Federation of Asian Bishop's Conference

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proclamation of God's word gave the impression that what had been perhaps the most forceful argument in favour of explicit missionary activity was no longer valid. If God's inexhaustible love cannot be frustrated, then why engage in the difficult and often misinterpreted task of travelling across the globe to bring the good news to a place where it already exists?' Colberg, 'The Omnipresence of Grace', 189-90.

[33] Colberg, 'The Omnipresence of Grace', 190.

[34] Colberg, 'The Omnipresence of Grace', 190.

[35] Cardinal Bea was the President of the then Secretariat (now Pontifical Council) for Promoting Christian Unity and was instrumental in the production of *Nostra Aetate*; J. Oesterreicher, 'The Declaration on Non-Christian Religions', in Vorgrimmler (ed), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II,* Vol. III (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), 1-154, at 130, cited in Colberg, 'The Omnipresence of Grace', 185.

[36] Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, 'Mission as Dialogue: An Asian Roman Catholic Perspective', in Ogbu U. Kalu, Peter Vethanayagamony and Edmund Kee-Fook Chia (eds), Mission After Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 144 -54, at 147. The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference which emerged in 1972 following Vatican II identified four modes of interreligious dialogue, namely:

•   The dialogue of life – which involves informal, ongoing sharing of life and friendship in day-to-day life;

•   The dialogue of collaborative action – which fosters collaboration in the defence and promotion of justice, peace and ecological wholeness;

•   The dialogue of theological reflection – which involves enrichment by and a deeper understanding of the beliefs and practices of other religions; and

•   The dialogue of spiritual experience – which brings people together at a deeper level to both share their specific spiritual traditions and practices with each other and share in common spiritual experiences.

For more, see Peter C. Phan, 'Christian Social Spirituality: A Global Perspective', in Philomena Cullen, Bernhard Hoose and Gerard Mannion (eds), *Catholic Social Justice: Theological and Practical Explorations* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2007), 18-40, at 32; Michael Amalados, 'Dialogue', in R.S. Sugirtharajah and Virginia Fabella

(FABC) born post-Vatican II in 1972 understood dialogue as 'Triple Dialogue' – i.e. dialogue with Asian religions, Asian cultures and Asia's poor.[37] Triple dialogue, as an integral process involving inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and integral liberation, was seen as enabling the Asian church to address the issues of Asia's poverty and Asia's multi-religiosity under the evangelising mission of the church in Asia.[38]

Several critical questions have overflowed from the many quests to make sense of mission vis-à-vis other faiths. Since these questions continue to water the fertile ground of missional imagination and missiological thinking even today, it would be important to review them.

Questions of Pneumatology and Christology

One of the popular ways in which Christian ecumenical discourses have affirmed the validity of the religious experience and traditions of other religions is by taking recourse to the language of the presence and activity of the Spirit in other religions.[39] The WCC's *Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies* (1979) raises the question: 'Is it right and helpful to understand the work of God outside the Church in terms of the Holy Spirit?' The Baar statement on 'Theological Perspectives on Plurality' produced by the WCC's Programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Co-operation in January 1990 declared: 'We affirm unequivocally that God the Holy Spirit has been at work in the life and

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(eds), *Dictionary of Third World Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 111-14.

[37] Virginia Fabella, 'The Roman Catholic Church in the Asian Ecumenical Movement', in Ninan Koshy (ed), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement in Asia,* Vol. II (Hong Kong: World Student Christian Federation, Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCAs and Christian Conference of Asia), 116.

[38] Roman Catholic missiologist Edmund Chia explains 'triple dialogue' as follows: 'In the context of Asia, inculturation is brought about, first of all through the dialogue with Asia's poor, in view of facilitating their integral liberation. Second, because the other religions have their own views of what liberation and salvation mean and because the majority of Asia's poor owe their allegiance to these other religions, the process of inculturation, which entails the church's dialogue with the poor, must also include dialogue with the religions. In short, inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and the process of integral liberation are mutually involving ministries, all of which are integral to the evangelising mission of the church in Asia'; Edmund Chia, 'Wanted: Interreligious Dialogue', in *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue,* 12.1 (2002), 101-10, cited in Chia, 'Mission as Dialogue', 148.

[39] Of course, not always have Christians agreed upon the presence of divine activity in other faiths. One needs to remember the 1983 WCC Vancouver Assembly's rejection of the use of the phrase 'God's creative hand in the life of people of other faiths' in its report on 'Witness in a Divided World'.

traditions of peoples of living faiths.'[40] This contrasts with the tone of *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today,* the preparatory paper for the 2005 CWME conference held in Athens, which seeks to clearly avoid the 'temptation to separate the presence of God or the Spirit, from the Son of God, Jesus Christ'.[41] *Together towards Life,* while acknowledging that God's Spirit… 'can be found in all cultures that affirm life', goes on to say that 'we do not fully understand the workings of the Spirit in other faith traditions'.[42]

There is an inherent dilemma in all these discourses on discerning the Spirit in other religions. This is brought out perceptively by the Pentecostal Asian American theologian Amos Yong as follows:

> If we discern the Spirit using Christian (e.g. biblical) criteria, we end up either 'christianizing' the other insofar as we find the Spirit to be present, or 'demonizing' the other insofar as we find the Spirit absent. In the former case, we appear to have allied ourselves with Rahner's idea of 'anonymous Christianity', and thus opened ourselves up to all the difficult counter-questions generated by such a position, not the least of which is that we have imposed our own categories on religious others who are distinct from ourselves and have their own self-understandings. In the latter case, not only have we arrived at theologically charged rhetoric liable to be abused socially and politically, but we have also done so by declaring religious others void of certain goods and values as determined by criteria external to them.[43]

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[40] See Section IV: 'The Holy Spirit and Religious Plurality' of the Barr Statement: Theological Perspectives on Plurality (Statement of a theological consultation held in Barr, Zurich, Switzerland, in January 1990, organised by the WCC's Programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Co-operation as part of preparations for the Canberra Assembly. The Barr statement says:

Everything which belongs to 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control' is properly to be recognised and acknowledged as the fruit of the activity of the Holy Spirit. (Gal. 5.22-23, cf. Rom. 14.17).

We are clear, therefore, that a positive answer must be given to the question raised in the Guidelines on Dialogue (1979): 'Is it right and helpful to understand the work of God outside the Church in terms of the Holy Spirit?' (para 23).

[41] The WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism's 2005 conference held in Athens offered four criteria as a way of discerning the signs of the Spirit. They are ecclesial (that which confesses Jesus as Lord), personal and life-changing (that in which there is evidence of the fruit of the Spirit), charismatic (that which empowers the practising of the gifts of the Spirit with love), and ethical (that which identifies with the poor). See Kirsteen Kim, 'Come, Holy Spirit: Who? Why? How? So What?' in Jacques Matthey (ed), *Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile!* Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 2005 (Geneva: WCC, 2008), 155ff.

[42] *TTL,* §93.

[43] Amos Yong, 'The Holy Spirit and the World Religions: On the Christian Discernment of Spirit(s) 'after' Buddhism', in *Buddhist-Christian Studies,* 24.1 (2004), 191-207, at 192.

Yong poses a stiff challenge to all those who attempt to accord validity to other religious traditions employing a Christian pneumatological framework. The validity and integrity of our theological claims to respect other religions stands or falls vis-à-vis our position in relation to the dilemma Yong raises.

The salvific significance of Christ in our relationships with other faiths has also been a persistent and perennial question.[44] As the San Antonio mission conference of 1989 aptly captured it: '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. There is a tension between these affirmations which we acknowledge and cannot resolve.'[45]

The attempts of John Hick[46] and Stanley J. Samartha to resolve this tension through a theocentric shift need attention. In his *The Rainbow of Faiths,* Hick argued:

> … in order to make sense of the idea that 'the great world religions are all inspired and made salvific by the same transcendent influence, we have to go beyond the historical figure of Jesus to a universal source of all salvific transformation. Christians may call it the cosmic Christ or the eternal Logos; Hindus and Buddhists may call it the Dharma; Muslims may call it Allah; Taoists may call it the Tao; and so on. But what we then have is no longer (to put it paradoxically) an exclusively Christian inclusivism, but a plurality of mutually inclusive inclusivisms…[47]

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[44] Two important meetings which dealt with this issue are:

a) The Zurich Consultation of the WCC held in May 1970 to evaluate an earlier interreligious meeting held in Ajaltoun, Lebanon, in March 1970 to consider the theme 'Dialogue between Men (sic) of Other Faiths – Present Discussions and Future Possibilities'. The consultation was of the view that mission is concerned 'with discovering Christ where he already is holding all things together, with making Christ known so that men (sic) may consciously receive and share in his work of moving all things to their fulfilment in his kingdom, the Kingdom of love, and with receiving Christ as he makes himself known to us through his activity in, and through followers of, other faiths and commitments': 'Christians in Dialogue with Men of Other Faiths', in *International Review of Mission,* 59.236 (October 1970), 382-91, at 385.

b) A Mission/Dialogue Consultation of the WCC held 26th-29th January 1988 in Mahabalipuram, India, on the theme 'Christian Witness in a Pluralistic World', which dealt at considerable length with the theme of 'Christology and Salvation in the Mission of God'. For a report on this consultation, see Jean Stromberg, 'Christian Witness in a Pluralistic World: Report on a Mission/Dialogue Consultation', in *International Review of Mission,* 77.307 (July 1988), 412-36.

[45] San Antonio, Section 1 report, paras 26 and 29.

[46] John Hick's Copernican Revolution in Christian theology of religions ushered in through his 1973 book *God and the Universe of Faiths* (Macmillan) argued that the recognition of the religious values of other religions required a theocentric shift.

[47] Hick argued for leaving aside the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth in favour of 'a non-historical, or supra-historical, Christ figure or Logos'… effectively 'a name for the worldwide and history-long presence and impact upon human life of

Similarly, embracing the Hindu idea of Mystery – as an 'ontological basis for tolerance' – Samartha too argued for a theocentric Christology to emphasise both the distinctiveness of Christian mission as well to foster interreligious relationships:

> No one could have anticipated in advance the presence of God in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. There is an incomprehensible dimension to it. That Jesus is the Christ of God is a confession of faith by the Christian community. It is indeed normative to Christians everywhere, but to make it 'absolutely singular' and to maintain that the meaning of the mystery is disclosed only in one particular person at one particular point, and nowhere else, is to ignore one's neighbours of other faiths, who have other points of reference. To make exclusive claims for our particular tradition is not the best way to love our neighbours as ourselves.[48]

Samartha revises his Christology as a means through which 'the particularity and distinctiveness of Christian mission' can be restated in a way 'that co-operation with neighbours of other faiths for common purposes in society is not seen as a betrayal of mission but as the context in which the Christian witness to God's saving work in Jesus Christ becomes transparently clear'.[49]

Other notable attempts to reconcile the issue of 'salvation only through Christ' with 'respecting the integrity of other faiths' are Mark Heim's idea of many salvations, in which he argues that that one cannot talk of salvation in the singular but 'salvations' in the plural, given the intrinsic difference in religious understandings of salvation,[50] and Ariarajah's proposal for a 'composite Christology' for a 'holistic vision of salvation'.[51] The recent

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the Divine, the Transcendent, the Ultimate, the Real': John Hick, *The Rainbow of Faiths* (London: SCM, 1995), 22-23.

[48] Stanley Samartha, 'The Cross and the Rainbow', in John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (eds), *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (London: SCM, 1987), 75-76.

[49] Stanley Samartha, *One Christ Many Religions: Towards a Revised Christology,* 3rd Indian edition, 171.

[50] Mark Heim, *Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995).

[51] Wesley Ariarajah, *Your God, My God, Our God: Rethinking Christian Theology for Religious Plurality* (Geneva: WCC, 2012), 144. Arguing how 'we cannot arrive at a theology of religions that takes the experience of the peoples of other religious traditions seriously without radically reinterpreting the traditional Christian notions of salvation and the role of the cross in it', Ariarajah says: "My own sense is that we need a new 'composite Christology' that envisions a 'holistic salvation' understood at the personal, social and all other dimensions of human life. In doing so, it should hold together Jesus the teacher, healer, life-giver, the one who initiated the reign of God, and the one who mediates our life in God. This Christology could include some of the new dynamic understandings of what the death of Jesus on the cross and faith in resurrection can mean in our day. We also need to place this Christology-soteriology in the context of all other witnesses to God's saving work in the world, and God's overall mission of healing God's creation. We can, as

document on Christian Self-Understanding produced by the WCC's programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Co-operation responds to the Christological question in a persuasive way: 'We see Christ as a specific saving gift to all creation, not a replacement for or denial of God's presence and power through many other means.'[52] Pneumatology and Christology will be two issues that will push mission theology to widen the horizons of its imaginations critically and creatively so that our witness to the hope that is within us in a pluralistic world is both compassionately Christian and passionately interreligious. This demands theological integrity and interreligious sensitivity.

Mission and the Question of Culture

In contexts where religions and culture are intimately intertwined, mission has to contend with the issue of the clash of cultures where mission is accused of cultural erosion through the superimposition of a set of cultural values foreign to local cultures. Triumphalism has doubtlessly caused great cultural damage – especially where colonialism employed Christianity to aid its economic and political agendas through the myth of Christian superiority and moral co-option. However, an indiscriminate and wholesale affirmation or romanticising of local/native culture can be morally dubious because of the ambiguity of culture itself. The historical connections between mission, colonialism and culture are complex.[53]

Perhaps one of the points in the ecumenical movement when this conflict between Christianity and culture surfaced as a missiological issue was in the WCC's CWME conference held in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, in 1996. The conference recognised that there are 'life-denying and oppressive elements in cultures which reject fundamental values of human relationships' (I.3). Therefore the conference was critical and cautious about concepts such as inculturation which were thus far seen as bringing mission into closer contact with religions and cultures. Dr Musimbi R.A. Kanyaro from Kenya called upon the churches to 'move beyond a theology of inculturation and to put culture itself under scrutiny, in order to determine whether it promotes justice, life, peace and liberation, or whether it diminishes and dehumanizes people'.[54]

Christians, affirm without any hesitation that we have such a large vision and hope for the world because of our belief that 'God was in Christ' reconciling the world unto Godself and has called us to become Christ's disciples to participate in this work": Ariarajah, *Your God, My God, Our God*, 145.

[52] 'Who Do We Say That We Are? Christian Identity in a Multi-Religious World', in *The Ecumenical Review,* 66.4 (December 2014), 458-501, at 475.

[53] See Philip Jenkins, 'Imperial Missionaries?' in *Christian Century,* 26th November 2014, 45.

[54] Cited in Jacques Matthey, 'Salvador Among the World Mission Conferences of this Century', in *International Review of Mission,* 86.340/341, 19-26, at 20-21.

Revisiting the question of mission and local cultures today would entail being perceptive about how power is embedded between and within cultures, and evaluating culture from the perspectives of the margins – i.e. the ones oppressed by culture.[55] We need to be critical about politically expedient worldviews, which in the name of not offending the religio-cultural sensibilities of some religious and cultural elite, offer tacit complicity to internal injustices inherent in cultures. Mission and dialogue discourses should feel free to denounce religiously validated cultural practices like for example casteism and Zionism without the guilt of religious supremacy, and make the perspectives of the marginalised and oppressed the touchstone for evaluating culture.[56] Probably the biggest

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[55] The complex intersection of mission, colonialism and culture is brought out in a study entitled 'Mission At and From the Margins: Patterns, Protagonists and Perspectives', undertaken under the auspices of the Centenary Celebrations of the Edinburgh 1910 conference. The study points out how mission provided the space for the Dalit (formerly 'untouchable') communities to resist the 'internal colonialism' of the caste system which is an integral part of the Hindu religion. The study says: "… Dalit entanglements with missionaries are much more complex than patron-client or colonizer-colonized relationships. The conditions created by mission were seen as a liberative-transformative space by Dalit communities for self-assertion and reclamation of their place in society rather than as components of the colonizing process. Dalit communities, which had no stake in local power, viewed those in their own country who had power as 'colonizers'. For them, the conversion experience of which they were the primary agents helped in their quest for freedom from oppression. In this, the conditions of mission played and continue to play the role of midwife": Joseph Prabhakar Dayam and Peniel Jesudason Rufus Rajkumar, 'Mission At and From the Margins: Patterns, Protagonists and Perspectives – A Critical and Constructive Contribution to the Edinburgh 2010 Conference', in Peniel Jesudason Rufus Rajkumar, Joseph Prabhakar Dayam and I.P. Asheervadham (eds), *Mission At and From the Margins: Patterns, Protagonists and Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 3-9, at 8.

Despite all the problems associated with colonialism and the ideals of the enlightenment, the discourses of the anti-caste social reformers Jyothiba Phule and B.R. Ambedkar (who were in many ways very critical of colonialism) help us to understand how, in the context of caste-based Brahmanical colonialism, 'British colonialism inadvertently made available certain normative and cognitive tools with which to fight Brahmanical colonialism', and, using the enlightenment-based ideal of civil society, 'aimed to reconstitute intra-human and human-divine relationships on a higher level of egalitarianism'. See Mahesh Gavaskar, 'Colonialism within Colonialism: Phule's Critique of Brahmin Power', in S.M. Michael (ed), *Dalits in Modern India: Vision and Values*, 2nd edition (New Delhi: Sage Publications), 91-107, at 92.

[56] Dialogue which indiscriminately embraces the religion and culture of the other faces the danger of being counter-intuitive to the purposes of the marginalized. Ariarajah recounts his encounter with an Indian bishop who denounced the credibility of the dialogue programme of the WCC on the grounds that WCC's partners in Hindu-Christian dialogue were oppressors of the Dalits (who were previously known as 'untouchables'). For the bishop being in dialogue with

question for both mission and dialogue in today's context where religions and cultures are being exposed for their oppression and marginalization is whether they can be counter-culturally reshaped as solidarity with the margins in contexts where cultures can be dominant and oppressive.[57]

Mission and the Question of Conversions

One of the crucial questions in the debates relating to mission and dialogue has been the questions of religious conversions. An indication of its importance was the publication of 'Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct', jointly produced by the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity (PCID), WCC's Programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Co-operation (WCC-IRDC) and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) which sought to engage the issue. There are two issues which merit attention:

First, there is need for a more robust political understanding of conversions, especially in contexts of majoritarian religious assertion like India where the rhetoric of conversion is often employed to intimidate minorities and curtail the religious freedom of the marginalised to validate the opinion that the 'most pervasive legal threat faced by Indian Christians today' is 'the aspersion that they are either victims or perpetrators of forced or fraudulent religious conversions'.[58]

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dominant-caste Hindus 'would be to compromise; it would amount to a tacit approval of the caste system by the Christian partners'. More importantly, it would amount to 'a lack of concern for and solidarity with the oppressed community'. S. Wesley Ariarajah, *Not Without My Neighbour* (Geneva: WCC, 1991), 80.

[57] Shanta Premawardhana, former Director of the Interreligious Dialogue and Co-operation programme of the WCC, suggests that, in a context where there is a growing recognition of the nexus between dominance, power and religion, 'our partners in dialogue are not necessarily those religious leaders who are a part of the exploitative structures, but those who suffer from exploitation': Shantha Premawardhana, 'The Strange Exorcist', in *Masihi Sevak: Journal of Christian Ministry,* 34.2 (August 2009), 61-70, at 63.

[58] Nandini Chatterjee, *The Making of Indian Secularism: Empire, Law and Christianity, 1830-1960* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 242. The Global Anglicanism Project Report (Episcopal Church Foundation, 2005) gives us a comprehensive picture of how the language of conversion can be used against Christianity:

The North Indian states of Gujarat (2003) and, more recently, Rajasthan (2005) have passed anti-conversion laws prohibiting conversion through force, fraud or allurement. While most people, including Christians, readily condemn such methods, application of the law by conservative 'Hindutva groups' can be broad. In one case, non-Christian students who failed an examination in a Christian school alleged they were failed because they refused to become Christian. Even basic expressions of Christian faith can be defined as coercive, regardless of how they were uttered: *The Vitality and Promise of Being Anglican, The Global Anglicanism Project* (Episcopal Church Foundation, 2005), 23.

Second is the issue of the agency and autonomy of those who choose to convert (especially those concerning historically marginalised communities). More often than not, implicit in the mission and dialogue discourses on conversion is a tacit tendency to be dismissive about the capacity of marginalised people to make religious choices. Marginalised people are rendered as 'objects' of mission – as those who are susceptible to monetary and materialistic inducements. A good indication of this pejorative attitude in mission discourses is the colonial epithet 'rice-Christians' used for Dalit converts in India.[59] These discourses insinuate an elitist view of freewill and autonomy through their essentialising of the marginalised as 'incapable of distinguishing motives and inexperienced in the exercise of their own judgement'.[60] Such views constitute social Darwinism as they solely target the marginalised. Today there is a need to move away from such understandings of conversion which blur the lines between consent, co-option and coercion, and between freedom, force and fraud.

The challenge for proponents of mission and dialogue is to carry out their respective agendas – of affirming proclamation and avoiding proselytism – employing an epistemology which does not denigrate the marginalised as merely 'objects' of their agenda and understands conversion within a wider intersection of religious freedom, human dignity, economic and political interests, and social privilege and power. Both *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World* and *Together towards Life* make reference to religious freedom and human dignity when discussing the issue of conversions.

Mission and Multiple-Religious Affiliations

One important question that the present context of religious plurality poses for mission concerns the shape of mission in a context where people claim multiple religious affiliations. Multiple religious belonging or multiple religious participation is now explicitly being acknowledged as a valid religious identity and a viable mode of being religious today. Two recent conferences on the theme 'Exploring Hybridity, Embracing Hospitality' organised by the WCC's Programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Co-operation in Chennai (October 2014) and Cleveland (April 2015) served to highlight the point that Multiple Religious Belonging as a phenomenon and practice is not a concern of academic theology alone or the by-product of post-modern supermarket spiritualities but a real phenomenon in mainline

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[59] Missionaries in colonial South India cast aspersions on the conversion motives of Dalits who were considered 'out-castes' (and were previously known as 'untouchables') and denied them baptism on the grounds that their conversions were motivated by reasons of food and livelihood.

[60] Gauri Viswanathan, 'Literacy and Conversion in the Discourse of Hindu Nationalism', in *Race and Class,* 42.1 (2000), 4.

churches which prevails in plural forms. In the Cleveland meeting, clergy in mainline Christian denominations who simultaneously embraced practices of another faith, faith practitioners who were always nurtured in two faiths as a result of being born from interreligious marriages, and ordinary people for whom living between and within two religious /spiritual traditions was just the norm, all testified to the ability of a person to participate in more than one religious tradition.

Multiple religious belonging poses unprecedented challenges for traditional understandings of mission because the boundary between the Christian self and the non-Christian 'other' no longer exists. There is need for a paradigmatic shift in conceiving of mission. What this phenomenon of multiple religious belonging enables mission to see is the relative redundancy of earlier models of 'doing' mission as now the context and conditions of doing mission are radically altered. The agent of mission is no longer 'purely' Christian. Therefore does it still make sense to talk of Christian foundations for mission?

One question ahead of us is whether this is a 'crisis' or *krisis* (opportunity) of new foundations for mission. Multiple religious belonging forces a revisiting of traditional understandings of Christian commitment, salvation, in a changed context. In a context where there are possibilities for 'inclusi-vising' mission – by not pitting 'me' against the 'other' – one of the ways mission can be conceived is probably as a response to the pastoral challenges that multiple-belongers face within structures which refuse to acknowledge the possibility that faith and believing can be hybridised and hyphenated.

(In) Conclusion

According to the noted missiologist Lamin Sanneh, 'For all of us pluralism can be a rock of stumbling but for God it is the cornerstone of universal design.'[61] This chapter sought to portray how the (hi)story of Christian mission vis-à-vis other faiths within the modern ecumenical movement has involved, on the one hand, ensuring that mission does not stumble in the face of religious plurality, and on the other hand, seriously taking up the challenge of building a world of justice, peace, healing and reconciliation on this cornerstone of God. There are several other issues that could have been discussed on the theme 'mission and other faiths'. This chapter, though furnishing only the most representative issues that have defined the debate between mission and dialogue in (in)decisive ways, has nevertheless sought to view the debate in an intersectional manner, bringing in the matrices of culture, politics and colonialism (to name a few) – all of which impinge upon missiological thinking today. It is with the hope that this

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[61] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), 29.

intersectional analysis will open up concomitant issues for discernment, debate and dissent in changing mission contexts that the incompleteness of this chapter is embraced. In its incompleteness it testifies that the (hi)story of missions may not be just about the unresolved questions of the past, or the changing contexts of the present but also the unknown opportunities of the future. The challenge is to traverse this unknown future as pilgrims – steadfast in our faith, sustained by a common hope and serving each other selflessly through love.

FORMATION

Martin W.H. Robra

Formation for Life-Affirming Mission and Transformative Action

Formation for life-affirming mission and transformative action is the task that follows from the statement of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME): *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (*TTL*).[1] Theological education, ministerial and lay formation, continuing ecumenical formation, theological education by extension (TEE) and various other terms – they all point to particular dimensions and methods of the broader process of equipping people for their life and witness as Christians. Going beyond a more narrow understanding of training or education, the term 'formation' refers here 'to the whole process of equipping, enabling, raising awareness, shaping or transforming attitudes and values'.[2] It corresponds to education as lifelong learning 'enabling people to lead a responsible and mature life in which conflicting experiences can be integrated and relationships with those who are different can be established' rather than 'education as the process through which people are introduced in the traditions and norms of a given community'.[3] The *Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches* underlined in 1993: 'Ecumenical Formation is an essential part of the process of building community in the one household of God.'[4]

The *TTL* document does not explicitly refer to theological education and formation itself, but it provides theological foundations for reflections on formation for life-affirming mission. Some vital impulses for this essential dimension of the life of the churches are being presented in the *Practical*

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[1] Jooseop Keum (ed), *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes – with a Practical Guide* (Geneva: WCC, 2013).
[2] Konrad Raiser, 'Fifty Years of Ecumenical Formation: Where Are We? Where Are We Going?' in *The Ecumenical Review,* 48.4 (1996), 440-56, at 440 – the term *formation* is used in this sense ecumenically since the 1965 Gazzada statement on laity formation.
[3] Raiser, 'Fifty Years', 445.
[4] Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, *Ecumenical Formation: Ecumenical Reflections and Suggestions,* in Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC, *Seventh Report* (Geneva/Rome: WCC/PCPCU, 1998), 53-59; also *The Ecumenical Review,* 45.4 (1993), 490-94, para 16.

Guide that accompanies the statement, focusing on four of its central themes:

1.   Spirit of Mission: Breath of Life, which involves the 'formation of leaders gifted with discernment' (*TTL* §35) and ready to 'empty themselves of their privileges for the sake of the disempowered (*TTL* §33). Through the gift of the Holy Spirit they embrace *metanoia* (repentance) as a process of transformation'.[5]

2.   Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins, which requires 'genuine liberation' (*TTL* §100) as 'an indispensable gift of the Spirit that must embrace all creation'; 'good missional leadership creates, space, invites and empowers others to come in and express their gifts' (*TTL* §47).[6]

3.   Spirit of Community: Church on the Move, which calls in response to the impact of globalization and migration 'for intercultural missional formation of leaders' (*TTL* §§75-76), and requires 'new guidelines' to facilitate authentic engagement in evangelism' (*TTL* §90);[7]

4.   Spirit of Pentecost: Good News for All, which inspires 'transformative missional formation' recognizing 'that the *missio Dei,* being in mission, is greater than loyalty to denominational and local identities' – 'identity is a gift from God, which needs to be celebrated and explored, resulting in what is life-giving to all'; leadership formation needs 'to ensure that outreach and proclamation are evangelism and not proselytism.'[8]

The emphasis on the Holy Spirit opens the horizon beyond humanity towards God's creation and the life-giving power of God's redemptive and transformative love, realizing already in the here and now signs of God's reign to come. Mission as participation in *missio Dei* begins at the margins among marginalized and subaltern communities and opens the space for mutual empowerment, life-affirming action and the sharing of the Good News of God's gift of life in Christ. The value of diverse contexts is affirmed, together with the need for inter-contextual and inter-cultural dialogue and co-operation also with people of other faiths in the transformative dynamic towards the promise of life in its fullness.

The Changing Context of World Christianity
and the Journey from Edinburgh 1910 Onwards

The *Practical Guide* points to a number of major challenges to theological education and formation in view of the changing global and ecclesial

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[5] *TTL*, 51.

[6] *TTL*, 51

[7] *TTL*, 64

[8] *TTL*, 71-72.

landscapes and the existing power asymmetries and inequalities that still reflect to a large extent the colonial and neo-colonial past. Formation is thus described as process of transformation of loyalties and identities towards a new community of life in the Holy Spirit.

The *TTL* statement and the practical guide build on:

- the account of the history of ecumenical education and formation,
- analysis of contemporary challenges in the different regions and globally,
- contextual reflections on the role of education and formation in Christian mission, and
- some very concrete proposals for action that are the results of the preparatory study process to the Edinburgh 2010 Centenary of the 1910 World Missionary Conference, the event itself and the follow-up in research and publications.[9]

The document is informed by the changing context of world Christianity:

- from the colonial period, the time of the two world wars, processes of de-colonisation, nation-building and continuing neo-colonial oppression to post-colonial realities marked by the impact of the globalization of markets and media, and the migration of millions of people leading to growing diversity,
- the shift of the centre of gravity of world Christianity towards the South and the East, together with the growth of Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal, Charismatic and African Independent Churches,

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[9] See especially the Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series volume on theological education and formation; Stephen Bevans, Teresa Chai, Nelson Jennings, Knud Joergensen and Dietrich Werner (eds), *Reflecting on and Equipping for Christian Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2015). The *Report of Study Group VI on Theological Education and Formation* was published in Daryl M. Balia and Kirsteen Kim (eds), *Witnessing to Christ Today,* Edinburgh 2010, Volume II (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), 148-74. The WCC Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) programme published a series of handbooks on theological education in world Christianity with Regnum and a global study report: Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, Joshva Raja (eds), *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives, Ecumenical Trends, Regional Surveys* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010); see also the series of handbooks on Africa (with Isabel Phiri), Asia (with Hope Antone, Hyjun Bae, Wati Longchar and Huang Po Ho), Orthodox Theological Education and Ecumenism (with Pantelis Kalaitzidis, Cyril Hovorun, Aikaterina Pekrido and Tom Fitzgerald), and Dietrich Werner and Namsoon Kang, 'Global Study Report of the WCC on the Future of Theological Education in World Christianity', in Melisande Lorke and Dietrich Werner (eds)*, Ecumenical Visions for the 21st Century: A Reader for Theological Education*, *Supplemental Readings* (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 115-76. Some of these and many other important resources of the process can be accessed at: https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ete/edinburgh-2010-study-group (accessed 1st August 2015).

- the rise of new voices from post-colonial, gender, ecological, ecumenical, interreligious, and other perspectives, and
- a new geo-political landscape with competing poles of economic, political and military power, new alliances (such as BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), and new forms of violence and war involving new actors.[10]

This body of work presents a striking continuity of power imbalances with the tendency to impose generalized frameworks that are reflecting the situation in Europe and North America. This refers for instance to the concept of secularization, the dominance of the economy over all other dimensions of life, and heavily institutionalized forms of education that require important financial resources, etc. In contrast, motivating stories of contextualized vital and inspiring forms of education were shared that are deeply rooted in the lives and spirituality of all God's people and sensitive to the voices and contributions of the poor and marginalized.[11] This refers for instance to the emergence of TEE – 'Theological Education by Extension',[12] now often read as 'Transformative Equipping and Education' or 'Tools to Equip and Empower'.[13] The Edinburgh 2010 process helped to bridge the gap between educators, scholars and leaders with Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic self-understanding and identity, and those from Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and diverse Protestant traditions.

Kenneth R. Ross demonstrates in his analysis of the texts of the two commissions of the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary World Conference concerned with education and formation (Commissions III and V)[14] that, in certain contrast to the prevailing vision of a Christianized planet, some perspectives anticipating future developments surfaced:

> From the distance of 100 years the flaws of Edinburgh 1910 are all too apparent. Yet its prescience and prophetic qualities also come into view. Its passion for forms of education which would serve the emergence of truly indigenous forms of Christianity proved to have great resonance through the 20th century. Theologically, the Conference anticipated the concentration on such themes as inculturation and contextualization that would be key to maturity for the 'younger churches'. Its insistence that such a process of

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[10] Cf. Martin Robra, 'The Ecumenical Movement in the Context of World Christianity in the 21st Century', in Lorke and Werner, *Ecumenical Visions*, 7-15.

[11] Cf. for instance, Ross Kinsler (ed), *Diversified Theological Education: Equipping All God's People* (Pasadena, CA: WCIU Press, 2008).

[12] See Ross Kinsler (ed), *Ministry by the People: Theological Education by Extension* (Geneva: WCC / Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983).

[13] Graham Aylett and Tim Green, 'Theological Education as a Tool for Twenty-First Century Mission', in Chai et al, *Reflecting on and Equipping for Christian Mission,* 56-71.

[14] Kenneth R. Ross, 'Perspectives on Education and Formation from the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910', in Bevans et al, *Reflecting on and Equipping for Christian Mission,* 21-33.

indigenization would necessarily be led by indigenous leaders and its consequent prioritization of the formation of such leaders proved to be of far-reaching significance.[15]

The Theological Education Fund

The implementation of ideas and recommendations of Edinburgh 1910 was blocked by World War I. Little changed in regard to theological education organized in the framework of the four classical disciplines of biblical, historical, systematic and practical theology, with ethics subsumed in systematic theology and the education of missionaries referred to special seminaries or just left to itself. Against this background, participants in the 1938 World Missionary Conference in Tambaram, India, stated: 'The worst element in all initiatives in Christian mission is theological education.'[16] It was at Tambaram that representatives of the so-called 'Younger Churches' became for the first time the majority at a World Missionary Conference. The participants called for a listening and dialogical approach to mission with an emphasis on the local church and the theological education required for it. They re-stated Edinburgh 1910 recommendations, for instance the use of vernacular languages rather than the colonial languages in theological education.[17]

But again, the next World War interrupted the follow-up to the conference. It took another twenty years until the Theological Education Fund of the International Missionary Council (IMC) was established at the IMC Assembly in 1958 in Accra, Ghana. After the integration of the IMC into the WCC in 1961, the fund continued to operate from London where it was based.[18]

The three decisive marks of TEF's work were:

- quality, combining intellectual rigour, spiritual maturity and commitment,

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[15] Ross, 'Perspectives on Education and Formation, 35.

[16] Cf. Ofelia Ortega, 'Contextuality and Community', in *International Review of Mission*, 98.388 (2009), 25-36, at 25, quoting Petros Vassiliadis, 'The Need for Change in Theological Education: Presidential Address. The IV Congress of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI), 31st May-7th June 2008', Thessaloniki, 1.

[17] Mark Laing, 'Recovering Missiological Ecclesiology in Theological Education', in Ebenezer D. Dazan and Frampton F. Fox (eds), *Missiological Education: Theological Integration and Contextual Implications* (New Delhi: Centre for Mission Studies, 2009), 41-72, at 52-53.

[18] For this and the following see John S. Pobee, 'Education', in Nicholas Lossky et al (eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd edition (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 384-89. A key educational initiative of the WCC is the Ecumenical Institute, Château de Bossey, that was already established in 1946. Bossey has been a laboratory of ecumenical learning and contributed significantly to reflections on ecumenical learning and education in the WCC – see Raiser, 'Fifty Years',

- authenticity, involving critical encounter with each cultural context in the design, purpose and shape of theological education, and
- creativity, understood as promoting new approaches of the churches obedience in mission.

The fund chose the following points of emphasis for different periods:

1958-1965: support for indigenous and interdenominational places and institutions for theological education in the global South;

1965-1970: development of new curricula for churches of the global South and new teaching materials written by theologians from the South;

1970-1977: critique of western concepts of theological education and the call for contextualization of both forms of ministry and forms of theological education in the South.

Desmond Tutu served TEF in the early seventies as Africa director at the time when Shoki Coe introduced the concept of contextualization to the broader discussion. TEF co-operated within the WCC with the Office of Education which was set up in 1969 following a call of the Uppsala Assembly.[19] The office included sub-sections on adult education, theological education and church education, and a fund for education among children and adults. The office worked with the understanding of education as lifelong learning and teaching as a two-way process. Paulo Freire, author of the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* worked with the office on the adult education desk. He strengthened the influence of Liberation Theology in the WCC: the poor are to be subjects of their own history and literacy/education is a process of liberation in action and reflection.

With a new mandate, in 1977 the TEF became the Programme on Theological Education (PTE). The PTE was to give attention to:

- the influence of context and culture in theology and ministerial formation,
- the need to liberate theological education and ministerial formation and practices from bondages which hamper faithfulness in their life and witness,
- cross-cultural discussion of key aspects of theological education, and
- the integration of gender concerns.

The 1983 Vancouver Assembly underlined that education is constitutive of the church and that Christian education as a whole

- transcends barriers
- is action-oriented
- is done in community

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[19] In 1971 the World Council on Christian Education also joined the WCC; and in 1972 the World Collaboration Committee for Christian Lay Centres, Academies and Movements for Social Concern was established (known since 1997 as *oikosnet*).

- means learning together (detecting the local in the global and the unfamiliar)
- is inter-cultural
- is a total process – social and religious learning are not separated from each other but constitute a unity.[20]

PTE translated this vision into action as a global network, with funding available for capacity-building and in close co-operation with the WCC scholarship programme. PTE developed with contributions of gifted leaders such as Samuel Amirtham, John Pobee and Ofelia Ortega. The continuity of the emphasis on learning in community, contextualized education and processes of intercontextual exchange, and the need for intercultural and interreligious co-operation, is obvious. PTE continued to operate within the CWME with its commitment to mission. PTE's points of emphasis reflected the understanding of mission promoted by the 1973 Bangkok World Mission Conference.

In parallel, the process of regional and global networking among Evangelical educators and institutions of education for mission and evangelism intensified. Important regional associations developed from the 1960s onwards. The Theological Assistance Program (TAP) of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) was formed in 1968 and became the WEA Theological Commission.[21] Like PTE, TAP promoted Theological Education by Extension (TEE) and assisted in faculty development and the publication of teaching material. Supported by the Theological Commission, the International Council of Accrediting Associations, now the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education, was created in 1980, fostering dialogue and co-operation at the international level.

The foundation of the Society for Pentecostal Studies in 1970 as an academic network which is also involved in bilateral theological dialogues was a first step at the international level in the world of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.[22] Representatives of regional associations that were formed in the meantime took the initiative for a World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education (WAPTE) in 2008 in Singapore. WAPTE was endorsed by the Pentecostal World Fellowship in 2009.[23]

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[20] Ulrich Becker, 'Ecumenical Learning', in Nicholas Lossky et al (eds)*, Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 379-80.
[21] www.worldevangelicals.org/tc/about.htm (accessed 1st August 2015).
[22] http://storage.cloversites.com/societyforpentecostalstudies/documents/history.pdf (accessed 1st August 2015).
[23] http://wapte.org/about/history (accessed 1st August 2015).

New Horizons for Theological Education and Formation
– from the 1990s to 2013

The changing ecclesial landscape and the shift of the centre of gravity of world Christianity, together with the challenges of inter-faith dialogue and co-operation, began to impose themselves increasingly on the ecumenical agenda during the 1990s. Both the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey and the Programme on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE), as it was now called, began to address these challenges systematically. To overcome separations and competitive relationships of the past, pro-active steps were taken by both sides to forge new links between ecumenical and Evangelical and Pentecostal scholars, theological networks and communities. Among those engaged in bridge-building was the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies which was founded in 1983. Fruitful exchange intensified and participation broadened after the 1998 WCC Assembly in Harare. The emerging Global Christian Forum started to function as a platform for the building of trust, exchange and shared reflections for all Christian traditions, churches and communities.[24]

The preparatory process for the Edinburgh Centennial contributed significantly to intensive research and discussion on ecumenical formation and theological education in world Christianity with the involvement of all relevant actors concerned.[25] The 'Report of parallel session on theological education – Edinburgh 2010' summarized the results of the discussion during the conference.[26] The report lists the following as 'most important challenges for reshaping and strengthening theological and missionary training':

a.   Disparity in the availability of resources for theological education between the North and the South and within several regions;

b.   The tremendous rise in the number of higher education students in the South in General, and the rise in applications for theological study programmes in particular;

c.   The growing interest of Pentecostal churches in theological education programmes;

d.   The urgent needs prevailing in many contexts to create more space for women in

e.   theological education, theological leadership and in the ministries of the church;

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[24] Huibert van Beek (ed), *Revisioning Christian Unity. The Global Christian Forum* (Oxford: Regnum, 2009).
[25] See footnote 9 above.
[26] https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ete/edinburgh-2010-study-group/report-on-edinburgh-2010-session-on-the-future-of-theological-edcuation-in-the-21st-century   (accessed 1st August 2015).

    f.   The lack of common quality standards and mutual recognition between theological schools of different contexts, denominational background and theological orientation;

    g.   Denominational fragmentation of the international landscape of theological education institutions;

    h.   The grave lack of scholarships and grants available for higher studies in theological education and the increasing difficulties of churches in funding their institutions of theological education;

    i.   Changing structural conditions of theological education (the move in some contexts away from church-related seminaries towards state-funded departments of religious studies);

    j.   The fundamental implications of global migration movements, and changing and increasingly diverse constituencies for programmes of theological education.

The report underlined concern for the education of children who represent 30% of world Christianity (para 8). It called for interdisciplinary and holistic methodologies overcoming compartmentalization, integrating academic learning, spirituality and education for ministerial service, contextualizing teaching materials, and strengthening gender-sensitivity and the inclusion of marginalized and subaltern communities (para 9). Affirming the value and 'strategic role of non-formal and non-residential forms of theological training', the report advocated a better 'balance between formal and non-formal, residential and non-residential forms of theological education' (para 10).

Common concerns included:

- the central role of the Bible as the Word of God in theological education, and the need for a 'new hermeneutic of the work of the Holy Spirit' (para 11),
- the role of the ecumenical and global dimensions and the task of reclaiming 'the public space for theology and for Christian witness by facing the burning issues of today's society' (para 12),
- the necessity of 'bridging the gap between theory and practice' inspired also by different 'models of theological learning and teaching' with some of them having an even longer history (para 13),
- the creative tension between the common basis of theological education in the Scriptures and Christian traditions, and the need for contextualization (para 14),
- creation of new spaces for inter-contextual exchange of resources, teaching staff, students, teaching materials, etc. – for instance, through a 'worldwide Online Network among theological educators of diverse theological traditions' (para 15),
- integration of the concerns and perspectives of marginalized groups and subaltern communities in the curricula for theological

education: 'Theological education in the presence of the other' (para 16),

- 'development of general Christian education both in universities and in private or public schools' (para 17), and

- Opening spaces for interdenominational education by including students of other traditions and support for interdenominational education by giving up past privileges and the sharing of resources and decision-making (para 18).

An Unfinished Agenda

The Edinburgh 2010 process and the work on the CWME mission statement (*TTL*) have raised research, reflection and debate on mission and missional formation to a new level. This is true for the inclusiveness of the processes in terms of different Christian traditions and communities, and to a large extent also regarding the inclusion of perspectives of marginalized and subaltern communities. It is also true in terms of the new theological insights regarding the role of the Holy Spirit presented by *TTL*.

The present generation is privileged to build common reflection and practice on these achievements. The emphasis on the Holy Spirit has still far more to offer concerning the care for creation and people, a vital basis for theological reflection, the understanding of relationships among Christians and with people of different faith communities, and – in the more narrow interest of missional formation – regarding curricula, methodologies and co-operation for life-affirming mission and transformative action.

It would be unacceptable if the level of dialogue and co-operation among representatives of different Christian traditions that was reached so far would weaken again and give way to different 'camps' of world Christianity. Simplifying, but probably not oversimplifying, important features of the present situation, they can be described as three overlapping circles of a) those emphasizing the unity of the church expressed and realized by the role of (male) bishops, b) those focusing on 'truth' regarding moral values (especially concerning issues of body and sexuality), and c) those who see the urgent need for dialogue and co-operation of all Christians and all people of goodwill in response to contemporary threats to life. These trends cut across different traditions and contexts.

In this situation, it is worthwhile to listen again to the wisdom of Willem Visser 't Hooft, who was to become the first General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948. He underlined at the inauguration of the Ecumenical Institute Château de Bossey in 1946:

> … the centre – i.e. the Institute – must have a truly ecumenical character. It should be the place where men and women of all the member-churches of the ecumenical movement learn together, receiving and giving, learn to struggle

one for the other, and where they thus accept the tension between truth and unity which is at the basis of any true ecumenical community. [27]

After many years of reflection on hermeneutics and the diversity of cultures and religions, we would perhaps prefer a different language. But still today we understand that the tension between 'truth and unity' to which Visser 't Hooft refers is a consequence and vital expression of the existing diversity of traditions, cultures and values in truly ecumenical communities that cut across boundaries of ethnic or national identities and loyalties and are committed to overcome existing power dynamics and inequalities. Not allowing the different circles to fall apart is a shared task of all who are faithful to participation in *missio Dei* – being together in mission and trying together to be authentic witnesses to Christ and the Good News of the Gospel in the world of today.

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[27] Quoted in Raiser, 'Fifty Years', 442.

DISCIPLESHIP

Benjamin Conner

'There is no participation in Christ without participation in his mission in the world.'[1]

Lesslie Newbigin

Introduction

Christian discipleship, at an analytic minimum, can be described as responding to and following Jesus Christ with the goal of union with God through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.[2] One notable feature about the ecumenical movement's contribution to contemporary understandings of discipleship, according to Lesslie Newbigin, is that the ecumenical movement has connected discipleship with mission and evangelism because it participates with Christ in God's ongoing redemptive mission in the world. Within the ecumenical movement, there are numerous expressions of what following entails and requires, and these differences relate to fundamental and often unreconciled understandings of the relationship between church, mission, society and gospel as well as perceptions of what God is doing in history.

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[1] Norman Goodall (ed), *Missions under the Cross: Addresses delivered at the enlarged meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Willingen, Germany, 1952, with statements issued by the meeting* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1953), 190.

[2] Different definitions of Christian discipleship and what a disciple is (*discipulus*, *mathetes*, learner) will emphasize one aspect over another, but one core or unifying affirmation is that Christian discipleship involves *following* Jesus. The call to discipleship, according to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, is: 'Follow me, run along behind me'… It gives us no intelligible programme for a way of life, no goal or ideal to strive after. It is not a cause which human calculation might deem worthy of our devotion, even the devotion of ourselves' (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Collier Books Macmillan Publishing, 1963), 62). According to Karl Barth, discipleship is related to *akolouthein*, the verb 'to follow', which reminds us that the event of following Jesus cannot be enclosed in a general concept – it is a response to a specific calling. In his words, 'the call to discipleship is the particular form of the summons by which Jesus discloses and reveals himself to individuals in order to claim and sanctify them as his own, and as his witnesses in the world' (Karl Barth, *The Call to Discipleship* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 7).

However discipleship has been conceived in the ecumenical movement, it has always indicated the importance of shaping and forming *people* to be and do certain things in response to the missionary calling of a missionary God. Therefore, in order to distinguish and benefit from the different conceptions of discipleship in the ecumenical movement, it is essential to examine ecumenical visions of who the people of God are, the laity, and what they are called to do and be, their vocation, because ecumenical understandings of Christian discipleship are often framed in terms of the people of God who are being discipled towards some end.

It is interesting to note that the *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* does not include an entry on 'discipleship'.[3] Perhaps this is because discipleship is simply implicit in every aspect of the ecumenical movement as the entire movement could be interpreted in relation to responding to the call of Christian discipleship. Given the overwhelmingly broad scope of discipleship in the ecumenical movement, this chapter, for the sake of focus and clarity, will engage only one facet of the larger conversation – the ecumenical understanding of discipleship as articulated in relationship to the laity. If, as I have suggested, the key question for understanding discipleship is correlated to the issue of supporting Christians in following Christ and preparing them to participate in God's ongoing redemptive work in the world, then ecumenical perceptions of the role and calling of the laity should provide fertile ground for apprehending how many in the ecumenical movement have understood Christian discipleship.

Christian Discipleship: Presumptions and Challenges

Expressions of Christian discipleship in the ecumenical movement have been articulated in response to challenges: challenges to the faith, challenges to the church, and challenges to the missionary enterprise. At that first great ecumenical missionary conference, Edinburgh 1910, it could be argued that the legitimacy of the missionary enterprise or whether or not such a conference was a faithful way of responding to the gospel was not questioned. The faithful response of discipleship was for the so-called Christian nations to organize for mission, to evaluate and marshall their resources, and to participate in advancing 'the evangelization of the world in this generation' (the SVM [Student Volunteer Movement] watchword, the spirit of which impacted the tenor of the conference).[4] The outbreak of

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[3] Nicholas Lossky et al (ed), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd edition (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002).
[4] As Denton Lotz reminds us, 'The leaders of the Edinburgh Conference, its chairman [John Mott] and secretary [J.H. Oldham], were all men from the student movement, influenced by the urgency of the watchword's appeal' (Denton Lotz, 'The Evangelization of the World in this Generation: The Resurgence of a Missionary Idea among the Conservative Evangelicals' (Dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1970), in Thomas Shivute, *The Theology of Mission and Evangelism in*

World War I in 1914 not only compromised the missionary effort but also called into question the entire modern missionary enterprise. The issue that challenged the authenticity of Christian discipleship was that the message of the gospel was clothed in western cultural baggage which was not congruent with the relationships between the messengers or the contexts in the global South that was their focus. The ecumenical historian W.R. Hogg comments, 'The war inflicted no greater disaster upon the Christian missionary enterprise than its rupture of the bonds of Christian love.'[5] Indeed, the war called into question the authenticity and depth of the discipleship of western Christianity.[6]

In this global context of conflict, the call of discipleship required, on the one hand, that Christians 'establish a counter-good' by harnessing every resource and power that was available to them to advance the missionary mandate.[7] On the other hand, the increasing influence of the phenomenon of secularization in the West was also calling into question the validity and relevance of Christian mission that was indirectly linked with the rise of military conflicts. The challenge for the so-called western 'sending' countries, restoring their missionary and evangelization advance in the global South, involved more than mere reorganization; it called for theological engagement and contextual analysis of their own culture.

In 1928, Rufus Jones noted that the 'greatest rival of Christianity in the world to-day is not Islam, or Buddhism, or Hinduism, or Confucianism, but a worldwide secular way of life and interpretation of the nature of things'.[8]

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the International Missionary Council from Edinburgh to New Delhi, 32, note 30). For a brief yet substantial history of the watchword, see Dana L. Robert, 'The Origin of the Student Volunteer Watchword: "The Evangelization of World in This Generation"', in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 10.4 (October 1986).

[5] W.R. Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council and its Nineteenth-Century Background* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002).

[6] As John Flett has argued, 'The West had considered itself a Christian civilization, yet the war revealed the impotence of Christianity, even among its greatest supporters' (J.G. Flett, 'From Jerusalem to Oxford: Mission as the Foundation and Goal of Ecumenical Social Thought', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 27.1 (January 2003), 17-22, 17).

[7] As one author suggested, 'The war itself comes as a challenge to the disciples of the Kingdom to call into being by the mercy of God a work which might never have been but for this tragedy' (E. Shillito, 'The Sweep of War', in *International Review of Mission,* 8 (1919), 443).

[8] R.M. Jones, 'Secular Civilization and the Christian Faith', in *The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, March 24-April 8, 1928* (New York: International Missionary Council, 1928), 230. The forces that were secularizing, in the sense that Jones was employing the term, were mechanistic science (a scientific interpretation of the universe and its concomitants 'rationalism' and 'naturalism', the emergence of 'new historical methods'), the industrial

The impact of secularization, according to Jones, was the withdrawal of western society from the church, and 'absorbing' interest in purely secular (as opposed to 'spiritual') interests, the disintegration of life into disparate fields and spheres, and the marginalization of the 'prestige and sacred character of the Church'.[9]

Emil Brunner argued that only 'true theology' can free Christianity from secularism by struggling with the powers of the *Zeitgeist*.[10] However, 'true theology' cannot be limited to merely doctrinal or ideological formulations. Rather, within the context of Christian discipleship, it calls for radical engagement with the secularism that involves appropriate training of the laity to positively impact the world through their different professions to challenge the maxims of the secular worldview.[11]

Discipleship and the Emergence of the Laity

The laity became, in the theology of the ecumenical movement, both a concrete strategy of ecclesial influence in a rapidly changing world and a conceptual place to consider the changing landscape for Christian discipleship. The Life and Work Movement that initially engaged the concept of lay discipleship in ecumenical circles and their role in evangelization, played a pioneering role in this regard.[12]

In the preparatory documents associated with the Life and Work's Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State (1937), J.H. Oldham considered the predicament of the church and determined that religion had come to be considered 'one department among others, instead of something that is concerned with the whole of life'.[13] Oldham's call was for the church to restore its influence by becoming laicized. The laity must be prepared as part of an ecclesial strategy of influence, he argued, suggesting, 'The church as an organized society stands outside the activities of the social and political life. The Christian laity participates in these activities. Transformation from within is immeasurably more effective than any influence that can be brought to bear from without.'[14] The witness and action of the laity is the way that the church will transform society but, Oldham recognized, to this point the church's discipleship had not been

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revolution and urbanization, 'widespread loss of faith in immortality' and the failure of the Church.

[9] Jones, 'Secular Civilization', 239.

[10] Emil Brunner, 'Secularism as a Problem for the Church', in *International Review of Mission,* 19 (1930).

[11] Emil Brunner, 'Secularism as a Problem for the Church', in *International Review of Mission,* 19 (1930).

[12] W.A. Visser 't Hooft and J.H. Oldham, *The Church and Its Function in Society* (Chicago, IL and New York: Willett, Clark & Company, 1937), 106.

[13] Visser 't Hooft, *The* Church, 176.

[14] Visser 't Hooft, *The* Church, 176.

adequate for supporting them in this task. 'Many lay men and women who are conscious of religious need long in their secret hearts for the help they feel the church might give them,' he argues, 'but they do not find that the church satisfies that need.'[15]

According to Visser 't Hooft, the following issues must be addressed to support the action of the laity in living out the 'obligations of the Christian life'.[16] First, the church must be connected more deeply with the exigencies of lay life in the world, for example, by providing clarity for the laity who are dealing with issues related to life in the workforce. Second, the church needs to offer ethical guidance to the laity for concrete situations that might arise in the public sphere. Finally, the larger congregations must offer smaller groups of Christians more intimate settings 'for the purpose of mutual help in Christian witness and action'.[17] These groups could be described as discipleship groups that have the aim of attending to the fitness of lay witness and they –

> … may be local, having as their primary concern the social evils of a particular town or rural area. Their objects may be primarily spiritual, i.e. to sustain and fortify through prayer and fellowship those who seek to advance the cause of righteousness, to relieve distress and to serve the common good in various forms of public activity.[18]

The *telos* of this notion of discipleship arcs towards the Kingdom of God, advocates a deeper and more faithful participation in the ongoing mission of God in the world and, therefore, towards social justice, the relief of distress, responsibility to one's neighbourhood, and prophetic conflict.

The role of church leaders is, then, to clarify for the laity the consequences of Christian responsibility and offer guidance as to what kind of behaviour the gospel calls forth in particular circumstances.

The concern that impactful social engagement and mission require preparing the laity for life and witness in a complex world was also recognized at the inaugural meeting of the World Council of Churches in 1948[19] and also at the WCC gatherings at Amsterdam and Evanston.[20] The

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[15] Visser 't Hooft, *The Church*, 178.

[16] Visser 't Hooft, *The Church*, 180.

[17] Visser 't Hooft, *The Church*, 181.

[18] Visser 't Hooft, *The Church*, 181-82.

[19] W.A. Visser 't Hooft (ed), *The Official Report Man's Disorder and God's Design,* Volume V, The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 154. According to the inaugural WCC meeting, 'The laity requires strengthening through biblical and theological study and discussion with special reference to the bearing of Christian faith upon daily life'. The report stated further: 'For it is through the laity that the Church has the greatest and most natural opportunity to show in and to the world that the message of the Bible, and all that the Church is committed to by obedience to its Lord, are relevant to the real problems and needs of man in every age, and not least our own. Only by the witness of a spiritually intelligent and active laity can the Church meet the

issues were given sustained attention through the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey and through ecumenical publications like *Laymen's Work* and *Laity.*

Discipleship and a Laity that is Coming of Age

A pertinent question for the ecumenical movement is: Who or what sets the agenda for Christian discipleship? Prior to the 1950s, discipleship was focused on the preparing laity to bear the church into the world – into the university, the academy, the factory, the family and the political realm – and be responsible Christians in their everyday lives as community members, employees and family members. The church supported the discipleship of the Christian in the following way: 'The real task is for the church to become genuinely and active present, there where she already is' present in the lives of believers and as they navigate political and vocational issues. Strategically, it is through preparing the laity to live rightly in the world, and through the power of the Spirit and in the name of the church, that the world might 'be restored to health and life'.[21] Responsibility was one of the key words to describe discipleship at this time.

Responsible Christians asked such questions as, 'What do we mean by "Christian Witness" in the case of a social worker serving in a secular organization?' Discipleship requires that the church prepare Christians to be responsible and ethical in their various callings and thereby to be faithful witnesses. Christians must be trained so they can 'see the meaning of faith for social problems'.[22] The Ecumenical Institute took up the questions that were raised by the ecumenical movement and by other lay movements, and imagined the discipleship of the laity in the following way: 'Programmes must take up the questions and needs of human society so that Christians may be helped to respond to them through prophetic witness and healing service.'[23]

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modern world in its actual perplexities and life situations.' The proposal to create an Ecumenical Institute was offered in response to such concerns.

[20] 'It is the laity who draw together work and worship; it is they who bridge the gulf between the Church and the world, and it is they who manifest in word and action the Lordship of Christ over that world which claims so much of their time and energy and labour' (W.A. Visser 't Hooft (ed), *The Evanston Report: The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches* (New York: Harper Books, 1955)*, 161). It is in faithfully executing their vocation in the midst of a 'secular' job, called to obedience and service wherever they are. What are Christian vocation and witness in the context of this particular occupation or profession? Discipleship is the response of faith that answers such questions.

[21] *Laymen's Work* 1 (May 1951), 9.

[22] *Laymen's Work* 1, 12.

[23] Hans-Reudi Weber, *A Laboratory for Ecumenical Life: The Story of Bossey 1946-1996* (Geneva: WCC, 1996), 7.

Certainly one of the most significant contributions of the Ecumenical Institute for the developing understanding of Christian discipleship in the ecumenical movement was the affirmation, through publications and programmes, of the notion of professional life as vocation. Specialized meetings enabled teachers to think through how the Christian faith might impact teaching from the basics of humanist assumptions to the specifics of complex subjects. Medical doctors, people involved in industry and other professionals gathered together to look at 'human relationships within a production-oriented society'.[24] Additional conferences related to living as disciples in the world were held for artists, politicians, lawyers, journalists and social workers. Along with conferences that supported particular vocational groups, there were conferences that addressed specific issues in the modern world like social welfare, family and the meaning of work. In terms of Christian discipleship, *the point in all of this was to equip the laity for their witness in the world* – which, of course, begs the question, What is the world? Consequently, the Institute offered consultations on the meaning of the secular, the meaning of history, and the significance of sociology for understanding and navigating social structures, institutions and relationships. The Institute was supported in its efforts by the ecumenical publication, *Laity*.

While no single prevailing understanding of discipleship dominated the pages of *Laity*, one can discern important affirmations of past conceptions and anticipations of future trajectories. Discipleship may still be summarized, from the standpoint of the church's responsibility to the laity, as 'the training of the laity for their ministry in the world'[25] because their ministry is one of being in the world faithfully. In this perspective on discipleship, to disciple the laity is to help them to become 'adult' and to give them a proper 'biblical orientation'. Consider the impact of Hans-Ruedi Weber's and Suzanne de Dietrich's Bible studies for orienting the discipleship of Christians who are to be in, yet not of, the world. In this vision, every baptized Christian must be supported by a church that understands the world and that offers disciplines that are portable enough to be 'translated into very concrete ways and lines of conduct',[26] right down to addressing issues related to the 'right use of time and money'.[27]

While the world is in view in this vision, discipleship, following Christ, is still grounded in the Biblical text and in the rhythm of being gathered into the church and being sent from the church. According to Frère Francois (Taizé community): 'Spiritual retreats should be understood as a means of training laity, with a view of their witness in the world, their apostolate and their obedience.' The disciplines are an essential aspect of a

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[24] Weber, *A Laboratory*, 40.
[25] *Laity: reprints from Laity 2-6* (Geneva: Department on the Laity, WCC, May 1962), *Laity* 2, 3.
[26] *Laity*, 25.
[27] *Laity*, 26.

kind of evangelical discipleship that always has the calling of the disciple as a messenger in view.

The view of discipleship as gathering into and sending by the church is balanced by another view that emerged around the same time, an almost competing view that has a dissimilar assessment of the church and a different understanding of where the presence of God and strength for faithful witness can be found. In an effort to combat 'church narcissism',[28] this competing approach to discipleship aims at preparing Christians for dialogue with the world in the effort of jointly imagining a more humanized world. This line of thinking is adequately captured and summarized by theologian Hans Hoekendijk:

> Wherever in our apostolate we *see a convincing demonstration of Christ's solidarity with the world, we* will clearly have to be present *in* this world with solidarity, not just now and then in a sortie from the ecclesiastical enclave, only to return thereafter with great speed, but *permanently*, because we know that as Christians we have our *Sitz im Leben* (life situation) in the world, not in the church. In the world one must live as a 'child of the kingdom, that has been planted on the acreage of the world'.[29]

What then, does it mean to disciple the laity if living comfortably and authentically as humans in the world is their calling? Put baldly:

> This training does not aim at extending a knowledge of dogma, improving evangelism, nor raising the level of professional ethics. Nor is this training concerned with the growth of the Church as an organization or the increase of its influence as an institution in the world. On the contrary, the object of this training is to improve the functioning of society and the creation among members of an insight into the connection between the daily order of things and the hidden kingdom of God.[30]

By 1958 the conversation about Christian discipleship pivoted on an interpretation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's so-called 'worldly Christianity', a Christianity that has come of age, and called the church to 'no longer lament over the process of secularization, but rejoice in it'.[31] The challenge of Christian discipleship was to move 'out of our pious isolation to a deep commitment to the affairs of this world'.[32] As I will explain below, discipleship was moving out of religion and into history. Newbigin's phrase from the Introduction ('There is no participation in Christ without participation in his mission in the world') was being applied in ways that he had neither imagined nor intended.[33]

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[28] *Laity*, 29.

[29] Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk, 'Apostolate: The Communicating with Fellow Travelers', in *The Church Inside Out* (UTS, NY: 1966), 54.

[30] *Laity*, 31.

[31] *Laity*, 105.

[32] *Laity*, 100.

[33] In speaking about the integration of the IMC and the WCC in 1961, Newbigin laments that mission, the church and discipleship were not oriented as he had

In the 1960s, secularization changed, in the estimation of many in the ecumenical movement, from being a problem that stood in the way of evangelization to being the animating theological doctrine for faithful evangelism. This mindset prepared the way for new conceptions of discipleship that were imagined in response to the question of what Christians were being formed to do and be in the world.

Out of Religion and Into History

By appealing to Bonhoeffer's notion of Jesus as the 'Man for others', the Missionary Structure of the Congregation project of the Department on Studies in Evangelism promoted an understanding of true transcendence (or union with Christ, which was noted earlier as the goal of Christian discipleship) as living a life for others. The cultural marginalization of the church, which had been relegated to the sphere of the private and the sacred, was now inconsequential and even providential as faithful discipleship had its power and purpose in the secular world. Discipleship, under such conditions, involves recasting secular work as a 'work of holiness', following Charles West's directive to 'strengthen the true secularity' of the secular person.[34]

Discipleship is still, in agreement with the Oxford Conference, about preparing Christians to be responsible, but history (the now, the *saeculum*, this age), and not the church, must be the place where God's action and presence are sought. Christians who become present in the world will be able to discern *Christus extra muros ecclesiae*.[35] Since God is present in the 'actual life situation of every [person]', then discipleship must involve 'entering into partnership with God in history'.[36] Whereas secularization

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imagined: 'There were important areas, however, where I have to confess that *I failed to achieve what I had hoped for as the result of integration*. I hoped that we would be able to use the resources of a world organization to identify and direct resources to places where there were great opportunities for evangelism… but it had to be admitted that there was much less enthusiasm for the direct preaching of the Gospel and the building up of the Church than for technical assistance and political action': Lesslie Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda: An Autobiography* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 205-06.

[34] C.A. Coulson, 'A Secular World? – God and Things', in *Laity* 16 (November 1963), 36. See also Charles C. West, '*Consultation on 'the Meaning of the Secular'* (Bossey, Switzerland: Ecumenical Institute, 1959).

[35] 'Christ outside the walls of the Church.' This argument is advanced in ecumenical circles by Walter Hollenweger in 'Christus Extra et Intra Muros Ecclesiae', in WCC Department on Studies in Evangelism and Thomas Wieser (ed), *Planning for Mission: Working Papers on the New Quest for Missionary Communities* (New York: U.S. Conference for the WCC, 1966).

[36] WCC Department on Studies in Evangelism Western European Working Group and WCC Department on Studies in Evangelism North American Working Group, *The Church for Others, and the Church for the World: A Quest for Structures for*

might *de-churchify* discipleship, it was argued, it cannot *de-Christianize* it. Transcendence is achieved by immersion into the present – by moving out of religion (which focuses on transcendence and the metaphysical) and into history (the present, this age, this world, the secular). The disciple must join God who is already at work in the world that has 'come of age'. Christian discipleship is itself portrayed as a secular, worldly movement so that *kenosis*, presence and participation in the world become essential themes of discipleship.[37]

Discipleship in the Ecumenical Movement Today:
Back to the Church

There is no way to offer a comprehensive picture of discipleship in the ecumenical movement. In promoting the narrative that in the ecumenical movement discipleship moved out of religion and into history, I recognize that I am giving scant attention to the important contributions of the Orthodox theologians and the concept of missionary discipleship as participation in 'the liturgy after the liturgy' (Ion Bria). And I am overlooking the many contributions of the Faith and Order Movement, including the conferences and papers that culminated in the ecumenical best-seller, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (The Lima Document or BEM), a document that grounds discipleship in a baptismal ecclesiology and offers a contrasting story-line to mine.

And, although non-Europeans certainly contributed to the documents and discussions I have engaged above, I have not adequately attended to

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Missionary Congregations. Final Report of the Western European Working Group and North American Working Group of the Department on Studies in Evangelism (Geneva: WCC, 1967), 14.

[37] What does discipleship look like when it is moving out of religion and into history? Christian discipleship involves testing the spirits that are at work around us, discerning God's action and considering how God might be drawing us into the action, whether it be reforming and supporting public education, engaging civil rights movements, participating in urban service training, supporting voluntary services in the cities, engaging issues of housing, employment, poverty, social welfare, discrimination, participating in city renewal movements, or challenging unjust social institutions. Theological reflection must be guided by sociological analysis. Discipleship in this era had shifted from the 'gathering and sending' model of earlier days to a diffused model where the is little talk of how God forms Christians in the church and much more about how God is at work in grassroots community organizations like the Los Angeles Goals Project initiated by the Department of City Planning and Public Policies (WCC, *The Church for Others*, 120-24). Christian discipleship was not churchly, but was instead a participation in what Hans Hoekendijk termed 'shalomization' or humanization.

discipleship in the context of the 'great new fact of our era'[38] or accounted for the challenges and insights that other faith traditions might have for Christian discipleship – a particularly important contribution of the ecumenical movement. According to Weber, 'The Bible had to be read also with the eyes of Asians, Africans, Latin Americans and Pacific Islanders, from the perspective of the oppressed and the poor, enriched by the experience and insights of women.'[39] Ministry from the margins is one of the central affirmations in the new affirmation on Mission and Evangelism (*Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*) – insights from discipleship in the ecumenical church will continue to inform the shape and spirit of Christian mission in the future.

My omissions are partly for the sake of expediency, but also because the shift of discipleship moving out of religion and into history is, to my mind, the seismic shift that continues to impact the ecumenical movement in the most significant ways. There has, however, recently been a trend back towards the church, and this comes in part due to the initiative of Faith and Order and partly due to developing understandings of evangelism in the context of a continually changing world.

According to Konrad Raiser, former General Secretary of the WCC (1993-2003), the southern shift in the centre of Christianity and the increasing secularization of the West, combined with the reality of globalization, has created the need for a new understanding of the laity. In earlier ecumenical discussions of the laity, the laity were understood to be representatives of the church in the secular world. Their witness corresponded with their faithfulness as responsible Christians in various roles in society and was enlivened by the rhythmic spiritual breathing of gathering and sending. Today, Christian discipleship is often understood as participating in wide-ranging movements and initiatives related to justice, the environment, and confronting 'anonymous centres of power'.[40] Globalization and its concomitants require a new profile and programme of discipleship for the laity in order to help them face 'global threats to survival'.[41]

The vision for Christian discipleship (still related to participation in the ongoing redemptive mission of God) is 'the rebuilding of viable, non-exclusive social forms that will produce a community with a human face in which human dignity is recognized, basic human needs are satisfied, and

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[38] From the sermon William Temple preached at his enthronement as Archbishop of Canterbury. William Temple, *The Church Looks Forward* (London: Macmillan, 1944), 2.

[39] Weber, *A Laboratory*, 8.

[40] Konrad Raiser, 'Profile of the Laity in the Ecumenical Movement: Towards a New Definition', in Nicholas Apostola (ed), *A Letter from Christ to the World: An Exploration of the Role of the Laity in the Church Today* (Geneva: WCC, 1998), 12-22, at 17.

[41] Raiser, 'Profile of the Laity', 19.

the diversity of cultural identities and human talents is duly recognized'.[42] Under such conditions, discipleship is preparing Christians to join in movements of justice, peace and 'the integrity of creation'.[43] In many ways, the ecumenical movement is still considering what it means for Christian discipleship to move out of religion and into history. Recently, however, the ecumenical movement is recovering the importance of connecting discipleship and evangelism with the life and spiritual resources of the church.

Three very important documents from the joint study programme on Ecclesiology and Ethics conducted by Faith and Order and the WCC's Justice, Peace and Creation team (*Costly Unity, Costly Commitment* and *Costly Obedience*), and a report from the ecumenical conversation on evangelism (*Evangelism Today: New Ways for Authentic Discipleship*) are representative of this shift. While not official statements, they represent the cross-current of conversation surrounding discipleship, evangelism and mission in the ecumenical movement today and offer a middle position between church-centred discipleship prior to the 1950s and Christian discipleship that has moved out of religion and into history.

The documents recognize the formative value of ecclesial practices for shaping the laity, and for forming congregations and individuals for faithful and concrete witness/actions in the world. In terms of discipleship, 'The heart of Christian moral formation lies in worship, through which the story of salvation is re-enacted in the modes of prayer, proclamation, and sacrament.'[44] What the documents represent is the fact that congregations practise witness together,[45] and preparing congregations to embody witness should orient the goals and disciplines of Christian discipleship. *Evangelism Today* acknowledges that the 'mere humanization of Christian mission' is not an adequate vision for discipleship and evangelism.[46] What is proposed instead is a vision of liturgical formation that shapes and nurtures internal habits, establishes patterns of life, and provides new lenses for viewing the world along with 'new energy to bear witness in it'.[47]

The ecumenical concept of discipleship that had moved out of religion and into history is now returning to the church, not to escape from the influence of the world, not with a naïve understanding of the relationship

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[42] Raiser, 'Profile of the Laity', 18.

[43] Raiser, 'Profile of the Laity', 19.

[44] Thomas F. Best and Martin Robra (eds), *Ecclesiology and Ethics: Ecumenical Ethical Engagement, Moral Formation and the Nature of the Church* (Geneva: WCC, 1997), 66-67.

[45] For a deeper discussion of practising witness, see Benjamin T. Conner, *Practicing Witness: A Missional Vision of Christian Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

[46] WCC, 'Evangelism Today: New Ways for Authentic Discipleship', in *International Review of Mission,* 103.1 (April 2014), 131.

[47] Best and Robra. *Ecclesiology and Ethics*, 67.

between church and culture, nor imagining that the church is a total culture that is somehow apart from the world. The turn back to the church is for the sake of strengthening disciples through faithful Christian practices, and the turn represents the recognition that immersion in the world without the guidance of the church has often led to 'malformation'. As *Costly Obedience* suggests, 'Discipleship finds resources in many complexly interacting elements of churchly life: the education of lay persons, the preparation of pastors, moral discourse in family and congregation, the experience of seeking to serve the wider community. Liturgical formation, in the Lord's supper and in our common baptism, is fundamental to all other kinds of formation.'[48]

The concept of discipleship in the Ecumenical Movement has always been set within larger conversations related to mission and evangelism. And while ecumenical understandings of the demands of Christian discipleship have changed as discipleship has moved out of religion into history and back to the church again, the affirmation has remained the same: 'There is no participation in Christ without participation in [God's] mission in the world.'

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[48] Best and Robra, *Ecclesiology and Ethics*, 56.

PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCE-SHARING

Dongsung Kim

Introduction

Christians are called to share the good news of God's kingdom in every place and at all times. The Christian churches have carried out this vocation through their ministries of mission and evangelism, service and proclamation. In so doing, they have developed strategies and methods that have sought to enable each church, as equal members of the one Body of Christ, to benefit from as well as to contribute to this common endeavour. This chapter will explore how the ideals and practice of ecumenical sharing has developed within the ecumenical movement, focusing specifically on the developments within the activities of the World Council of Churches, wherein the so-called four streams of the modern ecumenical movement – Faith and Order, Life and Work, Christian Education, and Mission and Evangelism – have historically been located. I will seek to examine how ecumenical sharing evolved over the years by focusing on the discourse as it developed in relation to the work of the International Missionary Council (IMC), later to become the Department and then the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC. This is because sharing ecumenically has been a concern and interest of the modern Protestant missionary movement from its very early period, and also, in my view, because of the systematic engagement with the issue which has occurred within the structures of the IMC over the years. As such, this chapter will engage with the various reports and documents relating to particular meetings and conferences of the IMC as well as other departments of the WCC which were influenced by the turn of events and direction in which the discussions evolved over the years.

Sharing of resources within and beyond the life of the Christian church has been part of its identity and mission from the very earliest periods of its history. According to the Pauline Epistle to the Romans (15:26), we find reference to the monetary gifts that the churches in Macedonia and Achaia had collected for 'God's people' in need (Romans. 15:26). The interesting point of this sharing was that the Gentile church provided the financial resources for the church in Jerusalem. In other words, the church on the margins was providing for the church in the centre, and this sharing was an expression of solidarity and not mere charity. In this sense, the first expression of inter-church aid in the first century was instrumental in building up the universal church and establishing the bonds of fellowship as the one body of Christ. Also noteworthy is the purpose for this inter-

church aid or ecumenical sharing of resources. It was not only to secure the survival of the church in Jerusalem, but also to ensure that its missionary vocation could be sustained and strengthened. The ecumenical sharing of resources possessed a missionary nature with the resources shared serving as an investment of sorts in ensuring the continuation of the witness and service of the local Christian church.

Within the modern ecumenical movement since the beginning of the twentieth century, the development of inter-church aid and ecumenical sharing of resources was instrumental in fostering reconciliation in war-torn Europe as the ravaged communities struggled to overcome the brutal years of violence and hatred. With the changing socio-political landscape which followed the tumultuous years of warfare, the scope of inter-church aid also experienced a shift. Its focus and scope expanded beyond Europe to other parts of the world. The decolonization process in Asia and Africa, as well as other parts of the world that followed World War II, reached its heights of impact after the 1950s, and this led to the establishment of many independent states. In a similar manner, the churches within these new states also sought to establish themselves as independent entities distinct from the Eurocentric mission bodies that led to their establishment. With the rise of self-awareness and a growing desire for self-reliance, the western mission-founded churches of the global South began to challenge the established ecclesial principles and underpinning political ideology, processes and theological foundations for sharing between churches. One of the issues that emerged for debate was the nature of their future ecclesial relationship. Concerns and even objections were raised to the nature of inter-church aid being a one-directional flow from the rich to the poor, the churches of the North to the churches of the South, and from the powerful to the powerless.

It is within this evolving ecumenical landscape that the practice and concept of ecumenical resource-sharing emerged as:

> … a framework for new relationships that would free the churches from traditional roles of being either a sending (giving) or a receiving body, and enable them to overcome structures of inequality and dependency between rich and poor.[1]

The genesis of the concept 'Ecumenical Sharing of Resource' (ESR) originated as a study process after the Nairobi Assembly of the WCC in 1976.[2] The Central Committee of the WCC called for:

> … a study on the ecumenical sharing of resources, to study all existing methods of sharing resources, both human and financial, to seek new and

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[1] Huibert van Beek, 'Ecumenical Sharing of Resources', in Nicholas Lossky, José Míguez Bonino, John Pobee, Tom F. Stransky, Geoffrey Wainwright and Pauline Webb (eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 382.
[2] van Beek, 'Ecumenical Sharing of Resources', 382.

more ecumenical methods, and to relate the whole issue to the World Council's search for the unity of the Church.[3]

Ecumenical resource-sharing was therefore motivated by a missio-economic paradigm for just relationships to become normative within the economic sphere of missional relationship between the churches of the global North and South. The relationship between the churches, irrespective of one's material wealth or otherwise, should be based on 'spiritual sharing and solidarity'.[4] This meant that the emphasis of sharing resources was to facilitate 'Fullness of life for all' and meant mutual challenge and equipping of each other based upon principles of mutuality and reciprocity.

According to the WCC document on the ecumenical sharing of resources, the followers of Jesus are 'all receivers in the first instance, and that Christ is the one who gives everything to all'.[5] Acknowledging this indicates that 'sharing is not a matter of one giving to another, but of all receiving together', while noting that 'no one can receive anything except what is given from heaven' (John 3:29).[6] This affirmation repudiates an economic model of ownership that is privatized, belittles the sovereignty of God and denies life in community that benefits the common good. Everything, including ourselves, is created by God, 'the father of every good and perfect thing' (James 1:7).[7] Seen in this light, 'sharing' is not simply about giving or receiving but 'is rather the way in which we seek to be what we are within an interrelated human community'.[8] In this sense, sharing, as a 'responsive relation to others, is indeed the costly discipleship to which God calls us and for which Jesus has set the pattern before us'.[9] This means that sharing is a confessional act of faith in which the church proclaims her message through her acts of sharing because 'all the resources held by the churches are given to them in trust by God'.[10] Through its sharing, the church expresses its conviction that 'the almighty God has given us an opportunity to use his resource in order to show

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[3] WCC, *Empty Hands – An Agenda for the Churches: A Study Guide on the Ecumenical Sharing of Resources for use by Churches, Local Congregations and Other Groups* (Geneva: WCC, 1980), 4.

[4] Unit IV – Sharing and Service, *New Approaches to Development – Ecumenical Formation Seminar Report* (Geneva: WCC, 1996), 6.

[5] Tracy Early, *Simply Sharing – A Personal Survey of How Well the Ecumenical Movement Shares its Resources* (Geneva: WCC, 1980), 20.

[6] Early, *Simply Sharing*, 21.

[7] Francis Stephanos, 'An African Perspective: Challenging the Power Structure', in Knut Edvard Larsen and Knud Jørgensen (eds), *Power and Partnership* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 62.

[8] Ghana Robinson (ed), *Sharing and Living – A Study on the Ecumenical Sharing of Resources in India* (Madurai, India: Nepolean Press, 1983), 2.

[9] Ghana Robinson (ed), *Sharing and Living*, 2.

[10] David Gill (ed), *Gathered for Life: Official Report, Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: WCC, 1983), 63.

compassion, love, respect and care for our fellow human beings and nature'.[11] As such, the ecumenical sharing of resources is one of the ways in which the church fulfils its ministry of witness, service and mission in the world. The sixth Assembly of the WCC that was held in Vancouver acknowledged this when it declared that:

> The ministry of sharing is a challenge to the churches to practise what they are called to be: sharing communities which seek to do justice, taking the side of all those who are denied their share in the fullness of life that God has promised.[12]

In a later document recommending ESR as a process for study and action for the churches, the WCC Central Committee further elaborated on the understanding and practice of the concept with the statement that 'our participation in sharing has its origin in our ministry as a Church and our relations with one another as members of the same body'.[13]

The Vancouver Assembly further noted that 'sharing is rooted in the very nature of the Triune God as a "community of sharing" characterised by dynamic and creative mutuality', and that 'the Church's sharing and healing ministry originates from the very life and mission of Christ himself'.[14] It is therefore important for the church to regard the responsibility of sharing resources as being part of its vocation and stewardship. This is why 'sharing and healing begin at a personal level, but they become societal both on local and ecumenical levels'.[15] However, sharing of the Christian church goes beyond its borders and embraces 'the whole inhabited earth' (*oikoumene*) while also characterizing the relationship that we have with our neighbours.[16]

A significant achievement of the Vancouver Assembly was the recognition that the churches needed a new model of sharing and that 'the donor-receiver type of relationship must give way to relationships which facilitate the sharing of decision-making and power'.[17] This 'donor-receiver type of relationship' had passed its sell-by date because the political era of colonial rule had given way to the rise of independent nation-states that demanded a different model of political relationship. This also had major impact on the relationship that evolved between mission agencies and the local churches that they founded. The ecumenical movement under the umbrella of the WCC also recognised that the politico-ecclesial environment in which the sharing of resources took place had radically

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[11] Stephanos, 'An African Perspective: Challenging the Power Structure', 62.

[12] Gill, *Gathered for Life,* 63.

[13] WCC, *Empty Hands*, 10.

[14] 'Report of the Issue Group on Healing and Sharing Life in Community' in Gill, *Gathered for Life.* 62.

[15] 'Report of the Issue Group on 'Healing and Sharing Life in Community', 62.

[16] WCC, *Empty Hands*, 10.

[17] 'Report of the Issue Group on Healing and Sharing Life in Community', 62.

changed and that a more just and life-affirming model was needed. It also announced that 'bilateral or confessional patterns of sharing should be challenged so that the churches may grow towards greater ecumenical sharing on local, regional and international levels'.[18]

As the debate on the practice, processes and theological foundations for sharing developed throughout the years, there was also a shift in the understanding of resources within the ecumenical movement. At the outset much of the inter-church aid was financial in that it involved the transferring of money from the giver to the receiver. However, in subsequent decades the churches came to recognize that the church had much more to share than simply money. The manifold gifts that the church has received from Christ included 'insights into the gospel arising from cultural heritage, commitment to liberation and involvement in the struggle, and sharing in the suffering and pain of other members of the body of Christ'.[19] No church, regardless of where it is situated geographically, socially or economically, is without something that can be shared with others. Each person, as a child of God, is uniquely endowed with 'some understanding of life and its value, some strength of purpose, some sense of direction, some unique, individual expression of humanity'.[20]

The ecumenical vision which is present in the spirit and principles of the ecumenical sharing of resources is a broad understanding of resources which include 'spirituality, culture and human resources as well as finance and material goods'.[21] As the Central Committee of the WCC affirmed during their 1980 meeting in Geneva, 'every church, rich or poor, needs to recognize the greatness of its wealth in being the people of God'.[22] This wealth of the church takes many forms, as already described above, and it is in sharing these very gifts that the Christians 'mutually enrich one another and build up one another in the fullness of Christ'.[23] The recognition that all Christian churches, regardless of where they are situated within the socio-economic order, have resources gifted to them by God is important as it strengthens the integrity and worth of one's self-identity as a member of the body of Christ. The acknowledgement of gifts held by all as God's people is also important in shaping the perspectives and framework for sharing as it provides the possibility for humility, respect and a strong sense of mutuality to inform them. Knowing that our wealth in Christ as the body of Christ is not determined by material or financial terms is what enables us as Christians to hold out our hands to one another in hope and expectation that God will fill us, together.

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[18] 'Report of the Issue Group on Healing and Sharing Life in Community', 62.
[19] Unit IV – Sharing and Service, *New Approaches to Development*, 6.
[20] Early, *Simply Sharing*, 71.
[21] van Beek, 'Ecumenical Sharing of Resources', 382.
[22] WCC, *Empty Hands*, 7.
[23] WCC, *Empty Hands*, 7.

During the 1970s two specific examples of institutions intentionally searching for methods, processes and structures that could give expression to the ideals of resource sharing between churches took shape. The first example is the Evangelical Community for Apostolic Action (CEVAA) which was established in 1971 by 'different churches in Europe… Africa and the Pacific, linked with missionary societies' as they transformed 'their relationships in order to establish a community of partners in mission'.[24] The transformed relationship reflected a desire to enter together into a covenant as churches which are 'working together in the mission of evangelisation' and reflected:

> The search by the churches of the south for their own autonomy in relation to the missionary societies and the churches of the north, their concern to take up their different responsibilities and their desire to reflect upon their resources and their identity.[25]

However, the creation of CEVAA was not a simple process nor could it be likened to 'a victory parade' and 'came at the cost of many difficulties'. This was because those who were responsible for the transformation 'were not content with a few cosmetic retouches to what was there. They aimed at a thorough-going reform to correspond to the missionary demands of the church today'.[26] These efforts for transformation began as early as 1954 when the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) began exploring how to reorganise its structure. Through a prolonged process of consultation and joint action, the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society finally adopted the proposal for a new organic structure and 'the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society dissolved itself, 30th October 1971. On this same date, the Evangelical Community for Apostolic Action was created'.[27]

A distinctive characteristic of CEVAA is that this community of churches –

> is not a 'single centre' unifying the churches. It functions as a 'multi-centre'; that is, it is the place where many relations uniting the churches come together. It thereby gives rise to a community life made up of relations and collaborations that favour the discovery and realisation of a worldwide

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[24] Samuel K. Ada, 'CEVAA: From a Missionary Society to a Community of Churches in Mission', in *International Review of Mission*, 76.304 (October 1987), 505.

[25] Ada, 'CEVAA: From a Missionary Society to a Community of Churches in Mission', 505.

[26] Ada, 'CEVAA: From a Missionary Society to a Community of Churches in Mission', 514.

[27] Ada, 'CEVAA: From a Missionary Society to a Community of Churches in Mission', 515.

mission in the service of a world of solidarity. This goes beyond mere inter-church aid to an organism made for service, communion and dialogue.[28]

Not only does CEVAA provide a different level of engagement and mutuality in action; it also provides a different process or mechanism for sharing power in decision-making as 'decisions are taken jointly on the international level' where a representative of each member-church is present. This enables a structure and decision-making process whereby, 'in principle, no church imposes its decision on others'.[29] The actions necessary for carrying out these decisions are then 'entrusted to member-churches and organisms who share responsibility for them',[30] with each member contributing 'the spiritual, human and financial resources at its disposal, according to what each has received from the Lord'.[31]

The other example is the Council for World Mission (CWM) with its historic roots in the London Missionary Society (LMS). The Congregational Council for World Mission, formed in 1966 by the Congregational Church in England and Wales, was renamed as the Council for World Mission in 1973. However, it was only in 1977 that the Council for World Mission came to embody 'a radically different conception of mission' which in turn 'influenced the creation of a new strategy for engagement in world mission'.[32] It is important to recognise that CWM 'emerged not as a traditional missionary society' but rather 'understands itself as a fellowship of churches, which are themselves involved in mission, acting locally and seeking partners globally'.[33] It was, and continues to be, 'a community of churches, from the north and the south, that have covenanted together to challenge and to enable each other for mission and, as equal partners, to share their gifts and needs for mission'.[34] Much like the structure of CEVAA, the Council for World Mission, by constituting itself as a council in which 'a place is allocated to each participating church' seeks to provide 'opportunity for effective

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[28] Ada, 'CEVAA: From a Missionary Society to a Community of Churches in Mission', 516.

[29] Ada, 'CEVAA: From a Missionary Society to a Community of Churches in Mission', 517.

[30] Ada, 'CEVAA: From a Missionary Society to a Community of Churches in Mission', 516.

[31] Ada, 'CEVAA: From a Missionary Society to a Community of Churches in Mission', 518.

[32] Maitland Evans, 'The Council for World Mission's Partnership in Mission Model', in *International Review of Mission*, 76.304 (October 1987), 458. See also, Barrie Scopes, 'The Shaping of the Council for World Mission', in *International Review of Mission*, 76.304 (October 1987), 452-53.

[33] Christopher Duraisingh, 'CWM's First Decade and Beyond', in *International Review of Mission*, 76.304 (October 1987), 474.

[34] Duraisingh, 'CWM's First Decade and Beyond', 474.

participation by member-churches at the strategic levels of decision-making'.[35]

Along with the two historical models described above, a recent organic transformation took place in the Association of Churches and Missions in South West Germany (EMS), founded in 1972. As the Association grew in partnership with churches in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, it evolved as an international mission organisation with a first international consultation organised in 1983 under the title 'Sharing in Obedience' which was attended by two delegates from each member- and partner-organization. The final message from this consultation states:

> All Christians share in obedience, in order to live and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to spread the Kingdom of God on earth. The members of the body of Christ acknowledge that all of them depend on each other, help each other and complement each other. All have received gifts and all can pass on gifts.[36]

In 2012 EMS celebrated its 40th anniversary and adopted a new constitution as well as a new name where the abbreviation 'EMS' is no longer derived from a mission 'in South-west Germany', but signifies rather an 'Evangelical Mission in Solidarity'. With this new constitution and self-understanding, the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity presents itself:

> As a fellowship of churches and missions in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East with equal rights in our 'Common Witness', we learn from each other and support each other. We stand on the foundation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In word and deed, we participate in God's mission in our world. In solidarity we stand up for one another, and for justice, peace, the integrity of creation and the dignity of all mankind.[37]

The example of EMS shows that the ecumenical movement continues to seek opportunities for discerning together structures, processes and methods that can build humility, respect and mutuality in the relationship between churches.

More recently, during a consultation in Malawi organised by the World Council of Churches and ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together for Development) on the relationship between churches and specialised ministries in September 2014, a different term, 'assets', was presented as a potential alternative reference that could enable the churches to move beyond the historical baggage held by the term 'resources' as this has primarily been identified as money. The term 'assets' provides more space and opportunity to refer to gifts already existing within a church and allows

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[35] Evans, 'The Council for World Mission's Partnership in Mission Model', 459.

[36]   https://ems-online.org/en/about-us/who-we-are/the-history   (accessed   14th October 2015).

[37]   https://ems-online.org/en/about-us/who-we-are/the-history   (accessed   14th October 2015).

the church to explore more broadly what is available without being limited to finances as it is used in other contexts beyond economics. Exploring assets allows the church to assess the social, cultural as well as religious experiences and gifts at its disposal.

In his recent article, 'Mapping Out and Mobilising Diaconal Assets', Kjell Nordstokke identifies two categories of assets that can be found in Christian churches – tangible and intangible assets – which can contribute to strengthening the sharing of resources between churches.[38] The tangible assets he refers to are practice, institutions and structures, human resources, economic resources and communication resources. On the other hand, intangible assets are identified as the collective memory of the past, rites and rituals, ethos and relations, along with trust and moral authority.[39]

The practice of the ecumenical sharing of resources is more than simply the exchange of money or other materials. It is, foremost, about establishing right relationships. In this vein it is interesting to note that one of the intangible assets that the church possesses is its network of global relationships. The church, wherever it is situated and regardless of size or perceived strength, is a member of the one body of Christ. All Christian churches around the world confess that they believe one holy catholic and apostolic church as a fundamental foundation of their faith. The shared confession implies that the Christian church is equal in stature and heritage. This has significant implications for how the churches relate to one another, particularly in terms of sharing ecumenically.

Given that the discussion of sharing resources ecumenically originated from the Christian church's deliberations on mission, it is not surprising to see that the earliest discussions on the significance of partnership was also raised in the missionary context. From as early as the third World Mission Conference which was held in Tambaram, India, in 1938 the issues of co-operation and unity were explored which affirmed the importance of right relationships between churches of the global North and the global South. The report of the Tambaram conference states:

> We believe that cooperation is in line with the will and purpose of God, and that it is thus essentially Christian. We would urge that not only between churches in each field but also in the relations between the older and the younger churches, cooperation should be regarded as the governing principle.[40]

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[38] Kjell Nordstokke, 'Mapping Out and Mobilising Diaconal Assets', in Stephanie Dietrich, Knud Jørgensen, Kari Karsrud Korslien and Kjell Nordstokke (eds), *Diakonia as Christian Social Practice: An Introduction* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014).

[39] Stephanie Dietrich, Knud Jørgensen, Kari Karsrud Korslien and Kjell Nordstokke (eds), *Diakonia as Christian Social Practice: An Introduction* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 217-9.

[40] International Missionary Council (ed), *The World Mission of the Church – Findings and Recommendations of the Meeting of the International Missionary*

During the subsequent meetings of the IMC, such as those in Whitby, Ontario, Canada, in 1950 and the meeting in Willingen, Germany, in 1952, the theological foundations and practice of sharing resources ecumenically were further probed and discussed. Throughout the development of the discourse on partnership, the focus was on mutuality and respect, and the recognition that each partner had the capacity to be responsible. In addition, the most important basis for fostering a relationship of mutuality and interdependence as an expression of true partnership was the conviction that, as members of the one body of Christ, all were equal.

At no point in the history of the discussions on the ecumenical sharing of resources was the notion of independence offered as a viable alternative to partnership. Rather, the proper sharing of resources ecumenically was regarded as promoting the unity of the church. In this sense, the discussions and deliberations on the ecumenical sharing of resources can be understood as confirming the ideal that 'the corrective for paternalism is not independence, but interdependence, and interdependence comes with a deeper understanding of the nature of unity in Christ and of the situation in which other members of the body of Christ live'.[41]

An important element in partnership is the recognition by the churches that they are one, sharing in the common baptism of faith in Christ Jesus. This aspect of our commonality as a faith community has been emphasized again and again over the years. As René Padilla remarked, 'Giving and receiving cannot be maintained unless there is between the churches a mature relationship based on the Gospel. If the Church ceases to be a community in which people share a common meaning derived from the Gospel, sooner or later there is a return to the old ways of paternalism and dependence'.[42] A similar observation was made by Francis Stephanos who argued that, 'if Christians are to take interdependence seriously, they need to realize that they share a common life – the resurrection life'.[43]

As the one body of Christ, the churches around the world are compelled, in their sharing of ecumenical resources, to ensure that the method of sharing is reflective of the values of the relationship that they have in Christ. The churches must therefore constantly remind themselves that:

> True partnership implies mutual support for the identity and all aspects of the work and the well-being of each of the partners. It is comprehensive, with no

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Council, Tambaram, Madras, India, December 12-29, 1938 (London, New York: International Missionary Council, 1939), 153.

[41] C. René Padilla, 'Partnership' in Unit IV – Sharing and Service', in *New Approaches to Development*, 45.

[42] Padilla, 'Partnership' in Unit IV', 45.

[43] Padilla, 'Partnership' in Unit IV', 45.

limits as to what the relationship should embrace. It is built on respect, trust, accountability and genuine two-way communication.[44]

It could be argued that if Christ must be truly present in ministries of service and sharing of the church, then it is important to build the relationship and establishes the processes of mutuality based on the life and ministry of Christ himself, therefore: 'The model of partnership that Jesus gives us is that of servanthood – partnership which is expressed in compassion, humility, obedience and in a genuine spirit of service to the point of sacrificing oneself'.[45] The church must maintain the attitude and conviction that, as equal members in the body of Christ, we have the responsibility as a new creation of reflecting Christ in our acts of sharing. According to Francis Stephanos, 'Partners who dispense resources are stewards of the resources of God and let others be equal players to share the resources in the manner that will benefit all members and maintain dignity'.[46]

Therefore when one delves into the plethora of documents, statements, expressions of intent and goodwill that can be found throughout the history of the modern ecumenical movement on the ideals of ecumenical sharing of resources and partnership, it could be assumed that the process of sharing had reached the pinnacle of an effective, meaningful and constructive relationship of mutuality, respect and trust. Yet, the reality of the relationship between churches is one where the commitment and interest of partnership is still in jeopardy, and the ecumenical sharing of resources as reflecting the right relationships of a community of sharing are limited. The obstacles to realizing these ideals are present in churches of the global North as well as the South.

Does this mean, then, that and the process of ecumenical sharing of resources can never reach the ideal to which the ecumenical movement has been aspiring? According to Konrad Raiser, former General Secretary of the WCC:

> The vision of ecumenical sharing offers a real opportunity for a new beginning and the theology of sharing itself is not an abstract idea, but rather an important aid to interpreting our own experiences and a pointer towards the sources which can constantly renew the strength for sharing.[47]

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[44] Knut Edvard Larsen and Knud Jørgensen, 'Editorial Introduction – Exploring Models for Power and Partnership' in Knut Edvard Larsen and Knud Jørgensen (eds), *Power and Partnership* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 2.

[45] Stephanos, 'An African Perspective: Challenging the Power Structure', 74.

[46] Stephanos, 'An African Perspective: Challenging the Power Structure', 74.

[47] Konrad Raiser, 'Towards a Sharing Community' in Huibert van Beek (ed), in *Sharing Life – Official Report of the WCC World Consultation on Koinonia: Sharing Life in a World Community, El Escorial, Spain, October 1987* (Geneva: WCC), 18.

More concretely, the source and strength which enables one to persevere in hope is that a true and faithful commitment to the sharing relationship necessitates the church recognising that mutuality is only possible in 'the freedom granted by the Spirit of God'.[48]

Raiser reiterated that the ecumenical movement has not been without success in sharing its resources ecumenically, promoting changes in attitudes and perspectives, and fostering and promoting the sharing of non-material resources.[49] Raiser also noted that the churches in the North and the South have been mutually enriched through the sharing of 'spiritual perceptions and ideas, music and songs, prayers and living testimonies'.[50]

Throughout the history of the modern ecumenical movement the desire to see the churches sharing their resources ecumenically, with the whole of the *oikoumene*, has been a prominent and lasting topic. That the churches continue to discuss and debate the issue, as well as deliberate on how best to practise it, signifies that it continues to be a theme of interest. Even more, it implies that sharing ecumenically is, as was noted previously, an integral part of how the church can and should exist in this world, as a community of sharing and fostering just relationships.

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[48] Raiser, 'Towards a Sharing Community', 19.
[49] Raiser, 'Towards a Sharing Community', 19.
[50] Raiser, 'Towards a Sharing Community', 21.

CONTEXTUALISATION

Katalina Tahaafe-Williams

If the twentieth century could be classified as mission's ecumenical century, then it could also be described as the century that gave us a world Christianity that no longer appeared predominantly white and western. African scholar Akintunde Akinade defines world Christianity as the 'new global configuration of the Christian faith in all its hues and colours', including the varieties of local expressions and the ways they interact with one another.[1] The Scottish theologian Andrew Walls stated that the 'most remarkable century in the history of the expansion of Christianity has been the twentieth'.[2] While it can be argued that at the time Christian decline in the West was already apparent, this was not the case in other parts of the world, especially in the global South.[3] According to American historian Dana Robert, more than seventy per cent of the world's Christian population in the early twentieth century were Europeans.[4] However, by the end of the century, African and Latin American Christians alone made up almost fifty per cent of the world Christian populations, not counting the Christian populations of Asia and Oceania.

Clearly, a demographic transformation in world Christianity took place which saw a shift in Christian identity from the western to the southern hemisphere. This was a massive shift not just in population and geography,

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[1] Akintunde E. Akinade, 'Hans Küng', in Miguel A. de la Torre and Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas (eds), *Beyond the Pale: Reading Theology from the Margins* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 232.

[2] Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 64.

[3] The language used to name the parts of the globe that are not 'western' or part of what is known as 'the West' continues to be problematic. Without exception, all such terms (e.g. non-western, non-European, Third World, Developing World, non-white) implicitly convey the notion that the West is superior and all the rest are inferior. I have resorted to using the term 'global South' simply because it is the term I found most used in the contemporary literature I have researched. Further, the idea of the East was also absorbed into the Eurocentric ideological discourse of 'the West and the Rest' which promoted the 'ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority'. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Concepts of the Orient* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1985).

[4] Dana L. Robert, 'Shifting Southward: Global Christianity since 1945', in Paul W. Chilcote and Laceye C. Warner (eds), *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2008), 118.

but also in cultural and world outlook. Robert Schreiter quotes the German theologian Karl Rahner who described this situation as:

> the church moving from a predominantly Hellenistic worldview into the era of a world church, characterised by a pluralism in worldview and multiplicity of new pastoral and theological problems unprecedented in Christian history.[5]

Combined with a socio-political environment that saw the processes of decolonisation to independence empowering former colonised nations with the confidence to shake off European domination, we witness the emerging demand for and debate over what has become widely known in the world church, especially within missiological and theological circles, as *contextualisation*.

My intention in this chapter is to highlight some significant developments in contextualisation in the twentieth century, and to discuss key challenges that may pick up some of the themes in the new WCC Mission Affirmation: *Together towards Life* (*TTL*)[6] which students of *TTL* may find useful as they seek to apply it in their communities and churches, mission activities, ministries and lives.

As a child born in Tonga and brought up in the Methodist Church, I thought Christianity was a western religion. In my childish imagination, when I thought of what God might look like, I pictured an image of a white man with long white hair and beard. This is not surprising, given that western Christian missions in the colonised territories had been in existence for at least four centuries. Add to that the rather ambiguous relationship between western missions and European imperialism and you have an environment where non-western minds and imaginations were conditioned to think that the Christian faith originated in the West when in fact it was born in the East.

Western cultural and religious dominance were so pervasive that even in a small island kingdom in the South Pacific, western Eurocentric representations of what it meant to be Christian were uncritically accepted as normative. The pictures of Jesus that hung on our church walls and family homes portraying him at any stage in his life on earth from infancy to adulthood were consistently of a very white European male. The picture books in my Sunday School class that I loved to look at with such fascination had the whole holy family radiant with peaches-and-cream complexions. The films of Christ's crucifixion that were viewed at Easter and cried over with such anguish, had characters, including that of Jesus, with distinctly white European features.

In the hot tropical climate of the South Pacific, proper attire for Sunday worship worn by Tongan women were British Victorian-style clothes that covered the body from neck to toe, while men had to wear jackets and ties.

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[5] Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), xi.

[6] *TTL*.

In the Eucharist the congregants received the body and blood of Christ in bread and wine (grape juice for us good Methodists, of course!) which were not easily acquired in a Tongan village. However, if anyone dared to suggest an alternative use of the flesh and the juice of the indigenous coconut as sacramental elements, the uproar would be deafening! So it was acceptable to use the British religio-cultural Methodist-contextualised bread and grape juice for the body and blood of Christ *(which I contend are not necessarily the Biblical/traditional bread and wine used by Jesus in Palestine)*, but it was inconceivable that local church leaders and members would consider the use of the flesh and juice of the beloved coconut! Hymns were sung with gusto that told of the need to be washed by the blood of Jesus in order to be 'white as snow' and thereby to be pure and worthy. Liberationist ethicist Miguel de la Torre and womanist ethicist Stacey Floyd-Thomas concur that many in marginalised situations are 'conditioned from childhood to see and interpret reality through the eyes of the dominant culture'.[7] One could say that in this situation western Christian conditioning was quite thorough so that anything white western was superior and therefore to be internalised, imitated and/or adopted.

Clearly, western Christianity had intentionally brought the gospel to the non-western world in deeply enculturated western forms. Inevitably and increasingly, Christian populations in Asia, Africa and Latin America began to question what was perceived as imposed alien cultural categories and forms. As Asian theologian Hwa Yung explained, there was an 'increasing dissatisfaction with a Western Christianity as against an indigenous variety', and a growing desire for a confident self-identity.[8]

In significant ways, the Protestant ecumenical movement was instrumental in bringing the visible presence and voices of Christians from the global South to the forums of world mission thinking and theological discourse. Beginning at the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference and continuing through to the 1938 International Missionary Conference in Tambaram, India, the presence of representatives from new churches in the global South was more visible than at any mission conferences held earlier.[9] After World War II, however, it was clear that reactions against European colonialism in the global South included rejecting western Christian missionaries with accusations of 'paternalism, racism and cultural imperialism'.[10] Ironically, Christianity in the global South continued to grow rapidly, even as the demand for a moratorium on western missionaries became more intense. A significant part of that growth came

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[7] Miguel A. de la Torre and Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas, *Beyond the Pale: Reading Theology from the Margins* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), xxiii.

[8] Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (Oxford: Regnum, 1997), 1.

[9] Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process*, 64.

[10] Robert, 'Shifting Southward', 122.

in the form of indigenous independent Pentecostal churches, for example, within the African context, the African Initiated Churches (AICs).[11]

Robert credits contextualisation with the explosion of Christian growth in the global South, stating that, while the scholars were busy debating theological concepts, the people at the grassroots who received the gospel message went about 'retranslating it into cultural modes that fitted their worldviews and met their needs'.[12] The implication is that, without the mission professionals and elites noticing, indigenous Christians demonstrated their effectiveness as interpreters of Christianity to their own people so that, even before the missionaries and colonisers had left, the gospel was already being contextualised. In short, this was a remarkable example of the marginalised being the agents of mission and evangelism.

Within Roman Catholic circles there was also a growing mood for renewal in the church.[13] The idea of interpreting the gospel in terms of local contexts and circumstances began to gain strong support, as was the case at the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s. This gave the impetus for Latin American bishops who gathered at Medellin in Colombia in 1968 to articulate their profound concerns over the alarming level of poverty in Latin America, and to officially endorse this idea of contextualisation in the form of what was becoming widely known as the *theology of liberation*.[14] By the early 1970s both Catholics and Protestants were engaging with this radical understanding of mission and theology, using terms like *contextualisation, localisation, indigenisation, inculturation,* and *adaptation*.[15] In the last quarter of the twentieth century a growing awareness and wider acceptance of human experience as integral to mission and to the classical sources of theology, namely, scripture and tradition, were quite evident.

The renowned South African missiologist David Bosch credited the nineteenth century German scholar Friedrich Schleiermacher with pioneering the contextual approach to theology, as Schleiermacher was the first to assert that all theologies are shaped by the context in which they emerge.[16] Though Schleiermacher did not go far enough with his contextual approach, he opened the door to challenge the very notion of a 'pure' message.[17] In his terms, all texts including the biblical text were influenced by the contexts and circumstances in which they were written. As Bosch

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[11] Robert, 'Shifting Southward', 133.
[12] Robert, 'Shifting Southward', 125.
[13] Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 2.
[14] Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (London: SCM, 1974), 5.
[15] Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies,* 2.
[16] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 422.
[17] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 422.

framed it, 'It was impossible to penetrate to a residue of Christian faith that was not already, in a sense, interpretation.'[18] Bosch therefore maintained that 'from the beginning the missionary message of the Christian church incarnated itself in the life and world of those who had embraced it'.[19] Likewise, contextual theologians Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder made very clear that 'mission has always engaged in what is today called the process of inculturation or contextualisation', and listed key figures in the history of the church who have practised contextualisation in how they witnessed to and proclaimed the gospel, from the apostles of Jesus, to the Patristic Fathers, through the Reformation and right up to the present day.[20] So while it was from the Christians of the global South that the contextual approach to mission and theology was brought to the fore in the twentieth century, contextual mission and theology are not novel to the Christian faith nor indeed to European contextual theology!

In this vein, one could further name *European* theology*, Euro-American* theology*, and *Western* theology as contextual theologies because, according to Bevans:

> There is no such thing as 'theology'; there is only *contextual* theology: *feminist* theology, *black* theology, *liberation* theology, *Filipino* theology, *Asian-American* theology, *African* theology, and so forth. Doing theology contextually is not an option, nor is it something that should only interest people from the Third World, missionaries who work there, or ethnic communities within dominant cultures. The contextualisation of theology – the attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of a particular context – is really a theological imperative.[21]

Of course, Christianity in both western and non-western contexts had not yet become fully conscientised to that phenomenon and it is arguable that many western missionaries at the time were shocked and took offence at the changing missiological and theological landscape! But once indigenous Christians were awakened to their own discomfort in struggling to relate to the gospel message in foreign terms, they demanded not only that they be free to contextualise it for their own realities, but that the world church should recognise and accept that contextual theology is *the* way to do theology. They began to set the agenda for mission and there would be no turning back. Bevans and Schroeder agree that Christians in both the global South and in the West came to the realisation that 'what had pretended to be a *universal* theology was in fact one that *universalised* theological

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[18] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 422.
[19] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 421.
[20] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 385.
[21] Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 3.

expression according to what amounted to a local theology developed in Europe'.[22]

Even with that realisation, perhaps the most serious challenge to contextualisation is western Christianity's resistance, continuing lack of recognition, and failure to take seriously the contextual nature of theology in how it does theology in the West. There continues to be a certain air of arrogance among the ranks of western theologians, in the academy and seminaries, where the prevailing attitude is that 'they know what theology is and that everyone else has to submit to their judgment when theologising'.[23] Missiologist Stan Nussbaum suggests that this might be because –

> Western theologians generally think and write as if knowing, understanding, and explaining are the only valid aims of theology. They rarely get their hands dirty in history, taking the side of the poor and experiencing life from their perspective.[24]

Perhaps it is simply an oblivion to just how culturally conditioned western mission and theological thinking and presuppositions are. Perhaps it is more about a reluctance to let go of privileged positions in the centre of power and make room for the *other*, for the *marginalised*. De la Torre and Floyd-Thomas promote the view that doing theology from the centre of power and privilege not only assists in normalising and legitimising the social location and theological status of the dominant culture, but also enables a process of self-justification and legitimising of the socio-political status quo.[25] Bevans and Schroeder suggest that western theology's reluctance to take contextualisation seriously may have something to do with the risk and pain involved in confronting the fact that western Christianity has been marred by colonial expansionism, racism and assumptions of cultural superiority.[26]

It would seem that the Hellenistic mindset Rahner thought had been left behind with the advent of world Christianity still dominates western theology. So much so that the classical binaries of principle versus application, objective versus subjective, continue to shape western theological approaches. The implication of course is that western theology falls under the superior principle-objective mode, while contextual theologies such as Liberation Theology fall under the inferior application-subjective mode. Unfortunately, this stigma of inferiority continues to

[22] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 386.
[23] John Fuellenbach, 'The Theology of Liberation', in William Jenkinson and Helene O'Sullivan (eds), *Trends in Mission: Toward the 3rd Millennium* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 75.
[24] Stan Nussbaum, *A Reader's Guide to Transforming Mission: A Concise, Accessible Companion to David Bosch's Classic Book* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 108.
[25] Torre and Floyd-Thomas, *Beyond the Pale,* xxiii.
[26] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 388.

hinder active self-conscious contextual theologising and mission in western Christian contexts.

De la Torre and Floyd-Thomas describe the uphill battle that contextual theologians from the global South and from migrant diasporic communities in the West often face when they question or challenge Eurocentric theological perspectives –

> Those relegated to the margins of theological discourse are always welcomed to 'colour' the conversation, as long as the supremacy of Eurocentric theological thought is not radically challenged. Scholars from marginalised communities who engage in questioning or debunking Eurocentric theological perspectives are usually ignored, their scholarship dismissed as lacking 'academic rigor'.[27]

This assessment resonates with my own experiences in western church circles and theological forums. Often the views and challenges I offer are dismissed as coming from an apparently aggressive minority ethnic woman, or alternatively I get patronised as just another person with a *chip on her shoulder*. What irks even more is the very surreal experience of having a white male or female in the same forum make a point you made first, and seeing their input being treated as insightful and valuable while yours is totally ignored and you wonder whether you have said anything at all or you just imagined having said it! It is irksome and surreal because in such moments there is a sense of utter invisibility. Over the years I have tried different postures and projections of my voice and body language when I speak in such forums to see if I am better received and heard. Then I realised I could not possibly carry that problem too! There are no medals for the never-ending effort dedicated to honing one's skills at getting under the skin of an alien dominant culture and mastering an alien dominant tongue in order to articulate, to communicate, to be heard. There is no acknowledgment of the years spent in building strength and resilience to survive that dominant racist culture. There certainly is no respect for refusing to be co-opted and be fitted in a box *they* have constructed. In that kind of climate, to be a contextual theologian one must develop a thick skin. Darrell Whiteman contends that 'good contextualisation offends people for the right reasons',[28] and Walls concurs when he intimates that to be faithful to Christ will often put one at odds with one's society.[29]

Liberation Theology and its methodological use of inculturation are two of the most prominent and well-known forms of contextualisation. They also appear to be the best matched with marginalised and indigenous Christian populations and communities, and this is not surprising for they emerged out of precisely those contexts. It was Latin American scholar

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[27] Torre and Floyd-Thomas, *Beyond the Pale,* xxiv.
[28] Darrell L. Whiteman, 'Contextualisation: The Theory, the Gap, the Challenge', in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* 21.1 (January 1997), 2.
[29] Andrew Walls, 'The Gospel as the Prisoner and Liberator of Culture', in *Missionalia,* 10.3 (November 1982), 98-99.

Gustavo Gutierrez who brought the theology of liberation to world attention when his book of the same name was published in the early 1970s.[30] Emerging out of a situation in Latin America of abject poverty and oppression for millions of its peoples, Liberation Theology seeks to engage with socio-political reality in ways that could overcome such human desperation and hopelessness.

Roman Catholic theologian John Fuellenbach explains that it is a theology that demands 'a radical commitment to the plight of the poor in order to help them to change the situation through an active engagement for social justice and human rights'.[31] It asks questions of the gospel and what it has to say to such situations or risk being totally irrelevant. A significant feature of Liberation Theology is its insistence that taking a preferential option for the poor does not mean doing things for the poor. Rather, it is about ensuring that the poor are free to exercise their human agency in ways they choose. It is ensuring that, as marginalised Christians, the poor are full partners in God's mission and hence are agents and bearers of mission.

In *TTL*, the church affirms that marginalised people are agents of mission exercising a prophetic role that emphasises fullness of life for all, and commits to acting in justice, solidarity and inclusivity as the marks of mission from the margins.[32] Gutierrez's expressed vision made clear that in his view there will be –

> an authentic theology of liberation only when the oppressed themselves can freely raise their voice and express themselves directly and creatively in society and in the heart of the People of God, when they themselves account for the hope, which they bear, when they are the protagonists of their own liberation.[33]

Whereas the process of contextualisation involves a particular theology engaging with the reality of its local context, in the case of inculturation the theological concern is to do with cultural empowerment and freedom. Oppression is seen in terms of cultural imperialism across cultural lines, so the key theological task according to Nussbaum is to free each culture from alien cultural domination.[34] In his recent encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium,* Pope Francis details the request by the Bishops of Oceania that the church develop an 'understanding of the truth of Christ' that integrates the traditions and cultures of the region, and to require missionaries to use it in co-operation with indigenous Christians to ensure that the faith and life of the church is expressed in legitimate forms appropriate to each culture.[35]

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[30] Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (London: SCM, 1974).
[31] Fuellenbach, 'The Theology of Liberation', 74.
[32] *TTL,* §39.
[33] Gutierrez, *The Theology of Liberation*, 268.
[34] Nussbaum, *A Reader's Guide*, 112.
[35] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls, 2013), 93.

This is inculturation. Bosch views inculturation as far more radical than some of the liberation theologies and certainly more so than some of its former manifestations, i.e. *adaptation*, *accommodation*, and *indigenisation*, because it is about making the gospel at home in a particular culture.[36] However, he warns against making the gospel so at home in that particular culture that it becomes co-opted and thereby loses its ability to illumine, inform, enlighten and challenge that culture.[37] Bevans listed six models of inculturation including translation, anthropological, praxis, synthetic, transcendental and counter-cultural, and explains that, while each may have an affinity with a particular context (e.g. counter-cultural is the most appropriate in securalised post-modern European or North American context), no one model is absolute.[38]

Vietnamese-American theologian Peter Phan sees the significance of contextualisation for the growth and health of Christianity when he states that 'on the success of inculturation will hang the future of the church'.[39]

We have seen the impact of indigenous contextual mission during the colonial era and at the exodus of colonisers and western missionaries from the global South. The profound and inspiring point of that moment in history was that world Christianity saw grassroots indigenous and marginalised Christians in action! In other words, the church and the mission of God are flourishing and growing through the agency of the marginalised!

It is estimated that by 2025 there will be 2.6 billion Christians in the world with 633 million living in Africa, 640 million in Latin America, 460 million in Asia, and 555 million in Europe.[40] Whilst not surprising, this continuing reality of the radical shift in the demographics of world Christianity should surely compel us to rethink our mission and theological formulations and strategies. This is exactly the vision and hope of *TTL*.[41] It affirms that mission movements are emerging from the global South and East and that rethinking our mission and theological formulations involves rooting our mission practice in these contexts and cultures as well as acting to confront structures that oppress and dehumanise contrary to the values of God's reign.[42]

Given the unprecedented level of global migration with its very public and visible implications for the world church, western Christianity is certainly seeing growth and vitality in the diasporic and multicultural churches and communities, in stark contrast to the decline that is now so common in the western church. There is a sort of reverse contextualisation

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[36] Nussbaum, *A Reader's Guide*, 112.

[37] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 455.

[38] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 37.

[39] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context,* 388.

[40] Akinade, 'Hans Küng', 232.

[41] *TTL,* §39.

[42] *TTL,* §39.

going on here. Christian migrants arriving in the West bring with them their understandings and practices of Christianity (which might have been taught to them by western missionaries in the first place but now it is 'tradition'). They set up communities and plant diasporic churches where they live and witness in ways that mirror what happened back home. As a matter of fact, what these migrants are doing is taking the gospel and making it feel at home within their own minority ethnic diasporic communities. So it is a bit like contextualising in a bubble. They are surrounded by western society and culture, and they have created a diasporic bubble where they contextualise the gospel message they receive from the wider church in the shape of the 'tradition' they brought with them. The pros and cons of such a monoculturally entrenched approach to being church in diaspora are open for debate. But the point for now is that these are marginal Christian communities actively living out their faith in a kind of ironically contextual way – and they are strong, vibrant, thriving and growing, on the margins! For they are certainly not at the centre!

Yet it could be argued that the western churches are not paying serious attention. Contextualising patterns of mission practice initiated by migrant churches are emerging within western contexts that could have a truly profound impact in the whole life and vitality of western Christianity as has happened in the global South. By not paying serious attention, the older western churches are missing golden opportunities for really innovative and creative mission practices that could contribute to their missional renewal. For what could be more innovative and creative than contextualisation? The strength of contextualisation is that it helps us bridge the gap between our talking and our walking, between our theorising and our action, between our theologising and our authentic praxis. The experiences of migrant/multicultural churches in the West and of indigenous independent churches in the global South demonstrate that contextualisation helps build strong churches! Non-contextualised Christianity tends to engage people only at very superficial levels, so that at best what you get is a kind of 'split-level Christianity'.[43] This is what Yung calls 'nominal Christianity' where the gospel has not penetrated deep into individual and communal consciousness so as to engage meaningfully with human needs and aspirations.[44] Yung believes that nominal Christianity is prevalent in world Christianity, and I would add that it is western Christianity that is most susceptible and vulnerable to it.

This is why mission from the margins is so vital for the renewal of the life of the world church, especially in the West. Marginal peoples are experts in contextualisation. With very few material resources and often under extremely dire circumstances, they are innovatively and creatively going about doing the mission of God. De la Torre and Floyd-Thomas

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[43] Whiteman, 'Contextualisation: The Theory, the Gap, the Challenge', 3.

[44] Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas?* 4.

make the point that the margins provide a 'double-consciousness' that helps illuminate and expose realities that the centre is bound to miss.[45] *TTL* is fully in sync when it states that 'People on the margins have agency, and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view'.[46] Doing mission from the margins allows for contextualisation to unmask the centre's taken-for-granted mission and theological presuppositions. It allows for Bevans' and Schroeder's notion of 'prophetic dialogue' as the new paradigm of mission for the 21st century.[47] But ultimately our contextual imperative takes its cue from our Lord's incarnation itself. There is nothing abstract about God incarnate. Henri Nouwen would insist: 'It has everything to do with the tangible, audible, and visible experience of God, an experience so real that it becomes the foundation of life.'[48] Knowing that, how can we not go and do likewise?

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[45] De la Torre and Floyd-Thomas, *Beyond the Pale,* xxv.

[46] *TTL,* §15.

[47] Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 387. The notion of 'prophetic dialogue' prioritises dialogue between gospel and context and, combined with good listening and discerning skills, you have a formula for effective contextual mission.

[48] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, and Melbourne, Vic: Dove Communications, 1984), viii.

TRANSFORMATION

Nico A. Botha

Introduction: A Characterisation of Transformation

The difficulty in designating and describing the concept 'transformation' could be likened to the complexities around recounting a term like 'globalisation'. It has not been easy either to define Christian mission and its concomitant discipline of missiology. The South African missiologist David Bosch spoke of mission as being 'indefinable'.[1] There is a downside and an upside which the trickiness of characterizing transformation throws up. On the one hand, the lack of a clear-cut characterisation renders the task of tracing transformation in mission over a century virtually impossible. On the other hand, it opens up the prospect of looking at transformation from diverse angles and perspectives.

The introductory paragraph should not necessarily detract from attempts at describing transformation, albeit not in clinical terms. A few examples must suffice. First, in order to develop some understanding of transformation, a striking example in the ecumenical world comes from the Lutheran World Federation document[2] that describes transformation as 'an ongoing process of total reorientation of life with all its aspirations, ideologies, structures, and values'. It is a continuous process of rejection of that which dehumanizes and desecrates life, and adherence to that which affirms the sanctity of life and gifts in everyone, and promotes peace and justice in society. Transformation engages and changes all who are a part of it. In that manner, transformational *diakonia* helps to overcome so-called *helpers' syndromes*, practices and relationships that separate 'we' from 'they'. In the end, no-one escapes vulnerability. We all need to be transformed, reconciled and empowered. For that reason, we are all in need of *diakonia* – first of all God's *diakonia* as revealed in Jesus Christ, and then as mutual care and accompaniment of one another. Transformation is clearly a process, but at the same time, transformation envisions the achievement of certain goals, arriving at a new situation where human dignity is more respected with peace and justice for more people. Thus, transformation is closely related to what also may be defined as social

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[1] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 9.
[2] Kjell Nordstokke (ed), Diakonia in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment – An LWF Contribution to the Understanding and Practice of Diakonia (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2009), 43-44.

change, progress or development. From a theological point of view, transformation is a reminder of God's constant renewal of creation (Latin: *creatio continua*), as every morning we experience the darkness of night being transformed into the light of a new day breaking forth. As people of God, we see transformation as God's gracious gift for which we owe praise and service. It links diaconal work with the admonition of St Paul who told the believers not to 'be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect' (Romans 12:2). Therefore, transformation rejects conformism. It expresses an alternative way of experiencing God's will in relationship to all God's creation.

As the Mission in Context document reads:

> … transformation, perceived in the light of Christ's resurrection, is the unfolding of the potential life-giving nature of all creation and an expression of the working of God's grace in nature. It is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit to effect transformation in and through the Church to the whole world.[3]

Perhaps the German missiologists Faix and Weissenborn are unintentionally assisting in breaking down the very rich definition offered by the Lutheran World Federation by drawing attention to seven elements of transformation in their chapter on *Transformation als Aspekt der Soteriologie*[4] (Transformation as an Aspect of Soteriology). They interpret transformation as the all-encompassing challenge of God's reign. Space does not allow for any manner of elaboration on the seven elements, so they will merely be enumerated: it is present as well as something for the future; it includes soul and body; it is personal or individualistic and communal; it is momentary as well as a process; it is worked by the Spirit as well as being embodied by Christians; it is word, deed and being; and finally, it comes from God into the world.[5] The ensuing discussion therefore shows diverse elements of what is contained in the above-mentioned characterisation, as well as in the breakdown offered by Faix and Weissenborn.

In this chapter, liberty is taken to introduce different perspectives of transformation, relating to Christian mission from 1910 to 2010. First, transformation is looked at from a philosophical perspective with specific reference to the changes in thought-patterns and epistemologies brought about by shifts from the Enlightenment paradigm to a more post-modern mode of thinking. Secondly, the question is posed as to why, for example, Bosch uses the term 'transforming' in the title of his life work,

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[3] Nordstokke, 'Diakonia', 44.
[4] Tobias Faix and Thomas Weissenborn, 'Transformation als Aspekt der Soteriology', in Rainer Ebeling and Afred Meier (eds), in *Missionale Theologie* (Marburg an der Lahn: Verlag der Francke-Buchhandlung, 2009), 113-20.
[5] Faix and Weissenborn, 'Transformation', 116-20.

Transforming Mission,[6] but does not even begin to offer some specific characterisation of transformation. Thirdly, a strong focus is on transformation in social, political, cultural and economic modes in relation to Christian mission. For this purpose, the thinking on transformation is traced in terms of the world mission conferences of the International Missionary Council (IMC), and after the fusion between the IMC and the World Council of Churches (WCC) in New Delhi, India, in 1961, the conferences under the auspices of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), Lausanne, as well as some individual scholars.

Philosophical Transformation

The term 'philosophical' is used in very a broad sense to include shifts and transformation in missionary thinking since Edinburgh 1910, as well as hard-core philosophical transformation – for example, post-modernism – in its implications for mission.

What passes the review first is a brief investigation into how the missionary message was transformed over the twentieth century. Perhaps it is important to say from the outset that these shifts were profoundly informed by different cultural trends. A further issue is to reveal the underlying assumption that in the Bible, the book of Christians, and the church, there is no obvious concept of mission found, meaning that mission is a Christian construction which has undergone many changes, at least more than ten times during the past century.

Before and after Edinburgh 1910, mission was understood in terms of 'expansionism'. More concretely, western churches were required to expand into countries that had not yet been fully 'missionised'. The emphasis was on individual conversions, or in the Von Zinzendorf jargon, 'winning souls for the Lamb'. Disastrously, this has led to mission and colonialism becoming fellow travellers. In a country like Germany, the very specific protuberance or prominence of such an understanding of mission has been the notion of the *volkskirche,* or the establishment of 'national ethnic churches'. The effect of such a kind of missionary understanding on a country like South Africa is well recorded and not up for any further discussion in this chapter.

The Jerusalem 1928 mission conference saw a deconstruction of mission concepts in following a binary approach to the secularism-mission dialectic.[7] Doing mission in a divided world meant for this conference that the only possible relationship was dualistic or binary in terms of a Christian 'mission versus secularism' construct.

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[6] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*.
[7] *Christian Century*, 10th May 1928, 1.

Amazingly, but true as early as the 1930s, what is today a common understanding of mission as holistic – 'meeting the whole of human need'[8] – emerged. Still, in the 1930s another important trend which saw the light was an understanding of mission in relation to, or meeting, other faiths;[9] and indeed, still in the 1930s a compelling notion of mission as partnership in evangelism[10] came to the fore with the inclusion of what was then still known as the 'younger churches'.

Turning quickly from the IMC mission conferences to the coming into being of the WCC in 1948, the fusion of the 'Faith and Order' and the 'Life and Work' Commissions gave rise to an understanding of mission as 'ecumenical witness'.[11] Up till then, mission had been understood very much in ecclesiological terms as an activity or enterprise of the *church*.

The Willingen 1952 conference of the IMC brought about a fundamental transformation from a church-centric mission to an understanding of mission as God's mission, with its deep and profound theological thinking of mission as emanating from the heart of God, and based on earlier reflections of Barth, Hartenstein and Kähler, the conference gave rise to the artefact *missio Dei*.[12] This has indeed been quite a radical transformation, espoused particularly by the Dutch missiologist, Hoekendijk, in his understanding of mission based on the God-world-church scheme. For Hoekendijk, the church was nothing but an instrument of mission, with mission as the only reason for its existence and, consequently, completely relativised. Mission was now interpreted as participating in God's mission.

To conclude the fifty years since Edinburgh 1910 of what is indeed a cursory perspective on what is loosely understood as philosophical and studious transformation, the attention turns to the 1958 mission conference at Achimota in Ghana. The Achimota conference was made famous by the resolution of the IMC to merge with the WCC. Clearly, the foundation for

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[8] Daniel J. Adams (ed), *From East to West: Essays in Honour of Donald Bloesch* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997), 99.

[9] Stanley H. Skreslet, *Comprehending Mission: The Questions, Methods, Themes, and Prospects of Missiology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 117; Daryl Balia and Kirsteen Kim, *Witnessing to Christ Today,* Edinburgh 2010 Vol. II (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), 36.

[10] Wolfgang Gunther and Guillermo Cook, 'World Missionary Conferences', in Karl Muller, Theo Sundermeier, Stephen B. Bevans, Richard H. Bliese (eds), *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 504.

[11] Mark Beach (ed), *Introducing the World Council of Churches. A Common Journey of Faith* (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 5; Balia and Kim, *Witnessing to Christ Today*, 201.

[12] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Conflict: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 290; John G. Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 152.

understanding mission as 'mission in unity' was laid here, though the main emphases were on presence and dialogue.

Perhaps, and arguably so, one of the most radical transformations in mission occurred at the Mexico City conference in 1963. A complete overhaul of mission understanding, albeit to a large extent only theoretical, took place. Mission was transformed as a departure from the slogan 'from the West to the rest since the best is in the West', to mission in six continents. If this is not creating too much of a caricature, the understanding was that the entire world is a mission field, not just particular geographical areas of it. A further issue at Mexico City was an epistemological break with the Jerusalem binary of Christian mission versus secularism to a more creative interpretation of the relationship between the two. Consequently, Mexico City opted for the more dynamic term 'secularisation' rather than 'secularism', which creates the impression of a closed system to be resisted rather than to be engaged creatively with the gospel.

Furthermore, the 1960s began to witness a greater participation of Africans, Asians and Latin Americans, taking mission by storm with their stories of oppression and exploitation, struggle and hope. This resulted in mission being viewed more and more as liberation (Bosch).[13] Key terms from the gospel – for example, salvation – found a more comprehensive and contextual interpretation, culminating in another major transformation at the Melbourne 1980 conference where very profound missiological thinking took place about the plight of the poor of the world. From the perspective of God's kingdom missions were to exercise a preferential option for the poor, following God in his choice for the poor. There were other interpretations of mission, still in the period between 1970 and 1990 – for example, mission was seen as inter-church aid, proclamation, dialogue and church growth.

Transforming Mission: David J Bosch

One of the intriguing speculations about Bosch's world-renowned book is why the term used in the title of the book does not find any further reflection in it.

In a personal discussion, Prof. Piet Meiring from Pretoria and Prof. Kritizinger from Unisa, Pretoria, who both knew David Bosch well, concurred that he did not find it necessary to work out his understanding of 'transforming' in any pertinent fashion, since this is profoundly constituted by the thirteen elements of his Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm. What is of course very transformative is Bosch's metaphorical understanding of mission. His consistent description and analysis of 'mission as', rather than

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[13] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 432-46.

'mission is', is in itself a major transformation from clinical, watertight definitions to a more open-ended understanding of mission.

Hans Küng had numerous discussions with David Bosch in South Africa in 1986. During public meetings Küng often referred to the six epochs in the history of Christianity, the six major paradigms operative in the church through the centuries. Building upon the theory of paradigm shifts proposed by the natural scientist Thomas Kuhn, Küng explained the way transformation took place in the church over twenty centuries, from early Christianity till the contemporary era. Küng and Bosch agreed to a remarkable degree on interpreting mission according to paradigm shifts, and it came as no surprise that David Bosch, when he conceived his magnum opus on Transforming Mission, used Küng's – as well as Kuhn's – arguments as a springboard for his study.[14]

Christian mission, Bosch wrote, helped in its own way to transform the world. In the same process, the church's mission was profoundly influenced and transformed by *the world*, to which it was sent. The many facets of transformation, aptly described in Part 3 of his book, reiterate the truth time and again. That Bosch had it right becomes clear when one studies the discussions at the great ecumenical gatherings since Edinburgh 1910, and by reading the statements and decisions made by these gatherings.[15] Mission at its core has been a process of transformation, *in both directions*.

In Tina Ahonen's study on Bosch,[16] she refers to Bosch's unwavering belief that 'Christians make a difference to this world'. In a footnote she factors in a lengthy citation from Bosch to illustrate the point about his clear understanding of the involvement of the Christian community in God's mission of transforming the world:

> 'We know,' Bosch asserts, 'that evil, injustice, hatred, estrangement, prejudice and fear will never entirely disappear from the face of the earth before the kingdoms of this world are finally consummated in the Kingdom of God. But the moment we allow this harsh reality to paralyse and sabotage our efforts, we can no longer pray the Lord's Prayer – "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven". To offer that prayer implies believing that Christians make a difference to this world… the community of those who are enjoying the foretaste of perfection – should get involved in God's mission of transforming the world.'[17]

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[14] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 181-89.

[15] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 301-03, 338-39, 369-74, 376-78.

[16] Tina Ahonen, *Transformation through Compassionate Mission: David J Bosch's Theology of Contextualization* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society, 2003), 114-15.

[17] David J. Bosch, 'The Kingdom of God and the Kingdoms of This World', in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa,* 29 (December 1979), 3-13.

Reflections on Transformation in Diverse Modes

This rather broad and generalising heading is aimed at creating space for reflections on transformation in its interconnectedness to theology or missiology, and special reference to the world mission conferences. Perhaps an important disclaimer is necessary. On the issue of transformation in its linkages to theology and missiology, a random selection of individual authors has been made and, with reference to the world mission conferences, it is necessary to point out that an exhaustive discussion on all of them is impossible in a chapter as limited as this.

The most that is achievable is to let examples, or perhaps more aptly illustrations, illuminate the message of transformation. The random and slightly arbitrary selection of authors is meant to substantiate thinking on transformation at the world mission conferences.

Whitby 1947: Stephen Neill on Revolution

The brief discussion on Whitby 1947, the fourth mission conference, under the auspices of the International Missionary Council, focuses on Part 1 of the conference report under the heading *World in Ferment*.[18] The particular reference is to the thinking of one of the foremost mission stalwarts, Stephen Neill.[19] The underlying assumption here is that his input at Whitby speaks to the question of transformation. In fact, in Neill's perspective, his ecclesiological construct is that of a church at the forefront of radical transformation. Indeed, 'From the beginning, and in its essential nature, the Church has been revolutionary. Christ sent it out as an explosive, corrosive, destructive force'.[20]

An intriguing part of his exposition is locating the revolutionary church in the context of the Roman Empire. In a reflection on transformation, this is paramount in the following sense: *there is no depoliticized, individualized understanding of the church.* As then, so now, the matrix in which the church exists is empire. In identifying the church as 'the tiny charge of dynamite', [21] Neill suggests that, when placed under the Roman Empire, it blew 'the whole thing sky high'. In his understanding, such reality is also reflected in the overthrow of the temple of the great Diana in Ephesus. Conversely, for Neill the truth of God as embodied by the church, is not one-sidedly a destructive and a corrosive force, but equally a force for the reshaping of the world: 'The Church is also the mother and nurse of the nations.' A rather intriguing but controversial aspect of the reflection on

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[18] C.W. Ranson, *Renewal and Advance: Christian Witness in a Revolutionary World* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1948), 206-22.
[19] Stephen Neill, 'A Revolutionary Church', in Ranson, *Renewal and Advance*, 62-84.
[20] Neill, 'A Revolutionary Church', 64.
[21] Neill, 'A Revolutionary Church', 65.

the church as revolutionary is Neill's take on Marx and Engels.[22] Based on a sense of symbolism, he draws attention to the centenary of the Communist Manifesto in 1948, a year after Whitby. Without being able to trace this and in full awareness of the fact that Marx has broken radically with all forms of religion, particularly Christianity, he still poses the question whether ultimately there was not 'something inchoately Christian' in their option for the underdog.

Based on this very cursory look at the views advanced by Neill at Whitby all those years ago, we can see that ideas on transformation in Christian mission should be kept in creative tension with secular ideas on transformation. Put slightly differently, Christian mission and the concomitant discipline of missiology will contribute immensely to the transformation of the world if a critical discourse between the two is kept alive. This is the DNA, the determinant of mission in post-modern fashion.

Bangkok 1973: Salvation to the World Today

Highly relevant to any discussion on transformation is Section II report of the Bangkok 1973 mission conference on salvation and social justice.[23] In accepting the reality that in a book on Ecumenical Missiology which introduces a diversity of topics, some measure of overlapping between chapters is unavoidable, the simple argument will be that the Section II report speaks eloquently to the issue of transformation. It contains an important disclaimer to the effect that the focus on the social, economic and political aspects of the gospel in no way denies the personal and eschatological dimensions of salvation. The implications of the work of this Section for any reflection on mission as transformation are quite challenging.

First, there has been an understanding that the transformation of social, economic and political structures is an instruction from God. Based on Luke 4:18-19, the mission of Christ by the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit was to declare God's love to the poor, to nurse the wounds of the broken-hearted, to liberate captives, to restore sight to the blind, and to free the oppressed. All of this was to be wrought through the death, cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Salvation was understood as something where human beings were called to participate and where they were offered life in its fullness in a divided world. Secondly, salvation or transformation in these terms was first and foremost aimed at the liberation of the church and of Christians. Thirdly, such salvation reflects four dimensions, namely: the struggle for economic justice and against the exploitation of human beings by human beings, the struggle for human dignity in the face of political

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[22] Ranson, *Renewal and Advance,* 72-73, 189.
[23] Pauline Webb, *Salvation Today* (London: SCM, 1974), 40-51; Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 384, 393, 396-99.

oppression, the struggle for solidarity in the face of the alienation of human beings, and the struggle for hope against the hopelessness in individual lives.

The only serious criticism of Bangkok 1973 pertaining to the Section II report is the omission of any reflection on the devastation caused by the prevailing geo-economic system to the earth. In his world-renowned and acclaimed book, *Earth Community, Earth Ethic*, Rasmussen traces the havoc created to mother earth by the successive agricultural, industrial and information and resources revolutions.[24] In a fascinating and mind-blowing fashion, he pleads for a 'homecoming', as a return to the *oikos*, a reconciliation of sorts with mother earth.

Lausanne 1974 to Wheaton 1983.
Tizon: Radical Evangelicals and Transformation

Any reflection on transformation will be incomplete without the profound thinking on the issue in Evangelical mission circles, with particular reference to Lausanne. Space is lacking to engage the documents emanating from the Lausanne Movement in any serious manner. Instead, what is reflected upon here is the excellent study by Tizon,[25] in which he deals with missionary thinking on transformation in a profound way. The focus in his study is on how in radical Evangelical circles the complex term 'transformation' is used and developed. A striking feature of Tizon's[26] treatment of the term is his notion, and one supposes in following Bosch, 'Mission as Transformation'. *Is this a correction of Bosch's omission of transformation from his elements which make up the Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm?*

One issue that is overlooked quite often and to which Tizon[27] draws attention is that, though Bosch does not offer any substantial definition of transformation in *Transforming Mission*, he does, however, show two meanings of the term. As an adjective, the term 'transforming' describes mission as a society, culture and reality changing movement and as a movement being transformed itself. The avoidance of the subject-object terminology (the subject is mission, and the object is society, culture and reality), used by Tizon, is deliberate. Though the point he makes, on how Bosch understands transformation without working it out in his mammoth book, is important, the subject-object scheme of things which, on a different level, Bosch deconstructs in his critique of the Enlightenment paradigm, remains problematic. To identify mission as the subject, and

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[24] Larry L. Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997) 53-74.

[25] Al Tizon, *Transformation after Lausanne: Radical Evangelical Mission in Global-Local Perspective* (Oxford:: Regnum, 2008).

[26] Tizon, *Transformation,* 4.

[27] Tizon, *Transformation*, 6-7.

society and culture as object, is to reinvent the binary, creating dualism between the two. More often than not there are very helpful elements in society and culture which contribute to change rather than serving as hindrances. Conversely, there are sometimes elements in mission which are detrimental to transformation.

Be that as it may, a hugely creative moment with Tizon[28] is the description of transformation based on the global-local construction. Borrowing from Schreiter[29] in his global-local perspective on the history, theology and practice of mission, Tizon identifies four reasons why such a construction is 'timely and necessary'. First, it 'has done much to elevate social concern in evangelical mission thought'. Secondly, if this is interpreted correctly, context is taken seriously as a source of mission theology. Thirdly, Tizon calls into service the 'bridges' to show how the global-local construct can bring evangelical, ecumenical and Catholic mission traditions together 'for issues of social justice'. He goes on to assert that 'by laying out a socially informed, holistic, integrative – in a word, Transformational – missiology, we encourage genuine Christian ecumenism'. Fourthly, Tizon believes that the global-local lens as a rendering of *Mission as Transformation* may add to 'ongoing creative thinking among theologians, missiologists, and social scientists concerning the tension between the global/universal and the local/particular'.[30]

Then again, what is the theological or biblical grounding of *Mission as Transformation* in the understanding of evangelical mission? The answer to this question has been given in the Wheaton 1983 statement on Transformation in which, the goal of transformation is captured in the biblical vision of the Kingdom of God.[31] Some feminists and womanist theologians may suggest that the metaphor of Kingdom should be avoided in favour of the reign of God. Nevertheless, the statement's interpretation of transformation as a new way of being human in submission to the Lord is incisive – once again feminists and womanists may object to the title 'Lord'. In simple terms, the statement then spells out the social, political and economic consequences of such a new life: bringing peace, overcoming prejudices, sharing basic resources, working for greater participation of people in the decisions which affect their lives, and an equal receiving from others and giving of themselves. The Christological grounding of this being is 'growing up in Christ', and the pneumatological grounding is 'dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit'.[32]

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[28] Tizon, *Transformation*, 11-13.
[29] Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and Local* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 3-4.
[30] Tizon, *Transformation,* 12-13.
[31] Tizon, *Transformation*, 247.
[32] Stephen Neill, 'A Revolutionary Church', 62-84.

Salvador 1996: Kanyoro's Cultural Hermeneutics

In my 1996 interview with Mercy Oduyoye on the moratorium call, she thought that if there was still any relevance at all to this type of call, it could only be a call for a moratorium on patriarchy in the African Church.[33] The ideas expounded by Kanyoro at the mission conference in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, in 1996 tie in with what Oduyoye said the same year.[34] In coining her 'cultural hermeneutics', she reflects on what she understands as her accumulated experiences and expresses wariness of glibly accepting culture and, by so doing, tolerating unjust behaviour. Looking at the evolution of her ideas on cultural hermeneutics it would be safe to predicate this on transformation. She writes:

> For generations, African women have unquestioningly obeyed all that society prescribes for them in the name of culture. Child marriages, female circumcision and the rites of passage from birth to death, whether useful or harmful, are imposed on African women simply because it is 'our culture'. This might be taken to mean that what is culture is natural, good and unavoidable. Culture has silenced many women in Africa. It has hindered them from experiencing Jesus' liberating promise of abundant life for all (John 10:10).[35]

In essence, her cultural hermeneutics is aimed at the scrutiny of cultures themselves. In her understanding there are a number of basic underlying assumptions on cultural hermeneutics in its African garb. First, it is an analysis and interpretation of culture to discern liberative as well as oppressive elements. Secondly, it creates space for the telling of stories of their own experiences, and the reading and understanding of the Bible in context. Thirdly, cultural hermeneutics is geared towards renewal or, in the context of this chapter, transformation in that harmful elements in culture are unmasked and holistic ones are affirmed. This is setting, the context for confession and forgiveness in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Edinburgh 2010: Children as Agents of Transformation

At the centenary celebrations of Edinburgh in 2010, refreshing ideas on children in mission emerged. These are not simply reflections on how adults should respond more aptly in theology and the church to the situation of children, but thoughtful suggestions on acknowledging children as agents of mission. One such creative suggestion is to identify children as agents of transformation. In rather simple terms it is stated that '…

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[33] Interview by Nico A. Botha with Mercy A. Oduyoye in Nairobi, August 1996.
[34] Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro, 'Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures', in Christopher Duraisingh, *Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures* (Geneva: WCC, 1998), 96-110.
[35] Kanyoro, 'Called to One Hope', 104.

throughout history God has used children as his willing instruments'.[36] In narrative mode, Edinburgh 2010 has taken note of the diverse ways in which God calls children into service as instruments of change. The stories of Patricia of Santa Mesa, Moko and Selfin of Poso and Pronchai, the Hmong are lined up to illustrate the point. Patricia's story is about working for transformation through disciple-making in an area in the Philippines which is described as '… a breeding ground for thieves, criminals, and sex workers'.[37] Moko's and Selfo's story is on transformation or reconciliation in a context of grave violence in Indonesia, and in Prochai's story he emerges as an 'environmental ambassador' in Thailand in a situation where deforestation is rife.[38] If this will not be construed as mere sloganeering, one could say in acknowledging children as serious agents of transformation: *If the adults mess up, let the children clean up.*

Transformation as a Response to Post-modernity

The final and concluding section of this chapter is triggered by discussions between the author and Dr Rudolph Meyer, a close friend of the late Beyers Naudé in the Christian Institute (CI), and erstwhile anti-apartheid activist and editor of the CI journal, *Pro Veritate.*[39] As a knowledgeable scholar on post-modernism, he raised convincing arguments on why any discussion on transformation would be incomplete without some engagement with post-modernity.

From approximately the 1950s to the 1970s far-reaching changes occurred in many areas of life. Kirk states that:

In contradistinction to comprehensive and globalising theories of science, economics, technology, law and not least in Christianity and mission, post-modernity proposes a reading of history always bound by limited, context-specific, fallible, and therefore constantly revisable perspectives.[40]

Post-modernity, says Tizon,[41]

… refers to a different way to understand the world. The most fundamental claim of post-modernity it seems, is that the Enlightenment has failed. A breakdown of such a claim boils down to the following: … that human rationality, ingenuity, industrialization and determination have led not to a

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[36] Balia and Kim, *Witnessing to Christ Today*, 126.

[37] Balia and Kim, *Witnessing to Christ Today*, 126.

[38] Balia and Kim, *Witnessing to Christ Today*, 126.

[39] A Christian monthly journal of the Christian Institute, called *Pro Veritate* (For the Truth), was published from the 1950s to 1976 when it was banned by the apartheid government. The journal testified in the name of Christ against injustice in society, politics, economics and labour. Rudolph Meyer was its final editor from 1970 to 1976.

[40] J. Andrew Kirk, 'Post-modernity', in John Corrie (ed), *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations* (Nottingham, UK: IVP, 2007), 299.

[41] Tizon, *Transformation*, 85.

better world, but to an unjust world, in which elitist, hegemonic, and dehumanizing forces have created new kinds of cultural, economic, and socio-political inequities.

The question arises: why is post-modernism and its core dimension of deconstruction so vitally important for mission, and particularly mission as transformation? In proceeding with a discussion on deconstruction in its relevance for mission as transformation, it is to be conceded up front that it can quite easily be construed as a negative description. It is, however, a rather positive objective indication maintaining that knowledge of the real, as the presence of an object, its in-depth meaning, and knowledge extending itself all the way to the object as a thing-in-itself, is *invalid.* The real object always 'slips' away and always eludes the signifier. The thing in itself always escapes.

In mission and its accompanying discipline of Missiology, and indeed in theology in general, the point made about deconstruction is perhaps best illustrated by the metaphorical narrative of the paradise which human beings cannot reach or enter – we are permanently 'outside': we live out of reach of the ultimate, away from the final – incomplete and limited. Here, we cannot reach the ultimate meaning of our lives – we cannot contact God directly, as there is no 'straight', objective connection, *except through faith.*

Deconstruction is to be as positive and assisting as to 'hope and pray' continuously and to try and reach the 'real', whatever it may be. It is also expressed in Hebrews 11:29 as: 'These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.' One of the main aims of deconstruction is dismantling invalid efforts and claims to reach the ultimate real, especially God; it shuns pretences, shams, fabrications, façades and deceit. It always hopes and longs… 'We see through a faint copper plate (a mirror), into a puzzle'. The hope is always there to experience someday 'face to face'. (1 Corinthians13).

The implications of this for mission as transformation could be put in simple terms. Even when we think that we have a firm grip on issues of liberation and transformation in personal, communal, social, cultural, political and economic terms, the danger of disarray is constantly looming large. In addition, that is why we can only proceed as understood by Tizon 'with more cultural sensitivity, humility, and an emphasis on relationships over impersonal programs'.[42] Furthermore, Tizon is clear that post-modernity in itself has not yet provided humanity with a viable alternative to modernity. [43] Or perhaps it would be closer to the truth to suggest that the gains of post-modernism have not yet permeated the way we go about life in general and mission in particular.

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[42] Tizon, *Transformation*, 86.

[43] Tizon, *Transformation*, 86.

Conclusion

This chapter regards transformation as one of the most striking developments in mission, especially from 1910 to 2010. Transformation challenges missionaries, missiologists and the churches worldwide comprehensively. This is visible in the mission conferences and modifications in mission understanding which are delineated, as well as the major metamorphosis from modernism to post-modernism in contemporary society, science, biblical interpretation, and also mission. It is a new way of life, of thinking, of caring, of loving, of responsibility, and of joy. Above all, this ubiquitous missional transformation makes room for the Holy Spirit to crown Christ as Saviour of the whole world towards renewal, and the glorification of almighty God.

JUSTICE

Chammah J. Kaunda and Roderick R. Hewitt

Introduction

The modern ecumenical movement's journey with issues of justice over the last century mirrors the global crises since World War I that exposed the human struggle for justice and peace amidst conflictive forces of violence and death that have since continued to mutate and spread like wildfire throughout the world. The essence of this struggle is to be found in the inhumane and anti-creation dispensing of power by imperial forces that unleash death upon God's creation. The mechanistic coming together of political, economic and military power (empire), seeks control over the life forms and resources of the earth to use for its own selfish and unjust global agenda.

The key objective of this chapter is to present some highlights of key programmatic expressions of the modern ecumenical movement since 1910 that have promoted and demonstrated how the church's missional commitment to justice has resisted forces of empire that deny people fullness of life. The church's missional identity and vocation demands that it serves as vanguard of God's justice and peace in the world. In order to appreciate the context of the modern era a brief overview is required to identify the legacy of justice that was bequeathed to the modern church.

The locus of ecumenical discourse on justice began with a missiological reading of the biblical narrative. The stories of God's relationship with humanity and creation are clothed in language that speaks of peace (*shalom*), righteousness (right living) and the well-being of all within God's household (*oikos*). How power is dispensed within any relationship will ultimately shape whether justice (that is, ethically and morally right action) has been carried out. God's justice (*shaphat* and *mishpat)* becomes most active in contexts where life-denying and unjust exercise of power prompts those who are oppressed to seek God's intervention (Exodus 3:15). Those who are recipients of God's justice enter into a covenantal relationship with God to practise his standard of justice in their relationship with others. Not only should justice shape the lifestyle of individuals with God and with one another but also justice should shape the political and economic ethics of a nation.

The Kingdom of God and God's Justice
in Relation to the Modern Era

In approaching the theme of justice in the twentieth century, this chapter highlights some of the development of the concept of justice within the ecumenical movement of the World Council of Churches since its inception in 1948. In order to set the stage, it is imperative to revisit the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference because it sets the stage for what Mark MacDonald refers to as the 'institutional church's captivity to the mindset of Western culture'.[1] This description by MacDonald aptly described the dilemma faced by the church of 1910 with its Christianisation model of the world that was made synonymous with the political goals of western civilization steeped in the world order of colonialists' power and policies.

Therefore, the Stockholm 1925 Life and Work conference had a minimalist perspective on the urgency of justice as a missiological imperative and its focus reflected the agenda of the political status quo. The Jerusalem World Mission Conference of 1928 did address the social relevance of the Kingdom of God by calling for a rejection of the worship of money as 'the religion of a capitalist society'. We begin to detect some tentative signs of the ecumenical movement identifying consensus around how biblical perspectives on the Kingdom of God oppose modern secularism and the global structures of exploitation in the economic system of colonialism.[2] The 1937 Oxford Conference on 'Church, Community and State' marked a shift when the church sought to re-enter into strategic partnership with the state and later found out the hard way how easily the church's mission to justice can be compromised – with the rise of the fascist totalitarian state. The global economic crisis of the 1930s ushered in fascism as a political order in parts of Europe that wreaked havoc on millions of lives through World War II. The Oxford Conference on 'Church, Community and State' argued for the church to become a servant of justice rather than the lord thereof.[3]

The church's identity is not under any obligation to uncritically support any political or economic ideology but should be critical of every economic exploitation and marginalization. This means that the churches should work towards a preferential option for workers who are treated unjustly.[4] The

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[1] Mark MacDonald, 'Our agenda, as we wake up': www.anglicanjournal.com/articles/our-agenda-as-we-wake-up#sthash.UYvYSSvo.dpuf (accessed 11th November 2015).

[2] Nicholas Lossky et al (eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement,* 2nd edition (Geneva: WCC, 2002).

[3] Joseph H. Oldham, *The Churches Survey Their Task: The Report of the Conference at Oxford, July 1937, on Church, Community and State* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1937).

[4] Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope (eds), *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices* (Geneva: WCC, 1997).

church is therefore expected to demonstrate its solidarity with people and contexts where justice is denied.

A New Ecumenical Era for Justice?

The founding of the World Council of Churches in 1948 brought with it a restoration of the church's missional responsibility to 'balance freedom, justice and the control of power'[5] that involves working for the emergence of a just and responsible society. The 1948 Assembly focused on what the mission of God means for human society and emphasized the gospel's realistic impact on the lives of people in concrete contexts of injustice. Reinhold Niebuhr, with his Christian Realism approach, was highly influential in the development of the WCC's social thought.[6] The religio-political fallout from the two world wars had exposed deficiencies in the two forms of political 'religions' that dominated the minds of the people at that time. One model focused on a kind of morally cynical worship of force, and the other on morally sentimental and utopian ideals that used revolutionary force to build a purely classless society. The Christian faith as practised by the church within the context of western colonialism was inconsistent at times in its attitude to structural injustices like slavery that oppressed vulnerable people. What they experienced was a Christian faith that was celebrated by western nations and a church that claimed to be morally and ethically superior to other civilizations and cultures, but which also embraced a political and economic system that was built on oppressing the labourers. Niebuhr argues that 'the first task of the Christian Church was to interpret the sorrows and distresses, agonies and pains, through which the world was passing, and recognize the hand of God in them, and to see beyond the crises because there was a divine judgment upon the sins that are travails of the nations'.[7]

The emerging WCC programme on justice therefore called for a return to Christianity that reflected the justice, peace and love of God in society instead of relying on secular idealism and its false promises.[8] Reliance on secular idealism, secular law and uncritical Christian legalism would not promote social justice; therefore, the missional church ought to work for the peace of nations by translating the revolutionary gospel of Jesus to speak to the diverse expressions of oppression.

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[5] Lossky et al, *Dictionary,* 556.
[6] Kinnamon and Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement,* 281.
[7] Kinnamon and Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement,* 280.
[8] Kinnamon and Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement,* 282.

The Responsible Society in a World Perspective

The WCC Amsterdam Assembly of 1948 had proposed 'Responsible Society' as a frame of action for the church's missional engagement in the world. The concept was regarded as 'a criterion by which [to] judge all existing social orders and at the same time a standard to guide [human beings] in the specific choices [they] have to make'.[9] By 'responsible society', it meant a society 'where freedom was the freedom of men [and women] who acknowledge responsibility for justice and public order and where those who hold political authority and economic power are responsible for its exercise, and the people whose welfare is affected by it'.[10]

'Responsible society' was postulated, not as an alternative social or political system, but as a criterion by which all existing social orders would be judged, and to influence the specific choices that are employed to make such judgments. However, the notion of 'Responsible society' was found to be ideologically biased to a western worldview of the world's economic (dis)order and justice which proved irrelevant to the situation in these newly independent countries in the global South, especially in Africa.[11] Yet the concept had some value as justice cannot exist where a few people abuse social and political power by denying the majority their socio-economic and political freedom. This report encouraged the exercise of justice at all levels of society: families, work places, young peoples' teams, tribal groups and associations, and Christian congregations.[12]

Christian Social Responsibility and the Programme to Combat Racism

The Second Assembly of the WCC, at Evanston in 1954, affirmed that Christian social responsibility was centred on the mighty acts of God, revealed in Jesus Christ as Lord, and that God created the world, and all time was embraced within his eternal purpose centred on justice and peace.[13] Everything about social justice ought to revolve around the lived experience of Jesus and his interaction with the human family and the rest of creation. His experiences have set an example that invites women and

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[9] Edward Duff, *The Social Thought of the World Council of Churches* (New York: Associate Press, 1956), 117.

[10] Kinnamon and Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement,* 283.

[11] Peter Lodberg, 'Justice and Peace in a World of Chaos', in John Briggs et al (eds), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement: Volume 3, 1968-2000* (Geneva: WCC, 2004), 323-43; Paul Abrecht, 'From Oxford to Vancouver: Lessons from Fifty Years of Ecumenical Work for Economic and Social Justice', in *The Ecumenical Review,* 40.2 (1988), 147-68.

[12] Kinnamon and Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement,* 284.

[13] Kinnamon and Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement*, 282.

men to live in life-giving and just relationships of promise and obedience to God's purpose in the world.

Racism has remained one of the most unjust humanly created instruments of oppression that has been used by imperial powers. The colonial governments had legitimized the enslavement of people where legalized racism provided cheap labour to strengthen their economy. Even after slavery was abolished in the British colonies in 1834, other forms of racism continued in other societies during the twentieth century. The WCC Evanston Assembly stated that 'any form of segregation based on race, color or ethnic origin is contrary to the gospel and is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of man [woman] and with the nature of the church of Christ' (WCC Evanston Assembly, 1954).[14]

Therefore, racism was identified as a grave issue of injustice. The move to create a Programme on Racism gained momentum from churches from the global South that pressured the 1968 Uppsala WCC Assembly to give programmatic priority to the elimination of institutional racism. The apartheid ideology of the minority white South African government made racism its official policy from 1948. Racial segregation and other issues of social injustice had also flourished in the countries of South America and the southern states of the United States of America that culminated in the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968. The Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) was therefore established in 1969 at the WCC Central Committee meeting at Canterbury, UK. In the 1970s and 1980s, the PCR played a highly visible and controversial role in mobilizing international debate and action against the white minority government of South Africa. Churches were called to support churches and groups in South Africa that worked towards overcoming apartheid to promote justice and peace.

A Post-Colonial Discourse on Justice

This chapter argues that it was the global decolonisation process that followed World War II, and the rise of different contextual theologies of liberation in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, that restored the centrality of justice to the missional mandate of the modern church and the ecumenical movement. The justice paradigm of Liberation Theology exposed the alliance of Euro-American imperial forces with western theological, ecclesial and missionary agenda that created military-backed regimes that unleashed suffering and death upon oppressed peoples. The different theologies of liberation achieved some success in contributing to the disempowering political systems of oppression. However, the much more entrenched control of the economy by unjust financial capitalistic

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[14] Baldwin Sjollema, 'The Archives of the World Council of Churches' Programme to Combat Racism': www.brill.com/sites/default/files/ftp/downloads/31985_Brochure.pdf (accessed 13th November 2015).

power systems remains an unfinished agenda in the cause of achieving global justice.

The contemporary ecumenical discourse on justice is constructed on the perspective that it is indivisible, not only as a matter of ethical and theological conviction, but in praxis that affirms 'the conviction that justice, peace and creation are bound together'.[15] The different programmatic expressions of the WCC such as *Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society* (JPSS), the conciliar process for *Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* (JPIC), the *Theology of Life* (TOL) and, most recently, *Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace* (PJP) have built on the insights of previous ecumenical discussions that challenge the churches to make sacrificial commitments to justice, peace and creation within their unique and changing social contextual landscapes.

Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society (JPSS)

The WCC's quest in the 1970s for a 'just, participatory and sustainable society' was a response to growing recognition of the persistence of poverty and misery and of ecological degradation threats. To a great extent, these issues were legacies from the underdevelopment policies of the colonial era that shaped many nations of the global South. Therefore, the WCC Nairobi Assembly in 1975 gave new emphases to justice issues linked with science and technology, militarism and disarmament, ecology and human survival, and the role of women in the church and society which were all part of the growing liberation theological paradigm. Philip Potter, the former WCC General Secretary, emerged as a key voice in the transition from the older colonial paradigm to a post-colonial ecumenical social thought paradigm.[16] The focus on justice issues mandated by the Nairobi Assembly was followed up by the Assemblies held in Vancouver in Canada in 1983 and Canberra in Australia in 1991. These Assemblies offered continuous advocacy for churches to define what it meant to be a missional church in the world by taking concrete action on the threats to life in the areas of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Other justice-focused programmes emerged, such as *Towards a Church of the Poor* and *Faith, Science and the Future*.[17] *Towards a Church of the Poor* was undertaken to produce documents to explore the relationships between the poor and the organized church in the medieval periods. The idea behind *Towards the Church of the Poor* was for the church to identify with the poor, to encourage preferential options for the poor, and to further

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[15] WCC, 'Justice, Peace and Creation': www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/jpc/hist-e.html (accessed 13th November 2015).

[16] Lewis Mudge, 'Ecumenical Social Thought', in John Briggs, Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Georges Tsetsis (eds), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 3, 1968-2000* (Geneva: WCC, 2004), 279-321, at 290.

[17] Mudge, 'Ecumenical Social Thought', 290.

identification and solidarity with the poor as means of promoting justice in the oppressive world.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

The ecumenical focus on justice expanded to include other emphases such as the promotion of human rights that included socio-economic and political rights. The 1983 Vancouver Assembly, for example, called for an interrelated study of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. This emphasis on the integrity of creation marked the beginning of an intentional focus within the ecumenical movement to address issues concerning environmental degradation and climate change caused by rogue human behaviour. In contexts of systemic injustice, the church's mission should resist and reject all socio-economic systems that contribute to the disintegration of life.

JPIC was therefore developed to engage WCC member-churches in a conciliar process of mutual commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation as a priority. JPIC was originally intended only for advocacy within the WCC member-churches but the Vancouver Assembly in 1983 extended the call to all non-member-churches because 'humanity is now living in the dark shadows of an arms race more intense and of systems of injustice more widespread than the world has ever known'.[18] The programme emphasized the need for churches to confess anew the Christian faith and repent of past silence in contexts of systemic oppression where the powers of death in racism, sexism, caste oppression, economic exploitation, militarism, violation of human rights, and the misuse of science and technology reign.

The WCC Seoul Convocation (1990) on JPIC focused on urgent questions of human survival and called for stronger conciliar fellowship in the ecumenical movement around shared moral principles. The convocation argued that, in the exercise of power, all human actions are ultimately accountable to God. However, the ecclesial diversity that exists in the ecumenical movement meant that the level of commitment to the 'conciliar process' varied, and some churches opted out of ecclesiological commitment which they were unprepared to make in the quest for justice and peace.

Militarism, Disarmament and Peace

Another important threat to life that robbed people of justice and human dignity throughout the twentieth century was the growing militarism

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[18] Preman Niles, 'Ecumenical Dictionary: Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation': www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/who/dictionary-article11.html (accessed 13th November 2015).

promoted by the global arms industry and the stark consequences of nuclear proliferation. Since the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948, the WCC has consistently stated that 'the part which war plays in our present international life is a sin against God and a degradation of man, while the discovery of atomic and other new weapons renders widespread and indiscriminate destruction inherent in the whole conduct of modern war'.[19]

This ecumenical focus on the threats posed by global militarism was raised again at the Second Assembly in Evanston in 1954 where the delegates stressed that 'the development of nuclear weapons makes this an age of fear. True peace cannot rest on fear'.[20] It could be argued that the voice of the ecumenical movement has served to drive the global movement for the development of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).[21] At the fourth WCC Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968, a report entitled 'Towards Justice and Peace in International Affairs' was adopted by the Assembly. It also adopted a statement on 'further steps' to avoid nuclear conflict. The sixth Assembly in Vancouver in 1983 condemned the production, deployment and use of nuclear weapons as 'a crime against humanity… The nuclear weapons issue is, in its import and threat to humanity, a question of Christian discipline and faithfulness to the Gospel'.[22] All the WCC Assemblies recognized the threat of militarism in destroying global peace and in spreading economic injustice and underdevelopment among the world's poor. Therefore the production, development and use of nuclear weapons were classified as a crime against humanity and must be condemned on ethical and theological grounds. At the WCC Harare Assembly in 1998 it was emphasized that the communities of faith must become 'agents of reconciliation and peace with justice in homes, churches and societies as well as in political, social and economic structures at the global level'.[23]

The International Peace Convocation held in Kingston, Jamaica, in 2011 called for the protection of the innocent in the face of injustice, war and violence, and advocated total nuclear disarmament and control of the proliferation of small arms around the world.[24] This message was reiterated

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[19] Peter Weiderud, 'The WCC concern for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation' (12th March 2005): https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/international-affairs/peace-and-disarmament/nuclear-weapons/the-wcc-concern-for-nuclear-disarmament-and-non-proliferation (accessed 13th November 2015).

[20] Weiderud, 'The WCC concern for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation'.

[21] For more information, see US Department of the State – Office of the Historian, 'Milestones: 1961-1968': https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/npt (accessed 11th November 2015).

[22] WCC, 'Statement on the Way of Just Peace' (8th November 2013): https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/adopted-documents-statements/the-way-of-just-peace (accessed 11th November 2015).

[23] WCC, 'Statement on the Way of Just Peace'.

[24] Mathews G. Chunakara, *Building Peace on Earth* (Geneva: WCC, 2013).

at the WCC Busan Assembly in 2013, set in the context of the ongoing Korean conflict and threat of nuclear war, and the gathering again called for nuclear weapons to be made illegal.

The Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women

Gender issues have been a challenge for the ecumenical movement because of the difference in the ecclesiological thinking of the member-churches of WCC. In spite of these challenges, the ecumenical movement has embraced the need to promote women's rights as a justice issue mandated by the gospel of Christ. Through collaboration with religious and civil societies partners around the world, a department on the co-operation between men and women in the Church and Society programme was established in 1954 and developed to become a programme desk of the WCC in 1974. Feminist theologians critiqued patriarchy and expressed anger at gender injustice against women, even within the ecumenical movement. In response, the WCC launched an ecumenical Decade of Solidarity with Women in 1988 which was concluded with a presentation at the eighth Assembly in Harare in 1998.[25] The programme was built on the United Nations Decade for Women from 1976 to 1975.

At the end of the Decade at the Harare Assembly in 1998, the delegates suggested four major themes as a means of promoting justice that would impact on women's lives in the world: a) Economic; b) Social Justice; c) Women's Participation in the Church; and d) Racism and Violence against Women. The Decade brought together various groups to reflect on the concerns of gender, justice and violence. These concerns were to: a) empower women to challenge oppressive structures; b) affirm the contribution of women in their churches and society; c) give visibility of their engagement in the struggle for peace, justice and integrity of creation; d) enable churches to free themselves from racism, sexism, classism and discrimination; and e) encourage church action in solidarity with women.[26] The Decade declared gender-based violence and sexism in the church as a sin and called for steps to be taken to achieve justice for women.

Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV): Church Seeking Reconciliation

The WCC Decade to Overcome Violence was launched in 2001 in Berlin, Germany, in response to the global context of pervasive violence that threatened all forms of life. The DOV called on churches to become 'aware

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[25] WCC, 'Together on the Way – *8.2. Response to the plenary on the Ecumenical Decade – Churches in Solidarity with Women*' (1999): www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/assembly/fprc2e-e.html (accessed 10th November 2015).

[26] WCC, 'Together on the Way'.

of the urgent need to overcome violence that has pervaded [human lives], the world, and the whole created order'. The programme was launched in response to peoples' 'deep yearning for the restoration of justice and building lasting peace grounded in justice'.[27]

Through these objectives, the WCC envisaged challenging churches and civil societies to work together in promoting justice and peace-building in the world. DOV, which ran from 2001 to 2010, focused on Peace in the Community, Peace with the Earth, Peace in the Market, and Peace among Peoples. The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation that was held in Kingston, Jamaica, in 2011 brought to an end the DOV with the recognition that peace could not be achieved in the world if there was no justice. Therefore a new methodological approach to justice and peace was launched that was synthesized as 'just peace'.

An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace

Since 2011, the WCC took a radical shift in the discussion on justice and peace to postulate for 'just peace' as a framework of analysis and criteria for ethical action. The call to just peace was received by the Central Committee meeting in Geneva in February 2011 to commence studying, reflection, collaboration and common action. This was a direct response to the recommendations of the WCC Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2006, and further developed the insights gleaned from the 'Decade to Overcome Violence, 2001-2010'. The call for just peace was therefore launched at the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) held in Kingston, Jamaica, in 2011. The focus on the work of just peace embraced four key areas of recognized threats to life on a global scale: in *the community* – so that all may live free from fear; with *the earth* – so that life is sustained; in *the market-place* – so that all may live with dignity; and among *the nations* – so that human lives are protected. Central to this call was the affirmation that there can be no peace anyway without justice; while the opposite is also true.[28]

The theme of the tenth assembly in Busan, South Korea, in 2013 also embraced the focus on justice and peace – 'God of life, lead us to justice and peace' – that gave birth to the current programmatic emphasis on *The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace* as an ecumenical praxis. The message of the tenth Assembly affirmed the churches' desire to move together. The WCC perceives the *Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace* as neither a journey towards a concrete geographical place nor merely an activist action, but a transformative journey in which God is the one who invites believers to begin anticipating the world that the Triune God unfolds by describing and

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[27] Simon Oxley, *Telling the Truth About ourselves and our World* (Geneva: WCC, 2009), 8.
[28] WCC, *Companion to Just Peace* (Geneva: WCC, 2011), 2.

re-describing the world in the context of ecology, economy, peace or human dignity.[29]

Ecumenical Chronicle Life, Justice, and Peace for All: A Call to Action

This programme was mainly based on issues that relate to economic justice. It is a call to action necessitated by people and the earth being in peril due to over-consumption of some growing inequalities as shown in the persistent poverty of many in contrast to the extravagant wealth of a few.[30] The WCC makes a case that the life of the global community would end if the sins of egotism, callous disregard and greed, which lie at the root of these crises, are not addressed. With a sense of urgency, this dialogue is brought to the churches as a call for action, born of a profound hope and belief that 'an economy of life is not only possible, it is in the making, and God's justice lies at its very foundation'.[31] This dialogue addresses the destructive economic variance between the global North and the global South because it fosters economic injustice. The focus on economic issues as an area for faith confession emerged during the 2004 ecumenical gathering at Accra, Ghana, that culminated in the adoption of the *Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth* process that outlined theological convictions that addressed the threats to life in the economic and environmental injustices of the contemporary global economy. Issues surrounding poverty, wealth and ecology, and the impact of economic globalization, became urgent agenda items for ecumenical reflection.

In the 2013 ecumenical focus on *Economy of Life for All Now: An Ecumenical Action Plan for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture,* the ecumenical community outlined action areas for churches in tackling public finance and debt, regulation of the financial sector, and global economic governance with the aim of realizing ethical, democratic, just and sustainable financial and economic systems.[32]

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[29] WCC, 'An Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace' (2014): www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/geneva-2014/an-invitation-to-the-pilgrimage-of-justice-and-peace (accessed 13th November 2015).
[30] WCC, 'Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All: A Call to Action' (2012): https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/neoliberal-paradigm/agape-call-for-action (accessed 13th November 2015).
[31] WCC, 'Economy of Life'.
[32] WCC, 'Economy of Life for All Now: An Ecumenical Action Plan for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture' (2014): www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/economy-of-life-for-all-now-an-ecumenical-action-plan-for-a-new-international-financial-and-economic-architecture (accessed 11th November 2015).

Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace:
An African Case Study of Ancestral Land Justice

This chapter concludes by using the important issue of land justice within the African context to highlight the urgency of addressing issues of injustice in the world. Displacement from ancestral lands continues to be a source of bitterness among many African ethnic groups. In the name of progress, many ethnic groups have been internally displaced from their ancestral land because of unjust political and economic motives. Places that most ethnic groups considered as sacred and sources of their well-being have been desacralized and destroyed. Many African people believe that the Supreme Being as the creator of the whole universe is intertwined with their ancestral land with fauna and flora and entrenched with the social, political and spiritual dimensions of their lives.[33] This brings a direct link with African spirituality since, like many indigenous peoples, African communities have set great importance on their relationship to their ancestral land. In this perspective, the land did not belong to any human being but people belong to the land, which is given by God.

Many conflicts during the period of colonialism, and even since the independence of African nations, are related to the theft of ancestral land. Land has therefore become a justice issue that has influenced the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, political leaders tend to pay very little attention to implementing these rights in most African nations. For example, a clear case of land injustice is present among the Himba people of Kaokoland in Namibia who have been struggling since European colonialism. This struggle continues with the Namibian government trying to erect a large dam for hydro-electric power at Epupa Falls which would mean displacing hundreds of Himba people, disrupting their traditional way of life, and infringing their traditional land rights.[34] The Himba people are a small ethnic group with a population of about 20,000. They argued that their rights have been downtrodden and that decisions about their future imposed on them by the Namibian government are unjust. There has been a clash between economic development of the 350 square kilometres of ancestral lands, that the government argues is in the national interest, and the just rights of the Himba people to their sacred grave sites and grazing lands, and to protect the land against massive ecological damage on water systems.[35] As Craig Matthew puts it in his documentary film *Ochre and Water*: 'For the Himba and in the words of the chief headman, Kapika, "The land is an absolute. If you take away this

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[33] Robert Hitchcock and Diana Vinding (eds), *Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Southern Africa* (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 2004).
[34] Hitchcock and Vinding, *Indigenous Peoples' Rights.*
[35] Terese Sveijer, 'Himba people's fight against Planned Construction of the Dam', in *Indigenous Affairs,* 3/4 (July-December 1997), 12-17.

land, then there is no longer a Himba.'"[36] The Himba people's just struggle for land rights represents an important part of the wider global struggle where land once owned by the local people has been corruptly transferred and expropriated by an unjust legal system and given to a wealthy minority elite, many of whom had no desire to develop the land.

The ecumenical programmes on *Together towards Life* and the *Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace* must therefore include the global struggle for land justice, especially in contexts such as the occupied land of Palestine and Irian Jaya (West Papua) where continuous land theft is denying people justice with fullness of life. The WCC support of indigenous people in ancestral land-related claims must therefore be treated as a spiritual and human rights issue because without it a dignified life is not possible. The call to the *Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*, with its missional affirmation through *Together towards Life* (*TTL*), is very relevant to indigenous peoples in their struggles to defend ancestral land rights. Accompanying them in their struggles will prove significant in journeying 'together towards life'.

Conclusion

Justice and peace have occupied pride of place within the ministry of the WCC since its inception in 1948. Issues of justice have centred on economic, political, gender and environmental justice. The road of justice is not an easy one as there are too many roadblocks and unspeakable dangers. The WCC has achieved some success in its global justice advocacy in spite of the many threats to life that are denying people and the wider creation fullness of life. The search to promote values and practices of justice and peace, and to work towards an inclusive community in which women and children, indigenous peoples, minorities, refugees and migrants, racially and ethnically oppressed peoples, can find unconditional love, security, respectability, equal opportunity and rights must never be surrendered to the unjust imperial systems of this world.

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[36] National GeoGraphic Traveller South Africa, 'Travel tactics for a changing world: smart traveller': www.fotolambro.com/HimbaTravels.pdf (accessed 13th November 2015).

MARGINS

Deenabandhu Manchala

> Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes"?' (Matthew 21:42 NIV).

'Mission from the Margins' is an approach that affirms exactly this vision of mission as one done, not from positions of power and privilege, but with empty hands, in resistance to powers, and in struggle for life with dignity and justice.

'Mission from the Margins' is the contribution of those who represented the experiences of the marginalized communities – anti-racism and Dalit movements, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and migrant workers, in the work of the WCC's Just and Inclusive Communities during 2006-2013. Presenting margins as the signpost for mission today, this chapter asserts the agency of the marginalized and their experience as authentic bases for mission, and then goes on to define mission as: i) struggle and resistance, ii) seeking justice and inclusivity, and iii) healing and wholeness. To put it differently, it focuses not on those on the margins but on those at the centre as the ones in need of healing and restoration.

This emphasis on the 'margins' marks a significant milestone in the ecumenical movement's consistent engagement with issues of life and people as the core of its vocation of fostering unity and mission. The enormous human suffering and divisions caused by two world wars, interspersed with genocides, famines, and the proliferation of various instruments and institutions of injustice that drew strength from certain cultures of domination and discrimination, dispossessing large sections of people around the world, inspired and influenced the ecumenical movement in the twentieth century.[1] Through the World Council of Churches, churches have participated in struggles against racism, apartheid and military dictatorships, and of the Australian Aborigines, the indigenous peoples of South and Central America, the Palestinians against occupation, people with disabilities, and similar issues. This has helped the churches to

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[1] In the WCC-led ecumenical initiatives, the concerns and issues of people from the global South, and of social justice, began to be more pronounced all the way from the WCC's Assembly in New Delhi in 1961. The 'Church and Society' conference in Geneva in 1966, the 'Towards the Church of the Poor' conference in Cyprus in 1978, the convocation on 'Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation' in Seoul in 1989, and the 'Ecclesiology and Ethics' study during the 1990s, were some of the major milestones along the way.

converge their visions and actions more intentionally towards an inclusive society.[2]

However, 'God's option for the poor', a theme that arose from the churches' engagement in contexts of intense poverty in Latin America, broke new ground.[3] By ascribing epistemological privilege to the poor and other subjugated voices, it inspired the creative surge of Liberation Theology. Simultaneously, similar theological formulations, such as Black Theology, African theologies, Feminist and womanist theologies, the Dalit and Minjung theologies and many others, arising out of people's struggles for life, began to challenge the dominant discourse, demanding change in the churches' self-understanding and their vocation.

Within the distinct missiological stream of the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism too, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* (1982) singled out the poor as the crucial criterion for testing the effectiveness of mission. It affirmed that the 'church's relation to the poor was not simply a question of social ethics; it was a matter of faithfulness to the gospel itself… Christ demonstrated that centrality by moving towards those who are on the margins – to the point of dying "outside the gate" (Heb. 13:12)… Such concern (for the poor) is not only a matter of speaking to the poor or for them, but of listening to their distinctive voices and standing with them against political and economic systems of oppressive inequity'.[4] Even as it held the poor as recipients of the gospel, it nevertheless affirmed their agency: 'Who but the church of the poor can preach with integrity to the poor of the world? In these ways we see the poor churches of the world as the bearers of mission.'[5] The preparations for the centenary celebrations of the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 2010 inspired fresh reflections on mission in a world that was radically different. It was recognized that the church was now a global reality, highly diverse and located predominantly in the global South. Engaging with hard questions and existential challenges brought by people from many parts of the world, it was able to affirm the collective experience of the marginalized as a foundation for mission.[6]

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[2] See Lukas Vischer, 'Major Trends in the Life of the Churches', in John Briggs, Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Georges Tsetsis (eds), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 3, 1968-2000* (Geneva: WCC, 2004).

[3] The two Latin American bishops' meetings in Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979) are considered to be watershed events. Gustavo Gutierrez and Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Muller*, On the Side of the Poor: the Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 39.

[4] Birgitta Larson and Emilio Castro, 'From Missions to Mission', in Briggs, Oduyoye and Tsetsis (eds), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement,* 128.

[5] Section 4 of the Statement. Quoted in Briggs, Oduyoye and Tsetsis (eds), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 3,* 128.

[6] It must said that some were suspicious as to whether the idea of mission from the margins was in response to the reality of the former recipients – the people and

While all along these different streams, the concerns of those treated unjustly remained on the agenda, and were referred to as 'the poor', what makes 'Mission from the Margins' distinctive is its emphasis on the agency of the marginalized and their visions as crucial for authentic mission in the world today. It underlines a new consciousness of Christian faith and vocation in an increasingly marginalized and marginalizing world.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is not to insist further on the agency of the margins but to point out what such a mission might mean for the churches as they affirm their participation in God's mission.

The Risk of Semantics

The statement uses the term 'margins' to suggest all those who are yearning for justice and for life with dignity. At the outset, it is necessary to recognize that the term 'margins' is prone to both misrepresentation and misinterpretation. First, 'margins' belongs to the language of the centre. It seems to hold people as objects or a category. By avoiding naming them as *people*, it takes the focus off the reasons why they are marginalized.[7] Further, it seems to suggest that in an essentially centripetal social dynamic, it is inevitable that some are on the margins for a variety of reasons. The privileges of being at the centre and the misfortunes of being on the margins thus become normative and inevitable, and so are the consequent responses. Secondly, it is an unfair categorization of all who are pushed to the sides for a variety of reasons. Those on the margins are not a homogeneous group, and there are many forces and factors that marginalize people. Most often, marginalized people are referred to, in the language of economics, as 'the poor'. Their condition of being poor is the result of many other marginalizing forces at work, and these manage to hide themselves under the cover of this broad categorization. Thirdly, 'margins' is a fluid concept. Not all those who experience marginalization follow the same trajectory as those who experience multiple or intense forms of marginalization. But the powerful few may claim marginal status whenever their power and prominence are in danger. Ironically, the powerless may be the majority but they remain on the margins. And lastly, there are 'margins' within 'margins', and so are the value orientations that sustain and legitimize marginalization among the marginalized. Each of these deserves

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churches in the South now as active agents of mission and evangelization in many parts of the world.

[7] 'These generalizations are produced by positions of control – (and) are indeed not just after-effects but direct manifestations of the power structures that repress these groups – and thus miss the reality of the people, hinder real options for the margins, and repress people even further': Joerg Rieger, 'Liberating God-Talk: Postcolonialism and the Challenge of the Margins', in Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner and Mayra Rivera (eds), *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire* (St Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004), 211.

recognition and response, but for them the category of 'margins' does not help.

Therefore, 'margins' is relative to perception and interpretation, and by provoking semantics one can hide the causes and dynamics of marginalization, the faces of the forces as well as of the victims.[8] The continued reference to 'Mission from the Margins' without this consciousness may valourize the marginalized, promote patronization, and in turn veil the causes of marginalization – the core of what this concept aims to address.

Unveiling the Veiled

Incidentally, those at the centre are constantly at work circulating certain myths to insist that marginalization is self-imposed, and that some are poor because they are lazy, not smart enough, or ontologically inferior, basically to deflect scrutiny of their own privileged positions. Unfortunately, traditional mission expressions are influenced by this perception of marginalized people as those to be pitied and helped rather than those who are sinned against.

A necessary first step, therefore, is to come to an awareness of the faces and names of those whom we refer to as inhabiting the margins. A cursory look at some of these would reveal the truth about the reasons for their marginalization. The hundreds and thousands of refugees of war from Africa, the Middle East, and many parts of the world, the Palestinians who are punished for their resistance to occupation, the African Americans who are pushed further to make space for white privilege, the aboriginal Australians and the First Nation people in the Americas whose faces are veiled to hide historical crimes, the children who are trafficked and are fleeing in order to escape the wars of the drug lords in Central America, women who are deprived of education and employment, and even the right to life, in many parts of the world, the Pacific Islanders who live on the brink of being submerged, the nearly 90,000 war widows in Sri Lanka, millions of rural and urban poor, forced migrant workers, child labourers, climate refugees, physically disabled people and people maimed in wars and land mines, and the nearly 250 million discriminated Dalits in South Asia. Indeed, the list is awfully endless. Besides these, there are hundreds and thousands of people in every society who are deliberately excluded from opportunities and participation so that those at the centre feel special and privileged in the face of mass deprivation.

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[8] This was exactly the risk that the draft of the new WCC mission statement *Together towards Life* ran into when it was first introduced at the Pre-Assembly gathering in Manila in 2012. The section on 'Mission from the Margins' provoked a lengthy, rather tiresome, debate on the meaning and location of the margins and the centre, suggesting that it is often unsettling to step outside the box, particularly when that step is towards the 'not-so-mainstream', and the 'not-so-glorious'.

Unmasking the Powers

Who then are these that push millions to the margins? Once again, these too are many: individuals and collectives, and institutions and structures that sustain themselves by making and ensuring that certain values and cultures are normative and acceptable. Foremost among these is the insatiable greed for power and wealth, which makes millions poor, hungry, homeless, dispossessed and dehumanized. What more can we say about this when it is acknowledged widely that a mere 2% own 90% of the world's wealth? People, communities, nations, and political and economic structures are in the grip of this collective egotistic disorder that seeks self-elevation by causing mass deprivation in order to feel powerful and invulnerable. Second is the role of certain cultures, anthropological theories and the concomitant values that ascribe status and privilege to a few by holding others to be inferior and expendable. Patriarchy, racism, casteism, ageism, ableism, and excessive and irresponsible assertion of identity are some of these, perpetuating the disenfranchisement and dehumanization of those who do not fit into the normative scheme of dominant powers. Third come some dominant religious traditions and institutions that lend support and legitimacy to the marginalizing forces. By constantly nurturing and accentuating the notion of 'the other', and 'the other' as hostile or inferior, these justify sometimes even ruthless expressions of discrimination and exclusion.[9] By legitimizing marginalization of others as a part of the divine scheme, these religious belief systems diminish whatever consciousness their adherents may have, and by holding that this world is an illusion and the best is yet to come, they anaesthetize their victims from revolting and asserting their rights.[10]

In sum, the forces that sanctify greed for wealth and power, the cultures and traditions that nurture domination and discrimination, and the religious and cultural resources that encourage the rejection and exploitation of 'the other' are those that cause and sustain marginalization. As such, 'Mission

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[9] 'Most world religions, including Christianity, while furthering their self-perpetuating missions, have played a major role in this process of 'othering'. Operating alongside nationalism, ethnicity, racism, patriarchy, and in my context casteism, religions have always encouraged people to nurture inflated self-understandings and detrimental understandings of those who do not belong to their fold. In fact, this common but often ignored trait of "othering" has been the source of most evils': Deenabandhu Manchala, 'Migration: An Opportunity for Broader and Deeper Ecumenism', in Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan (eds), *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 159.

[10] C.S. Song puts this succinctly: 'Faith and theology… have reduced believers to inactivity not only in matters of faith but also in relation to their social and political responsibilities. How easy it is, then, for them to become, on the one hand, objects of exploitation and, on the other, unconscious or unwilling collaborators of evil social and political forces!': C.S. Song, *Jesus, The Crucified People* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 209.

from the Margins' involves confronting cultures and systems, and transforming them through just and life-affirming alternatives. Unfortunately, these forces and cultures are also present and even rampant in many churches. An option such as this calls for introspection and transformation from within.

God's Mission with the Marginalized

It is in the light of this agenda of mission that we need to understand afresh the oft-repeated affirmation: 'God opts for the poor.' We may perhaps replace the term 'the poor' with 'marginalized people' and thus keep the focus on different forces and experiences of marginalization. First of all, God loves marginalized people not because they are innocent and pitiable but primarily because they are victims of the unbridled and insatiable greed of some for power and wealth. As Daniel Groody says, 'Christ came to live as a poor person not because poverty itself has any intrinsic value but to criticize and challenge those people and systems that oppress the poor and compromise their God-given dignity.'[11] In fact, the whole Biblical tradition itself is an account of God's continuous intrusion whenever life is abused, denied and destroyed to satiate this greed.

Secondly, Jesus embraces liberation of the oppressed as the core of his ministry and dares the powers by taking sides with the despised and discriminated people of his time, thus challenging religious and cultural traditions that deny rights and dignity to some – women, Gentiles, widows, lepers, people with disabilities and tax collectors. In other words, God's justice in Jesus Christ is a biased justice, neither neutral and universalistic, nor forensic, but biased towards the victims of cultures and traditions that keep people in bondage, both the victim and the aggressor alike. Therefore, he preaches repentance to the powerful and the privileged which, when they change, becomes good news to the poor.

Thirdly, in defiance of the norms and values that create and sustain hatred, fear and rejection of 'the other', Jesus chooses a counter-strategy of opting for the 'othered' people of his time. So much so that, against popular images of the Divine, we find, in Jesus, a victim God – betrayed, forsaken, tortured, killed, maimed, mocked and ridiculed – all experiences that those who have been pushed to and beyond the margins go through. 'From this social location he undermines all the world's categories, which deprecate and dehumanize, rejecting the idols which classify and segregate human beings based on social labels such as superior or inferior, rich or poor, worthy or unworthy. Instead, Jesus reveals the truth that all human beings have an essential, inalienable dignity given by God.'[12] The promise of

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[11] Daniel G. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 195.
[12] Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality and Justice,* 49.

fullness of life for all can be a reality only when some stop behaving as if their lives were more important and valuable than others.[13]

The Mission of the Marginalized

'Through their struggles in and for life, marginalized people are reservoirs of the active hope, collective resistance and perseverance that are needed to remain faithful to the promised reign of God,' says *TTL*.[14] The many movements and initiatives of marginalized people around the world today testify to their determination to resist and expose the forces that deprive them of their rights and dignity. Their struggles for economic justice, rights and self-determination, and against displacement and discrimination, present themselves as signs of a new social order. Further, they are not only exploding the myth of the manipulative centre but also articulating alternative visions arising from their resistance to injustice. They are also rejecting ideologies and identities imposed on them.[15] These movements may be fluid and vulnerable to various forces and dynamics; but through their struggles, they offer hope and alternative visions that reflect the goals of God's mission. Therefore, their resources of experience and perspective,[16] and strategies and struggles, are not merely subject-matter for theological reflection 'but are places where theories and ideas are produced'.[17] Traces of such counter-culture are present in the gospel

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[13] As Orlando Costas says that the 'call to conversion is not an invitation to soothe guilty consciences, to reinforce one's privileged status, and to give one strength to continue to be part of an oppressive social system. It is, rather, to turn from personal sins and from alliances with the oppressive structures of this world, to join the struggle of God's kingdom against the forces of evil, of injustice, exploitation and repression': Orlando E. Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984), 14.

[14] *TTL,* §39.

[15] For example, the worst victims of India's heinous caste system were called by many names over the centuries – untouchables, outcastes, fifth castes, depressed castes, low castes, Harijans, etc. But today they call themselves 'Dalits', meaning crushed, torn, crumpled and oppressed. With each assertion of their Dalit identity, they indict the dominant society for its cruelty and hold it responsible for their 'dalitness'. Such trends are seen among many subaltern and hitherto subjugated communities. Their new names and ideological movements also reject patronizing attitudes but solicit solidarity and participation.

[16] As *TTL,* §38 says: 'People on the margins have agency, and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view.'

[17] Rieger, 'Liberating God-Talk, 204. Rieger also shares another useful insight: 'Truth is that which has been pushed below the surface in specific situations… This sort of truth cannot be determined once and for all… but must be discovered time and again along the way… Truth thus conceived can only be perceived from the margins. It has to do with the underside of things… Truth needs to be sought – and can be found – in the tensions and conflicts of life… It might be said that truth – created in repression and thus full of pressure – harbours its own energy sources

tradition too, especially in the choices that Jesus and the first community made.[18]

Church in God's Mission with the Marginalized

'Mission from the margins', therefore, is guided by the vision of a world based on mutuality and interdependence. It hopes for a polity of justice and freedom which allows the space and possibility for all to celebrate God's gift of life. As such, it is neither about marginalizing those who have been at the centre nor about reducing the margins through superficial expressions of inclusion. However, calling churches to join this mission of God from the margins may imply that churches are at the centre. This is not true in most cases, even in the predominantly Christian West. In an increasingly diverse and secularized world, churches are increasingly finding themselves on the margins. How then do churches participate in God's mission in ways that are more in response to theological convictions rather than existential compulsions, and to the gospel call rather than to survival needs? The following possibilities may be considered as part of a reflection on the way forward.

First, when marginalization is the result of the irresponsible exercise of power, the churches' neutrality and subtle forms of glorification of power do not make them credible to be a part of this movement of God with marginalized people. Instead, churches need to follow Jesus who rejected all forms of hegemonic and dominating power but opted for models of power that nurture and affirm life and healing, 'Both injustice and violence have to do with assertions of power – power to dominate, intimidate, control, and exploit. The traces and glorification of such concepts of power are rampant in our social and ecclesial structures, ideologies, theologies, liturgies, and even in interpersonal and institutional dynamics.'[19] The option for 'Mission from the Margins', then, is an option to give up

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that reshape desire and instigate transformation.' Rieger, 'Liberating God-Talk, 217.

[18] Warren Carter in his *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005) makes interesting comparisons to prove margins as God's preferred site. He lists: instead of law, the synagogue tradition and imperial ideology, the community looks to Jesus and the prophets; instead of commitment to the emperor, commitment to the one crucified by the emperor; instead of *pax romana*, they opt for the hope of the Kingdom of God; no embracing but critiquing powers; no sustaining the order, but shaking up the order; power not to lord over but to serve; instead of hierarchical and patriarchal structures, they opt for an egalitarian and communitarian life; no violence but active resistance; and instead of wealth, sharing as a source of prosperity and life-giving.

[19] Deenabandhu Manchala, 'Theological Reflections on Pilgrimage', in *Ecumenical Review,* 66.2 (July 2014), 140.

privileges of power and to subject oneself to be scorned, scrutinized and trivialized like the marginalized.

Secondly, churches need to evolve themselves from being mere religious communities to being moral communities, upholding the values that sustain and celebrate life through their own being and actions. This implies overcoming the life-denying practices of sexism, racism, casteism, and different forms and expressions of discrimination and phobias both within and around, as part of their witness to being the signs of God's reign to come. In response to the reality of increasing plurality, the discourse on Christian unity is now annotated with the language of hospitality and inclusion. As those denied identity and taken advantage of by many devious expressions of unity and community, the marginalized are suspicious of such attempts. Therefore, there is need to deconstruct the terms 'hospitality' and 'inclusion' because the notions of power are implied in them. 'Hospitality involves guest and host… In this experience, the host has the power and prerogative to offer hospitality… the manner and extent of it are often based on the social identity and location of the guest…'[20] Likewise, inclusion too implies 'the notion of "*normative/norm*" and the binary notion of "insider/outsider" with the "insider inviting the outsider" into the normative space. Someone is choosing to include someone else! The fundamental question then is, who includes whom?'[21] Therefore, 'hospitality without justice is oppressive and dehumanizing. Similarly, inclusion without hospitality is nothing more than charity'.[22]

Thirdly, a just, open and inclusive world does not flow forth because of the church's preaching or missiological reflections. Those who enjoy power do not give it up and those who gain through injustice do not stop being unjust. Instead, this transformation begins with those who are marginalized and with those who are indignant about injustice. Churches need to be a part of this stream and, wherever possible, facilitate dialogue and partnership – among faith communities, and with movements and initiatives committed to this vision of the world. The report of a study on 'mission in the experience of the Dalits', holds that 'understanding mission as having a midwifery role has significant implications because primarily mission does not become the monopoly of ecclesiastical Christianity… Rather, understanding mission as creating the conditions for liberation

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[20] 'Hospitality, Inclusion and Justice: A theological reflection in response to old and new forms of discrimination and exclusion – a continuing conversation among the members of the Core Group of, and others related to, the WCC programme on Just and Inclusive Communities': WCC Consultation, Nagpur, India, December 10-14, 2009:
www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/theological-reflection-in-response-to-old-and-new-forms-of-discrimination (accessed 6th July 2015).
[21] 'Hospitality, Inclusion and Justice'.
[22] 'Hospitality, Inclusion and Justice'.

helps us to understand mission as a process which opens itself to further the liberative agendas of other organizations, groups and bodies which may have their base outside the church but yet are involved in the issues of justice'.[23] Therefore, the unity that the church seeks is for the mission of bringing all things and people together, irrespective of the conditions and restrictions that society imposes.[24]

Fourthly, it calls for an engagement with theologies of life, theologies emerging out of struggles against injustice, discrimination and oppression. These theologies alone can liberate the churches to break free of the tendency to maintain neutral positions and refuse to legitimize the perpetuation of unjust and oppressive structures and forces. Joerg Rieger advocates: 'Theology that develops resistance to the powers of exclusion may help to develop new models that prove useful in restructuring not only the process of theological reflection but also the church and, ultimately, even society at large.'[25] The credibility of the churches' witness today, therefore, depends on their ability to re-anchor themselves in the theologies and system of knowledge arising out of multi-religious contexts and in contexts of people's struggles for life, justice and dignity. On the other hand, affirmation of faith in the God of life cannot remain mere verbal activity confined to liturgy and theological articulations in the context of concrete historic struggles of people for life. When poverty and injustice are a creation of irresponsible assertion by oppressive powers, leading to the denial of life for many, then exposing, resisting and transforming all forces that create such conditions is an essential form of Christian obedience. Whether churches with all their institutional interests and power structures have the courage and inclination to join this pilgrimage of life of the poor, is a moot question. The challenge here is the reluctance to let go of burdensome structures, archaic systems of knowledge, and often

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[23] Deenabandhu Manchala, Joseph Prabhakar Dayam and Peniel Rajkumar, 'When Margins Inform and Reform Mission: Dalit Experiences as Foundations for Mission Theology', in Emma Wildwood and Peniel Rajkumar (eds), *Foundation for Mission,* Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series, Vol. XIII (Oxford, Regnum: 2013), 41.

[24] Further, the 'Global Platform for Theological Reflection 2010 Unity and Mission Today: Voices and Visions from the Margins', a conference held at Bucharest, Romania, from 4 to 10 October 2010, found that 'Mission is an activity in the struggle for life, and to that extent, mission could also be re-conceived as enabling everybody to participate in the discovery of one's own and our collective humanity. The marginalized people become the agents of mission and unity': www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/global-platform-for-theological-reflection-2010 (accessed 6th July 2015).

[25] Joerg Rieger, *God and the Excluded* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 3.

redundant theological formulations, and to open oneself to the margins in order to listen to what God is saying and asking the churches to do.[26]

In conclusion, the mission of God with the marginalized today implies setting aside seemingly endless prescriptions on mission and getting engaged in the life-world of marginalized people, among whom God is present in their sighs and clamour for life and justice. 'After all, the church belongs to a faith tradition that is built around the memory of the one who defied the power and glory of the contemporary political and religious establishments, and proposed life-affirming alternatives by commending the act of a widow who gave only two small copper coins as greater than those who gave huge sums; applauding the prayer of the scorned tax collector as more acceptable than that of the glorified Pharisee; valuing the faith of the despised gentile more than that of his own centuries-old religious tradition; defying the protocols and traditions of rituals and propriety for the sake of the healing the sick; and teaching his disciples that to have and wield power is to be a servant, and even goes to extent of being one by washing their feet on the night before he was killed. In fact, much of the biblical tradition is driven by this counter-culture, unveiling to us the locale of God's presence and power among the Last, the Lost and the Least. These for Jesus are God's VIPs and his partners, and so should they be for the church too!'[27]

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[26] Jürgen Moltmann challenges: 'Every theology which claims to be Christian must come to terms with Jesus' cry on the cross… In the face of Jesus' death-cry to God, theology becomes impossible or becomes possible only as specifically Christian theology. Christian theology… must come to terms with the cry of the wretched for God and for freedom out of the depths of the sufferings of this age. Sharing in the sufferings of this time, Christian theology is truly contemporary theology': *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (New York, Evanston, San Francisco and London: Harper & Row, 1973), 153.

[27] See Deenabandhu Manchala, 'Relocating Theological Education in a Marginalized Context', Bangalore: Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College, 2015.

ENVIRONMENT

Ernst M. Conradie

Introduction

The relatedness of the three terms included in the title of this contribution is nowadays widely accepted in missiological circles. Since Edinburgh (1910) Christian mission can only be undertaken ecumenically, although this does not necessarily reflect missionary praxis. At least since Vancouver (1983) and Seoul (1990), it is widely acknowledged in ecumenical circles that mission includes an environmental dimension. Likewise, ecumenical fellowship is situated in a particular social and environmental context – given the etymological connections between the 'whole inhabited world' (*oikoumene*), ecology (the underlying logic of the household) and economy (the rules for housekeeping) on the basis of the Greek root *oikos* (household).

However, the relationships between these terms remain contested since each may be used as an umbrella concept that includes the others. Is mission not one dimension of the ecumenical movement, alongside the quest for unity, faith and order, social responsibility, education and worship?[1] Or does the ecumenical movement itself form part of God's mission? Or is Christianity one religious tradition alongside others so that the whole Christian tradition forms part of the emergence of symbolic consciousness (alongside culture, music and science) within the human species, which forms part of the evolution of life within the environment of the earth as a planet in a vast universe? Or does the creation and evolutionary history of the universe form part of the mission of the Triune God? In each case, these questions reveal theological differences and power relations.

In this contribution I will address such questions through a brief survey of crucial insights that emerged within the history of the modern ecumenical movement in general, and in Christian eco-theology in particular. I need to admit that this survey is tendentious and offers only one version of a story (situated mainly in reformed literature emerging from within the South African context) that can only be properly reconstructed through ecumenical participation, and therefore has to be corrected by other contributions within this volume.

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[1] For a recent discussion of 23 notions of ecumenicity, see Ernst M. Conradie (ed), *Notions and Forms of Ecumenicity: South African Perspectives* (Stellenbosch, RSA: Sun Press, 2013).

The structure of this essay was conceived while sitting at Cape Maclear, Lake Malawi, with an injured leg, not able to go for a swim. This is a place of incredible beauty and tranquillity, where the tension between affluent tourists and poor villagers, a stone's throw away, is all too obvious. While the legacy of (foreign) mission is equally obvious, the natural beauty is deeply contaminated by deforestation, over-fishing and localised over-population, not to mention political conflict over scarce resources.

The Agents of Mission Revisited

In classic rhetoric, four core questions have to be addressed: Who says what to whom with what intended effect? In missiological terms these questions become: Who sends whom to whom with what agenda?[2] In the modern ecumenical movement these questions have been answered in diverging ways with many twists and turns, given diverging soteriological, cultural (and economic), ecclesiastical and developmental notions of mission. I suggest that this may help us to understand how environmental concerns have come to be included in missionary agendas, or inversely, how 'mission' became a dimension of environmental concerns.

In classic (Nicene) ecumenical theology, it was assumed that it is God the Father who sends the Holy Spirit to do God's work of creation, salvation and consummation on the basis of what Jesus Christ has done 'for us and our salvation'. The Spirit is commissioned by the Father and thus 'proceeds' from the Father. Note that the work of the Creator Spirit, the 'Giver of Life', includes participation in the Triune God's work of creation (*creatio*) so that it would be incorrect to say that the Spirit is sent to creation (*creatura*), 'the world', the earth or the land. Mission is situated within the whole work of God (*oikounomia tou Theou*), which is an even broader category than God's mission.[3] The work of salvation takes place 'through the prophets' by providing the means of salvation (including the inspiration of the Scriptures) and by using the church as an instrument so that the formation, edification (through word and sacrament), fellowship, ministries and missions of the church forms part of the mission of the Spirit. In Nicene missiology, the movement of the Spirit is towards the consummation of all things through the resurrection of the dead and the 'life of the world to come'.

In ecumenical missiology, this pneumatological understanding of mission is captured in *Together towards Life* (2013)*, alongside the Christological focus of *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical*

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[2] See also Ernst M. Conradie, 'Creation at the Heart of Mission', in *Missionalia,* 38:3 (2010), 380-96.

[3] See Steve de Gruchy, 'Agency, Sin and Grace: Protestant Reflections on Mission and Creation', in Lukas Vischer (ed), *Witnessing in the Midst of a Suffering Creation: A Challenge for the Mission of the Church* (Geneva: WCC, 2007), 97-114 (111).

Affirmation (1982). However, it took more than a century of controversy to arrive at such ecumenical consensus. In what follows I will reconstruct a brief narrative of this process.[4]

In the nineteenth century, mission was understood primarily as the activities of various para-church agencies operating in a cross-cultural context to proclaim the gospel, to convert the heathen (and to save their souls from damnation), to plant churches and to establish Christianity in non-western contexts. Given denominational equivalents to the colonial 'scramble for Africa' (and colonial resources elsewhere), mission gradually morphed to become the activities of various denominations (no longer of para-church organisations) operating in cross-cultural contexts to proclaim the gospel, to win converts (or proselytes) and to establish new congregations that would strengthen a particular confessional tradition. It was soon realised that this required the self-governance, the still elusive self-sustenance, and self-extension of so-called daughter churches. On this basis, the insight gradually dawned that mission was primarily the mission of the church, that mission was ecclesial, church-centred. Conversely, the sending church itself came to be understood in missionary (or better, missional) terms, prompting a missionary ecclesiology (Karl Barth). The conclusion was that the church was missionary by its very nature, that it was inappropriate to speak about church *and* mission, that the church was the one that is sent, not the one that is sending. This insight could not hide abiding tensions between so-called mother and daughter churches, but by the Whitby conference of 1947 a new formula was endorsed that mission described a partnership or churches to proclaim the gospel together in six continents. In *Together towards Life* (Busan 2013), this insight was radicalised to speak of mission *from* the margins, not only *to* the margins. Nevertheless, in some Evangelical and Pentecostal circles (e.g. by Donald McGavran), church growth was still being regarded, well beyond the 1980s, as the very goal of mission.

This ecclesiocentric understanding of mission was radicalised and subsequently undermined by the retrieval of a more classic understanding of mission as being God's mission (*missio Dei*). The focus shifted from a mission-centred church to the belief that the church and its missions (plural) form part of *missio Dei.* There is a church because there is mission. Mission is thus understood in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity and not soteriology or ecclesiology. The emphasis on God's mission should be understood within the context of a Barthian critique of religion and of Christianity in particular. This was the lasting response of dialectic theology to the legitimacy crisis experienced in western Christianity following the two world wars. The criterion against which the moral

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[4] I am drawing here especially from the magisterial overview offered by David J. Bosch in *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 368-93.

bankruptcy of western culture and Christianity alike is measured is God's mission, not ours.

Such insights led to two important shifts that each decentralised the role of the church in God's mission:

First, God's mission is not primarily to the church but to the world in order to establish God's reign. The church cannot be equated with God's reign. The church is therefore nothing but an instrument used by the Spirit in the coming of God's reign. Given the waning influence of the church in so-called secular societies, some concluded that the church is only one such instrument and perhaps not even the most important one used by God. If King Cyrus could be hailed as the servant of Yahweh, the Spirit may also use other instruments, including progressive organisations, development agencies, technological innovations and so forth. This suggests the radical *in*significance of the church. In the Dutch theology of the apostolate (Arnold van Ruler and J.C. Hoekendijk), a dynamic notion of the church as participating in the movement of the Spirit was proposed. The church was even described as a 'sociological impossibility' since any institutionalisation would tend to hamper this movement. It would be to fossilise the movement of a bird in flight. In the ecumenical climate of the 1960s and 1970s, with a widespread loss of confidence in the institutional church, it seemed that inside the church there was no salvation! It was still possible to describe mission as God's work but this was then understood as a rich, metaphorical re-description of the human quest for well-being or of progressive notions of social responsibility.

Secondly, the locus where the Spirit is believed to be at work shifted with this 'turn to the world', the orientation of the church towards the world, that coincided with the turning of the world away from the church.[5] For some, the Spirit works primarily in the institutional church and its governance structures in order to establish a visible sign of God's reign in the world. Others place the emphasis on the church as an organism, and thus on the vocations of the laity in the world, but then outside the church as an institution. For yet others, the world becomes the primary locus of the Spirit's mission. The church is perhaps the only organisation that does not exist for its own sake, but for the sake of its non-members. The church need not gather the whole world into itself as a haven of salvation but exists through its mission for the sake of the world. One is not human in order to become a Christian; one becomes a Christian in order to become human (again). The goal of mission is understood as humanisation, not as Christianisation. Culture is not subservient to the gospel; the gospel is necessary so that human cultures can flourish. Moreover, the world provides the agenda in this regard. The church only exists as a church *for* others (Dietrich Bonhoeffer), it is best understood as a servant church

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[5] See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, Volume IV.3.1: The Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), 18-38 (37).

(Avery Dulles), and since the church cannot claim that it knows what is best for others, perhaps as a church *with* others (Theo Sundermeier). The gospel is not an aim in itself but is there for the sake of the well-being of the world (Arnold van Ruler).

Willie Jonker, an eminent twentieth-century South African reformed theologian, puts it aptly: 'At the very moment when the world turned away from the Church and the illusion of the so-called corpus Christianum fell away, the Church became free for a new awareness of its mission and its calling to be a witness in the world.'[6] This suggests a tendency to relativise the church: 'The Spirit is not restricted to the church but is operative in the whole world to accomplish the salvation that is intended for the world, and in some sense is already present in the world.'[7] The church is therefore not absolutely necessary for the salvation of the world, but the world is absolutely necessary for the existence of the church. Accordingly, mission is best associated with the social agenda of churches situated in civil society in various local contexts, for example in terms of proclaiming the 'social gospel', caring for the needy, engaging in 'charity', 'development', social and economic justice, peace-making and perhaps earthkeeping.

This turn to the world prompted a further pendulum shift in which it is nowadays widely recognised that the church is not merely an instrument of the Holy Spirit but also a sign, symbol and sacrament of God's coming reign (Melbourne 1980). It may be a fragile and not a triumphalist sign, a sign of the cross, but it is not as insignificant as secularised interpretations of God's mission seem to suggest. The conversion of the church is needed but the gospel provides the agenda for such transformation. There is a distinction between the community we are and the one we long for. The blurring of the boundaries between church and world is neither in the interest of the church nor of the world. The church's mode of being in the world is being different from the rest of the world. The world needs to be challenged by the radical demands of the gospel. The church, and Christian theology, can only be relevant only within the wider world as long as it sticks to its own cause. The mode of belonging to the world is through antithesis. The church is always provisional, the firstfruits of the coming harvest, an experimental garden, an alternative community (David Bosch), an eschatological community (Jürgen Moltmann). It has sociological but also theological qualities so that the church cannot be equated with any other organisation or voluntary association.[8] There needs to be a creative tension between the realisation of God's reign on earth and the role of the

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[6] See W.D. Jonker, 'Turning to the World: On Karl Barth's Interpretation of the Modern Era', in Johan Mouton and Bernard C. Lategan (eds), *The Relevance of Theology in the 1990s* (Pretoria, RSA: HSRC, 1994), 535-48 (539).

[7] Jonker, 'Turning to the World', 543.

[8] See John W. de Gruchy, 'Christian community', in John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (eds), *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives* (Cape Town, RSA: David Philip, 1994), 125-38.

church as a pointer to that.[9] These insights prompt ongoing reflections on the place of the church in the whole household of God[10] – which is widely acknowledged to extend far beyond the institutional church and, indeed, has cosmic dimensions.

Views on the World

The turn to the world that was evident in ecumenical theology in the 1960s pre-empted and acted as a bridge between traditional church-centred theologies and twentieth-century contextual theologies. One may suggest that the term 'world' was still open to interpretation, so that some theologies focused on the human psyche (habits of the heart), family life and sexuality, while others focused on cultural issues such as indigenisation, civil religion, consumerism or the impact of technology. Yet others became concerned with the relationship between theology and the arts, literature, philosophy or with dialogue with other religious traditions. Some became immersed in the political economy, while yet others focused on the bio-physical environment. One also needs to recognise the burgeoning interest in the entire cosmos that is evident in current discourse on science and theology. In each case, this 'turn to the world' is evident.

There is no need to play off a theological interest in the personal, the social, the cultural, the religious, the biophysical and the scientific against each other. All the better contributions recognise the need for a multi-dimensional approach even though the relationships between these spheres are construed in diverging ways. It is also not surprising that this 'turn to the world' was eventually captured under umbrella terms such as contextual theology or public theology. What these approaches have in common is a resistance to ecclesiocentric theologies, a sense of ecumenicity that is wider than a concern over church unity and a multi-dimensional notion of mission that encompasses but also extends well beyond ecclesial missions.

My sense is that this 'turn to the world' set the parameters for subsequent debates on the relationship between mission, ecumenical fellowship and the environment. Diverging interpretations of the turn to the world remain possible, if only because of different cosmological views of the world or socially constructed worldviews. Nevertheless, this 'turn to the

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[9] See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 381.

[10] See Ernst M. Conradie, 'The whole household of God (*oikos*): Some ecclesiological perspectives: Part 1 & 2', in *Scriptura,* 94 (2007), 1-28. See also the forthcoming volume edited by Clive W. Ayre and Ernst M. Conradie, *The Church in God's Household: Protestant Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ecology* (submitted to Cluster Publications, 2015). This volume places the church within a missiological framework and explores the ecological significance of various dimensions of mission in chapters on *leitourgia*, *kerygma*, *diakonia*, *koinonia*, *martyria* and *ecclesia*.

world' influenced all subsequent debates on God's mission, ranging from self-secularising theologies to a Barthian universalism, from understanding the world as a process (following Whitehead, Cobb and others) to the panentheistic views that are now common in indigenous theologies, eco-theologies and in discourse on science and theology alike.

Shifts in Environmental Concerns

The emergence of Christian eco-theology followed in the wake of this turn to the world. Although environmental concerns may be traced back to the early history of Christianity and is inspired, for example, by the medieval examples of Hildegard of Bingen and Francis of Assisi, self-conscious and overt forms of eco-theology emerged only in the 1960s with early exponents such as Hendrikus Berkhof, Thomas Berry, John Cobb, Paul Santmire and Joseph Sittler, most of whom were also deeply involved in the ecumenical movement. It is not possible to offer a brief history of subsequent developments in eco-theology here. Instead, one may point to shifts in the way in which environmental challenges have been understood in secular discourse since the first global environmental conference that was held in Stockholm in 1972. I suggest that the following twists and turns, each symbolised by a particular landmark conference or report, may be identified.

Before the 1970s, environmental discourse had focused mainly on issues around nature conservation and preservation, i.e. the protection of pristine areas from commercial agriculture, mining, industry and urban development. The famous *Limits to Growth* report to the Club of Rome (1972) signalled an emerging concern over population growth (when there were less than 4 billion humans on earth, compared with the current 7.3 billion). Besides issues around food production, the concern was over non-renewable resources, including fossil fuels and minerals. This concern gradually shifted to debates on the sustainable use of renewable resources, signalled by the Brundtland report on *Our Common Future* (1987). The focus on the carrying capacity of the land was prompted by concerns over fresh water, deforestation, the erosion of topsoil, plummeting fish stocks and a rapid loss of biodiversity. While early debates had centred on the sustainability of economic growth, efficiency and the need for sustainable development, later debates had shifted to the very notion of sustainability. The question was not only how long the use of non-renewable resources could be sustained or how it could be sustained (technologically), but what it was that had to be sustained, i.e. what such scarce resources were to be used for. While some focused on the need for sustainable livelihoods, others critiqued the perceived need to sustain expanding consumerist lifestyles, industrialised capitalism or even western forms of civilisation.

The Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 signalled a shifting emphasis towards the victims of environmental destruction, including the

human victims. This had been prompted by the loss of species but also by the social ecology movement, the animal welfare, animal rights and animal liberation movements, and by a wide range of indigenous, eco-feminist and social justice movements that were concerned over the plight of refugees, the victims of climate change, exposure to toxic waste (associated with environmental racism), the plight of farm workers, factory workers and mine workers, and by the adverse environmental conditions to which the poor and marginalised, especially women and children, were exposed. The argument was that the daily problems experienced by the poor were of an environmental and not merely an economic nature. The focus therefore shifted to the interplay between economic inequalities, violent forms of conflict and environmental destruction (also captured in the ecumenical call for 'Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation') and the role of ideological distortions around gender, race and class associated with environmental injustices.

The further shifts in environmental discourse are best understood in terms of climate change and therefore with understanding the environment as being indeed a truly global concern. The focus was no longer on nature conservation, limited resources or on carrying capacity but on the absorption capacity of the biosphere – to absorb the waste products of industrialised societies, especially carbon dioxide but also municipal, toxic and nuclear waste. The UN protocol adopted at Kyoto in 1997 signalled a recognition of the need for a political solution to a problem on which there was already sufficient scientific consensus at that time, a consensus that obtained higher levels of probability with each subsequent report released by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Although mustering sufficient political will remain elusive, it seems that the technological means are already available to address climate change, while the economic costs have been calculated to be quite feasible as, for example, the *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change* (2006) suggests. Although the task is gigantic, it can be captured in one sentence, namely, to transform the energy basis of the entire global economy from an over-reliance on fossil fuels to sustainable alternatives within the period between 1990 and 2050, of which the first two decades were the most important.

Two further shifts were signalled by the Conference of the Parties held at Copenhagen (COP 15, 2009) and COP 21 held in Paris (2015). The inability at Copenhagen to reach an agreement that would limit an increase in average global surface temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels suggested that the problem was not merely political, economic or technological but that it be understood in terms of limits to the kind of rapid social change on a voluntary basis that was required.[11]

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[11] The different forms of limits involved (limited resources, limited absorption capacity and limits to social change) were analysed by Larry Rasmussen in a

Societies can and do change, but the scale of the required change and the relatively long time frame seemed to pose intractable problems. This prompted an interest in theories of, and mechanisms for, social change. What if trusted strategies such as education, marketing, punishment (through self-imposed taxes), policy-making, social engineering, management, calls for responsibility and prophetic warnings all fail to deliver the required change promptly enough?[12] Clearly, such social change is necessary in order to muster political will and for change to be effective.

It is too early to comment on the significance of the Conference of the Parties held in Paris in November 2015, but it was remarkable to observe the apocalyptic language used in preparatory documents and statements released prior to the conference. As many suggest, this might have been our 'last chance' to prevent catastrophic climate change by the end of the 21st century through international policy. There is much debate on irreversible environmental thresholds that will have apocalyptic consequences if and when they are transgressed. Ironically, such apocalyptic language is pre-empted in millennial expectations and in post-apocalyptic literature and films alike. Indeed, what if it is already too late? How would that shape our understanding of God's mission and God's loving care for creation?

Anticipated Further Shifts in Thinking about Mission, Environment and Ecumenism

It is fair to say that Christian discourse on the environment largely mirrors the shifts in secular environmental discourse as sketched above. This is true even though in some Christian circles the focus remains on issues around nature conservation and the environmental stewardship of land, while others are concerned over environmental justice or climate justice.[13] Even if there is an emerging consensus that earthkeeping forms a dimension of mission, there are diverging views on what such mission entails, given shifting views on 'the environment' – views that are influenced more by secular than by theological considerations.

This correlation between secular and Christian discourse on the environment may be partly due to the quite significant ecumenical participation in environmental movements. This would be entirely

brilliant early article entitled, 'The future isn't what it used to be: 'Limits to growth' and Christian ethics', in *Lutheran Quarterly,* 27 (1975), 101-11.
[12] See Ernst M. Conradie, 'Contemporary Challenges to Christian Ecotheology: Some Reflections on the State of the Debate after Five Decades', in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa,* 147 (2013), 106-123.
[13] There is a huge corpus of Christian literature on the highly contested notion of environmental stewardship. For a critique of this notion and a survey of different rationales for Christian earthkeeping, see Ernst M. Conradie, *Christianity and Earthkeeping: In Search of an Inspiring Vision* (Stellenbosch, RSA: Sun Press, 2011).

appropriate, given the need for collaboration between governments, business, industry and civil society alike. Within civil society (which is a highly contested terrain) there is an obvious need for co-operation between the full array of social movements and organisations, especially amongst religious traditions, to protect our common home. There is a welcome, quite widespread, recognition that climate change, for example, is not merely a technological, political or economic problem. It is a moral issue since those who contribute very little to the problem will suffer the consequences disproportionally. This is reiterated in concerns over climate justice and in calls for differentiated responsibilities, adaptation and technological transfer. Moreover, there is an emerging recognition that climate change is also a spiritual problem. If one knows what to do and how to do it, and has the means, but still finds oneself unable to muster the necessary moral energy, will, leadership and imagination to do so, all this points towards a spiritual and not merely a moral problem. This is recognised in many statements by religious leaders, most recently in Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si* (June 2015).[14]

However, there is another side to this spirit of collaboration. This is prompted by debates on the *Christian* roots of environmental degradation. This is supported by a) the correlation between historic carbon emissions and those countries where Christianity was influential by the advent of the industrial revolution, b) the tacit ideological legitimation of neo-liberal capitalism and consumerist aspirations in many Christian contexts, and c) the popularity of preaching the prosperity gospel in so-called developing economies. If industrial capitalism did not simply result from the spirit of Protestantism (Max Weber), one may argue that Christians were not quick enough to warn about its side-effects (including the plight of impoverished workers), or to resist the ideological tendencies (e.g. consumerism) that legitimised and incentivised economic activities causing environmental destruction.

If that is taken into account, it seems that Christians and therefore also the ecumenical movement could contribute something quite particular to global efforts to address environmental challenges that no other organisation or movement can. To fail do so in the name of a spirit of collaboration would be irresponsible. What is that particular contribution that only Christians can make? My impression is that this question is seldom addressed and often underplayed. Where it is addressed, this is typically done in the form of retrieving ecological wisdom from the symbols embedded within particular confessional traditions, liturgies and spiritualities. Given Christian complicity in the root causes of environmental destruction, one would wonder whether a confession of guilt

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[14] See also the document produced by the Climate Change Committee of the South African Council of Churches, entitled *Climate Change – A challenge to the churches in South Africa* (Marshalltown, RSA: SACC, 2009).

and not only a confession of faith may not be more appropriate.[15] This may well revolutionise dialogue with other religious traditions – for example, if the Muslim victims of rising sea levels in Bangladesh were taken as the cue for such a confession.

There is more at stake though and this comes more closely to the heart of the ecumenical movement itself, given the deep denominational and theological divisions within the larger Christian tradition. While Christians in some contexts contribute disproportionately to carbon emissions, Christians in other contexts are or will increasingly become the victims of climate change. Given the way in which political power blocks tend to protect their own interests in negotiations on climate change, it is sad to note that ecumenical fellowship between churches and Christians living in such countries are unable to bridge such divides through common witness, a quest for justice and peace-making. One may imagine what a difference common public witness across such political divides could make to the legitimacy of protecting national interests at any Conference of the Parties. Clearly, the quality of fellowship between churches provides a test case for the credibility of their witness to the mission of the Triune God in the world. This is the inexorable crux where the interplay between God's mission, ecumenical fellowship and environmental challenges will be at stake in the next few decades.

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[15] See Ernst M. Conradie, 'Confessing Guilt in the Context of Climate Change: Some South African Perspectives', in *Scriptura,* 103 (2010), 134-52.

GENDER

Lilian C. Siwila

Introduction

This chapter examines the contours of women's experiences and contributions to mission work by tracing how they negotiated the gender challenges that they faced throughout their work. According to Predelli and Muller, much of the literature on women and their work in mission organisations suggest that women were talked about as the 'other or totally neglected'.[1] This is despite their immense contribution to Christian mission. In the general global discourse on the value of women's involvement in Christian mission, many have been classified as assistants or helpers who worked alongside men to support the men, but never as the leaders of the community because of socialised gender-perception and ecclesial endorsement of men being the preferred leaders.[2] The work done by the men set the standard for what was classified as missionary work. Within an ecclesial environment where women were deemed not to be qualified to enter the ordained ministry because it was reserved for the males, the classification of work done by the women was seen as social work and was not regarded as mission but service to the community.[3] In response to these perceptions concerning women's involvement in mission work, this chapter uses ecumenical perspectives of partnership in mission as demonstrated in the London Missionary Society (LMS) work in Zambia to interrogate ways in which men and women understood gender dimensions in mission work. The chapter also challenges some of the ambivalences in the understanding of gender in relation to mission that have been reflected during this period. It concludes by postulating a gendered approach to mission calling and service that affirms the contributions of men and women.

Gender Division of Labour in Mission Stations

Ideas about gender dynamics among western missionaries played a critical role in organising work and giving meaning to their mission projects in the

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[1] Line Nyhagen Predelli and Jon Muller, 'Piety and Patriarchy: Contested Gender Regimes in Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Mission', in M.T. Huber and Nancy C. Lutkehaus (eds), *Gendered Mission: Women and Men in Missionary Discourses and Practice* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 67-112.

[2] Predelli and Muller, 'Piety and Patriarchy'.

[3] Predelli and Muller, 'Piety and Patriarchy'.

global South. Mission organisations like the LMS within Zambia held a conservative view on women's involvement in mission activities. Due to the patriarchal nature and construct of most of the Protestant mission organisations, mission work took on ambiguous and ambivalent gender perspectives that allowed male missionaries to emphasise their supremacy over women missionaries. Predelli and Muller state that Protestant missions have not been simply patriarchal but male-dominant in the form of organisational control.[4] Despite these challenges, male missionaries also realised that they needed to rely on the service of women in some of the mission activities.[5] This resulted in a gendered division of labour in the administration of mission work. Services such as teaching, nursing, and training women in housewifery and domestic work were regarded as women's work and consequently classified as a lower priority and lower paid mission work.[6] Within the division of labour practised in the mission stations of western missionaries, evangelism and preaching were accorded a high priority and were viewed as men's mission work.[7] Despite this perception, Hill and Hunter argue that mission has been historically viewed as a women's cause because women missionaries were seen to be suitable to work with native women since they had more freedom and opportunities for contact with native women than male missionaries.[8] In Escobar's memory of women in mission, he presents a detailed account of scholars who have expressed the value and contribution of women to mission work and their contribution to missionary literature.[9] It could be argued that in most cases this literature was used to confine women to specific roles such as literacy, hygiene, homecraft and other types of domestic work.

Another factor that affected gender division of labour in mission stations was the idea of hiring and evaluating personnel according to an objective standard. Rita Smith Kipp argues that women who made themselves available for mission work were sometimes hired to 'act as men' when it came to professional matters. However, their lack of access to theological education or the privilege of ordination meant that many women were classified as lay missionaries and therefore came to their professions without formal theological training. They relied on experiences which did

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[4] Predelli and Muller, 'Piety and Patriarchy', 68.
[5] Predelli and Muller, 'Piety and Patriarchy', 68.
[6] Predelli and Muller, 'Piety and Patriarchy', 68.
[7] Predelli and Muller, 'Piety and Patriarchy', 68.
[8] See also Jane Hunter, *Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn of the Century in China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984). Also Patricia Hill, *The World their Household: The American Women's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation 1870-1920* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995).
[9] Samuel J. Escobar, 'Mission Studies – Past, Present and Future', in Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (eds.), *Landmark Essays in Mission and World Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), 244-63.

not fully prepare them for the work ahead.[10] Commenting further on this bureaucratic mode of hiring, Kipp identified this kind of approach as a contributing factor to the way in which male missionaries from the West underestimated the competence of their female colleagues in the mission field. The persistence of gender stereotypes which was driven by these factors was also motivated by missions' bureaucratic structures.[11]

Hierarchical bureaucracy, associated with patriarchy and gendered as male, was embraced by churches that engaged in mission in the global South. In order to address this setback, there was need for gender mainstreaming of these bureaucratic organisations that controlled mission work. The gendered nature of bureaucracy meant that men controlled the decision-making of the organisations on behalf of women. This caused resistance among some women missionaries who had an alternative vision of gender justice in mission understanding and practice. This was evident in the work of Mabel Shaw whose work at the Girls' Boarding School in Mbereshi, Zambia, encountered a number of bureaucratic challenges from the LMS.[12] Although her work ethic was ridiculed as arrogant and feminine, Shaw's reaction was in response to the bureaucratic male leadership within the LMS that seemed to downgrade the concept of mutuality and partnership in mission.

In order for questions about gender relationships in mission within the African context to be effectively interrogated, it is important to also examine the relationship that emerged between missionaries and the different groups of people with whom they interacted at their mission stations and the wider society in which they were located, such as the native people, owners of capital, and their workers, politicians and the judiciary. This kind of gender perception was consistent with the dominant cultural worldviews of the western political landscape that informed and shaped the governance model of their mission stations within the global South. Colonial policies within Zambia focused on setting control between the colonizer and the colonised which were embedded in gender constructs. This is because gender inequalities were also reflected in colonial discourses.[13] Therefore, the presence of western-founded mission stations within Zambia as exhibited in the work of the LMS was coloured by

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[10] Rita Smith Kipp, 'Why Can't a Woman be More like a Man? Bureaucratic Contractions in the Dutch Missionary Society', in Huber and Lutkehaus, *Gendered Mission*, 145-77, at 146.

[11] Kipp, 'Why Can't a Woman be More like a Man?', 146.

[12] Sean Morrow. '"No Girl Leaves School Unmarried": Mabel Shaw and the Education of Girls at Mbereshi, Northern Rhodesia, 1915-1940', in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 19.4 (1986), 601-35.

[13] The work of Huber and Lutkehaus (eds), *Gendered Mission*, provides a detailed account of this debate. Most of the authors in this volume have demonstrated in detail a gendered analysis on the relationship between the mission field and the missionaries who worked in these mission fields.

cultural, race and class prejudices that informed the embedded patriarchy within the system of governance. It could be argued that western missionaries within Zambian society embodied patriarchal ideologies that kept women in positions of servitude. Therefore, as missionaries engaged in working particularly with African women, an embedded patriarchal construct shaped the agenda of the mission station and grossly restricted efforts for mutual partnership between men and women and a need for a holistic, gendered approach to mission. Despite all these gender ambivalences within the London Mission Society's missional understanding and practice, especially within the African context of Zambia, they emerged as a pro-active western Protestant mission organisation that promoted the autonomy of women in developing mission projects that served the needs and interests of native women.

One transformational example is expressed through the work of the female missionaries at the Mabel Shaw Girls' Mission School which was expressly dedicated to the care of women missionaries.[14] Shaw, who was the founder of the school, proposed that the school be administered by single women missionaries whom she thought did not have the same opportunities as their male counterparts did to work in the mission field abroad. The call for an all-inclusive mission was also the emphasis of the LMS during the period of sending its missionaries to the mission field in Africa. Although many missionaries were condemned for not being all-inclusive in their mission work, to some extent they still maintained the call for all humanity to go into the world and preach the gospel. Phiri argues that the concept of mutual sharing should reject the imperialistic tendency to expect the sharing to be one-sided. This is based on the assumption that only certain people in the partnership have something to share.[15] The theology of partnership in the mission project should be seen beyond gender. Mission work done in the sharing of the common project would go beyond gender, race and culture boundaries in an effort to serve life.

Decade of the Churches on Women and Mission

Having presented an overview of the gender dynamics that shaped western missional attitudes and practice towards women who served within the context of the global South, attention will be given next to examining the phenomenon as expressed within one mission station within Zambia. The next area of interrogation between mission and gender gives attention to the period of the 'Churches in Solidarity with Women' which was born out of a need to focus on women's issues within the ecumenical agenda of the

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[14] Morrow, 'No Girl Leaves School Unmarried'.

[15] Isabel Apawo, 'Partnership in Mission: A Critical Appraisal of the Partnership of Women and Men', in Desmond van der Water (ed), *Postcolonial Mission: Power and Partnership in World Christianity* (Upland, CA: Sopher Press, 2010), 61-77.

church and wider society. This chapter argues that a gendered perspective on the *Ecumenical Decade on Churches in Solidarity with Women* challenged the ecumenical movement to find non-patriarchal ways of reading women's missional contribution into the history of the church. Despite the invaluable contribution of women's involvement in mission work, it has not been adequately recognised and recorded in the history of world mission.[16] According to Heider-Rottwilm:

> The decision by WCC central committee in 1987 to declare the Decade was based on the recognition that the much-vaunted community between men and women would remain an illusion so long as we failed to identify and combat factors disrupting and dividing the community… By deciding on the Ecumenical Decade, the churches co-operating in the WCC committed leadership, which is largely male-dominated, to work towards eliminating such relationships of violence.[17]

This focus by the WCC signalled that systemic imbalance in recognition of women's missional contribution in the church could only be addressed, not by mere exhortation but through intentional corrective efforts. Throughout the Decade, a number of suggestions on how the churches through their predominantly male leadership could address issues that negatively affect women's missional contribution were made. A major concern raised in the WCC project was the need for the full participation of women in the decision-making of the church at all levels. Progress on the work towards solidarity with women was discussed in most of the WCC Assemblies during this period. Llewellyn, reflecting on the WCC's emphasis on the *Ecumenical Decade on Churches in Solidarity with Women*, argued that the core issue faced by the churches was that of revisiting their unenlightened position on the role of women within the church.[18] The author warned that if, at the end of the Decade, there was no real life-giving difference experienced by women, then the church's very being would have been seriously ruptured.[19] Using a gendered framework on mission and the church, it becomes imperative to continuously challenge the church to revisit its contribution to the call for churches to be in solidarity with women.

The Ecumenical Decade should be seen as one way in which the ecumenical body has attempted to encourage gender advocacy in mission. As an initiative that aimed at bringing the concerns of women onto the ecumenical agenda, the Decade also became a period in which the church

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[16] See Escobar, 'Mission Studies – Past, Present and Future'.

[17] Antje Heider-Rottwilm, 'Violence Against Women: A Challenge to the Churches' Solidarity', in *The Ecumenical Review, Churches in Solidarity with Women: A Mid-Decade Assessment*, 46.2 (April 1994), 172-77, at 173.

[18] Hallett Llewellyn, 'The Ecumenical Decade: A Gift to the Churches?', in *The Ecumenical Review, Churches in Solidarity with Women: A Mid-Decade Assessment,* 46.2 (April 1994), 186-90.

[19] Llewellyn, 'The Ecumenical Decade: A Gift to the Churches?', 186-90.

had to reflect on the ways in which it had progressed in its response to issues affecting women. Llewellyn calls it a period of 'a new walking with women where repeated acts of forgiveness and creative repentance would flow'[20] from the patriarchal structures of the church that have hindered women's full participation in the mission of the church. The *Ecumenical Decade on Churches in Solidarity with Women* agenda called for a gendered missional journey that turned 'pyramids to circles'[21] where all God's people gathered round the table as partners of equals in the ministry of the gospel. This meant placing much more emphasis on shared leadership, decision-making and the training of women to take up leadership roles, and for men to intentionally let go and make space for women to equally share their gifts in leading the church and her mission. In this way, women would then be capable of participating in the leadership roles of the church. Heider-Rottwilm cautions that the ecumenical decade was not a decade for women but a decade for the churches to be in solidarity with women.[22] The statement must be understood in line with accountability on the side of the church. The Decade was supposed to be a time for the church to rediscover and use its prophetic voice to advocate the full participation of women in the work of the church and find other gender-affirming ways of being church that is all-inclusive. It was also a period to remind the church of the need to repent and to be reconciled with women for the sin of negligence in upholding women's roles in the ministry and mission of the church.

One of the main hindrances to gendered mission that keeps women from being adequately recognised for missional contributions within the church and wider society is the issue of sexism that has been used as a phenomenon to exclude women from full participation. Philip Potter, a former WCC general secretary, argued that:

> Neither men nor women will become truly human unless this disease of sexism is diagnosed and cured. It will be one world of women and men together or no world at all. And we are still a world in state of becoming. Sexism, like racism, is sin. Only in Christ can we become renewed to be authentic human beings as men and women.[23]

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[20] Llewellyn, 'The Ecumenical Decade: A Gift to the Churches?'

[21] In most of her writing, Letty Russell placed much emphasis on the round-table theory when addressing issues of gender. As a feminist, she believed that, unless both men and women are brought to the round table, issues of hierarchy will always hinder the call for a partnership of equals between men and women. In her work on women in mission, Russell used the framework of 'African Women Theologians – The Circle' to emphasise the need for mutual partnership in mission. See also Letty M. Russell, 'God, Gold, Glory and Gender: A Postcolonial View of Mission', in *International Review of Mission*, 93.368 (January 2004), 39-49.

[22] Heider-Rottwilm, 'Violence Against Women', 117.

[23] Philip Potter, *Sexism in the 1970s: Discrimination Against Women: A Report of the WCC Consultation* (Geneva: WCC, 1975), 33.

Sexism has therefore been a longstanding enemy to mainstreaming gender in church and society through the use of sexist language, symbols and approaches in presenting the mission of the church. Sexism has also portrayed women as the weaker sex, with the intention of reflecting the 'who' they are as women and not 'what' they are as human beings created in the image of God. One of the aims of this *Ecumenical Decade on Churches in Solidarity with Women* was to call for shared partnership in mission. Therefore the challenge posed by sexism should be central to the gender discourse of the mission agenda. This would entail focusing on different forms of gender-based violence that manifested themselves through sexism. Within church circles, violence against women has in many cases worked as a hindrance to a gendered missional approach. The mere fact that women are sometimes excluded from full participation, even in the ministry of the Eucharist due to their gender, is a form of violence which challenges gender equality. Policies that sometimes govern the mission of the church also incorporate strong sexist language that excludes women from leadership positions in the church. Instead of bringing together men and women in partnership in mission, sexism has in many ways become a reaction to the effective and life-giving mission work of the church.

Together towards Life:
A Theology of Partnership of Men and Women in Mission

This chapter adopts the concept of *Together towards Life* by focusing on one of the themes which is 'Mission from the Margins'. The contemporary involvement of women in mission demonstrates pro-active methods in neutralising the negative legacy of the past. Women are responding with life-affirming alternative strategies to challenges that threaten their participation in the church's ministry and mission. They pose new questions that relate to the post-modern context that bear witness to the enslaving and prostituting relationship that has evolved between the global socio-economic system and the dominant religious context that shapes the church's missional identity and witness. Keum states that the changing landscape of church and mission provides an opportunity for fresh thinking and new forms of action that involves a change of emphasis from partnership towards mission to 'Together towards Life'.[24] This new and changing landscape must also factor into its changing dynamics, the role that gender must play if the missional objective of seeking for fullness of life is to be realised. According to *Together towards Life*:

> Mission has been understood as a movement taking place from the centre to the periphery, and from the privileged to the marginalised of society. Now people at the margins are claiming their key role as agents of mission and

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[24] *TTL*, 43.

affirming mission as transformation. This reversal of roles in the envisioning of mission has strong biblical foundations because God chose 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.[25]

The document confirmed that it is the poor that lived on the margins of their society and women are the majority of those that are deemed poor. There is a correlation with this socio-economic phenomenon and the reality that it has always been women and the poor who did not have an opportunity for full participation in the mission of the church because they became the object rather than the subject of mission. According to Russell, in the development of the modern missionary movement, the gospel message was combined with the patriarchal, imperialist and social legacy of the Greco-Roman empire that gave the church of the global North unchecked powers to introduce mission that had imperialistic ideology in the nineteenth century.[26] This however should no longer be the case because of the socio-political and economic trends that are changing the landscape of global Christianity. Christianity is no longer thought of as a product from the North to the South and 'crossing oceans to heathen lands'. Rather, the contemporary era has embraced 'mission from everywhere to everywhere' and involves home-based commitment to all humanity, including women. The current approach to mission begins with the heart of God and love for all humanity and creation. This means building communities of men and women working together towards serving life which includes all God's creation. *TTL* is therefore about the church becoming the communion of Christ's disciples and an inclusive community that exists to bring healing and reconciliation to the world.[27] This communion is commissioned to invite those on the margins to come into the centre so that the church becomes a communion of believers working towards a common project.[28]

Lastly, reflecting on the concept of gender and mission during this period, I can also conclude that gender issues need to be understood within the framework of power relations. Mission during the twentieth-century era was carried along by power relations more than a relationship between men and women. This was seen in power dynamics between and among mission projects, power between the North and the South, and power between the elite and those in the lower class within the mission field. Therefore a call for a theology of partnership of equals today will require an investigation on how the church has in the 21st century defined power dynamics between men and women. To what extent has the call for 'Together towards Life' been viewed through gender lens?

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[25] *TTL,* §6.
[26] Russell, 'God, Gold, Glory and Gender'.
[27] *TTL,* §7
[28] Phiri, 'Partnership in Mission', 61-77.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to analyse the concept of gender and its relationship with how the church expressed its ministry and mission. It examined the way in which gender discourses played themselves out at different times and in different contexts during the twentieth century. The chapter has found that issues of gender took on ambivalent stances. The ambivalences in gender discourses also affected the way in which mission work progressed. In conclusion, if the mission work of the churches is to be effective in the contemporary era then there is need to address gender issues that disadvantage the participation of women. The 21st-century concept of mission is about a call for partnership that goes beyond gender, class, race and other social constructs that affect the dialogue on gender equality. Partnership in mission in a post-colonial period entails the understanding that all humans are called to be missionaries in their context. Finally, gender and mission should challenge the church to create a new awareness of the increasing diversities in discussions of gender, and learn to celebrate difference with an emphasis on unity in diversity.

MIGRATION

Gemma Tulud Cruz

The Migration Landscape

Mobility is as old as the human species. In fact, it is regarded as an engine of human history. Borders have been re-drawn, people's stories have been rewritten, and identities and subjectivities have been transformed, because individuals, groups or masses of people took the risk to cross borders by land, sea or air.

The twentieth century saw large movements of people across borders for various reasons. European colonial expansion which extended into the first half of the twentieth century involved the movement of peoples from three continents – from the more or less sixty-one million Europeans, including missionaries, who moved to the settlement colonies, to the thousands of people from the colonies who moved or were forced to move e.g. as slaves. The social upheavals brought by the two world wars, meanwhile, led to a considerable movement of refugees and asylum seekers.

The second half of the twentieth century saw the rise of particular types and waves of migration. There was the guest worker who came under a temporary permit system aimed at the importation of temporary contract labourers. France and Germany ran such programmes in the 1960s and 1970s, importing labourers largely from Algeria and Turkey respectively. About the same time a parallel pattern was seen in the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries which imported cheap unskilled labour from south and south-east Asian. This movement of workers intensified globally in the 1980s when the world economy rapidly evolved new forms of integration. Women also became more visible as independent migrants at this time. Last but not least, the end of the twentieth century saw the increase of clandestine or unauthorised movements of people, particularly unskilled workers, refugees and asylum seekers, a phenomenon which took on unprecedented proportions in the 21st century, not only in volume but also in the often tragic nature of these movements, as destination countries instituted more stringent and more restrictive immigration policies.[1]

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[1] For a more substantive historical discussion of the migration of groups mentioned in this section, see Gemma Tulud Cruz, *Toward a Theology of Migration: Social Justice and Religious Experience* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Nevertheless, the 21st century has been called 'the age of migration'[2] mainly because there are more people on the move in the world today than ever before. A July 2014 UN report notes that, globally, there were 232 million international migrants.[3] More disturbingly, a June 2014 UN refugee agency reports that there were now 51.2 million refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced people worldwide, the highest since World War II.[4] Today, about 3% of the world's population are migrants. While the percentage may seem minuscule, it actually represents a lot of people. In fact, if all migrants in the world were to come together to constitute a country, theirs would be the world's fifth most populous.

Shifts in Missiological Approaches

Christian mission's close link with migration is not a new phenomenon. The most extensive missionary movement in Christianity's history, for example, corresponded with one of the great migrations in human history, namely, European expansion, especially between 1800 and 1925. Theological reflection on the close relationship between migration and mission, however, were not common until fairly recently.[5] This is due in part to the fact that it is also only fairly recently that migration has started to be considered as *locus theologicus*.[6] One of the earlier notable documents that address Christian mission in the context of migration is

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[2] See Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World,* 4th edition (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[3] See 'International Migration and Development Report', Report of the Secretary General at the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 20th July 2014: www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/207 (accessed 10th June 2015).

[4] UNCHR, 'World Refugee Day: Global forced displacement tops 50 million for first time since post-World War II era': www.unhcr.org/53a155bc6.html (accessed 15th June 2015).

[5] See Gioacchino Campese CS, 'Mission and Migration', in Stephen Bevans (ed), *A Century of Catholic Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 247-60, for an example. Note also recent journals entirely devoted to mission and migration. E.g. *Exchange: Journal of Missiological and Ecumenical Research,* 43.1 (2014) which focused on the topic 'Christian Communities Facing Migration'; and *Mission Studies,* 32.2 (2015) where five out of six articles come from the 'Migration, Religion, and Identity' study group conducted at the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS) conference, Toronto, 2012.

[6] One of the earliest explicit theological treatments may be found in Carmen Lussi, 'Human Mobility as a Theological Consideration', in Solange Lefebvre and Luis Carlos Susin (eds), *Migration in a Global World*, Concilium 2008/5 (London: SCM, 2008), 50. For an instructive survey on the emergence of migration as *locus theologicus,* see Gioacchino Campese CS, 'The Irruption of Migrants: Theology of Migration in the 21st Century', in *Theological Studies,* 73 (2012), 3-32.

Exsul Familia (1952), which is considered as the Catholic Church's *Magna Carta* on migration. The World Council of Churches document that came out of the 1995 global ecumenical consultation in Ethiopia on the churches' response to the forced displacement of peoples is particularly noteworthy as it covers a wide range of missiological issues and responses in relation to people on the move.[7]

As in the past century, the challenges and gifts associated with the plight of people on the move in contemporary times, almost half of whom are Christians,[8] constitute an important context for Christian mission. Within the churches' missiological responses to uprooted people one can discern some shifts to which this essay now turns.[9]

From Religious to Pastoral

From time immemorial, Christian churches understood and practised mission in the context of people on the move primarily in terms of tending to migrants' religious needs. In colonial times many missionaries came, or were sent, to take care of the religious needs of compatriots on the move such as soldiers, merchants and their families. While mission among migrants continues to be animated by this vision and approach, other more personal, psycho-social and ethnic needs of migrants slowly took on equal (sometimes greater) importance as more people moved in groups and in greater numbers, and settled in ethnic enclaves. Since the 1920s, every Ukrainian community in Saskatchewan, Canada, has had the so-called Ukrainian National House which is actually a church and a hall where people can get together. Today, these churches, whether Orthodox or Catholic, remain a source of well-being, security and meaning. They also serve as a conduit into Ukrainian heritage and a bridge across generations.[10]

For many migrants, however, the church is not just the principal site of celebration for ethnic identity and community. It is also their refuge in times of crisis and their home when they want to shout for joy. Not surprisingly, and more especially so in the 21st century when there is greater recognition and more opportunity for the exercise of cultural rights, roles for the clergy would tend to be more service-oriented, or strongly informed and guided by practical needs. In traditional societies, where most migrants originate, the clergy are usually experts in religious rituals and scriptures. In the context of contemporary migration, however, members of

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[7] See Sara Stephens, *The Prophetic Mission of Churches in Response to Forced Displacement of People: A Global Ecumenical Consultation* (Geneva: WCC, 1996).
[8] Todd Johnson and Gina Bellofatto, 'Migration, Religious Diasporas and Religious Diversity', in *Mission Studies,* 29 (2012), 8-9.
[9] 'Shift' is used here not in terms of 'either-or' but 'both-and'; in other words, in terms of a fluid continuum.
[10] Janet Mancini Billson*, Keepers of the Culture: The Power of Tradition in Women's Lives* (New York: Lexington Books, 1995), 345, 368.

the clergy are sought for various kinds of help, particularly those that are normally defined as pastoral work. Witness, therefore, has now become strongly associated with '*with*ness', while mission as 'accompaniment' is more strongly practised.

Jacqueline Maria Hagan, for example, notes the increasing practice of migration counselling among ministries in the western highlands of Guatemala for prospective migrants. Services sought by migrants from their priests or pastors range from group prayer (with the migrants and their families and, sometimes, with church members) before setting off by foot towards the Mexican border, or asking their priest or pastor to meet with their *coyote*[11] to determine whether the guide is honest or a scoundrel.[12] Many Christian groups themselves become a direct part of the migrants' actual journey.[13] In the context of the Americas, these include the Scalabrinians, a Catholic religious congregation, who operate a network of migrant shelters along the US-Mexico and Mexico-Guatemala borders that provides spiritual, religious and practical support for unauthorized migrants in transit. There is also the group called Samaritan Patrol, a coalition of Quakers, Jews, Methodists, Catholics and Presbyterians, which has volunteers that roam the desert in jeeps and vans, from daybreak to nightfall, to offer water to migrants in distress.[14]

From Charity to Justice

The churches have undoubtedly long been involved in missionary work among people on the move. The biblical command to the Israelites to love the stranger, as they were also strangers in Egypt (Deuteronomy 10:19) enshrines the missionary task of every Christian to care for migrants. Up until the last quarter of the twentieth century, the missionary work that the churches have done among migrants was arguably largely confined to charity or charitable services. In the US, for example, national ecclesiastical structures in the Catholic Church ministering to new immigrants or refugees began only in 1920 when the National Catholic Welfare Conference established a Department of Immigration after the World War

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[11] A *coyote* is a guide who takes migrants across international borders in exchange for money.

[12] Jacqueline Maria Hagan, *Migration Miracle: Faith, Hope and Meaning on the Undocumented Journey* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 2.

[13] See Jacqueline Maria Hagan, 'The Church vs the State: Borders, Migrants, and Human Rights', 96-101 and Cecilia Menjivar, 'Serving Christ in the Borderlands: Faith Workers Respond to Border Violence', in Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (ed), *Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 110-15.

[14] Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *God's Heart Has No Borders: How Religious Activists Are Working for Immigrant Rights* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 141-43.

I. The US Bishops' Migration and Refugee Services itself was established only in 1965.[15]

Around the last quarter of the twentieth century, when assimilationist discourses gave way to the idea of integration and destination, countries increasingly became more restrictive in their immigration policies resulting in dangerous clandestine journeys by migrants, while pastoral work for migrants also started to evolve more strongly from largely addressing the effects by providing economic, physical and psychological assistance, to targeting the causes, including those of a more political nature.[16] As Elizabeth Ferris noted on the heels of post-Cold War conflicts that led to the widespread forced displacement of people, 'Increasingly the Churches are called to become more active in addressing the causes of uprooting of people'.[17] Thus, in addition to ecclesiastical structures and organizations serving migrants and refugees, what are known today as FBOs (faith-based organizations) increasingly took on important missionary roles in the context of migration. Anglican priest and theologian Susanna Snyder, for example, looks at the FBOs that deal with asylum seekers in the UK and proposes three strengths that these religious bodies have to offer – namely, transcendent motivation, organisational nature and strategies, and resource mobilisation.[18]

This evolution of the understanding of the churches' mission to people on the move also had implications for the idea of hospitality as a critical biblical missionary call and challenge in the context of migration. More specifically, the understanding and practice of hospitality shifted towards what Christine Pohl regards as subversive hospitality[19] or what Evangelical

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[15] Angelyn Dries, OSF, 'Catholic Mission in North America 1910-2010', in Bevans, *A Century of Catholic Mission*, 59.

[16] This could be seen in the presentations in the above-mentioned global ecumenical consultation in Ethiopia in 1995. Two years earlier, a similar event sponsored by the WCC was held by the churches in Asia. See conference proceedings in Christian Conference of Asia, *Uprooted People in Asia: Conference on Migrant Workers, Refugees and Internally-Displaced Communities in Asia. Hong Kong, 22-26 November 1993* (Hong Kong: Christian Conference of Asia, 1995).

[17] Elizabeth Ferris, 'Crisis Situations, Humanitarian Assistance, Preventive Measures and Churches' Response', in Matthews George Chunakara (ed), *Rights of Internally Displaced People: Asian Churches' Response* (Hong Kong: Christian Conference of Asia, 2000), 37.

[18] See Susanna Snyder, *Asylum-Seeking, Migration and Church* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012). See also Alexia Salvatierra and Peter Heltzel, *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013); and Erin Wilson, 'Much to be Proud of, Much to be Done: Faith-Based Organizations and the Politics of Asylum in Australia', in *Journal of Refugee Studies,* 24.3 (2011), 548-64.

[19] See Christine D. Pohl, 'Responding to Strangers: Insights from the Christian Tradition', in *Studies in Christian Ethics,* 19.1 (2006), 82. A more substantive

Lutheran church pastor the Rev. Alexia Salvatierra calls 'prophetic hospitality'.[20] To be sure, the massive, global, and sometimes tragic,[21] nature of human mobility towards the end of the twentieth century – and, even more, in the current century – has compelled the churches to move beyond charity to justice.

For Mary Jo Leddy, a Canadian who is widely recognized for her work with refugees in Toronto, Christian missionary work from the perspective of justice in the context of migration requires and begins with conversion – the change of mind and heart and moral imagination – through an encounter and personal relationship with a refugee. Leddy posits that this ethical moment – that is, the encounter with a migrant or refugee – is the moment when we are 'summoned, addressed, and commanded… the time of annunciation and visitation… For many, the encounter with a real person called "refugee" evokes feelings of profound compassion that lead to practical forms of kindness. It is within this reach of mercy that the necessity (and near impossibility) of justice begins to emerge'.[22] Making justice possible means that 'arguments about the economic, political and social implications of migration must first find a reference in the human face of the migrant or else the core issues at stake become lost and easily distorted. If we do not get the human face of the migrant right, a just society is not possible'.[23] This idea of focusing on the human person and their dignity is reiterated by Thomas Albinson, World Evangelical Alliance Ambassador for Refugees, Displaced and Stateless People, by pointing out the need for putting a face on the numbers and valuing human life above other agendas.[24]

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treatment may be found in Pohl's earlier work, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Eerdmans, 1999).

[20] See Alexia Salvatierra, '"Do Not Neglect to Show Hospitality": Sanctuary and Immigrant Justice', in L. Dykstra and C. Myers (eds), *Liberating Biblical Study: Scholarship, Art and Action in Honor of the Center and Library for the Bible and Social Justice* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 213-20. See also Ched Myers, 'Our God is Undocumented: Sanctuary and Prophetic Hospitality', in Ched Myers and Matthew Colwell (eds), *Our God is Undocumented: Biblical Faith and Immigrant Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 53-72.

[21] See, for example, Nick Squires, 'Italy mourns 300 dead in Lampedusa migrant boat tragedy': www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/10355661/Italy-mourns-300-dead-in-Lampedusa-migrant-boat-tragedy.html (accessed 20th June 2015).

[22] Mary Jo Leddy, 'When the Stranger Summons: Spiritual and Theological Considerations for Ministry', in *New Theology Review,* 20.3 (August 2007), 6-7.

[23] Daniel Groody, 'The Church on the Move: Mission in an Age of Migration', in *Mission Studies,* 30 (2013), 36.

[24] See Thomas Albinson, 'A Christian Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in the Mediterranean': www.worldea.org/news/4555/a-christian-response-to-the-humanitarian-crisis-in-the-mediterranean (accessed 25th July 2015).

Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo, for example, points to Christian groups and activists who played a role in the struggle for immigrant rights in post-1965 and post-9/11 America, particularly those who responded to the death and violence at the US-Mexico border, and Christian clergy defending the labour rights of Latino immigrants. *Borderlinks*, an ecumenical organization founded by Presbyterian minister Rick Ufford-Chase, even offers experiential education and border tours for US citizens as it seeks to provide a theological understanding of conflicts and inequalities at the US-Mexico border. These and other groups arose in the 1990s and combine advocacy, service and civil disobedience. Hondagneu-Sotelo reckons that they constitute a new civil society of biblically-inspired social action groups and are, in a sense, direct heirs to a well-known pro-migrant movement in the US in the 1980s known as The Sanctuary Movement. This movement, led by a lay Quaker named Jim Corbett, aided and advocated just treatment for Central American refugees, particularly Guatemalans and Salvadorans who had been detained and denied legal status as officially sanctioned refugees. The movement's actions on behalf of migrants took a radical turn when Presbyterian minister John Fife, followed by five San Francisco Bay churches, publicly declared his church as a sanctuary church. The letter sent by Fife to the US attorney general goes straight to the point:

> We are writing to inform you that Southside United Presbyterian Church will publicly violate the Immigration and Nationality Act, Section 274 (A). We have declared our church as a 'sanctuary' for undocumented refugees from Central America… We believe that justice and mercy require that people of conscience actively assert our God-given right to aid anyone fleeing from persecution and murder. The current administration of US law prohibits us from sheltering these refugees from Central America. Therefore we believe the administration of the law to be immoral, as well as illegal… Obedience to God requires this of all of us.[25]

It is common knowledge that the migration of peoples, particularly those who are forced to move, is embedded in local and global inequalities. Thus the churches understand, especially in view of horrific deaths of large numbers of migrants in the Mediterranean witnessed in 2014 and 2015, that in the context of human dislocation, there can be no meaningful mission without costly incarnation since 'this may entail advocating justice in regard to migration policies and resistance to xenophobia and racism' (*TTL* §70). As Jonathan Bonk contends:

> To be a Christian entails recognizing and resisting the terrible reductionisms of all self-serving nationalisms, tribalisms, and racisms – and their ever-attendant legalisms – that undervalue or even dismiss the stranger, the refugee, or the immigrant, or the enemy. When we co-operate in such

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[25] Renny Golden and Michael McConnell, *Sanctuary: The New Underground Railroad* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 46, as quoted in Hondagneu-Sotelo, *God's Heart Has No Borders*, 145.

systemic reductionism we subvert our own identities as men and women created in the image of God, since we yield to Caesar something to which Caesar has no ultimate claim – human beings, including ourselves. *Legality*, for Christians, can never be an acceptable substitute for *justice*.[26]

From Mission *to* Migrants to Mission *of* Migrants

The title of this section is perhaps ironic as missionaries are, in most cases, migrants themselves. Many of the great Christian missionaries such as William Carey and Matteo Ricci crossed borders. But while missionary work used to be largely centred in the less developed countries and was mainly done by westerners, the whole world is now a mission field because of the 'death of distance'[27] and because of the shift in Christian demographics. As *TTL* §5 points out: 'Today we are facing a radically changing ecclesial landscape described as 'world Christianity' where the majority of Christians either are living or have their origins in the global South and East', and that 'migration has become a worldwide, multi-directional phenomenon which is reshaping the Christian landscape.' In other words, mission is now everywhere, including the West, not just because of the structures and processes associated with globalization but also because of changes within the churches themselves.

Indeed, mission in the context of migration arising from globalization has changed or expanded not just the mission field. It also brought other forms of spreading the gospel, e.g. travelling evangelists and short-term missions.[28] Other creative ways differing from the traditional 'soil-based' church planting, which are facilitated by the disappearance of geographic barriers, include 'bus churches' for the diaspora in limited access contexts and churches on the high seas, aboard ships, including cruise ships and ocean liners.[29] In addition, mission in the context of migration arising from globalization expanded the objects of missionary activity as migrants and

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[26] Jonathan Bonk, 'Whose head is this and whose title?' Presidential address delivered at the International Association for Mission Studies 13th Quadrennial Conference, Toronto, 15th August 2012: https://sites.google.com/a/iams2012.org/toronto-2012 (accessed 5th July 2015).

[27] Albino Barrera, OP, 'Mission in a Globalized Economy', in James Kroeger (ed), *The Gift of Mission: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013), 161.

[28] See Mäite Maskens, 'Mobility among Pentecostal Pastors and Migratory Miracles', in *Canadian Journal of African Studies,* 46.3 (2012), 397-409. A broader survey of missionaries on the move in contemporary times may be seen in Claire Brickell, 'Geographies of Contemporary Christian Mission(aries)', in *Geography Compass,* 6/12 (2012), 725-39.

[29] Enoch Wan, *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology and Practice* (Portland, OR: Institute for Diaspora Studies, 2011), 132.

refugees become targets of missionary activity.[30] As Steven Ybarrola argues, using studies he has conducted in the evangelical churches in the Basque country of Spain, liminality can make people more receptive to the gospel.[31] In the context of the diaspora, Enoch Wan attributes the receptivity to the gospel to the experience of being in transition.[32] Some Christian groups even aggressively target migrants, whether they have moved to a country for good or are there only short-term, e.g. contract workers or seafarers.[33] One such group is *MoveIn*, a Christian group in Toronto, who took up residence in neighbourhoods where many new immigrants live. With a cup of cold water in one hand and the good news in the other, they pray that the migrants will discover Christ's love.[34] What is interesting is that most of these missionaries are immigrants or former migrants themselves. Thus, mission in the context of migration arising from globalization has also changed the face of the missionary from white, western or European to a Christian person of colour from the global South.

The missionary potential of (im)migrants, particularly from the global South, is immense as they reach out not only to their kin or compatriots in their adopted country, country of origin or other countries.[35] In the case especially of diaspora Christian individuals and congregations[36] they, in many cases, expand their missionary efforts to other members of the host society[37] and, in some cases, to other countries. Evidence for the former is the increasing role of migrants in what they perceive as the (re)-evangelization of Europe, giving rise to terms such as reverse-mission.[38] It

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[30] See P. Nyiri, 'Moving Targets: Chinese Christian Proselytizing among Transnational Migrants from the People's Republic of China', in *European Journal of East Asian Studies,* 2.2 (2003), 263-301.

[31] Steven Ybarrola, 'Anthropology, Diaspora and Mission', in *Mission Studies* 29 (2012), 85.

[32] Wan, *Diaspora Missiology,* 132.

[33] In some cases, these temporary migrant workers become missionaries themselves. See, for example, Sadiri Emmanuel Santiago B. Tira, *Filipino Kingdom Workers: An Ethnographic Study in Diaspora Missiology* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2012).

[34] Wan, *Diaspora Missiology,* 132.

[35] The Vietnamese diaspora in North America, for instance, conducts evangelistic work among Vietnamese, not just in their adopted country but also in Vietnam, Cambodia, Cameroon, Mali and Taiwan: Wan, *Diaspora Missiology,* 238-46.

[36] A more comprehensive and recent distillation of mission in/among the diaspora could be found in Chandler Im and Amos Yong (eds), *Global Diasporas and Mission* (Portland, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014).

[37] Enoch Wan and Anthony Casey, *Church Planting Among Immigrants in US Urban Centers: The 'Where', 'Why' and 'How' of Diaspora Missiology in Action* (Portland, OR: IDS, 2014).

[38] This is particularly true among African migrants. Afe Adogame has a substantive body of work on this topic. See, for example, Afe Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity* (London: Continuum, 2013); 'Transnational Migration and Pentecostalism in Europe', in

must be noted, of course, that the missionary work of migrants is not confined to evangelism.[39]

What is clear is that mission in the context of migration is not only about mission *to* migrants but also mission *of* migrants. In fact, the mission for the local church, according to Stephen Bevans, is 'not only to respond to migrants' needs and to accompany them on their journey but also to call and equip them for ministry, both within the church and within the world'.[40] Jehu Hanciles echoes this perspective in the case of immigrant churches. Hanciles argues that immigrant churches potentially have a missionary function, not only because they represent the most effective instruments through which immigrants can impact wider society, but also because 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.[41] Immigrant churches in many developed countries, for example, play a strategic role, whether they like it or not, since they are predominantly located in urban neighbourhoods and are often forced to occupy the most unlikely places – cramped living rooms, hotel ballrooms, thousands of shop fronts, rented halls or office buildings, even ornate churches whose membership has declined – they serve constituencies (both immigrant and native) long abandoned by more established and affluent congregations.[42] Churches

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PentecoStudies: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Research on the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, 9.1 (2010), 56-73; and 'African Christians in a Secularizing Europe', in *Religion Compass,* 3.4 (2009), 488-501. See also Jehu Hanciles, 'Migrants as Missionaries, Missionaries as Outsiders: Reflections on African Christian Presence in Western Societies', in *Mission Studies,* 30 (2013), 64-85; Richard Burgess, 'Bringing Back the Gospel: Reverse Mission Among Nigerian Pentecostals in Britain', in *Journal of Religion in Europe,* 4 (2011), 429-49; Danielle Koning, 'Place, Space, and Authority: The Mission and Reversed Mission of the Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist Church in Amsterdam', in *African Diaspora,* 2.2 (2009), 203-26; and Gerrie ter Haar, *Halfway to Paradise: African Christians in Europe* (Cardiff, UK: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998).

[39] See Matthew Colwell, 'From Immigrant to Immigrant Justice Organizer: Moises Escalante', and 'Proclaiming Liberty to the Captives', in *Our God is Undocumented,* 73-90 and 107-22 respectively. See also Vedaste Nyazabino, 'The Role of Refugee-Established Churches in Integrating Forced Migrants: A Case Study of Word of Life Assembly in Yeoville, Johannesburg', in *HTS Theological Studies,* 66.1 (2010), 1-9.

[40] Stephen Bevans, 'Mission *among* Migrants, Mission *of* Migrants', in Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese (eds), *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 101.

[41] Jehu Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 277-78.

[42] See the story of two large African-led Christian groups in Europe, the Church of the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for all Nations (Kiev, Ukraine), and Kingsway International Christian Centre or KICC (London) as described in J.

built or established by (im)migrants themselves often become veritable
centres of social and religious life.[43] As *TTL* §71 reminds us: 'God's
hospitality calls us to move beyond binary notions of culturally dominant
groups as hosts, and migrant and minority peoples as guests.' Hospitality
in the context of migration, in other words, ought to be understood not so
much as hospitality *to* strangers but hospitality *of* strangers and,
consequently, mission as a discipleship of equals.

The Challenges Ahead

Mission in the context of migration drives home the point that mission is a
shared calling and vocation of all Christians, no matter who they are and
wherever they may be. However, at no time is the idea of mission as shared
and borderless stronger than ever before than in this age of migration, when
globalization-induced human mobility has reached unprecedented
proportions, and Christian migrants, who are predominantly from the
global South, bring with them not only different ways of practising
Christianity but also a relatively strong faith commitment that includes
evangelism.

  The previous section has attempted to describe some of the shifts in the
missionary orientation and practice of the churches as a result of the
intensification of migration as well as changes in the factors, faces and
conditions associated with contemporary human mobility, particularly
among Christians. These shifts are, of course, just the tip of the iceberg.
The immense geographic boundaries that globalization has shrunk, and the
plural societies that contemporary migration created or intensified, means
that there are other existing, as well as emerging, missionary challenges
that remain largely unaddressed. There is, for example, the transnational
challenge.[44] There is much missionary promise in using and engaging not
only migrants' transnational networks but also the churches' very own
transnational networks. Related to this is the digital challenge. While most
churches have a digital presence, there is also much potential that could be
tapped in using digital technology for doing mission in the context of
migration. The overwhelming majority of migrants are 'digital natives' so
the possibilities are endless. Then there is also the interreligious challenge.
How do we respectfully observe the limits and possibilities of evangelism

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Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, '"To The Ends of the Earth": Mission, Migration and
Impact of African-led Pentecostal Churches in the European Diaspora', in *Mission
Studies,* 29 (2012), 23-44.

[43] See, for example, Fenggang Yang, 'Chinese Gospel Church: The Sinization of
Christianity', in Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Chafetz (eds), in *Religion and the
New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations*
(Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2000), 89, 97-98, 101-02.

[44] See, for example, Kirsteen Kim, 'Editorial', in *Mission Studies,* 32. 2 (2015),
175-76.

among migrants who are not Christians? Moreover, how do we practise mission as interreligious hospitality in a way that is praxological and doxological?[45] Last but not least, and perhaps the most critical of the challenges, is the intercultural challenge. How do we realize the church of the Pentecost in faith communities, especially in multicultural societies? While it is true and good that immigrants can use most local churches for their own services, Martin Luther King's statement that the most segregated hour of the week is 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning still rings true in places of worship worldwide as power differentials and various forms of differences inhibit the formation of inclusive churches.

Miriam Adeney gives voice to the heart of the challenge with the following questions:

> Should multi-ethnic churches – and therefore merged mission – be the goal? Do separate ethnic churches perpetuate divisions? Or is cultural identity so foundational that ethnic churches are a blessing? Should [US] ministry of the future expect to be multilingual, or is that a passing phase?
>
> How can majority-culture churches partner in mission with ethnic churches? In our hegemonic context, is it realistic to believe that churches of the less powerful can exert significant influence?[46]

It does not help, argue Martha Fredericks and Dorottya Nagy, in their guest editorial for the most recent issue of the journal *Mission Studies,* that the key missiological concepts of 'inculturation' and 'contextualization' tend to presume a single definable culture or context with respect to which the gospel is inculturated/contextualized, which may not be the case with migrants. Moreover, both processes, Fredericks and Nagy point out, favour a form of assimilation, whereas the challenge for migrant communities fleeing oppression is to maintain their threatened tradition.[47] *TTL* §75 eloquently gives voice to the challenge:

More than ever before, local congregations today can play a key role in emphasizing the crossing of cultural and racial boundaries and affirming cultural difference as a gift of the Spirit. Rather than being perceived as a problem, migration can be seen as offering new possibilities for churches to rediscover themselves afresh. It inspires opportunities for the creation of intercultural and multi-cultural churches at local level. All churches can create space for different cultural communities to come together and embrace exciting opportunities for contextual expressions of intercultural mission in our time.

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[45] M. Thomas Thangaraj, 'Embracing God's Hospitality in a Multi-Religious World', in *CTC Bulletin,* XXVIII.1 (December 2012), 22-24.

[46] Miriam Adeney, 'Colorful Initiatives: North American Diasporas in Mission', in *Missiology: An International Review,* XXXIX.1 (January 2011), 7-8.

[47] Martha Fredericks and Dorottya Nagy, guest editorial in *Mission Studies,* 32.2 (2015), 177-79.

What is clear is that unity is a powerful theme in Scripture (Gal. 3:28). Equally central, however, is the emphasis on vibrant creativity that gives birth to diversity.

SECTION THREE

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE

Introduction

This section is focused on the 2012 World Council of Churches Mission Affirmation *Together Towards Life*. It offers first the entire text of the document, followed by an essay that outlines its genesis and development. Further essays analyse the text from a variety of confessional and contextual perspectives. The section concludes with an essay that considers the challenge of missional formation in light of *Together Towards Life.*

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE

New WCC Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism

The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) has, since the WCC Porto Alegre Assembly in 2006, been working towards and contributing to the construction of a new ecumenical mission affirmation. The new statement will be presented to the WCC 10th Assembly at Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2013. Since the integration of the International Missionary Council (IMC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) in New Delhi in 1961, there has been only one official WCC position statement on mission and evangelism which was approved by the central committee in 1982, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation.* This new mission affirmation was unanimously approved by the WCC central committee on 5th September 2012 at its meeting on the island of Crete, Greece. It is the aim of this new ecumenical discernment to seek vision, concepts and directions for a renewed understanding and practice of mission and evangelism in changing landscapes. It seeks a broad appeal, even wider than WCC member churches and affiliated mission bodies, so that we can commit ourselves together to fullness of life for all, led by the God of Life!

Together towards Life: Introducing the Theme

1. 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 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).[1] 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. How and where do we discern God's life-giving work that enables us to participate in God's mission today?

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Abbreviations used for other translations include KJV (Authorized/King James Version), NIV (New International Version), and REB (Revised English Bible).

2. Mission begins in the heart of the Triune God and the love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation. The missionary God who sent the Son to the world calls all God's people (John 20:21), and empowers them to be a community of hope. The church is commissioned to celebrate life, and to resist and transform all life-destroying forces, in the power of the Holy Spirit. How important it is to 'receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20:22) to become living witnesses to the coming reign of God! From a renewed appreciation of the mission of the Spirit, how do we re-envision God's mission in a changing and diverse world today?

3. 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 the 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. This mission spirituality has a dynamic of transformation which, through the spiritual commitment of people, is capable of transforming the world in God's grace. How can we reclaim mission as a transformative spirituality which is life-affirming?

4. God did not send the Son for the salvation of humanity alone or give us a partial salvation. Rather, the gospel is the good news for every part of creation and every aspect of our life and society. It is therefore vital to recognize God's mission in a cosmic sense and to affirm all life, the whole *oikoumene*, as being interconnected in God's web of life. As threats to the future of our planet are evident, what are their implications for our participation in God's mission?

5. The history of Christian mission has been characterized by conceptions of geographical expansion from a Christian centre to the 'un-reached territories,' to the ends of the earth. But today we are facing a radically changing ecclesial landscape described as 'world Christianity' where the majority of Christians either are living or have their origins in the global South and East.[2] Migration has become a worldwide, multi-directional phenomenon which is reshaping the Christian landscape. The emergence of strong Pentecostal and charismatic movements from different localities is one of the most noteworthy characteristics of world Christianity today. What are the insights for mission and evangelism – theologies, agendas and practices – of this 'shift of the centre of gravity of Christianity'?

6. 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 of mission has strong biblical foundations because God chose

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[2] See Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Atlas of Global Christianity, 1910-2010* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

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? And why are their experiences and visions crucial for re-imagining mission and evangelism today?

7. 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?

8. 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. How can we proclaim God's love and justice to a generation living in an individualized, secularized, and materialized world?

9. The church lives in multi-religious and multi-cultural contexts and new communication technology is also bringing the people of the world into a greater awareness of one another's identities and pursuits. Locally and globally, Christians are engaged with people of other religions and cultures in building societies of love, peace, and justice. Plurality is a challenge to the churches and serious commitment to inter-faith dialogue and cross-cultural communication is therefore indispensable. What are the ecumenical convictions regarding common witnessing and practicing life-giving mission in a world of many religions and cultures?

10. The church is a gift of God to the world for its transformation towards the kingdom of God. Its mission is to bring new life and announce the loving presence of God in our world. We must participate in God's mission in unity, overcoming the divisions and tensions that exist among us, so that the world may believe and all may be one (John 17:21). The church, as the communion of Christ's disciples, must become an inclusive community and exists to bring healing and reconciliation to the world. How can the church renew herself to be missional and move forward together towards life in its fullness?

11. This statement highlights some key developments in understanding the mission of the Holy Spirit within the mission of the Triune God (*missio Dei*)

which have emerged through the work of CWME. It does so under four main headings:

Spirit of Mission: Breath of Life
Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins
Spirit of Community: Church on the Move
Spirit of Pentecost: Good News for All

Reflection on such perspectives enables us to embrace dynamism, justice, diversity, and transformation as key concepts of mission in changing landscapes today. In response to the questions posed above, we conclude with ten affirmations for mission and evangelism today.

Spirit of Mission: Breath of Life
The Mission of the Spirit

12. God's Spirit – *ru'ach* – moved over the waters at the beginning (Gen. 1:2), being the source of life and the breath of humankind (Gen. 2:7). In the Hebrew Bible, the Spirit led the people of God – inspiring wisdom (Prov. 8), empowering prophecy (Isa. 61:1), stirring life from dry bones (Ezek. 37), prompting dreams (Joel 2), and bringing renewal as the glory of the Lord in the temple (2 Chron. 7:1).

13. The same Spirit of God, which 'swept over the face of the waters' in creation, descended on Mary (Luke 1:35) and brought forth Jesus. It was the Holy Spirit who empowered Jesus at his baptism (Mark 1:10) and commissioned him for his mission (Luke 4:14, 18). Jesus Christ, full of the Spirit of God, died on the cross. He gave up the spirit (John 19:30). In death, in the coldness of the tomb, by the power of the Holy Spirit he was raised to life, the firstborn from the dead (Rom. 8:11).

14. After his resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared to his community and sent his disciples in mission: 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you' (John 20:21-22). By the gift of the Holy Spirit, 'the power from on high,' they were formed into a new community of witness to hope in Christ (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). In the Spirit of unity, the early church lived together and shared her goods among her members (Acts 2:44-45).

15. The universality of the Spirit's economy in creation and the particularity of the Spirit's work in redemption have to be understood together as the mission of the Spirit for the new heaven and earth, when God finally will be 'all in all' (1 Cor. 15:24-28). The Holy Spirit works in the world often in mysterious and unknown ways beyond our imagination (Luke 1:34-35; John 3:8; Acts 2:16-21).

16. Biblical witness attests to a variety of understandings of the role of the Holy Spirit in mission. One perspective on the role of the Holy Spirit in mission emphasizes the Holy Spirit as fully dependent on Christ, as the Paraclete and the one who will come as Counsellor and Advocate only after Christ has gone to the Father. The Holy Spirit is seen as the continuing presence of Christ, his agent to fulfill the task of mission. This understanding

leads to a missiology focusing on sending out and going forth. Therefore, a pneumatological focus on Christian mission recognizes that mission is essentially christologically based and relates the work of the Holy Spirit to the salvation through Jesus Christ.

17. Another perspective emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is the 'Spirit of Truth' that leads us to the 'whole truth' (John 16:13) and blows wherever he/she wills (John 3:8), thus embracing the whole of the cosmos; it proclaims the Holy Spirit as the source of Christ and the church as the eschatological coming together (*synaxis*) of the people of God in God's kingdom. This second perspective posits that the faithful go forth in peace (in mission) after they have experienced in their eucharistic gathering the eschatological kingdom of God as a glimpse and foretaste of it. Mission as going forth is thus the outcome, rather than the origin, of the church, and is called 'liturgy after the Liturgy.'[3]

18. What is clear is that by the Spirit we participate in the mission of love that is at the heart of the life of the Trinity. This results in Christian witness which unceasingly proclaims the salvific power of God through Jesus Christ and constantly affirms God's dynamic involvement, through the Holy Spirit, in the whole created world. All who respond to the outpouring of the love of God are invited to join in with the Spirit in the mission of God.

Mission and the Flourishing of Creation

19. Mission is the overflow of the infinite love of the Triune God. God's mission begins with the act of creation. Creation's life and God's life are entwined. The mission of God's Spirit encompasses us all in an ever-giving act of grace. We are therefore called to move beyond a narrowly human-centred approach and to embrace forms of mission which express our reconciled relationship with all created life. We hear the cry of the earth as we listen to the cries of the poor and we know that from its beginning the earth has cried out to God over humanity's injustice (Gen. 4:10).

20. Mission with creation at its heart is already a positive movement in our churches through campaigns for eco-justice and more sustainable lifestyles and the development of spiritualities that are respectful of the earth. However, we have sometimes forgotten that the whole of creation is included in the reconciled unity towards which we are all called (2 Cor. 5:18-19). We do not believe that the earth is to be discarded and only souls saved; both the earth and our bodies have to be transformed through the Spirit's grace. As the vision of Isaiah and John's revelation testify, heaven and earth will be made new (Isa. 11:1-9; 25:6-10; 66:22; Rev. 21:1-4).

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[3] See Ion Bria, *The Liturgy after the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective* (Geneva: WCC, 1996). The term was originally coined by Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos and widely publicized by Ion Bria.

21. Our participation in mission, our being in creation, and our practice of the life of the Spirit need to be woven together, for they are mutually transformative. We ought not to seek the one without the others. If we do, we will lapse into an individualistic spirituality that leads us to believe falsely that we can belong to God without belonging to our neighbour, and we will fall into a spirituality that simply makes us feel good while other parts of creation hurt and yearn.

22. We need a new conversion (*metanoia*) in our mission which invites a new humility in regard to the mission of God's Spirit. We tend to understand and practice mission as something done by humanity *to* others. Instead, humans can participate in communion *with* all of creation in celebrating the work of the Creator. In many ways creation is in mission to humanity; for instance, the natural world has a power that can heal the human heart and body. The wisdom literature in the Bible affirms creation's praise of its Creator (Ps. 9:1-4; 66:1; 96:11-13; 98:4; 100:1; 150:6). The Creator's joy and wonder in creation is one of the sources of our spirituality (Job 38–39).

23. We want to affirm our spiritual connection with creation, yet the reality is that the earth is being polluted and exploited. Consumerism triggers not limitless growth but rather endless exploitation of the earth's resources. Human greed is contributing to global warming and other forms of climate change. If this trend continues and earth is fatally damaged, what can we imagine salvation to be? Humanity cannot be saved alone while the rest of the created world perishes. Eco-justice cannot be separated from salvation, and salvation cannot come without a new humility that respects the needs of all life on earth.

Spiritual Gifts and Discernment

24. The Holy Spirit gives gifts freely and impartially (1 Cor. 12:8-10; Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11) which are to be shared for the building up of others (1 Cor. 12:7; 14:26) and the reconciliation of the whole creation (Rom. 8:19-23). One of the gifts of the Spirit is discernment of spirits (1 Cor. 12:10). We discern the Spirit of God wherever life in its fullness is affirmed and in all its dimensions, including liberation of the oppressed, healing and reconciliation of broken communities, and the restoration of creation. We also discern evil spirits wherever forces of death and destruction of life prevail.

25. The early Christians, like many today, experienced a world of many spirits. The New Testament witnesses to diverse spirits, including evil spirits, 'ministering spirits' (i.e. angels, Heb. 1:14), 'principalities' and 'powers' (Eph. 6:12), the beast (Rev. 13:1-7), and other powers – both good and evil. The apostle Paul also testifies to some spiritual struggle (Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 10:4-6) and other apostolic writings contain injunctions to resist the devil (James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8). 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). When we have discerned the Holy Spirit's

presence, we are called to respond, recognizing that God's Spirit is often subversive, leading us beyond boundaries and surprising us.

26. Our encounter with the Triune God is inward, personal, and communal but also directs us outward in missionary endeavour. The traditional symbols and titles for the Spirit (such as fire, light, dew, fountain, anointing, healing, melting, warming, solace, comfort, strength, rest, washing, shining) show that the Spirit is familiar with our lives and connected with all the aspects of relationship, life, and creation with which mission is concerned. We are led by the Spirit into various situations and moments, into meeting points with others, into spaces of encounter, and into critical locations of human struggle.

27. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom (Isa. 11:3; Eph. 1:17) and guides us into all truth (John 16:13). The Spirit inspires human cultures and creativity, so it is part of our mission to acknowledge, respect, and co-operate with life-giving wisdoms in every culture and context. We regret that mission activity linked with colonization has often denigrated cultures and failed to recognize the wisdom of local people. Local wisdom and culture which are life-affirming are gifts from God's Spirit. We lift up testimonies of peoples whose traditions have been scorned and mocked by theologians and scientists, yet whose wisdom offers us the vital and sometimes new orientation that can connect us again with the life of the Spirit in creation, which helps us to consider the ways in which God is revealed in creation.

28. The claim that the Spirit is with us is not for us to make, but for others to recognize in the life that we lead. The apostle Paul expresses this by encouraging the church to bear the fruits of the Spirit which entail love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, and self-control (Gal. 5:23). As we bear these fruits, we hope others will discern the love and power of the Spirit at work.

Transformative Spirituality

29. Authentic Christian witness is not only in *what* we do in mission but *how* we live out our mission. The church in mission can only be sustained by spiritualities deeply rooted in the Trinity's communion of love. Spirituality gives our lives their deepest meaning. It stimulates, motivates and gives dynamism to life's journey. It is energy for life in its fullness and calls for a commitment to resist all forces, powers, and systems which deny, destroy, and reduce life.

30. Mission spirituality is always transformative. Mission spirituality resists and seeks to transform all life-destroying values and systems wherever these are at work in our economies, our politics, and even our churches. 'Our faithfulness to God and God's free gift of life compels us to confront idolatrous assumptions, unjust systems, politics of domination and exploitation in our current world economic order. Economics and economic justice are

always matters of faith as they touch the very core of God's will for creation.'[4] Mission spirituality motivates us to serve God's economy of life, not mammon, to share life at God's table rather than satisfy individual greed, to pursue change towards a better world while challenging the self-interest of the powerful who desire to maintain the status quo.

31. Jesus has told us, 'You cannot serve God and mammon' (Matt. 6:24, KJV). The policy of unlimited growth through the domination of the global free market is an ideology that claims to be without alternative, demanding an endless flow of sacrifices from the poor and from nature. 'It makes the false promise that it can save the world through creation of wealth and prosperity, claiming sovereignty over life and demanding total allegiance, which amounts to idolatry.'[5] This is a global system of mammon that protects the unlimited growth of wealth of only the rich and powerful through endless exploitation. This tower of greed is threatening the whole household of God. The reign of God is in direct opposition to the empire of mammon.

32. Transformation can be understood in the light of the Paschal mystery: 'If we have died with Christ, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him' (2 Tim. 2:11-12). In situations of oppression, discrimination, and hurt, the cross of Christ is the power of God for salvation (1 Cor. 1:18). Even in our time, some have paid with their lives for their Christian witness, reminding us all of the cost of discipleship. The Spirit gives Christians courage to live out their convictions, even in the face of persecution and martyrdom.

33. The cross calls for repentance in light of misuse of power and use of the wrong kind of power in mission and in the church. '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.'[6] The Spirit empowers the powerless and challenges the powerful to empty themselves of their privileges for the sake of the disempowered.

34. To experience life in the Spirit is to taste life in its fullness. We are called to witness to a movement towards life, celebrating all that the Spirit continues to call into being, walking in solidarity in order to cross the rivers of despair and anxiety (Ps. 23, Isa. 43:1-5). Mission provokes in us a renewed awareness that the Holy Spirit meets us and challenges us at all levels of life, and brings newness and change to the places and times of our personal and collective journeys.

35. The Holy Spirit is present with us as companion, yet is never domesticated or 'tame.' Among the surprises of the Spirit are the ways in

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[4] *Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth (AGAPE): A Background Document* (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 13.

[5] World Alliance of Reformed Churches, *The Accra Confession: Covenanting for Justice: in the Economy and the Earth* (2004), §10.

[6] Edinburgh 2010, *Common Call* (2010), §4.

which God works from locations which appear to be on the margins and through people who appear to be excluded.

Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins

36. God's purpose for the world is not to create another world, but to re-create what God has already created in love and wisdom. Jesus began his ministry by claiming that to be filled by the Spirit is to liberate the oppressed, to open eyes that are blind, and to announce the coming of God's reign (Luke 4:16-18). He went about fulfilling this mission by opting to be with the marginalized people of his time, not out of paternalistic charity but because their situations testified to the sinfulness of the world, and their yearnings for life pointed to God's purposes.

37. Jesus Christ relates to and embraces those who are most marginalized in society, in order to confront and transform all that denies life. This includes cultures and systems which generate and sustain massive poverty, discrimination, and dehumanization, and which exploit or destroy people and the earth. Mission from the margins calls for an understanding of the complexities of power dynamics, global systems and structures, and local contextual realities. Christian mission has at times been understood and practiced in ways which failed to recognize God's alignment with those consistently pushed to the margins. Therefore, mission from the margins invites the church to re-imagine mission as a vocation from God's Spirit who works for a world where the fullness of life is available for all.

Why Margins and Marginalization?

38. Mission from the margins seeks to counteract injustices in life, church, and mission. It seeks to be an alternative missional movement against the perception that mission can only be done by the powerful to the powerless, by the rich to the poor, or by the privileged to the marginalized. Such approaches can contribute to oppression and marginalization. Mission from the margins recognizes that being in the centre means having access to systems that lead to one's rights, freedom, and individuality being affirmed and respected; living in the margins means exclusion from justice and dignity. Living on the margins, however, can provide its own lessons. People on the margins have agency, and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view. People on the margins, living in vulnerable positions, often know what exclusionary forces are threatening their survival and can best discern the urgency of their struggles; people in positions of privilege have much to learn from the daily struggles of people living in marginal conditions.

39. Marginalized people have God-given gifts that are under-utilized because of disempowerment and denial of access to opportunities and/or justice. Through struggles in and for life, marginalized people are reservoirs of

the active hope, collective resistance, and perseverance that are needed to remain faithful to the promised reign of God.

40. Because the context of missional activity influences its scope and character, the social location of all engaged in mission work must be taken into account. Missiological reflections need to recognize the different value orientations that shape missional perspectives. The aim of mission is not simply to move people from the margins to centres of power but to confront those who remain the centre by keeping people on the margins. Instead, churches are called to *transform* power structures.

41. The dominant expressions of mission, in the past and today, have often been directed *at* people on the margins of societies. These have generally viewed those on the margins as recipients and not as active agents of missionary activity. Mission expressed in this way has too often been complicit with oppressive and life-denying systems. It has generally aligned with the privileges of the centre and largely failed to challenge economic, social, cultural, and political systems which have marginalized some peoples. Mission from the centre is motivated by an attitude of paternalism and a superiority complex. Historically, this stance has equated Christianity with Western culture and resulted in adverse consequences, including the denial of the full personhood of the victims of such marginalization.

42. A major common concern of people from the margins is the failure of societies, cultures, civilizations, nations, and even churches to honour the dignity and worth of *all* persons. Injustice is at the roots of the inequalities that give rise to marginalization and oppression. God's desire for justice is inextricably linked with God's nature and sovereignty: 'For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords… who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who also loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing' (Deut. 10:17-18). All missional activity must, therefore, safeguard the sacred worth of every human being and of the earth (see Isa. 58).

Mission as Struggle and Resistance

43. The affirmation of God's mission (*missio Dei*) points to the belief in God as One who acts in history and in creation, in concrete realities of time and contexts, who seeks the fullness of life for the whole earth through justice, peace, and reconciliation. Participation in God's ongoing work of liberation and reconciliation by the Holy Spirit, therefore, includes discerning and unmasking the demons that exploit and enslave. For example, this involves deconstructing patriarchal ideologies, upholding the right to self-determination for Indigenous peoples, and challenging the social embeddedness of racism and casteism.

44. The church's hope is rooted in the promised fulfillment of the reign of God. It entails the restoration of right relationships between God and humanity and all of creation. Even though this vision speaks to an

eschatological reality, it deeply energizes and informs our current participation in God's salvific work in this penultimate period.

45. Participation in God's mission follows the way of Jesus, who came to serve, not to be served (Mark 10:45); who tears down the mighty and powerful and exalts the lowly (Luke 1:46-55); and whose love is characterized by mutuality, reciprocity, and interdependence. It therefore requires a commitment to struggle against and resist the powers that obstruct the fullness of life that God wills for all, and a willingness to work with all people involved in movements and initiatives committed to the causes of justice, dignity, and life.

Mission Seeking Justice and Inclusivity

46. The good news of God's reign is about the promise of the actualization of a just and inclusive world. Inclusivity fosters just relationships in the community of humanity and creation, with mutual acknowledgement of persons and creation, and mutual respect and sustenance of each one's sacred worth. It also facilitates each one's full participation in the life of the community. Baptism in Christ implies a lifelong commitment to give an account of this hope by overcoming the barriers in order to find a common identity under the sovereignty of God (Gal. 3:27-28). Therefore, discrimination of all types against any human beings is unacceptable in the sight of God.

47. Jesus promises that the last shall be first (Matt. 20:16). To the extent that the church practices radical hospitality to the estranged in society, it demonstrates commitment to embodying the values of the reign of God (Isa. 58:6). To the extent that it denounces self-centredness as a way of life, it makes space for the reign of God to permeate human existence. To the extent that it renounces violence in its physical, psychological, and spiritual manifestations both in personal interactions and in economic, political, and social systems, it testifies to the reign of God at work in the world.

48. In reality, however, mission, money, and political power are strategic partners. Although our theological and missiological language talks a lot about the mission of the church being in solidarity with the poor, sometimes in practice it is much more concerned with being in the centres of power, eating with the rich, and lobbying for money to maintain ecclesial bureaucracy. This poses particular challenges to reflect on what is the good news for people who are privileged and powerful.

49. The church is called to make present God's holy and life-affirming plan for the world revealed in Jesus Christ. This means rejecting values and practices which lead to the destruction of community. Christians are called to acknowledge the sinful nature of all forms of discrimination and to transform unjust structures. This call places certain expectations on the church. The church must refuse to harbour oppressive forces within its ranks, acting instead as a counter-cultural community. The biblical mandate

to the covenant community in both testaments is characterized by the dictum: 'It shall not be so among you' (Matt. 20:26, KJV).

Mission as Healing and Wholeness

50. Actions towards healing and wholeness of life of persons and communities are an important expression of mission. Healing was not only a central feature of Jesus' ministry but also a feature of his call to his followers to continue his work (Matt. 10:1). Healing is also one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:9; Acts 3). The Spirit empowers the church for a life-nurturing mission, which includes prayer, pastoral care, and professional health care, on the one hand, and prophetic denunciation of the root causes of suffering, transformation of structures that dispense injustice, and pursuit of scientific research, on the other.

51. Health is more than physical and/or mental well-being, and healing is not primarily medical. This understanding of health coheres with the biblical-theological tradition of the church, which sees a human being as a multi-dimensional unity and the body, soul, and mind as interrelated and interdependent. It thus affirms the social, political, and ecological dimensions of personhood and wholeness. Health, in the sense of wholeness, is a condition related to God's promise for the end of time as well as a real possibility in the present.[7] Wholeness is not a static balance of harmony but rather involves living-in-community with God, people, and creation. Individualism and injustice are barriers to community building and therefore to wholeness. Discrimination on grounds of medical conditions or disability – including HIV and AIDS – is contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ. When all the parts of our individual and corporate lives that have been left out are included, and wherever the neglected or marginalized are brought together in love such that wholeness is experienced, we may discern signs of God's reign on earth.

52. Societies have tended to see disability or illness as a manifestation of sin or a medical problem to be solved. The medical model has emphasized the correction or cure of what is assumed to be the 'deficiency' in the individual. Many who are marginalized, however, do not see themselves as 'deficient' or 'sick.' The Bible recounts many instances where Jesus healed people with various infirmities but, equally importantly, he restored people to their rightful places within the fabric of the community. Healing is more about the restoration of wholeness than about correcting something perceived as defective. To become whole, the parts that have become estranged need to be reclaimed. The fixation on cure is thus a perspective that must be overcome in order to promote the biblical focus. Mission should foster the full participation of people with disabilities and illness in the life of the church and society.

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[7] *Healing and Wholeness: The Churches' Role in Health* (Geneva: WCC, 1990), 6.

53. Christian medical mission aims at achieving health for all in the sense that all people around the globe will have access to quality health care. There are many ways in which churches can be, and are, involved in health and healing in a comprehensive sense. They create or support clinics and mission hospitals; they offer counselling services, care groups, and health programmes; local churches can create groups to visit sick congregation members. Healing processes could include praying with and for the sick, confession and forgiveness, the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and the use of charismatic spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12). But it must also be noted that inappropriate forms of Christian worship, including triumphalistic healing services in which the healer is glorified at the expense of God and false expectations are raised, can deeply harm people. This is not to deny God's miraculous intervention of healing in some cases.

54. As a community of imperfect people, and as part of a creation groaning in pain and longing for its liberation, the Christian community can be a sign of hope and an expression of the kingdom of God here on earth (Rom. 8:22-24). The Holy Spirit works for justice and healing in many ways and is pleased to indwell the particular community which is called to embody Christ's mission.

Spirit of Community: Church on the Move
God's Mission and the Life of the Church

55. The life of the church arises from the love of the Triune God. 'God is love' (1 Jn. 4:8). Mission is a response to God's urging love shown in creation and redemption. 'God's love invites us' (*Caritas Christi urget nos*). This communion (*koinonia*) opens our hearts and lives to our brothers and sisters in the same movement of sharing God's love (2 Cor. 5:18-21). Living in that love of God, the church is called to become good news for all. The Triune God's overflowing sharing of love is the source of all mission and evangelism.

56. God's love, manifest in the Holy Spirit, is an inspirational gift to all humanity 'in all times and places',[8] and for all cultures and situations. The powerful presence of the Holy Spirit, revealed in Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord, initiates us into the fullness of life that is God's gift to each one of us. Through Christ in the Holy Spirit, God indwells the church, revealing God's purposes for the world, and empowering and enabling its members to participate in the realization of those purposes.

57. The church in history has not always existed but, both theologically and empirically, came into being for the sake of mission. It is not possible to separate church and mission in terms of their origin or purpose. To fulfill God's missionary purpose is the church's aim. The relationship between church and mission is very intimate because the same Spirit of Christ who

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[8] WCC Commission on Faith and Order, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (WCC Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (1982)), §19.

empowers the church in mission is also the life of the church. At the same time as he sent the church into the world, Jesus Christ breathed the Holy Spirit into the church (John 20:19-23). Therefore, the church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning. If it does not engage in mission, it ceases to be church.

58. Starting with God's mission leads to an ecclesiological approach 'from below.' In this perspective it is not the church that has a mission but rather the mission that has a church. Mission is not a project of expanding churches but of the church embodying God's salvation in this world. Out of this follows a dynamic understanding of the apostolicity of the church: apostolicity is not only safeguarding the faith of the church through the ages but also participating in the apostolate. Thus the churches mainly and foremost need to be missionary churches.

God's Mission and the Church's Unity

59. Living out our faith in community is an important way of participating in mission. Through baptism, we become sisters and brothers belonging together in Christ (Heb. 10:25). The church is called to be an inclusive community that welcomes all. Through word and deed and in its very being, the church foretastes and witnesses to the vision of the coming reign of God. The church is the *coming together* of the faithful and their *going forth* in peace.

60. Practically as well as theologically, mission and unity belong together. In this regard, the integration in 1961 of the International Missionary Council (IMC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) was a significant step. This historical experience encourages us to believe that mission and church can come together. This aim, however, is not yet fully accomplished. We have to continue this journey in our century with fresh attempts so that the church becomes truly missionary.

61. The churches realize today that in many respects they are still not adequate embodiments of God's mission. Sometimes a sense of separation between mission and church still prevails. The lack of full and real unity in mission still harms the authenticity and credibility of the fulfillment of God's mission in this world. Our Lord prayed 'that they may all be one… so that the world may believe' (John 17:21). Thus mission and unity are intertwined. Consequently 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.

62. The highly competitive environment of the free market economy has unfortunately influenced some churches and para-church movements to seek to be 'winners' over others. This can even lead to the adoption of aggressive tactics to persuade Christians who already belong to a church to change their denominational allegiance. Seeking numerical growth at all costs is incompatible with the respect for others required of Christian disciples. Jesus became our Christ not through power or money but through his self-emptying (*kenosis*)

and death on the cross. This humble understanding of mission does not merely shape our methods but is the very nature and essence of our faith in Christ. The church is a servant in God's mission and not the master. The missionary church glorifies God in self-emptying love.

63. The Christian communities in their diversity are called to identify and practice ways of common witness in a spirit of partnership and co-operation, including through mutually respectful and responsible forms of evangelism. Common witness is what the 'churches, even while separated, bear together, especially through joint efforts, by manifesting whatever divine gifts of truth and life they already share and experience in common.'[9]

64. The missionary nature of the church also means that there must be a way that churches and para-church structures can be more closely related. The integration of the IMC and the WCC brought about a new framework for consideration of church unity and mission. While discussions of unity have been very concerned with structural questions, mission agencies can represent flexibility and subsidiarity in mission. While para-church movements can find accountability and direction through ecclesial mooring, para-church structures can help churches not to forget their dynamic apostolic character.

65. The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), the direct heir of Edinburgh 1910's initiatives on co-operation and unity, provides a structure for churches and mission agencies to seek ways of expressing and strengthening unity in mission. Being an integral part of the WCC, the CWME has been able to encounter new understandings of mission and unity from Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Indigenous churches from all over the globe. In particular, the context of the WCC has facilitated close working relationships with the Roman Catholic Church. A growing intensity of collaboration with Evangelicals, especially with the Lausanne Movement for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Alliance, has also abundantly contributed to the enrichment of ecumenical theological reflection on mission in unity. Together we share a common concern that the whole church should witness to the whole gospel in the whole world.[10]

66. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of unity, unites people and churches too, to celebrate unity in diversity both pro-actively and constructively. The Spirit provides both the dynamic context and the resources needed for people to explore differences in a safe, positive and nurturing environment in order to grow into an inclusive and mutually responsible community.

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[9] Thomas F. Best and Günther Gassmann (eds), *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia: Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, Santiago de Compostela 1993* (WCC Faith and Order Paper No. 166 (1994)), 254.

[10] See 'The Whole Church Taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World: Reflections of the Lausanne Theology Working Group' (2010).

God Empowers the Church in Mission

67. Through Christ in the Holy Spirit, God indwells the church, empowering and energizing its members. Thus mission becomes for Christians an urgent inner compulsion (1 Cor. 9:16) and even a test and criterion for authentic life in Christ, rooted in the profound demands of Christ's love, to invite others to share in the fullness of life Jesus came to bring. Participating in God's mission, therefore, should be natural for all Christians and all churches, not only for particular individuals or specialized groups.[11]

68. What makes the Christian message of God's abundant love for humanity and all creation credible is our ability to speak with one voice, where possible, and to give common witness and an account of the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15). The churches have therefore produced a rich array of common declarations, some of them resulting in uniting or united churches, and of dialogues, seeking to restore the unity of all Christians in one living organism of healing and reconciliation. A rediscovery of the work of the Holy Spirit in healing and reconciliation, which is at the heart of today's mission theology, has significant ecumenical implications.[12]

69. While acknowledging the great importance of 'visible' unity among churches, nonetheless unity need not be sought only at the level of organizational structures. From a mission perspective, it is important to discern what helps the cause of God's mission. In other words, unity in mission is the basis for the visible unity of the churches; this also has implications for the order of the church. Attempts to achieve unity must be in concert with the biblical call to seek justice. Our call to do justice may sometimes involve breaking false unities that silence and oppress. Genuine unity always entails inclusivity and respect for others.

70. Today's context of large-scale worldwide migration challenges the churches' commitment to unity in very practical ways. We are told: 'Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.' (Heb. 13:2, NIV). Churches can be a place of refuge for migrant communities; they can also be intentional focal points for intercultural engagement.[13] The churches are called to be one to serve God's mission beyond ethnic and cultural boundaries and ought to create multi-cultural ministry and mission as a concrete expression of common witness in diversity. This may entail advocating justice in regard to migration policies and resistance to xenophobia and racism. Women, children, and undocumented workers are often the most vulnerable among migrants in all

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[11] 'Mission and Evangelism in Unity', CWME Study Document (2000), §13.

[12] See 'Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation', in *You Are the Light of the World: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005*, Jacques Matthey (ed) (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 90-162.

[13] 'Report of WCC Consultation on Mission and Ecclesiology of the Migrant Churches, Utrecht, Netherlands, 16th-21st November 2010', in *International Review of Mission*, 100.1, 392 (April 2011): 104-07.

contexts. But women are also often at the cutting edge of new migrant ministries.

71. God's hospitality calls us to move beyond binary notions of culturally dominant groups as hosts, and migrant and minority peoples as guests. Instead, in God's hospitality, God is host and we are all invited by the Spirit to participate with humility and mutuality in God's mission.

Local Congregations: New Initiatives

72. While cherishing the unity of the Spirit in the one Church, it is also important to honour the ways in which each local congregation is led by the Spirit to respond to its own contextual realities. Today's changed world calls for local congregations to take new initiatives. For example, in the secularizing global North, new forms of contextual mission such as "new monasticism,", "emerging church," and "fresh expressions," have redefined and revitalized churches. Exploring contextual ways of being church can be particularly relevant to young people. Some churches in the global North now meet in pubs, coffee houses, or converted movie theatres. Engaging with church life online is an attractive option for young people thinking in a non-linear, visual, and experiential way.

73. Like the early church in the Book of Acts, local congregations have the privilege of forming a community marked by the presence of the risen Christ. For many people, acceptance or refusal to become members of the church is linked with their positive or negative experience with a local congregation, which can be either a stumbling block or an agent of transformation.[14] Therefore it is vital that local congregations are constantly renewed and inspired by the Spirit of mission. Local congregations are frontiers and primary agents of mission.

74. Worship and the sacraments play a crucial role in the formation of transformative spirituality and mission. Reading the Bible contextually is also a primary resource in enabling local congregations to be messengers and witnesses to God's justice and love. Liturgy in the sanctuary only has full integrity when we live out God's mission in our communities in our daily life. Local congregations are therefore impelled to step out of their comfort zones and cross boundaries for the sake of the mission of God.

75. More than ever before, local congregations today can play a key role in emphasizing the crossing of cultural and racial boundaries and affirming cultural difference as a gift of the Spirit. Rather than being perceived as a problem, migration can be seen as offering new possibilities for churches to re-discover themselves afresh. It inspires opportunities for the creation of intercultural and multi-cultural churches at local level. All churches can create space for different cultural communities to come together and

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[14] Christopher Duraisingh (ed), *Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures* (Geneva: WCC, 1998), 54.

embrace exciting opportunities for contextual expressions of intercultural mission in our time.

76. Local congregations can also, as never before, develop global connections. Many inspirational and transformative linkages are being formed between churches that are geographically far apart and located in very different contexts. These offer innovative possibilities but are not without pitfalls. The increasingly popular short-term 'mission trips' can help to build partnerships between churches in different parts of the world but in some cases place an intolerable burden on poor local churches or disregard the existing churches altogether. While there is some danger and caution around such trips, these exposure opportunities in diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts can also lead to long-term change when the travellers return to their home community. The challenge is to find ways of exercising spiritual gifts which build up the whole church in every part (1 Cor. 12-14).

77. Advocacy for justice is no longer the sole prerogative of national assemblies and central offices but a form of witness which calls for the engagement of local churches. For example, the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2011) concluded with a plea in the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation that 'churches must help in identifying the everyday choices that can abuse and promote human rights, gender justice, climate justice, unity and peace.'[15] Local churches' grounding in everyday life gives them both legitimacy and motivation in the struggle for justice and peace.

78. 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.[16]

79. As the church discovers more deeply its identity as a missionary community, its outward-looking character finds expression in evangelism.

Spirit of Pentecost: Good News for All
The Call to Evangelize

80. Witness (*martyria*) takes concrete form in evangelism – the communication of the whole gospel to the whole of humanity in the whole

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[15] 'Glory to God and Peace on Earth: The Message of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation', WCC, Kingston, Jamaica, 17th-25th May 2011, 2.

[16] '*Diakonia* in the Twenty First Century: Theological Perspectives', WCC Conference on Theology of *Diakonia* in the 21st Century, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2nd-6th June 2012, 2.

world.[17] Its goal is the salvation of the world and the glory of the Triune God. Evangelism is mission activity which makes explicit and unambiguous the centrality of the incarnation, suffering, and resurrection of Jesus Christ 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.

81. 'Evangelism is the outflow of hearts that are filled with the love of God for those who do not yet know him.'[18] At Pentecost, the disciples could not but declare the mighty works of God (Acts 2:4; 4:20). Evangelism, while not excluding the different dimensions of mission, focuses on explicit and intentional articulation of the gospel, including 'the invitation to personal conversion to a new life in Christ and to discipleship.'[19] While the Holy Spirit calls some to be evangelists (Eph. 4:11), we all are called to give an account of the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15). Not only individuals but also the whole church together is called to evangelize (Mark 16:15; 1 Pet. 2:9).

82. Today's world is marked by excessive assertion of religious identities and persuasions that seem to break and brutalize in the name of God rather than heal and nurture communities. In such a context, it is important to recognize that proselytism is not a legitimate way of practicing evangelism.[20] The Holy Spirit chooses to work in partnership with people's preaching and demonstration of the good news (see Rom. 10:14-15; 2 Cor. 4:2-6), but it is only God's Spirit who creates new life and brings about rebirth (John 3:5-8; 1 Thess. 1:4-6). We acknowledge that evangelism at times has been distorted and lost its credibility because some Christians have forced 'conversions' by violent means or the abuse of power. In some contexts, however, accusations of forced conversions are motivated by the desire of dominant groups to keep the marginalized living with oppressed identities and in dehumanizing conditions.

83. Evangelism is sharing one's faith and conviction with other people and inviting them to discipleship, whether or not they adhere to other religious traditions. Such sharing is to take place with both confidence and humility and as an expression of our professed love for our world. If we claim to love God and to love our fellow human beings but fail to share the good news with them urgently and consistently, we deceive ourselves as to the integrity of our love for either God or people. There is no greater gift we can offer to our fellow human beings than to share and/or introduce them to the love, grace, and mercy of God in Christ.

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[17] *Minutes and Reports of the Fourth Meeting of the Central Committee*, WCC, Rolle, Switzerland, 1951, 66.

[18] The Lausanne Movement, the *Cape Town Commitment*, 2010, Part I, 7(b).

[19] See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization*, No. 12, 2007, 489-504.

[20] WCC Central Committee, *Towards Common Witness: A Call to Adopt Responsible Relationships in Mission and to Renounce Proselytism* (1997).

84. Evangelism leads to repentance, faith, and baptism. Hearing the truth in the face of sin and evil demands a response – positive or negative (John 4:28-29; cf. Mark 10:22). It provokes conversion, involving a change of attitudes, priorities, and goals. It results in salvation of the lost, healing of the sick, and the liberation of the oppressed and the whole creation.

85. 'Evangelism,', while not excluding the different dimensions of mission, focuses on explicit and intentional articulation of the gospel, including 'the invitation to personal conversion to a new life in Christ and to discipleship.'[21] In different churches, there are differing understandings of how the Spirit calls us to evangelize in our contexts. For some, evangelism is primarily about leading people to personal conversion through Jesus Christ; for others, evangelism is about being in solidarity and offering Christian witness through presence with oppressed peoples; others again look on evangelism as one component of God's mission. Different Christian traditions denote aspects of mission and evangelism in different ways; however, we can still affirm that the Spirit calls us all towards an understanding of evangelism which is grounded in the life of the local church where worship (*leiturgia*) is inextricably linked with witness (*martyria*), service (*diakonia*), and fellowship (*koinonia*).

Evangelism in Christ's Way

86. Evangelism is sharing the good news both in word and action. Evangelizing through verbal proclamation or preaching of the gospel (*kerygma*) is profoundly biblical. However, if our words are not consistent with our actions, our evangelism is inauthentic. The combination of verbal declaration and visible action bears witness to God's revelation in Jesus Christ and of his purposes. Evangelism is closely related to unity: the love for one another is a demonstration of the gospel we proclaim (John 13:34-35) while disunity is an embarrassment to the gospel (1 Cor. 1).

87. There are historical and contemporary examples of faithful, humble service by Christians, working in their own local contexts, with whom the Spirit has partnered to bring about fullness of life. Also, many Christians who lived and worked as missionaries far away from their own cultural contexts did so with humility, mutuality, and respect; God's Spirit also stirred in those communities to bring about transformation.

88. Regrettably, sometimes evangelism has been practiced in ways which betray rather than incarnate the gospel. Whenever this occurs, repentance

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[21] It is important to note that not all churches understand evangelism as expressed in the above. The Roman Catholic Church refers to 'evangelization' as the *missio ad gentes* [mission to the peoples] directed to those who do not know Christ. In a wider sense, it is used to describe ordinary pastoral work, while the phrase 'new evangelization' designates pastoral outreach to those who no longer practise the Christian faith. See 'Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization'.

is in order. Mission in Christ's way involves affirming the dignity and rights of others. We are called to serve others as Christ did (cf. Mark 10:45; Matt. 25:45), without exploitation or any form of allurement.[22] In such individualized contexts, it may be possible to confuse evangelism with buying and selling a 'product', where *we* decide what aspects Christian life we want to take on. Instead, the Spirit rejects the idea that Jesus' good news for all can be consumed under capitalist terms, and the Spirit calls us to conversion and transformation at a personal level, which leads us to the proclamation of the fullness of life for all.

89. Authentic evangelism is grounded in humility and respect for all and flourishes in the context of dialogue. It promotes the message of the gospel, of healing and reconciliation, in word and deed. 'There is no evangelism without solidarity; there is no Christian solidarity that does not involve sharing the message of God's coming reign.'[23] Evangelism, therefore, inspires the building of inter-personal and community relationships. Such authentic relationships are often best nourished in local faith communities and based in local cultural contexts. Christian witness is as much by our presence as by our words. In situations where the public testimony to one's faith is not possible without risking one's life, simply living the gospel may be a powerful alternative.

90. Aware of tensions between people and communities of different religious convictions and varied interpretations of Christian witness, authentic evangelism must always be guided by life-affirming values, as stated in the joint statement on 'Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct':

a. Rejection of all forms of violence, discrimination and repression by religious and secular authority, including the abuse of power – psychological or social.

b. Affirming the freedom of religion to practice and profess faith without any fear of reprisal and or intimidation. Mutual respect and solidarity which promote justice, peace and the common good of all.

c. Respect for all people and human cultures, while also discerning the elements in our own cultures, such as patriarchy, racism, casteism, etc. that need to be challenged by the gospel.

d. Renunciation of false witness and listening in order to understand in mutual respect.

e. Ensuring freedom for ongoing discernment by persons and communities as part of decision-making.

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[22] World Council of Churches, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and World Evangelical Alliance, *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct* (2011).

[23] The San Antonio Report, 26; CWME, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* (1982), §34; Duraisingh, *Called to One Hope*, 38.

f. Building relationships with believers of other faiths or no faith to facilitate deeper mutual understanding, reconciliation and co-operation for the common good.[24]

91. We live in a world strongly influenced by individualism, secularism, and materialism and by other ideologies that challenge the values of the kingdom of God. Although the gospel is ultimately good news for all, it is bad news for the forces which promote falsehood, injustice, and oppression. To that extent, evangelism is also a prophetic vocation which involves speaking truth to power in hope and in love (Acts 26:25; Col. 1:5; Eph. 4:15). The gospel is liberative and transformative. Its proclamation must involve transformation of societies with a view to creating just and inclusive communities.

92. Standing against evil or injustice and being prophetic can sometimes be met with suppression and violence, and thus consequently lead to suffering, persecution, and even death. Authentic evangelism involves being vulnerable, following the example of Christ by carrying the cross and emptying oneself (Phil. 2:5-11). Just as the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church under Roman persecution, today the pursuit of justice and righteousness makes a powerful witness to Christ. Jesus linked such self-denial with the call to follow him and with eternal salvation (Mark 8:34-38).

Evangelism, Inter-faith Dialogue and Christian Presence

93. In the plurality and complexity of today's world, we encounter people of many different faiths, ideologies, and convictions. We believe that the Spirit of Life brings joy and fullness of life. God's Spirit, therefore, can be found in all cultures that affirm life. The Holy Spirit works in mysterious ways and we do not fully understand the workings of the Spirit in other faith traditions. We acknowledge that there is inherent value and wisdom in diverse life-giving spiritualities. Therefore, authentic mission makes the 'other' a partner in, not an 'object' of mission.

94. Dialogue is a way of affirming our common life and goals in terms of the affirmation of life and the integrity of creation. Dialogue at the religious level is possible only if we begin with the expectation of meeting God who has preceded us and has been present with people within their own contexts.[25] God is there before we come (Acts 17) and our task is not to bring God along, but to witness to the God who is already there. Dialogue provides for an honest encounter where each party brings to the table all that they are in an open, patient and respectful manner.

95. Evangelism and dialogue are distinct but interrelated. Although Christians hope and pray that all people may come to living knowledge of the Triune God, evangelism is not the purpose of dialogue. However, since

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[24] See *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*.
[25] See WCC, *Baar Statement: Theological Perspectives on Plurality* (1990).

dialogue is also 'a mutual encounter of commitments,' sharing the good news of Jesus Christ has a legitimate place in it. Furthermore, authentic evangelism takes place in the context of the dialogue of life and action and in 'the spirit of dialogue' – 'an attitude of respect and friendship.'[26] Evangelism entails not only proclamation of our deepest convictions, but also listening to others and being challenged and enriched by others (Acts 10).

96. Particularly important is dialogue between people of different faiths, not only in multi-religious contexts but equally where there is a large majority of a particular faith. It is necessary to protect rights of minority groups and religious freedom, and to enable all to contribute to the common good. Religious freedom should be upheld because it flows from the dignity of the human person, grounded in the creation of all human beings in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26). Followers of all religions and beliefs have equal rights and responsibilities.[27]

Evangelism and Cultures

97. The gospel takes root in different contexts through engagement with specific cultural, political, and religious realities. Respect for people and their cultural and symbolic life-worlds are necessary if the gospel is to take root in those different realities. In this way it must begin with engagement and dialogue with the wider context in order to discern how Christ is already present and where God's Spirit is already at work.

98. The connection of evangelism with colonial powers in the history of mission has led to the presupposition that Western forms of Christianity are the standards by which others' adherence to the gospel should be judged. Evangelism by those who enjoy economic power or cultural hegemony risks distorting the gospel. Therefore, they must seek the partnership of the poor, the dispossessed, and minorities, and be shaped by their theological resources and visions.

99. The enforcement of uniformity discredits the uniqueness of each individual created in the image and likeness of God. Whereas Babel attempted to enforce uniformity, the preaching of the disciples on the day of Pentecost resulted in a unity in which personal particularities and community identities were not lost but respected – they heard the good news in their own languages.

100. Jesus calls us out of the narrow concerns of *our* own kingdom, *our* own liberation, and *our* own independence (Acts 1:6) by unveiling to us a larger vision, and empowering us by the Holy Spirit to go 'to the ends of the earth' as witnesses in each context of time and space to God's justice,

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[26] Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of The Gospel of Jesus Christ* (1991), §9.

[27] See *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*.

freedom, and peace. Our calling is to point all to Jesus, rather than to ourselves or our institutions, looking out for the interests of others rather than our own (see Phil. 2:3-4). We cannot capture the complexities of the scriptures through one dominant cultural perspective. A plurality of cultures is a gift of the Spirit to deepen our understanding of our faith and one another. As such, intercultural communities of faith, where diverse cultural communities worship together, is one way in which cultures can engage one another authentically and where culture can enrich gospel. At the same time, the gospel critiques notions of cultural superiority. Therefore, 'the gospel, to be fruitful, needs to be both true to itself and incarnated or rooted in the culture of a people … We need constantly to seek the insight of the Holy Spirit in helping us to better discern where the gospel challenges, endorses or transforms a particular culture'[28] for the sake of life.

Feast of Life: Concluding Affirmations

101. We are the servants of the Triune God, who has given us the mission of proclaiming the good news to all humanity and creation, especially the oppressed and the suffering people who are longing for fullness of life. Mission – as a common witness to Christ – is an invitation to the 'feast in the kingdom of God' (Luke 14:15). The mission of the church is to prepare the banquet and to invite all people to the feast of life. The feast is a celebration of creation and fruitfulness overflowing from the love of God, the source of life in abundance. It is a sign of the liberation and reconciliation of the whole creation which is the goal of mission. With a renewed appreciation of the mission of God's Spirit, we offer the following affirmations in response to the question posed at the beginning of this document.

102. *We affirm that the purpose of God's mission is fullness of life (John 10:10) and that this is the criterion for discernment in mission.* Therefore, we are called to discern the Spirit of God wherever there is life in its fullness, particularly in terms of the liberation of the oppressed peoples, the healing and reconciliation of broken communities, and the restoration of the whole creation. We are challenged to appreciate the life-affirming spirits present in different cultures and to be in solidarity with all those who are involved in the mission of affirming and preserving life. We also discern and confront evil spirits wherever forces of death and negation of life are experienced.

103. *We affirm that mission begins with God's act of creation and continues in re-creation, by the enlivening power of the Holy Spirit.* The Holy Spirit, poured out in tongues of fire at Pentecost, fills our hearts and makes us into Christ's church. The Spirit which was in Christ Jesus inspires us to a self-emptying and cross-bearing life-style and accompanies God's people as we seek to bear witness to the love of God in word and deed. The Spirit of truth

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[28] *Called to One Hope*, 21-22; 24.

leads into all truth and empowers us to defy the demonic powers and speak the truth in love. As a redeemed community we share with others the waters of life and look for the Spirit of unity to heal, reconcile, and renew the whole creation.

104. *We affirm that spirituality is the source of energy for mission and that mission in the Spirit is transformative.* Thus we seek a re-orienting of our perspective between mission, spirituality, and creation. Mission spirituality that flows from liturgy and worship reconnects us with one another and with the wider creation. We understand that our participation in mission, our existence in creation, and our practice of the life of the Spirit, are woven together, for they are mutually transformative. Mission that begins with creation invites us to celebrate life in all its dimensions as God's gift.

105. *We affirm that the mission of God's Spirit is to renew the whole creation.* 'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it' (Ps. 24:1, NIV). The God of life protects, loves, and cares for nature. Humanity is not the master of the earth but is responsible to care for the integrity of creation. Excessive greed and unlimited consumption which lead to continuous destruction of nature must end. God's love does not proclaim a human salvation separate from the renewal of the whole creation. We are called to participate in God's mission beyond our human-centred goals. God's mission is to all life and we have to both acknowledge it and serve it in new ways of mission. We pray for repentance and forgiveness, but we also call for action now. Mission has creation at its heart.

106. *We affirm that today mission movements are emerging from the global South and East which are multi-directional and many-faceted.* The shifting centre of gravity of Christianity to the global South and East challenges us to explore missiological expressions that are rooted in these contexts, culture, and spiritualities. We need to develop further mutuality and partnership, and affirm interdependence within mission and the ecumenical movement. Our mission practice should show solidarity with suffering peoples and harmony with nature. Evangelism is done in self-emptying humility, with respect towards others and in dialogue with people of different cultures and faiths. It should, in this landscape, also involve confronting structures and cultures of oppression and dehumanization that are in contradiction to the values of God's reign.

107. *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.

108. *We affirm that the economy of God is based on values of love and justice for all and that transformative mission resists idolatry in the free-market economy.* Economic globalization has effectively supplanted the God of Life with mammon, the god of free-market capitalism that claims the power to save the world through the accumulation of undue wealth and prosperity. Mission in this context needs to be counter-cultural, offering alternatives to such idolatrous visions because mission belongs to the God of Life, justice, and peace, and not to this false god who brings misery and suffering to people and nature. Mission, then, is to denounce the economy of greed and to participate in and practice the divine economy of love, sharing, and justice.

109. *We affirm that the gospel of Jesus Christ is good news in all ages and places and should be proclaimed in the Spirit of love and humility.* We affirm the centrality of the incarnation, the cross, and the resurrection in our message and also in the way we do evangelism. Therefore, evangelism always points to Jesus and the kingdom of God rather than to institutions, and it belongs to the very being of the church. The prophetic voice of the church should not be silent in times that demand this voice be heard. The church is called to renew its methods of evangelism to communicate the good news with persuasion, inspiration, and conviction.

110. *We affirm that dialogue and co-operation for life are integral to mission and evangelism.* Authentic evangelism is done with respect for freedom of religion and belief, for all human beings as images of God. Proselytism by violent means, economic incentive, or abuse of power is contrary to the message of the gospel. In doing evangelism it is important to build relations of respect and trust between people of different faiths. We value each and every human culture, and recognize that the gospel is not possessed by any group but is for every people. We understand that our task is not to bring God along but to witness to the God who is already there (Acts 17:23-28). Joining in with the Spirit, we are enabled to cross cultural and religious barriers to work together towards life.

111. *We affirm that God moves and empowers the church in mission.* The church as the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit, is dynamic and changing as it continues the mission of God. This leads to a variety of forms of common witness, reflecting the diversity of world Christianity. Thus the churches need to be on the move, journeying together in mission, continuing in the mission of the apostles. Practically, this means that church and mission should be united and that different ecclesial and missional bodies need to work together for the sake of life.

112. The Triune God invites the whole creation to the Feast of Life, through Jesus Christ who came 'that they may have life, and may have it in all its fullness' (John 10:10, REB), through the Holy Spirit who affirms the vision of the reign of God, 'Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth!' (Isa. 65:17, KJV). We commit ourselves together in humility and hope to the mission of God, who recreates all and reconciles all. And we pray, 'God of Life, lead us into justice and peace!'

RESPONDING TO THE CHANGED LANDSCAPE OF THE 21ST CENTURY: THE PROCESS AND CONTENT OF *TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE*

Kirsteen Kim

Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes (*TTL*) is only the second World Council of Churches (WCC) policy statement on mission and evangelism. The first, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* (*EA*) was ratified by the WCC Central Committee in 1982 after several attempts to produce an acceptable text.[1] *EA* was the WCC response to two important documents of the previous decade: the *Lausanne Covenant* (*LC*) produced at the International Congress on World Evangelization in 1974 and the apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* in 1975. Within the WCC, it interpreted the lively debate on mission and evangelism at the General Assembly in Nairobi in 1975, and it was very much influenced by the World Mission Conference organised by CWME in Melbourne, Australia, in 1980.[2] The influence of Latin American Liberation Theology, which was at its height at the time, is evident in the text, which was commended for its 'holistic, encompassing approach to mission, highlighting both the call to a clear witness to Jesus Christ and the promised Kingdom of God, as well as the mandate to live in solidarity with those exploited and rejected by social and economic systems'.[3]

By the beginning of the 21st century, the need for a new WCC policy statement on mission and evangelism was urgent because of the 'changing landscapes'[4] in which mission was happening. The Commission on World

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[1] WCC, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation*, in Jacques Matthey (ed), *'You are the Light of the World': Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 4-38.

[2] Jacques Matthey, 'Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation: Presentation', in Matthey, *'You are the Light of the World'*, 1-3; Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *The Lausanne Covenant* (1974), available at: www.lausanne.org; Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: Apostolic exhortation on Evangelism Today, available at: www.vatican.va; David M. Paton (ed), *Breaking Barriers*. The Official Report of the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Nairobi, 1975 (Geneva: WCC, 1976); WCC, *Your Kingdom Come: Mission Perspectives*. Report on the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism, Melbourne, Australia, 12th to 25th May 1980 (Geneva: WCC, 1980).

[3] Matthey, 'Mission and Evangelism', 3.

[4] *TTL* subtitle.

Mission and Evangelism (CWME), reconstituted after the Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2006, began work on a new statement by identifying four contemporary challenges for mission: pneumatology and spirituality, the market economy and marginalisation, church and mission, and evangelism. Working groups formed in 2008 for each of these produced the four main parts of the new statement: Spirit of mission, Spirit of liberation, Spirit of community, and Spirit of Pentecost. In this chapter, following this outline, I shall consider how, in the process of writing *TTL*, CWME embraced changes in the theological landscape and applied these new insights to the interrelated socio-economic, ecclesial and religious contexts in which mission and evangelism are carried out. I shall conclude with a brief consideration of the significance of *TTL*.

Theological Landscape: Breath of Life

Comparing *TTL* with the earlier mission statement, *EA*, the most obvious shifts are in the theological themes which run through the documents: from reference to Christology and the Kingdom (or reign) of God to attention to the Holy Spirit and life. *EA* highlighted 'mission in Christ's way' (§§28-30), following the 'servant king' (§§6-8). It saw the church primarily as the body of Christ, which continues Christ's sacrificial ministry of mediating between God and his creation through its proclamation and witness (§§6, 8, 20, 47). By framing the second WCC statement on mission and evangelism pneumatologically, CWME signalled that *TTL* was intended to complement *EA* rather than replace it. At the same time, the pneumatological approach is a sign of continuity since it is construed in *TTL* as within the *missio Dei* theology (*TTL* §§1-2), which had shaped ecumenical mission theology in a Trinitarian way since the meeting of the International Missionary Council in Willingen, Germany, in 1952.[5] The understanding of mission as participating in the sending of the Triune God was strengthened during the 1970s by Orthodox theologians, especially through their spokesperson Ion Bria,[6] and used in the 1982 statement to emphasise particularly the link between mission and unity (see especially *EA* §§1, 3, 5, 20-21). Bria drew particular attention to the role of the Holy Spirit as the foundation of mission: 'The "sending" of mission is essentially the sending of the Spirit (John 14.26), who manifests precisely the life of God as communion' (1 Cor. 13.13).[7] *TTL* continues this focus in its first main section and in its framing.

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[5] IMC, 'The Missionary Calling of the Church', in 'Quarterly Notes, No. 16, October 1952', in *International Review of Mission,* 41.4 (Oct 1952), i-xii, at ii-iii.

[6] See, for example, Ion Bria, 'Confessing Christ Today', in *International Review of Mission,* 64.253 (Jan 1975), 67-74; 'The Liturgy After the Liturgy', in *International Review of Mission,* 67.265 (Jan 1978), 86-90; 'On Orthodox Witness', in *International Review of Mission,* 69.276-77 (Oct 1979-Jan 1980), 527-28.

[7] Bria, *Go Forth in Peace*, 3.

In its interpretation of 'mission in Christ's way, *EA* focused on the Synoptic Jesus who preached the Kingdom of God (Preface, 5, 6, 14, 20). In the post-colonial context in which *EA* was produced, 'kingdom' was reinterpreted as 'reign' rather than expanding territory[8] and, moving beyond the duality of 'evangelism' and 'social action' (*LC* §4 and §5), *EA* emphasised that God's reign encompassed both personal conversion (*EA* §§10-13) and social justice (§§31-36). In Matthew and Mark, Jesus repeatedly speaks of 'the kingdom', while 'Spirit' as a reference to God is rare, but Luke's gospel has a more developed pneumatology and in Luke's sequel to his gospel, the book of Acts, the Spirit takes centre stage as 'the guiding and driving force of mission'.[9] In John's gospel, 'kingdom' occurs in only three verses, whereas 'Spirit' or 'Paraclete' are frequently used. Furthermore, in the Pauline corpus the word 'Spirit' occurs over ten times more often than 'kingdom'.[10] The terms 'kingdom' and 'Spirit' occur in parallel in several New Testament verses (Matt. 12.28; John 3.5; Luke 4.18-19); these represent a general pattern in which both 'Spirit' and 'kingdom' function to describe God's work in history.[11] For example, the restoration of the kingdom for which the disciples were looking (Acts 1.6) is answered by the promise of the Holy Spirit, 'power from on high' (1.8; Luke 24.49). The two terms hang together in a Trinitarian doctrine of the kingdom: 'The Spirit is the one who makes the kingdom of God, the kingdom of love and justice, real in Jesus' life, and in the life of his followers. The Spirit is the Spirit of this kingdom (John 3:3-5).'[12] Since 'kingdom' and 'Spirit' are in many respects parallel terms in Scripture, the choice of one over the other is a contextual one.[13] In CWME, the shift from an almost exclusively Christocentric view of mission to embrace a more pneumatological one was already apparent in a text from 2000: 'Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today' (MEUT).[14]

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[8] Following the post-World War II New Testament scholarship of Ernst Käsemann, who spoke at the Melbourne conference in 1980, Krister Stendahl, who led the Bible studies at Melbourne, Oscar Cullmann, who was the doctoral supervisor of David Bosch, and others.

[9] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 113.

[10] Timothy Gorringe, *Redeeming Time: Atonement through Education* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1986), 89.

[11] Gorringe, *Redeeming Time*, 71.

[12] Mike Higton, *Christian Doctrine* (London: SCM, 2008), 80, commenting on Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* (London: SCM, 1981).

[13] See also Kirsteen Kim, 'Edinburgh 1910 to 2010: From Kingdom to Spirit', in *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association,* 30.2 (2010), 3-20.

[14] CWME, 'Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today', in Matthey, *'You are the Light of the World'*, 62-89. See also Jacques Matthey, 'Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today: Presentation', in Matthey, *'You are the Light of the World'*, 59-61.

The sending of the Spirit in mission to which Orthodox theologians drew attention was not first at Pentecost but in the very act of creation. The creative work of God led to the conception of Jesus Christ and the gathering of the church as eschatological gathering (*synaxis*). Continued Orthodox insistence on the need for proper attention to pneumatology in ecumenical theology led the first WCC General Assembly to have a pneumatological theme: the seventh Assembly held at Canberra, Australia, in 1991, which discussed, 'Come, Holy Spirit, renew the whole creation'.[15] The papers in preparation for the Assembly, other presentations there and the responses afterwards, revealed the potential of pneumatology for a holistic, environmentally concerned and inclusive theology of mission.[16] However, in the event, the approach was divisive because the treatment of the Holy Spirit in relation to creation and to other spirits and powers was insufficiently rigorous, and this led to accusations of syncretism from both Orthodox and Evangelical participants.[17] Fourteen years after the Canberra Assembly, the conference on mission and evangelism organised by CWME in Athens in 2005 at the invitation of the Greek Orthodox Church dared to revive the topic of pneumatology in the WCC. This time it was approached with caution and under the irenic theme, 'Come, Holy Spirit, heal and

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[15] Michael Kinnamon (ed), *Signs of the Spirit*: Official Report of the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Canberra, 1991 (Geneva: WCC, 1991). A pneumatological approach to mission is found in previous WCC general assemblies. At the New Delhi Assembly in 1961, the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about God's purposes in the whole creation was frequently mentioned, although the theology of the 'cosmic Christ' prevailed. See, John Nagpur, 'New Delhi 1961: The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches', in *International Review of Mission,* 51/202 (Apr 1962), 137-52. At the Uppsala Assembly of 1968, there was an emphasis on the freedom of the Spirit, while the Spirit's life-giving work made possible theologically the Assembly's affirmation of humanisation and development as a legitimate part of the church's task: WCC, *The Uppsala Report 1968: Official Report of the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: WCC, 1968). The pneumatological reasoning for a broad understanding of Christian mission was very clearly expressed at Uppsala by John V. Taylor, a prominent theologian, in his subsequent book about the Holy Spirit and mission, *The Go-between God* (London: SCM, 1972).

[16] A good selection of these can be found in *Ecumenical Review,* 41.3 (1989) and in *International Review of Mission,* 80.319-20 (1991). The Assembly provided rich resources of creation pneumatology for the development of theologies of eco-justice through the JPIC (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation) programme: see David G. Hallman (ed), *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North* (Geneva: WCC, 1994).

[17] For analysis of the pneumatological issues raised at Canberra, see Kirsteen Kim, *The Holy Spirit in the World: A Global Conversation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007); Kirsteen Kim, 'Spirit and "Spirits" at the Canberra Assembly of the World Council of Churches, 1991', in *Missiology: An International Review,* 32.3 (2004), 349-65.

reconcile'.[18] One of the documents prepared by CWME for Athens, 'Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation', drew attention to the Holy Spirit as the agent of reconciliation,[19] a theme which runs throughout the new statement. In *TTL* the Spirit's ministry of reconciliation is most often connected with creation. *TTL* calls for 'mission with creation at its heart' (§20), which moves 'beyond a narrowly human-centred approach and to embrace forms of mission which express our reconciled relationship with all created life' (§19).

In *TTL*, there is an integral relationship between personal encounter with Jesus Christ in the Spirit and participation in the church's mission. In the 1980s, Latin American liberation theologians, belatedly, connected the declaration of Jesus that 'the Spirit of the Lord is upon me' with the liberation he proclaimed (Luke 4.18) and developed a spirituality of liberation.[20] *TTL* takes this mission spirituality further and connects it with the liberation and reconciliation of the whole creation (§21). 'Spirituality' is often used for a kind of religion that is not expressed in worldly activity, but in worship, meditation and often introspection. 'Mission', on the other hand, is associated with activism, with goals and strategy, so 'mission spirituality' sounds like a contradiction in terms[21] and mission studies does not often overlap with spiritual theology.[22] However, the potential of the *missio Dei* paradigm understood pneumatologically for the development of mission spirituality had been revealed at the Canberra Assembly through the dialogue with spiritualities of indigenous peoples, reflection on women's spirituality, and the ecological agenda. In its development of 'transformative spirituality' (§3, 29-35), *TTL* shows that mission is a spiritual endeavour and spiritual life is missional since both are human

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[18] For documentation of the Athens conference, see Jacques Matthey (ed), *Come, Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile. Report of the World Council of Churches Conference on Mission and Evangelism, Athens, May 2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2008). For background, see Kim, *The Holy Spirit in the World*.

[19] CWME, 'Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation', in Matthey, *Come, Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile*, 92-126.

[20] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, and Melbourne, Vic: Dove Communications, 1984), 138, n.1; Gustavo Gutiérrez, 'Theology as Wisdom', in T.K. John (ed), *Bread and Breath: Essays in Honour of Samuel Rayan SJ* (Anand, Gujarat: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1990), 3-5, at 4.

[21] Robert Schreiter, 'The Theology of Reconciliation and Peacemaking for Mission', in Howard Mellor and Timothy Yates (eds), *Mission, Violence and Reconciliation* (Sheffield, UK: Cliff College Publishing, 2004), 11-28.

[22] A point addressed by Robert Davies Hughes, III, *Beloved Dust: Tides of the Spirit in the Christian Life* (New York: Continuum, 2008).

responses to impulses produced by the mission of the Spirit in the whole creation. Mission spirituality is mission 'in the Spirit'.[23]

As well as reflecting Protestant-Orthodox dialogue within the WCC, the Athens conference also reached out to Pentecostal churches and charismatic movements. Their growth, and the emergence in the intervening period of Pentecostal and charismatic theology,[24] meant that pneumatology, spirituality, and even discussion of spirits, had become more common across traditions and around the world – and this helped the discussion at Athens to avoid accusations of syncretism. Another preparatory document by CWME, 'The Healing Mission of the Church', related healing to the work of the Spirit, concepts of spiritual powers and gifts of healing.[25] This is reflected in the section in *TTL* on mission as healing and wholeness (§50-54). Furthermore, the Commission's committed involvement in the Edinburgh 2010 (centenary) project confirmed that a pneumatological approach would have an appeal beyond WCC member-churches to reach all strands of Christianity.[26] In many ways, the climate was right to approach time-worn topics from a fresh, pneumatological perspective, which seemed to capture the moment and reached across the churches from Orthodox to Pentecostal, from Catholic to Quaker. *TTL* incorporates references to spiritual gifts and discernment of spirits encouraged by spiritual renewal movements (§24-25). In fact, it revisions Christian mission as beginning with the spiritual activity of discerning the spirits in order to discover the movement of the Spirit of God in the world and join with it (§18, 25, 110).

If mission is 'finding out where the Holy Spirit is at work and joining in',[27] then learning to recognise the presence and work of the Spirit is crucially important. The Holy Spirit's life-giving nature is the most prominent feature of *TTL*, which takes its cue from John 10.10b: 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly' (§1, 102, 112). Although there was a strategic aim in choosing 'life' as the theme of the new mission

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[23] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1977); Kirsteen Kim, *Mission in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Indian Christian Theologies* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2003).

[24] For example, Pentecostal theology of mission was brought together in Harold D. Hunter and Peter D. Hocken (eds), *All Together in One Place: Theological Papers from the Brighton Conference on World Evangelization* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

[25] CWME, 'The Healing Mission of the Church', in Matthey, *Come, Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile*, 129-62.

[26] See the 'Common Call' of Edinburgh 2010 which can be downloaded from the project website: www.edinburgh2010.org. Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant (ecumenical and evangelical), Pentecostal and indigenous churches were full members of this project. See also the Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series published by Regnum Books, Oxford: www.ocms.ac.uk/regnum/edinburgh.

[27] Kirsteen Kim, *Joining in with the Spirit: Connecting World Church and Local Mission* (London: SCM, 2012).

statement because it would allow for a direct contribution to the theme of the WCC's thirteenth assembly, which was decided in 2011 to be 'God of life, lead us to justice and peace', the decision was entirely consistent with the established approach of CWME, as shown in the earlier document, MEUT. The great ecumenical creed of Nicaea-Constantinople defines the Holy Spirit as 'the Giver of Life' (*TTL* §1). The structure of the Nicene Creed makes it clear that we cannot reduce the life of the Spirit to some kind of 'purely spiritual' or church life that is separated from biological and natural life. The Spirit is the life-giver because the Spirit is co-creator with the Father and the Son. In *TTL*, the life of the church is set within the Triune God's creative activity to bring life to the world. In the preparation of the text, and at the pre-Assembly conference in Manila in 2012, at which delegates helped to hone the text, CWME spent some time reflecting on how the Spirit is related scripturally to each of the elements of creation: wind, water, fire and earth itself.

Because it takes life as the key marker of the Christian spirit, *TTL* expresses openness to engagement with all agencies that are life-affirming, such as liberation and development initiatives of various sorts, whether they are faith-based or not, while resisting the forces of death (§1, 3-4, 27, 49, 90, 93-4, 102, 106-7). This gives grounds for co-operation and alliances in mission with communities of other faiths and with secular bodies. Because Christians are committed to Jesus Christ, the life of the world, they have a particular understanding of what constitutes abundant life to share with the rest of humanity (*TTL* §1).

Having embraced a mission pneumatology, CWME working groups applied this to the most significant aspects of the changed landscape since 1982.

Socio-economic Landscape: Mission from the Margins

Changes in the theological landscape were not isolated from the significant socio-economic changes that took place in the thirty years between 1982 when *EA* was published and 2012 when *TTL* was finalised. The ending of the Cold War after the collapse of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc in the late 1980s ushered in a new world order. Many of the changes brought socio-economic and political benefits as the dictatorships of the right as well as the left from which *EA* called for liberation collapsed, and new democracies emerged in Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa. However, struggles for identity and self-determination led to new outbreaks of conflict often within nations. It was in large part as a response to this global context, and in the middle of the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence,[28] that the Athens conference expressed a new understanding of mission as reconciliation. The conference showed that 'mission does not belong to us,

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[28] Details available at: www.overcomingviolence.org.

but is the mission of God, who is present and active as Holy Spirit in church and world… to heal, reconcile and empower us so that, as individuals and communities, we may become and share signs of peace, forgiveness, justice and unity, and renounce hatred, violence, injustice and divisions'.[29] *TTL* builds on this theology of reconciliation and takes a step beyond *EA*'s call for liberation when it repeatedly links the two themes together (*TTL* §§24, 43, 101). Recognising the danger that action for liberation could degenerate into activism or even violence,[30] *TTL* insists that Christian efforts at social liberation must also look beyond the achievement of justice towards a reconciled society. Having a vision for future reconciliation with our enemies, the struggle must be waged in a way that does not breed future resentment but bears witness to the rightness of our cause through extending Christian love (Matt. 5.43-48).[31]

The post-Cold War era is often characterised as the era of globalisation. Globalisation may be thought of benignly as 'a process… which embodies a transformation in the spatial configurations of social relations and transactions… generating transcontinental or inter-regional flows'.[32] In this sense, it has been going on for many centuries, and Christian mission may be regarded as a globalising movement.[33] The changes brought about are varied, not uniform, and some are excluded, or exclude themselves, from aspects of globalisation, but no-one on the planet is unaffected by it.[34] Although they do not necessarily originate with the most powerful, in the era since 1945, global developments have tended to be driven by the USA. Whereas the globalisation brought about by the British Empire was expressed mainly in terms of territorial expansion, the USA holds power through non-governmental organisations, international corporations and local elites which carry its cultural influence around the globe. In both

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[29] Conference website: www.mission2005.org.

[30] Jacques Matthey, 'Reconciliation, *Missio Dei* and the Church's Mission', in Mellor and Yates, *Mission, Violence and Reconciliation*, 113-37.

[31] Donal Dorr, *Mission in Today's World* (Blackrock, Dublin: Columba Press, 2000), 128; cf. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 105.

[32] David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 16.

[33] See, for example, Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009); Sebastian C.H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

[34] Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives*, 2nd edition (London: Profile Books, 2002), 6-19.

cases, military might and control of the global economy undergird global power but today's imperialism is disguised as 'soft power'.[35]

If the global context for mission is thought of as 'empire', then raising the profile of the alternative kingdom of Christ, king of kings, was perhaps the most intelligible way of conveying the power of the gospel, as indeed was done at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910.[36] But in many respects, pneumatology – the language of Spirit, spirit(s) and spirituality – resonates with a form of globalisation that relies less on territorial expansion and more on hegemony by means of global flows, communications and cultural influences. The organic metaphors are also in keeping with the theology of the Spirit who moves in and over the creation. Furthermore, given that the movement of the Spirit is unpredictable (John 3.8), pneumatology allows for multi-directional movements in a way that the top-down analogy of kingship does not. As with the use of the 'kingdom' analogy, use of 'Spirit' may support as well as subvert the world order.[37] Nevertheless, in *TTL*, the Spirit is aligned with life-affirming forces (§2) as the Spirit of liberation and empowerment who overcomes the powers of evil and brings fullness of life for all (§36-37). The theology of the Holy Spirit that informs *TTL* is one that is subversive of human power structures, mindful that the Spirit speaks from the margins and empowers the prophets.

The issue of mission and power was a lively topic in the Edinburgh 2010 project[38] and CWME continued this interest in *TTL*. It did so, both in view of the abuse of power in Christian mission in the colonial period (§27, 98) and today, for example in some forms of prosperity theology, the lack of accountability of some 'para-church' agencies (§64), and also due to the unequal power relations of globalisation. Since globalisation affects people differently depending on their situation, it was a deliberate decision on the part of CWME not to try and describe the contemporary landscape in detail.[39] However, in solidarity with Christian sisters and brothers who are less able to articulate their views internationally, and in the tradition of the prophets, *TTL* draws particular attention to devastating socio-economic and ecological effects produced by the triumph of the 'market ideology' (§7, 31). Some enthusiasts for contemporary globalisation argued that a self-

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[35] Joseph S. Nye Jr, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* (Oxford: OUP, 2002); Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (London: Penguin, 2004), 1-29.

[36] Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), title of chapter 1.

[37] Kim, 'Edinburgh 1910 to 2010'.

[38] 'Theme Four: Mission and Power', in Daryl Balia and Kirsteen Kim (eds), *Edinburgh 2010: Witnessing to Christ Today* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), 86-115; Atola Longkumer, Jorgen Skov Sorenson and Michael Biehl, *Mission and Power* (Oxford: Regnum, 2016).

[39] A more detailed analysis of the effects of globalisation is found in MEUT, 18-30.

regulating and universal economic system would facilitate liberal democratic political systems and therefore more just societies.[40] However, through the AGAPE process, the WCC heard otherwise and sought an alternative globalisation which would eradicate poverty, challenge wealth accumulation and safeguard ecological integrity.[41]

The response of *TTL* to the socio-economic landscape was expressed especially in the second theme of 'mission from the margins'. It drew on the understanding that poverty, wealth and ecology are integrally related and was informed by several initiatives: *Oikotree*, which submitted a paper to CWME in 2011 entitled 'Mission in the Context of Empire: Putting Justice at the Heart of Faith';[42] the work of the WCC's 'Just and Inclusive Communities' programme;[43] and Dalit experience in India, which stressed the agency of the marginalised.[44] 'Mission from the margins' was a development of the concern for the poor expressed in *EA* to include all categories of marginalisation. Whereas *EA* advocated mission *to* the poor and *with* the poor (§§32-36), *TTL* challenges 'the perception that mission can only be done by the powerful to the powerless' and, asserting that 'People on the margins have agency, and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view' (§38), recognises mission *from* the margins that 'works for a world where the fullness of life is available for all' (§37).

Ecclesial Landscape: Church on the Move

Especially in its treatment of the option for the poor, *EA* continued the model of mission as done by 'the West to the rest', whereas *TTL* responds to the 'shift of the centre of gravity' of Christianity from the North and West to the global South and East, to which Andrew Walls first drew attention from the 1970s.[45] For demographic reasons alone, developments

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[40] E.g. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

[41] WCC, 'Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All: A Call to Action' (19th July 2012): www.oikoumene.org (accessed 10th July 2015).

[42] *Oikotree* is an ecumenical space open to people of all faiths who share a concern for justice and the healing of the nations, and is sponsored by the Council for World Mission (CWM), the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the WCC: *Oikotree* 'About Us': www.oikotree.org (accessed 10th July 2015).

[43] Just and Inclusive Communities brings together WCC work on racism, migration, indigenous peoples, Dalits and people with disabilities: www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/just-and-inclusive-communities (accessed 16th July 2015).

[44] See Peniel Rajkumar, Joseph Dayam and I.P. Asheervadham (eds), *Mission at and from the Margins: Patterns, Protagonists and Perspectives*, Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series (Oxford: Regnum, 2014).

[45] Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996); Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).

outside the West will increasingly define the future of Christianity and of mission.[46] Walls' work has also given rise to the paradigm of world Christianity, which has many facets in addition to the statistical. For example, it treats Christianity as a world religion; it draws attention to new movements arising outside the West; and it is a way of de-centring Europe, which has been overly dominant in the study of theology and church history.[47] The Edinburgh project was organised to highlight world Christianity, and *TTL* uses it as one of its main frameworks for analysis (§5).

Awareness of world Christianity transformed the view of the ecclesial landscape. A diversity of new and independent Christian movements has become apparent in the last few decades. The growth of new movements means that increasing numbers of Christians belong to churches which are local or independent and do not relate to any of the global confessional families with their origins in Europe. 'Independency' is the predominant form of Christianity in Africa and Asia.[48] Even where a church belongs in name to a particular global denomination, its practice and identity in a new context may diverge so significantly from others of the same denomination that the family resemblance breaks down.[49]

One of the main stimuli for new movements has been the growth, especially since the liberalisation of many economies worldwide, of Pentecostal or Spirit-type churches, which are in keeping with post- or late-modern capitalist societies in that they tend to preach a form of prosperity gospel and see themselves as transnational.[50] However, serious study of, and engagement with, Pentecostalism, New Religious Movements and indigenous spiritualities has given legitimacy to many of these as expressions of faith parallel in many ways with New Testament churches.[51]

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[46] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: OUP, 2002).

[47] William B. Burrows, Mark R. Gornik and Janice A. McLean (eds), *Understanding World Christianity: The Vision and Work of Andrew F. Walls* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011).

[48] Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Atlas of Global Christianity, 1910-2010* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 70-71.

[49] There is likely to be further weakening in the confessional families related to churches of European origin because many nations with large Protestant populations, such as South Korea, Brazil, Nigeria and China, are rising on the global economic and political stage and developing their own mission movements, while the European churches decline relatively in wealth, and the ties provided by development activities grow less significant. Kim and Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion*, 227-28.

[50] Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Cassell, 1996); David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

[51] Among the pioneers of this scholarship were Walter Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM, 1969; ET 1972) and Andrew F. Walls (see above).

The WCC was slow to adjust to this new landscape of Christianity. New movements, particularly those initiated in Africa, were initially dismissed by western churches as hopelessly syncretistic because of their affinity with indigenous religions which were regarded as superstitions.[52] Pentecostal and other new movements were experienced by older churches as a threat rather than as examples of the boundary-breaking nature of the Spirit's work. Such churches were not mentioned in *EA*. *TTL*, however, continuing CWME's inclusive work, recognises Evangelical, Pentecostal, and indigenous churches (§65). In a world of many churches, *TTL* condemns inter-church competition (§62) and calls for the unity in the midst of diversity. However, this unity is not western-led uniformity but inclusivity and mutuality (§59, §66), common witness (§63) and collaboration in mission (§60-61, 64).

   TTL urges this togetherness on the theological basis of the 'rediscovery of the work of the Holy Spirit in healing and reconciliation' (§68). It also points out that true unity and peace are never at the expense of justice and therefore 'unity in mission is the basis for the visible unity of the churches' (§69). From the outset of its third main section, *TTL* sets the church and its unity in the context of the mission of the Triune God both in its origin and in its destiny (§§55-58). During collaboration with CWME between the ninth (Porto Alegre) and tenth (Busan) Assemblies, the WCC Commission on Faith and Order came to a similar conclusion and produced a significantly reshaped ecclesiological statement.[53] Within this *missio Dei* paradigm, the church is missionary by its very nature and local congregations are centres of mission (§§72-79).

   Contemporary global flows also include the movement of people. Migration is a key issue within the debate about poverty, wealth and ecology but it is also an ecclesiological issue as Christians and churches are 'on the move'.[54] So-called 'migrant churches' are a feature of many cities where they challenge received paradigms of church life.[55] The

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[52] John S. Pobee and Gabriel Ositelu II, *African Initiatives in Christianity: The Growth, Gifts and Diversities of Indigenous African Churches* (Geneva: WCC, 1998), 27.

[53] Compare Commission on Faith and Order, The Nature and Mission of the Church (WCC Faith and Order Paper No. 198 (2005)) with Commission on Faith and Order, *The Church: Toward a Common Vision* (WCC Faith and Order Paper No. 214 (2013)): www.oikoumene.org (accessed 16th July 2015). See also articles in *International Review of Mission,* 99.1 (2010), which records the joint consultation of CWME and the Commission in Faith and Order in Hungary in 2009.

[54] Subtitle of ecclesiology section of *TTL*.

[55] For recent studies of migrant churches, see these examples relating to African churches in Europe: Afe Adogame, *The African Christian Diaspora: New Currents and Emerging Trends in World Christianity* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); Gerri ter Haar, *Halfway to Paradise: African Christians in Europe* (Cardiff, UK: Cardiff Academic Press, 1998); Claudia Währisch-Oblau, *The Missionary Self-*

commissioners received a paper on the implications of migration from ENFORMM, the Ecumenical Network for Multicultural Ministry.[56] It reflected on how the worldwide spread of Christianity as recorded in the New Testament was due not only to the deliberate sending activity of the church, but also due to migration movements. The Roman Empire, like most empires, dispossessed and displaced individuals and whole communities. Persecutions, like those recorded in Acts 8, 11 and 18, caused Christians to scatter or relocate. As well as such involuntary movement, the Empire also facilitated mobility for some, like Paul himself, his fellow tentmakers Priscilla and Aquila and Lydia, the business woman from Asia Minor (Acts 16). This was facilitated by the already existing Jewish diaspora, which extended from Pontus in the north of Asia Minor south to Egypt, from Rome in the west to Elam, east of Arabia (Acts 2.9-11), as shown in the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul, who in most cities found a Jewish community.[57]

Although missionaries move from one place to another, much mission theology has assumed that churches are geographically static in keeping with the European pattern of settled church life in parishes and national churches. Missionaries 'planted' churches and rarely encouraged them to think of themselves as missionary beyond their own context. Moreover, the *missio Dei* paradigm, in stressing the missionary nature of the local church, has downplayed movement between churches or of churches. Despite this, many of the growing churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America see themselves as sending and mobile. To the discomfort of many western Christians, they refuse to stay where they were planted. *TTL* responds to these challenges by calling for mutual hospitality at the invitation of the Spirit (§70). It also advocates multicultural ministry and globally connected churches (§75, §76). The statement characterises the church as a movement of the Spirit and, thus animated by the Spirit, it is naturally a missionary movement (§57). Because the Spirit is dynamic and powerful, the church lives and acts in the power of the Spirit, and the church moves and changes; it does not, it cannot, stay still.

At the heart of the shift to world Christianity in *TTL* lies a rediscovery of the nature of the church's catholicity, not primarily in terms of differences

perception of Pentecostal/charismatic Church Leaders from the Global South in Europe: Bringing Back the Gospel (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
[56] ENFORMM, 'Churches in Ecumenical Transition: Towards Multicultural Ministry and Mission' (2011).
[57] For insight into the colonial and diaspora context of early Christian mission, see, *inter alia,* Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and His Theology*, trans. M.E. Boring (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005); Alexander J.M. Wedderburn, *A History of the First Christians* (London: T. &T. Clark, 2004); Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of the World Christian Movement*, Vol. I (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001); R. Geoffrey Harris, *Mission in the Gospels* (Peterborough, UK: Epworth, 2004).

in doctrine and polity but as spatial or geographical diversity, which was the primary sense in which the first councils of the church understood it. No longer is the unity envisaged chiefly a denominational one; it is also a cultural and regional one. The ecumenism of the colonial period that gave birth to the WCC tended to assume that overcoming differences between the historic churches of Europe would unite Christians globally. Today, this is no longer the case and new expressions of catholicity are being sought from different regions of the world – for example, through the Global Christian Forum. The new catholicity must also recognise that many of the newer churches are organised differently from the traditional churches of Europe. Many of the newer churches of our age – especially neo-Pentecostal ones – do not understand themselves as national but as international, and they may exist primarily as local congregations. For various reasons, migrant churches may not settle or integrate into the local religious landscape.[58] These are Christians without borders and churches on the move – arguably much like the churches of the book of Acts. In view of the historical diversity of world Christianity and the different contexts in which faith is practised, *TTL* keeps an open mind about models of church polity and affirms Christian diversity, while encouraging a truly global conversation to discern the Holy Spirit (§69, §§72-75).

Religious Landscape: Good News for All

The final major change in the landscape for mission and evangelism since 1982 to which *TTL* responded was the growth in complexity of societies due to globalisation, particularly in the sense of religious plurality. Especially since 9/11, there has been heightened tension between people of different faiths, and further 'excessive assertion of religious identities and persuasions that seem to break and brutalize in the name of God rather than heal and nurture communities' (§82). In this climate, the word 'witness' – *martyria* in Greek – was taking on the meaning of the English 'martyr' due to the persecution of Christians (§32). Despite this, *TTL* nevertheless follows *EA* in promoting dialogue as the basis for relationships with people of other faiths (§§93-96; *EA* §§43-45). That is 'an honest encounter' in an 'open, patient and respectful manner' (§94). Dialogue in the WCC was grounded theologically in the belief that 'the Spirit of God is constantly at work in ways that pass human understanding and in places that to us are least expected' (§43). It was another way in which pneumatology was being developed in ecumenical discourse in the 1970s and 1980s.[59] *TTL*

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[58] For the circumstances of Korean diaspora churches, see Sebastian C.H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2014).
[59] See WCC, *Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies* (Geneva: WCC, 1979); Stanley Samartha, 'The Holy Spirit and People of Other Faiths', in Emilio Castro (ed.), *To the Wind of God's Spirit: Reflections on the Canberra Theme* (Geneva: WCC, 1990), 50-63.

affirms the presence and working of the Holy Spirit in all faith traditions and spiritualities that bring 'joy and fullness of life' (§93). Reflecting the work of CWME in the 1990s, following the frictions of the Canberra Assembly, *TTL* affirms that the gospel takes root in different cultures (§97) and the result is diverse communities (§§98-100).[60]

Nevertheless, *TTL* is mindful that the most immediate result of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was the preaching of the gospel and the appeal to repent and believe. As well as dialogue, *EA* also insisted that witness to the message of salvation 'should be rendered to all' (§42), and recognised the tension, later famously articulated at the WCC conference on mission and evangelism at San Antonio, Texas, in 1989: '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.'[61] *TTL* explains and resolves that tension by focusing on the role of the Holy Spirit in interreligious relations. The Spirit both creates the medium in which the dialogue takes place and is also the power for salvation. At one and the same time, the Spirit emboldens the witness and is the source of the love between neighbours of different faiths. Moreover, 'the Holy Spirit chooses to work in partnership with people's preaching and demonstration of the good news… but it is only God's Spirit who creates new life and brings about rebirth' (§82).

The final main section of *TTL* is the first WCC statement on evangelism. In *EA*, the emphasis in dialogue was on hearing and receiving from others. Although witness was described as 'evangelistic' and *EA* insisted that 'There is no evangelism without solidarity' (§34; cf. *TTL* §89), it contained no sustained treatment of the second part of CWME's brief. *TTL* defines evangelism as a particular form of mission: 'Mission activity which makes explicit and unambiguous the centrality of the incarnation, suffering, and resurrection of Jesus Christ' (§80).[62] It is a particular expression of mission or witness which includes an 'invitation to personal conversion to a new life in Christ' (§85). In addition to drawing attention to the Holy Spirit as the agent of evangelism and conversion (§82), another major contribution of *TTL* is to establish the link of evangelism with prophecy (§§91-92). The Spirit gives the prophetic boldness to speak truth to power. *TTL* combines the prophetic and more religious dimensions of Christian witness in several ways: first, it focuses on the way of Jesus in the gospels rather than on the missionary methods of Paul (§§86-92); second, by advocating a dialogical approach to evangelism that affirms diversity (§§93-100); and third, by returning to a definition of the WCC from 1951, which was later adapted

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[60] Christopher Duraisingh (ed), *Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures*, Report of the Conference of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, Salvador, Brazil, 1996 (Geneva: WCC, 1998).

[61] WCC, *The San Antonio Report*, F.R. Wilson (ed) (Geneva: WCC, 1990), 32 (Section I 26).

[62] This terminology was set out in MEUT, 7.

by evangelicals: evangelism is 'the communication of the whole gospel to the whole of humanity in the whole world' (§80; cf. *LC* §6).

Whereas in *EA* the main issue pertaining to evangelism was its perceived opposition to social action, *TTL* approaches evangelism within the context of fraught interreligious relations and controversy about conversion from one religion to another (§82). In reflecting on the topic, CWME was greatly helped by the involvement of some commissioners in the production in 2011 of the document *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct* jointly by the WCC, the Catholic Church and the World Evangelical Alliance.[63] *TTL* likewise calls for 'authentic evangelism' which rejects violence, affirms freedom of religion, respects peoples and cultures, practises mutual respect and facilitates reconciliation (§90). The statement thus, on the one hand, affirms proclamation while, on the other hand, reigning in proselytisers (§82, §110) and salesmen (§88) whose activities are not only contrary to the Spirit of Christ but also threaten community cohesion in various parts of the world.

All too often, evangelism has been a strategy for church growth, an unfinished task for the church, or an urgent call for the missionary, forgetting that it is only the Holy Spirit who brings about conversion (§82). Rather, in pneumatological perspective, evangelism is a spirituality, 'the outflow of hearts that are filled with the love of God for those who do not yet know him' (§81). 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' (§24). The Edinburgh 2010 project linked mission spirituality with authentic discipleship.[64] *TTL* continues this model of witness and evangelism in the spirit and the way of Christ (§§86-92). In authentic or Christ-like evangelism, words are consistent with actions and 'love for one another is a demonstration of the gospel we proclaim' (§86). There is an emphasis throughout *TTL* on following Christ by self-emptying or kenotic mission and on vulnerability and humility in evangelising (e.g. §§8, 23, 33, 62, 71, 87, 89, 92, 106). Evangelism 'is grounded in humility and respect for all and flourishes in the context of dialogue' (§89) 'with the expectation of meeting God who has preceded us and has been present with people within their own contexts' (§94).

Good news must be shared, and so the statement declares: 'There is no greater gift we can offer to our fellow human beings than to share and introduce them to the love, grace and mercy of God in Christ' (§83). Evangelism, in this sense, is at the heart of mission. It leads to repentance, faith and baptism (§84). It is the sharing of ourselves and our life in Christ

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[63] Available from the websites of each of the respective bodies.

[64] Cf. Theme 9 of the study process of the Edinburgh 2010 centenary project, which was entitled: 'Mission spirituality and authentic discipleship'. See Balia and Kim, *Edinburgh 2010*, 222-44.

while 'also listening to others and being challenged and enriched by others' (§95).

Together towards Life

In preparing *TTL*, CWME defined ecumenical mission in the 21st century by responding to changed landscapes: theological, socio-economic, ecclesial and religious. As a result of a seven-year process, *TTL* emerged as a consensus document from the commission and its wider network that includes not only WCC member-churches and mission bodies – Protestant and Orthodox – but also Catholic, Evangelical and Pentecostal representatives. As it turns out, *TTL* was produced at a fruitful moment when other major global Christian bodies were reflecting on mission and evangelism. *TTL* can fruitfully be compared with the *Cape Town Commitment* of the Lausanne Movement, published in 2011[65] and Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*) of late 2013, which draws on the proceedings of 2012 synod of bishops as well as other sources.[66] All three documents share the concerns of *TTL* for a Trinitarian theology of mission, integral or holistic mission, missionary congregations and transmission of the gospel message. However, in any comparison, certain characteristics of *TTL* will stand out. The most distinctive feature of *TTL* is its consistent pneumatological approach of 'mission in the Spirit', which facilitates other insights such as mission as discerning and affirming life, transformative spirituality, a dynamic understanding of the church and prophetic evangelism.[67] In each of its other main themes, *TTL* makes distinctive contributions which are not features of either the *Lausanne Covenant* or *Evangelii Gaudium*. In its treatment of the socio-economic landscape, *TTL* draws attention to mission *from* the margins. In dealing with the ecclesial landscape, *TTL* gives particular attention to the mobility of churches. With regard to the religious landscape, *TTL* stresses the complementarity of evangelism and dialogue.

The confluence of these documents gives great hope for mission that is even more ecumenical and reflects the church's catholicity. I look forward to seeing the response to changed landscapes, as expressed in *TTL*, being

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[65] Lausanne Movement, *The Cape Town Commitment: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011). See also: www.lausanne.org and the chapter by Allen Yeh in this book.

[66] Francis I, *Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel*, Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2013): www.vatican.va. For the historical, ecclesial and theological background to *Evangelii Gaudium*, see Paul Grogan and Kirsteen Kim (eds), *The New Evangelization: Faith, People, Context and Practice* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015). See also the chapter by Stephen Bevans in this book.

[67] Evangelii Gaudium also pays particular attention to the work of the Holy Spirit, although pneumatology does not provide the whole framework as it does in *TTL*.

implemented in the WCC and member-churches. I believe it will make a
rich and distinctive contribution to the churches' participation in the
mission of God through the Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ to create a
new heaven and a new earth.

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE:
A CATHOLIC ASSESSMENT

Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSF

Introduction

As I read an account[1] of the development of the World Council of Churches' (WCC) document *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (*TTL*), I became interested both in its theological foundation and the landscapes that were included. The description written by Kirsteen Kim rang true with me and I found it to be very engaging. When I was asked to write a Catholic response to *TTL* for publication in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*,[2] I went back to it and found much food for thought. My task in this essay is not to report, but to assess the document using a Catholic lens. My lens has been calibrated and focused on post-Vatican II Catholic mission documents. I have chosen certain elements that I will use for my assessment: *Ad Gentes* (*AG*), *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN*), *Redemptoris Missio* (*RM*), *Doctrinal Note* (*DN*), *Evangelii Gaudium* (*EG*), and *Laudato Si'* (*LS*). They have much in common, and hopefully this will be revealed as we move along through the assessment.

The Theological Foundation – Trinitarian Mission

The Second Vatican Council, particularly in *Ad Gentes*, stressed the 'missionary nature of the church', basing it on the very nature of the Trinity as a sending community. It was this document that provided the Catholic Church with a theology of mission that was not based on missionary work,

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[1] An account by Kirsteen Kim, Professor of Theology and World Christianity at Leeds University. She served as vice-moderator of the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism and chair of the drafting group for *Together towards Life.* Her presentation at the intercontinental conference of MISAL (Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life) in London in May 2014 bears the same title as the WCC document. A link to her presentation can be found on the Missionaries of Africa website: www.africamission-mafr.org/misal_london_2014.htm

[2] Madge Karecki, 'A Missiological Reflection on 'Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes', in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* 38:4 (2014), 191-92. Sections of this essay have been developed from this article.

but rather on the mission identity of the whole church. The origin of mission is the very life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The sending action of the Father, through which he sends the Son, whose mission is a gradual revelation of the Father's will and plan for all humanity, is the foundation of the Catholic Church's teaching on mission. The Father, then, through the mediation of the Son, sends the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit continues to send the ecclesial assembly. This is a key area of agreement of Catholic mission theology with *TTL* (§11, §43). It also reflects the intention of the drafting committee: 'The new statement aims to promote renewed appreciation of the mission of the Spirit… as the Life-giver as stated in the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople.'[3] Within this renewed appreciation for the Holy Spirit, *TTL* nevertheless asserts that 'a pneumatological focus on Christian mission recognizes that mission is essentially christologically based and relates the work of the Holy Spirit to the salvation through Jesus Christ'. The Holy Spirit is seen 'as the continuing presence of Christ, his agent to fulfil the task of mission' (§16).

Attention is placed firmly on 'the Triune God who is the creator, redeemer and sustainer of all life' (§1). This is accompanied by a forthright conviction that 'mission begins in the heart of the Triune God and the love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation' (§2). It is the Gospel of John that demonstrates this most clearly in chapters 14–16. Here the focus is on how the Spirit will act in the community of believers. Jesus assured the apostles that the 'Holy Spirit whom the Father will send will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you' (John 14:26). Senior and Stuhlmueller point out that the presence of the Holy Spirit is to enrich the post-resurrection community and strengthen its faith so that they can bear witness to Jesus as the true Son of God.[4] In its Spirit-prompted mission to the world, the church discovers the true meaning of the Word made flesh. *TTL* §3 echoes this same idea: '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.' This emphasis on the inner dynamics of the Trinity does not in any way diminish the mission of Jesus; instead it is an enrichment of our understanding of the *missio Dei* as revealed in Jesus in the Gospels.

Biblical and historical sources testify that both the celebration of the liturgy and mission were the most striking hallmarks of the early Christian community. It was in the context of worship that the community of believers experienced the presence of Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit. This was the birth of mission spirituality. *TTL* makes this point when it affirms that the Holy Spirit is the source of energy for mission (§104). In

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[3] Kim, 'Together towards Life', 1.
[4] Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 287-88.

the end, *TTL* calls all of us to transformation, a deep conversion that hopefully leads us to shape the choices we make in a way that gives witness to our commitment to participation in God's mission in the world.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, writing about Pope Francis, observed that the Pope's thought develops between two poles of 'encounter and praxis',[5] meaning that Pope Francis works in reality. He analyzes a situation, talks with others, prays, then sets in motion a plan of action based on discernment. He is praxis-oriented and the action is for the common good. It is a method that can be used in mission in the context of any of the landscapes described in *TTL* – in fact, in any landscape.

The Landscape of Creation

'Creation's life and God's life are entwined' (*TTL* §19). This document and the recently published encyclical by Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*[6] both give a clear expression to creation as a gift of God's love.

> Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion (*LS* §76).

This is a key convergence from a Catholic point of view. *TTL* invites humanity to a 'new conversion' and a 'new humility' (§22) in relationship to creation. Pope Francis incorporated not only his own thoughts, but also those of his predecessors Pope Saint John XXIII, Blessed Pope Paul VI, Pope Saint John Paul II, and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI who urged human beings to take cognizance of the devastation of the planet through excessive damage from pollution and the exploitation of the earth's natural resources.

The core concern of *TTL* and *LS* is what is happening to God's gift to all humanity, especially to poor people who are deprived of the earth's goods because of the rapacious appetites that cry out for immediate gratification. *TTL* §21 stresses that 'our participation in mission, our being in creation, and our practice of the life of the Spirit, need to be woven together, for they are mutually transformative'. The 'new conversion' called for in the document invites humans to 'participate in communion *with* all creation in celebrating the work of the Creator' (*TTL* §22). In that communion we come together in a common dance learning to step lightly upon the earth and celebrating God's gift to us. It is well known that the Greek word *oikos*

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[5] See Walter Kasper, *Pope Francis' Revolution of Tenderness and Love: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*, trans. William Madges (New York: Paulist, 2014), 19.

[6] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2015).

meaning 'house' is the root of 'eco' which forms the words 'ecology', 'economy', and 'ecumenical'.

Pope Francis has added to this trio of words by bringing to the attention of the human community the need for consideration of human ecology, a phrase first used by Pope Saint John Paul II in his encyclical letter, *Centesimus Annus* (*CA*). Referencing this letter, Pope Francis writes that:

> The destruction of the human environment is extremely serious, not only because God has entrusted the world to us men and women, but because human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement. Every effort to protect and improve our world entails profound changes in lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern societies (*LS* §5).

TTL §23 echoes these observations and clearly states that the greed of humanity is contributing to the global warming and climate change that leads to the disfigurement and damage of the earth, and adds more burdens to the lives of poor people. As Christians, we have a responsibility to care for our common home. If we allow our societies to continue to be obsessed with power and profit, we will continue to not only destroy the earth, but also deprive our sisters and brothers of their share of the earth's resources.[7]

This is a challenge that calls for a profound commitment to the common good, something that many people in the western world do not find easy because of individualism and materialism. Anthropologist and missiologist Paul Hiebert has pointed out that people from the western world tend to judge people by what they own, and judge success by the material goods they have accumulated.[8] This is an assault on human dignity. 'Authentic human development has a moral character. It presumes full respect for the human person, but it must also be concerned for the world around us and take into account the nature of each being and of its mutual connection in an ordered system' (*LS* §5).

The Landscapes of Mission on the Margins

The widening gap between rich and poor is a reality for countries throughout the world. 'In many ways, inequality is not just a financial issue,' notes Richard Wike.[9] He cites the UN Secretary-General's Special

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[7] See Ilia Delio, Keith Douglass Warner and Pamela Wood, *Care for Creation*: *A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth* (Cincinnati, OH: St Anthony Messenger Press, 2007), 25.

[8] Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 115.

[9] Richard Wike, 'With 41% of global wealth in the hands of less than 1%, elites and citizens agree inequality is a top priority', in *FactTank* (8th November 2014), Pew Research Center website: www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/11/08/with-41-of-global-wealth-in-the-hands-of-less-than-1-elites-and-citizens-agree-inequality-is-a-top-priority

Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, Amina Mohammed, who has skilfully pointed out that 'inequality is a major problem, in part, because it is linked with so many other challenges, such as "poverty, environmental degradation, persistent unemployment, political instability, violence and conflict"'.[10]

Mission history is filled with expressions of missionary activity that viewed people on the margins of their societies as passive recipients. The drafters of *TTL* drew attention to the fact that such an approach 'is too often complicit with oppressive and life-denying systems' (§41). Further, they judge that this approach was 'generally aligned with the privileges of the centre and largely failed to challenge economic, social, cultural and political systems which have marginalized some peoples' (§41). Pope Francis, commenting on just such an approach to mission, says: 'We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor' (*EG* §48). Faith and life cannot be separated. This is why a praxis-oriented and communal method of mission is essential. From a Catholic perspective, the task of evangelization, to use the words of the Pope, 'demands the integral promotion of each human being' (*EG* §182).

TTL reminds us that 'people on the margins, living in vulnerable positions, often know what exclusionary forces are threatening their survival and can best discern the urgency of their struggles; people in positions of privilege have much to learn from the daily struggles of people living in marginal conditions' (§38). In the light of this important observation about the perspective of people on the margins of society, in *TTL* there is an even stronger call made to the member-churches of the WCC to not just move people from the margins to the centres of power, but to learn to confront those who sit at these centres – to '*transform* power structures in society' (§40). 'Participation in the *missio Dei* requires a willingness to be of service to all others in all the realities of life. Whatever form of service is rendered needs to be characterized by mutuality, reciprocity and interdependence' (*TTL* §45). In this, words and deeds find concrete expression of our commitment to those on the margins, and in the process, we gain the ability to see more clearly the human dignity inherent in all people as our sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus.

In a world where inequality is considered one of the most important challenges facing every country, and where in 'developed and developing countries alike, the poorest half of the population often controls less than 10% of its wealth',[11] churches cannot ignore the forces that result in the disempowerment of people on the margins because others want to maintain the status quo and keep their profits high. This is what Pope Francis has named 'an economy of exclusion' (*EG* §53). Though the Catholic Church

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[10] Wike, 'With 41%', citing Amina Mohammed, *Deepening Income Inequality,* World Economic Forum website: http://reports.weforum.org/outlook-global-agenda-2015/top-10-trends-of-2015/1-deepening-income-inequality

[11] Amina Mohammed, *Deepening Income Inequality*, 1.

has a long record of social teaching, the Pope places great importance on working for the common good. It is no longer possible to claim that religion should be restricted to the private sphere and that it exists only to prepare souls for heaven. We know that God wants his children to be happy in this world too, even though they are called to fulfilment in eternity, for he has created all things 'for our enjoyment' (1 Tim. 6:17), the enjoyment of everyone. It follows that Christian conversion demands reviewing especially those areas and aspects of life 'related to the social order and the pursuit of the common good' (*EG* §182).

Clearly, there is a high level of agreement between the vision presented in *TTL* and the Catholic position on mission to people on the margins or peripheries of societies developed in Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation, *EG*. The situation of people on the margins often becomes complicated because of immigration issues. Church communities can be places of refuge for people who are struggling with issues surrounding their legal status. Churches are called to move beyond ethnic and cultural boundaries to come to the aid of all people in need and work to create multicultural communities. *TTL* §70 recommends advocacy work to promote justice in regard to legislation for people who want to settle in countries legally. Welcoming immigrants from various countries can enrich the life of nations if support is given to their integration into the larger society. This belongs to what Pope Francis calls a 'culture of encounter':

> People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens, not as a mob swayed by the powers-that-be. Let us not forget that 'responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation'.[12] Yet becoming a people demands something more. It is an ongoing process in which every new generation must take part: a slow and arduous effort calling for a desire for integration and a willingness to achieve this through the growth of a peaceful and multi-faceted culture of encounter (*EG* §220).

The word 'encounter' is used in *TTL* in relation to God, people of other faiths, different spiritualities and with people who are different from us. This is most especially true when it comes to immigrants. We can add to their insecurities in being in a new land, or we can help them to feel at home in their new environment. Articles in *TTL* are especially cogent on this point. 'We are led by the Spirit into various situations and moments, into meeting points with others, into spaces of encounter, and into critical locations of human struggle' (§26). In meeting and working with immigrants and poor people, we can find ourselves faced with questions that challenge our commitment to Christ. In *TTL* §45 we meet another challenge to our thinking about immigrants in the context of God's hospitality. Usually sociologists and anthropologists use the binary notions

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[12] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Pastoral Letter: *Forming Conscience for Faithful Citizenship* (November 2007), 13.

of dominant groups as hosts, and minority groups as guests, in issues of cultural adjustment. *TTL* §71, deepening the discussion on immigration issues, puts the issues in the context of Christian life: 'In God's hospitality, God is host and we are all invited by the Spirit to participate with humility and mutuality in God's mission.'

The Landscapes of Solidarity

There is a thread that runs consistently throughout the text, that poor people must be the concern of the Christian community. It should give witness to the world of our commitment to a Gospel way of life that can truly be called 'evangelical'. In *TTL* we find this same idea put more profoundly:

> To experience life in the Spirit is to taste life in its fullness. We are '… called to witness to a movement toward life, celebrating all that the Spirit continues to call into being, walking in solidarity in order to cross the rivers of despair and anxiety (Ps. 23, Isa. 43.1-5). Mission provokes in us a renewed awareness that the Holy Spirit meets us and challenges us at all levels of life and brings newness and change to the places and times of our personal and collective journeys (*TTL* §34).

Solidarity with poor people is meant to spur us on to take transformative action for ourselves and for the poor. We ourselves are called to conversion and to give preference to the needs of poor people. It is what Henri Nouwen called 'downward mobility'. Nouwen meant that one would need to choose voluntarily to scale down one's way of living for the sake of the common good. Nouwen learned many lessons from letting go of possessions, but also egotistical self-concerns. Indeed, downward mobility is what is needed to be able to meet everyone's legitimate needs for quality of life. Pope Francis wrote strongly and forthrightly about the need for basic human rights to be available to all people for the common good.

> In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters (*LS* §158).

To learn to think about the unity of the human family, people have to be exposed to others and to various ways of living. *TTL* §72 urges a local congregation to respond 'to its own contextual realities'. Mission trips and short-term mission service opportunities often help to stimulate members of local congregations to consider making a longer-term commitment to a specific mission location (*TTL* §76). Such experiences expose people to other cultures as well as to the possibility of developing relationships that are based on common concerns, solidarity and mutuality, equally enriching the local congregation and the global partners. Real solidarity with people creates an atmosphere of trust and mutual support, and we learn to work together with others for something bigger than ourselves. Both *TTL* and

Catholic teaching support such efforts because they help people to see their mission experience in the light of faith. Although Christian churches often work in a spirit of unity in meeting the needs of people who are oppressed or suffering, a deeper unity that is rooted in our common faith is still not a reality. Efforts have been made on many fronts, but there are still stumbling blocks on the path to unity.

The Landscapes of Unity

The unity that was brought through the joining together of the International Missionary Conference (IMC) and the evangelism desk of the WCC in 1961, to become the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, was indeed a cause for rejoicing. The efforts at collaboration among the Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, Pentecostal and indigenous churches has resulted in closer relationships and greater consensus on issues concerning worldwide mission. Catholics are now playing a role in the WCC, as evidenced by their participation in the General Council charged with organizing the Edinburgh Conference.

John Paul II linked ecumenism and mission in his encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio* (*RM*) where he wrote that 'the missionary thrust belongs to the very nature of the Christian life, and is also the inspiration behind ecumenism' (*RM* §1). The structure of *TTL* reflects its foundation in a Trinitarian theology of mission in a way that gives special attention to the work of the Holy Spirit. This resonates with the theology of a Trinitarian mission presented in the *Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity* (*AG* §2). *TTL* reflects these same elements of a theology of mission rooted in the life of the Trinity.

TTL §10 links the creative and abiding presence of the Trinity with working for unity in mission. 'The church is a gift of God to the world for its transformation towards the Kingdom of God. Its mission is to bring new life and announce the loving presence of God in our world. We must participate in God's mission in unity, overcoming the divisions and tensions that exist among us, so that the world may believe and all may be one' (John 17:21). As *TTL* §60 rightly stated: 'Mission and unity belong together', and unity is a reality rooted in baptism. Through baptism, the Trinity indwells all Christians and the Trinity continues to send us out to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, 'the lack of full and real unity in mission still harms the authenticity and credibility of the fulfilment of God's mission in the world… mission and unity are intertwined' (*TTL* §61). If we, as Christians, can work together on other issues that affect humanity and the whole of creation, then we need to open up ways to widen a process of discussion among all the churches that leads to concrete steps of working for unity.

For Catholics, the Second Vatican Council was a turning point in terms of ecumenism. This resulted in a very robust effort to engage in dialogue

with various Orthodox traditions, the Anglican Communion, Lutheran World Federation, World Methodist Conference, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Baptist World Alliance, Disciples of Christ, Pentecostals, Evangelicals and the Mennonites. All these dialogues continue because they are born out of the desire for unity instead of the 'scandal of disunity', and out of the need for common witness. There is now in the Catholic Church a sincere openness to ecumenism.

TTL §69 is indeed crucial: 'From a mission perspective, it is important to discern what helps the cause of God's mission.' The answer, no doubt, is that the steadfast concern for unity must be evident at every level of church life; otherwise we compromise our commitment to *missio Dei.* Paul VI expressed it well:

> It is the test of the credibility of Christians and of Christ Himself. As evangelizers, we must offer Christ's faithful not the image of people divided and separated by unedifying quarrels, but the image of people who are mature in faith and capable of finding a meeting-point beyond the real tensions, thanks to a shared, sincere and disinterested search for truth. Yes, the destiny of evangelization is certainly bound up with the witness of unity given by the Church (*EN* §77).

The early Christian community was of 'one heart and one mind' (Acts 4:32), and the witness of their lives was an attractive sign to others of the difference Christ makes in the lives of believers. The care shown to people in need (Acts 6:1-7; Matthew 25:31-40; James 2:5-8) was a striking image of God's own love for them. Christians have always engaged in mission through care for people in need, and this opened the way for them to accept the Gospel.

The Landscapes of Mission and Evangelism

Within the Catholic Church, Paul VI's summation of the ideas raised at The Synod on Evangelization (1974) inspired the use of the word 'evangelization' in missiological literature. His use of the term 'evangelization' instead of 'mission' helped to clarify the role of evangelization within the missionary enterprise, but also caused confusion. Instead of shedding light on the relationship of evangelization to mission, evangelization is treated as something completely unrelated to mission; or, as one colleague explained, mission is something that is done in other countries, evangelization is something which is done in one's home country! This is certainly not the Catholic position. Nevertheless, some Catholic dioceses have created separate offices for evangelization and for mission. This only compounds the confusion because the erroneous distinction between mission and evangelization is cemented into the institutional structure of a diocese.

Evangelization and witness are primary elements of Catholic teaching on mission. They are intimately related aspects of mission, but mission is the

wider category that includes other expressions which have long been part of mission as well as those which have arisen in contemporary contexts for mission. There is a footnote in *TTL* §85 which, though true, is not complete. Two articles in the *Doctrinal Note* deserve attention:

> The term *evangelization* has a very rich meaning. In the broad sense, it sums up the Church's entire mission: her whole life consists in *accomplishing* the *traditio Evangelii,* the proclamation and handing-on of the Gospel, which is 'the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes' (Rom. 1:16) and which, in the final essence, is identified with Jesus Christ himself (1 Cor. 1:24). Understood in this way, evangelization is aimed at all humanity. In any case, *to evangelize* does not mean simply to teach a doctrine, but to proclaim Jesus Christ by one's words and actions, that is, to make oneself an instrument of his presence and action in the world (*DN* §2).

Furthermore, the *DN* acknowledges the fact of contextualization as a factor in the work of evangelization, and the necessary sensitivity that should characterize what I prefer to call missionary evangelization:

> Evangelization also involves a sincere dialogue that seeks to understand the reasons and feelings of others. Indeed, the heart of another person can only be approached in freedom, in love and in dialogue, in such a manner that the word which is spoken is not simply offered, but also truly witnessed in the hearts of those to whom it is addressed. This requires taking into account the hopes, sufferings and concrete situations of those with whom one is in dialogue. Precisely in this way, people of good will open their hearts more freely and share their spiritual and religious experiences in all sincerity. This experience of sharing, a characteristic of true friendship, is a valuable occasion for witnessing and for Christian proclamation (*DN* §8).

TTL reflects on mission in articles 67-79 and on evangelism in 80-100. Though various elements of mission are considered, such as witness, unity, immigration, liturgy, twinning, advocacy and service, a connection is made in the last sentence that makes up §79. This sentence makes the connection between mission and evangelism: 'As the church discovers more deeply its identity as a missionary community, its outward-looking character finds expression in evangelism.' Despite the conviction one can sense in these words, a question remains: What are all the other dimensions mission if not outward-looking?

The longer section on evangelism – surprisingly, at least to this author – includes sections that as a missiologist, I would consider in conjunction with mission: individualism, secularism and materialism (§91), interreligious dialogue (§93), and cultural issues (§97-100). Now, it is true that there are no hard-and-fast distinctions, but long before proclamation goes on, in the preparation for mission these issues need to be clearly dealt with so that, as the community of faith engages in mission, they have been made aware of the importance of these aspects of mission praxis under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, informed by sound missiological principles.

Conclusion

In the light of the challenges of changing landscapes, the way forward might benefit from the development of some serious discourse around changing how thinking about mission is presented. We need to look at mission as a way of life, not as only a work. This would then be a more inclusive way of looking at missionary identity rooted in baptism. *TTL* uses the word 'humility' nine times §23, 71, 83, 87, 89, 106, 109 and 112. In each instance, humility is linked with some of the central aspects of missionary life. The first time it is used in the text is in connection with conversion: 'We need a new conversion (*metanoia*) in our mission which invites a new humility in regard to the mission of God's Spirit.' This is another aspect of preparation for missionary encounters that needs to be revisited because it is the very foundation of how the Holy Spirit works to prepare people not only for mission, but for the whole of Christian life. It prepares us for a life of gradual and systemic attitudes that mark *kenosis*, and manifests itself in choices that lead to self-emptying so that mission in Christ's way shapes mission praxis.

From a Catholic perspective, *TTL* serves to remind the entire Christian community that we must, through common witness and solidarity with those most in need, reveal God's desire and invitation that all humanity and all creation share in the 'Feast of Life through Jesus Christ' (§112). *TTL* rightly affirms the church's missionary identity and reasserts the need for us as Christians to commit ourselves anew to live in ways that give witness to God's revelation in Jesus, that all 'may have life, and have it abundantly' (John 10:10). Though there are differences in ecclesiology, sacramental practice and institutional structures that shape mission thinking, there are many more areas of commonality that can benefit the Catholic Church. This is a document that needs to be studied, reflected upon and implemented in ways that actually bring about justice, peace and unity for the sake of humanity and all creation. In this way, the reign of God can become not merely a promise but a foretaste of God's mission to the world in its ultimate fullness.

Scripture texts taken from the *Holy Bible, NRSV Catholic Version, Anglicized Text* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2005).

Together towards Life:
An Orthodox Assessment

Petros Vassiliadis

The year 2012, the year of the official adoption of the New Mission Statement, entitled *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes,* by the Central Committee of WCC, meeting in Crete, Greece, marked the end of a long period of Christian mission in modern times. The same year another document, also important from a missiological point of view, was released: the AGAPE Call for Action*, entitled *Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All: A Call for Action*, finalized at the Global Forum and AGAPE Celebration in Bogor, Indonesia, in June 2012. This latter document, repeating many ideas of the former WCC document, was not only addressed to the member-churches of WCC, to all Christians worldwide and to people of faith in general, but also to all partners from the secular establishment (political, social, etc.), who shared common ethical values. Both documents were the main focal points of reflection in the tenth General Assembly of WCC, which met in Busan, South Korea, on the theme: *God of life, lead us to justice and peace* (30th October-8th November 2013). The Busan General Assembly was the second in Asia in the history of this privileged ecumenical organization in the 65 years of its life, after the historic meeting in New Delhi in 1961, which was significant for two reasons: the full integration of the Orthodox Christian family into the ecumenical movement, and the importance it laid on inter-faith encounter and dialogue. The year 2013 also marked the release of another mission document of great magnitude: the personal encyclical of Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium*.[1]

The interdependence, therefore, of Orthodox Christianity with the new paradigm in Christian mission, underlined in all these mission documents that changed in a positive manner the route of our Christian witness to the world, is what initially the Orthodox expected to be the first step the ecumenical movement should take, even before the 1910 Edinburgh mission conference, which is considered in the West as the beginning of the ecumenical era.[2] The famous Circular Letters of the Orthodox Ecumenical

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[1] See chapters by Madge Karecki and Stephen Bevans in this book.

[2] According to Thomas E. FitzGerald, 'even before the Edinburgh Conference, the Orthodox Church of Constantinople, known as the Ecumenical Patriarchate, began a new series of discussions on issues related to church divisions as early as the year 1902. On 12th June of that year, Patriarch Joachim III addressed an encyclical…':

Patriarchate in 1902, 1904, and later in 1920, addressing all Christian churches, insisted that social and other practical activities of the churches should not be postponed until complete doctrinal agreement was achieved. Only through co-operation on social issues and joint commitment in the name of Christ for the sake of humanity, the circular went on, can a visible unity of the church be accomplished.[3] Of course, for unspecified reasons, the Orthodox interest in the course of time shifted to an exclusive quest for church unity, depriving the urgent quest for the unity of humankind of Orthodox energy and theological reflection.[4]

This is what all Orthodox committed to ecumenism expected from global Christian mission, and particularly its ecumenical branch, namely, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of WCC. In one of the last Messages of the Primates of the Orthodox Churches, it was clearly stated that:

> Orthodox Christians share responsibility for the contemporary crisis of this planet with other people, whether they are people of faith or not, because they have tolerated and indiscriminately compromised on extreme human choices, without credibly challenging these choices with the word of faith. Therefore, they also have a major obligation to contribute to overcoming the divisions of the world. [5]

These divisions, to a certain extent due to the failure or shortcomings of modernity on issues of justice, peace, the integrity of creation and the world economy, are among the consequences of individualism. The latter being one of the pillars of modernity, and the ensuing absolute, unconditional,

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The Ecumenical Movement: An Introductory History (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004), 82.

[3] Cf. Encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, 1920: 'Unto the Churches of Christ Everywhere', in Gennadios Limouris (ed), *Orthodox Visions of Ecumenism: Statements, Messages and Reports on the Ecumenical Movement 1902-1992* (Geneva: WCC, 1994)*,* 9-11. As interpreted by the first General Secretary of the WCC and historian Visser 't Hooft, this important principle was one of the key requirements of the ecumenical movement (cf. *Minutes and Reports of the Twelfth Meeting of the Central Committee, Rhodes, Greece, August 19-27* (Geneva: WCC, 1959), 95-97. See also §12 *Unitatis redintegratio*, of the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism.

[4] More on this in Stylianos Tsompanidis, 'The Ecumenical Process of *AGAPE* (Alterative Globalization Addressing People and Earth): An Orthodox Perspective', in *A Testimony to the Nations: A Vigintennial Volume Offered to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew* (Thessaloniki 2011), 905-23 (in Greek). Also his *Orthodoxie und Ökumene. Gemeinsam auf dem Weg zu Gerechtigkeit, Frieden und Bewahrung der Schöpfung* (Münster, Hamburg and London, 1990), especially chs. I, 1.3, II, 2 and II, 1.

[5] §6 of the *Message of the Primates of the Orthodox Churches,* disseminated *urbi et orbe* by the ultimate authority of the Orthodox Church, namely the Synod of the Primates of the independent (Autocephalous) Orthodox Churches, issued on 12th December 2008.

uncontrolled freedom of the individual in all aspects of life (sexual freedom, legally protected freedom in accumulating wealth, etc.), has been heralded as the new faith after the Enlightenment. Looking at the ambivalence of modernity, many Christian theologians and activists (and many more faithful from other religions, I suppose) insist that there must be a criterion to judge what should be saved from the values and achievements of modernity and what should be discarded. The latest neo-liberal form of the free-market economy, has changed power balances, shifting modernity from being the 'midwife' of human rights to their murderer. On the basis of the old principles of modernity, the present world economic system is increasingly falling back into totalitarian trends. Only if the world listens again carefully and gleans from the shared wisdom of religions and other age-old ethical traditions, can the positive values of the modern paradigm be renewed and revitalized. It is for this reason that from all religious quarters we speak of *liberation of modernity*.[6]

The most tangible aspect of this liberation has to do with the revered *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. In view of the breakdown of the International Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen a few years ago, just to mention one example, it became clear – at least in religious circles – that human rights are largely ineffective if they are not accompanied by human responsibilities. People of faith nowadays believe that the values and principles that form part of a common world ethic need not only public declaration but also a call for international legal endorsement.

The struggle, however, of Christians and faithful of other religions to promote a Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities is not just a diplomatic initiative aiming at introducing moral values to the global agenda at the expense of the values of modernity and the democratic achievements of the Enlightenment. It resulted from the pressure of prophetic and charismatic figures and theological movements for social and ecological justice from a faith perspective. Economic justice is a concept developed by the churches and the ecumenical movement with a view to achieving the equitable sharing of resources and power as essential prerequisites for human development and ecological sustainability. Long before a universal concern (political, scientific, etc.) and advocacy concerning the dangerous effects of climate change were developed, theologians from all religious quarters put a critical question to their own religious institutions: 'Will the churches have the courage to engage with the 'values' of a profit-oriented way of life as a matter of faith, or will they withdraw into the 'private' sphere? This is the question our churches must

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[6] This is the general message of an international, interdisciplinary, inter-faith project, in which Orthodox institutions participated, analyzed in the recently published book by Ulrich Duchrow and F.J. Hinkelammert, *Transcending Greedy Money: Interreligious Solidarity for Just Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

answer or lose their very soul,'[7] declared a WCC consultation of Eastern and Central European Churches on the problem of economic globalization at the dawn of the third millennium. This paved the way for *TTL* together with the *Call for Action,* which appeals for 'building a common voice, fostering ecumenical co-operation, and ensuring greater coherence for the realization of an Economy of Life for all'.[8]

Furthermore, the Orthodox Primates clearly affirmed that:

> The gap between rich and poor is growing dramatically due to the financial crisis, usually the result of manic profiteering by economic factors and corrupt financial activity, which, by lacking an anthropological dimension and sensitivity, does not ultimately serve the real needs of mankind. A viable economy is that which combines efficacy with justice and social solidarity.[9]

Therefore, Christian churches slowly, but steadily, started being concerned about two interrelated aspects of globalization: ecology and economy, both stemming from the Greek word *oikos* (household), and both carrying inherently the notion of communion *(koinonia),* so dear and revered in all Christian denominations, but definitely rooted deeper in the Orthodox tradition. The timely response of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on environmental issues, inasmuch as he expressed concern on the preservation of God's creation, as articulated through universally acknowledged endeavours (projects, conferences, etc.), have gained him the nickname 'The Green Patriarch'.

On a theoretical level, however, the most significant and crucial decision, shared now by most religions, is the conviction that, from a faith perspective, economy and ecology cannot be dealt with separately. This interrelatedness is in line with a similar conviction in the ecumenical movement, which for almost half a century had being examining justice and peace as inseparable entities, even at a time when the superpowers during the Cold War insisted on prioritizing them in differing and opposite ways.

In the wider ecumenical movement, Christians, in co-operation with their partners in inter-faith dialogue, came to the conclusion that 'various aspects of climate, ecological, financial, and debt crises are mutually dependent and reinforce each other. They cannot be treated separately any more'.[10] People of faith –

> discern the fatal intertwining of the global financial, socio-economic, climate, and ecological crises accompanied in many places of the world by the suffering of people and their struggle for life. Far-reaching market liberalization, deregulation, and unrestrained privatisation of goods and

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[7] Rogate Mshane, *Globalization: WCC-JPC,* presented at the Harare WCC Assembly: *The Responsibility of World Religions for Ecology, the World Economic System, and the International Law.*

[8] *Economy of Life, Justice, and Peace for All: A Call for Action,* §23.

[9] Message of the Primates, §8.

[10] Economy of Life, §10.

services are exploiting the whole Creation and dismantling social programs and services and opening up economies across borders to seemingly limitless growth of production.[11]

Needless to say, faithful from all religions must join forces to this end, and not fight one another. Hostility between them is a betrayal of religion. And the battle for achieving a legally established Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities cannot be won unless it is fought by a united front of people of faith. If all religious leaders and religious communities take action similar to the ecological initiatives of Patriarch Bartholomew, a new and better world will undoubtedly rise. And this is certainly the will of God!

With regard to *TTL* itself,[12] we should remind ourselves that Orthodoxy and Mission are two terms that at a first glance seem quite incompatible; at least, to western historians of mission.[13] When in 1910 the historic gathering of missionaries across denominational boundaries took place in Edinburgh, in order to launch interdenominational missionary co-operation, Orthodoxy was completely marginal. In their deliberations, there were only references to the Oriental (sic) or Greek churches, always within the framework of western (mainly Protestant) missions. Even in the following generation, no article on the importance of mission was written by Orthodox theologians.[14] The initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the dawn of the twentieth century, inviting all Christians to address together the great challenges of the new century, were brought later to the attention of the wider Christian world.

The encounter of Orthodoxy itself with world Christian mission has not always been a happy one. The missional dimension of the Orthodox Church was rediscovered just over a generation ago, thanks to the efforts and theological arguments of the former moderator of CWME, His Beatitude Anastasios (Yannoulatos), Archbishop of Tirana, Durrës and All Albania.[15] The theological discussion about mission, originally with Protestantism

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[11] Economy of Life, §10. This is something that was painfully felt in Greece by the majority of its citizens during the recent economic crisis.

[12] Most of what follows is based on an earlier article of mine under the title, 'An Orthodox Assessment of the New Mission Statement', in *International Review of Mission,* 102 (2013), 174-78.

[13] More in the collective Volume I edited under the title *Orthodox Perspectives on Mission*, Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series 17 (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), which was actually prepared as an Orthodox input to the WCC General Assembly held in Busan, South Korea, in 2013.

[14] More in Athanasios Papathanasiou, 'Tradition as Impulse for Renewal and Witness: Introducing Orthodox Missiology', in *International Review of Mission,* 100:2 (2011), 203-15.

[15] Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos, 'Discovering the Orthodox Missionary Ethos', in Ion Bria (ed), *Martyria-Mission: The Witness of the Orthodox Churches* (Geneva: WCC, 1980), 20-29; also Anastasios Yannoulatos, *Mission in Christ's Way* (Geneva: WCC and Brookline: HC Orthodox Press, 2010), 117-34.

within the framework of the activities of WCC, and after Vatican II also with Catholicism, has awakened the importance of mission for the Orthodox Church.

However, a significant contribution to the overall deliberations for an ecumenical mission theology in the form of a mission statement had to wait till a missionary awareness of the various *autocephali* Orthodox Churches was accomplished. Gradually, in addition to Archbishop Anastasios, other Orthodox theologians, who were actively involved one way or another with the ecumenical movement, and particularly with the CWME of WCC, most notably the late Prof. Ion Bria, made significant contributions to the development of contemporary mission theology. Themes emphasised by the Orthodox include: the dimension of *martyria* in mission over against an offensive and sometimes arrogant mission, the Trinitarian importance of the *missio Dei* theology, and the liturgical aspect of Christian witness in the form of 'the liturgy after the liturgy'. These emphases have been gleaned from the richness of the Christian tradition of the undivided church, as well as from the wealth of the Orthodox missionary heritage, especially St Cyril and Methodius' evangelization of the Slavs, and of Europe in general. Though at first the Orthodox approach to mission could be difficult for western missiologists and missionaries to understand, Orthodox mission theologians have nonetheless become invaluable players in the field of contemporary Christian missiology.

During the last fifty years, i.e. from the time of the admission of Orthodox Churches into membership of the WCC in 1961, there have been two official statements and one study document on mission and evangelism. The 1982 document *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation,* was officially approved by the Central Committee of WCC. The 2000 document *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today,* was adopted by CWME as a Study Document. The new mission statement, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, was unanimously approved by the WCC Central Committee held in Crete, Greece, on 5th September 2012.

The 1982 mission statement is traditional, reflecting a mainly Protestant understanding of mission. Though it was translated into languages such as Greek,[16] it was never embraced or wholeheartedly followed by Orthodox missionaries and missiologists. The Orthodox did not feel at home with its theological arguments or its overall aura. By contrast, the 2000 *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today* document was shaped, to a significant extent, by a substantial Orthodox contribution. This, however, exposed it to criticism from Protestant, particularly Evangelical, missiologists, and this may have been the reason why it never acquired universal acceptance or

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[16] Cf. Ion Bria and Petros Vassiliadis, *Orthodox Christian Witness,* EKO 1 (Katerini, Greece: Tertios Press, 1989), 177-200 (in Greek).

official approval by the entire WCC in the form of a decision by its Central Committee.

Both the 1982 statement and the 2000 mission study paper attempted to bring into actuality the traditional (western and eastern respectively) understanding of mission. However, they both fell short with regard to adaptation to the rapidly changing landscapes. The third millennium required concrete affirmations in the context of emerging new challenges, especially with regard to the growing pluralistic situation and the world economic system, and a renewed philosophy and language. In addition, the widening of the spectrum of Christian missionaries, ranging from the historically traditional churches (Orthodox and Catholic) and the traditional mainstream Protestant ecclesial communities, to the new vibrant and charismatic ones (Evangelical and Pentecostal), required the statement to have a broader appeal. Indeed, it was required to look even wider than WCC member-churches and affiliated mission agencies, so that all Christians could commit themselves together to fullness of life for all, led by the God of Life! It was into this situation that *TTL* came into being.

Of course, any new statement concerning the Christian imperative of mission would be wholeheartedly welcome from an Orthodox perspective. This one, however, seems in addition to fulfil some of the expectations of the Orthodox, especially in areas of crucial theological importance. First of all, its Trinitarian, as well as pneumatological, basis (§1) is of great importance. The Orthodox always insist that all fundamental aspects of Christian theology – creation of the entire cosmos by God, redemption in Christ and salvation through the church, but beyond its historic boundaries in the power of the Holy Spirit, etc. – are all conceived as the natural consequence of the inner dynamics of the Triune God, i.e. of the communion and love that exists within the Holy Trinity. Applied to mission, this Trinitarian basis can have tremendous effect in helping Christian missionaries to avoid imperialistic or confessionalistic attitudes. 'Trinitarian theology points to the fact that God's involvement in history aims at drawing humanity and creation in general into this communion with God's very life. The implications of this assertion for understanding mission are very important: mission does not aim primarily at the propagation or transmission of intellectual convictions, doctrines, moral commands, etc., but at the transmission of the life of communion that exists in God.'[17]

One could also add some further points: the ecclesial dimension of mission, the implicit liturgical aspect (although not fully articulated in the direction of the Eucharistic approach to mission, especially in view of the affirmation in §17), the explicit environmental and inter-faith consequences of an authentic Christian witness, and the clear connection between mission

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[17] Ion Bria (ed), *Go Forth in Peace: Orthodox Perspectives on Mission* (Geneva: WCC, 1985), 3.

and unity,[18] are all profound theological aspects, very familiar to the Orthodox tradition. The importance of inter-faith dialogue (instead of an aggressive and triumphalistic mission), on the basis of the economy of the Spirit (side by side, of course, with the economy of the Word/Christ),[19] and the integrity of creation with the ensuing environmental missional ethos,[20] must certainly please not only Orthodox missiologists, but also theologians engaged in the quest for the visible unity of the Church of Christ. To my knowledge, it is the first time that a mission statement has made such a strong and direct appeal: 'We are called to participate in God's mission beyond our human-centred goals. God's mission is to all life and we have to both acknowledge it and serve it in new ways of mission. We pray for repentance and forgiveness, but we also call for action now. Mission has creation at its heart' (§105).

The strong spiritual dimension that permeates the whole document is yet another positive point the Orthodox can immediately endorse. 'Authentic Christian witness is not only in *what* we do in mission but *how* we live out our mission. The church in mission can only be sustained by spiritualities deeply rooted in the Trinity's communion of love' (§29). Closely connected also are the spirit of humility and the imperative of repentance in mission. The cross, states the document, 'calls for repentance in the light of misuse of power and use of the wrong kind of power in mission and in the church' (§33). For generations, even centuries, the triumphalistic character in doing mission overwhelmed the humble quintessence of the Christian message and attitude, the Pauline affirmation that 'God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe' (1 Corinthians 1:21).

This brings us to the heart of the new mission statement, namely, that in the third millennium Christian mission, in addition to the proclamation of the Good News, should address structural sin, expressed in the intertwined contemporary crises, the economic and environmental, from the perspective of the marginalized (§36): '[Christians] are called to acknowledge the sinful nature of all forms of discrimination and transform unjust structures' (§49), and that 'all missional activity must… safeguard the sacred worth of every human being and of the earth' (§42).

The third millennium, in which all Christians are called to witness to the gospel, is characterized by a deep and prolonged crisis, caused by the world economic system; and their mission cannot be authentically pursued

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[18] 'Practically, as well as theologically, mission and unity belong together' (§60).

[19] (Metropolitan of Mount Lebanon) Georges Khodr, 'Christianity in a Pluralistic World: The Economy of the Holy Spirit', in *The Ecumenical Review* 23 (1971), 118-28.

[20] (Ecumenical Patriarch) Bartholomew Archontonis, *Encountering the Mystery: Understanding Orthodox Christianity Today* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney and Auckland: Doubleday, 2008).

without addressing this structural evil. In this respect, the 2012 AGAPE 'Call for Action' is clearly echoed in one of the final affirmations of *TTL*:

> Economic globalization has effectively supplanted the God of life with mammon, the god of free-market capitalism that claims the power to save the world through the accumulation of undue wealth and prosperity. Mission in this context needs to be counter-cultural, offering alternatives to such idolatrous visions because mission belongs to the God of life, justice and peace, and not to this false god who brings misery and suffering to people and nature (§108).

Such a strongly socially-oriented missionary appeal, of course, is not something new in the recent history of the missionary branch of the WCC. Some forty years ago, and only in the second decade after the integration of the IMC and the WCC, it was one of the reasons that caused a dramatic split in the world missionary movement with the creation of the Evangelical Lausanne movement. This time, however, the profound biblical, theological and spiritual argumentation can hardly provide any reasonable excuse for theological disagreement on the part of the Evangelicals or the Pentecostals. It surely is hopeful and timely to witness in recent times encouraging initiatives for encounter, reflection and discussion among Evangelical/Pentecostal and Orthodox representatives. It may not be accidental that, with both Evangelicals and Pentecostals, the Orthodox are engaged in a very constructive theological dialogue. It is also notable that since the time of the 2005 Athens World Mission Conference, and particularly in the 2010 Edinburgh centenary celebrations, they have been central players shaping the development of ecumenical missiology.

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE:
AN ECUMENICAL PROTESTANT ASSESSMENT

Thomas Kemper

Let me say at the outset that my interest in and excitement about *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (*TTL*) are based on its potential value as a teaching document on Christian mission in a world where that mission is truly global and moves with ease across national, cultural, economic, social and denominational boundaries. I find it an excellent resource for introducing an exploration of mission history, contemporary mission theology and future mission praxis.

What does 'Protestant Ecumenical' mean?

But to write about it under the rubric 'An Ecumenical Protestant Assessment' raises challenges for me. One dramatic example of the changing mission landscape addressed in *TTL* is the difficulty today of delineating an 'ecumenical Protestant' community with a distinctive Protestant missiological perspective. Such once existed, and much of the content of the document, as well as the process out of which it comes, is rooted in a predominantly Protestant ecumenical tradition, a tradition now significantly enlarged, as *TTL* itself bears witness, by interaction with evangelical Protestant, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Pentecostal perspectives. This history merits brief introductory notice here.

It was impossible to miss an ecumenical Protestant perspective on mission and evangelism at the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh. Indeed, the event was predominantly Protestant and the mostly European and American participants shared an optimistic expectation that by working together they could bring the world to Christ in one generation. Such was **the** ecumenical Protestant perspective.

Although tempered by the tragedy of two world wars, Edinburgh's spirit of Protestant co-operation infused the International Missionary Council and the other mostly Protestant organizational streams that produced the World Council of Churches after World War II. This would remain the epitome of ecumenical thought and action for much of the twentieth century. The churches of this movement were primarily the historical Protestant communions of Europe, both established and dissenting, and their North American implants, which today form the Protestant 'mainline': Anglican, some Baptist, Congregationalist, Lutheran, Methodist, Moravian and Presbyterian/Reformed. These churches also constitute what is often called

'conciliar Protestantism', comprised of those denominations participating in local, regional and national ecumenical agencies, whether in the US, Europe or the global South. They are commonly seen as advancing social as well as spiritual agendas.

But the ecumenical impulse would outdistance its Protestant origins. By the l980s, when I was doing my studies in missiology and later as a missionary in Brazil, 'ecumenical' incorporated more than Protestants in the fields of mission and evangelism. The Second Vatican Council had taken place. Protestants were being influenced by Roman Catholic Liberation Theology. In Brazil some of my most effective mission partners in street ministry were Roman Catholic nuns. Other partners were evangelical Protestants and a few Pentecostals.

'Ecumenical' is often used in contrast to 'Evangelical', but that is an increasingly dubious missional distinction. The success and maturing of the Lausanne Movement from its formation in 1974 to the *Cape Town Commitment* of 2010 showed that 'Evangelicals', too, are collaborative, also embrace social action, while the work of the World Council's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism indicates that 'ecumenicals', too, are evangelical, and also engage in evangelization.

I find no distinctively 21st-century 'Protestant ecumenical' mission platform or perspective, such as that represented by the International Missionary Council and then, to a large degree, the World Council of Churches, in the twentieth century. It seems to me that the historical Protestant ecumenical perspective on mission has been replaced by a larger awareness, and for that I thank God. Moreover, the mission-founded churches of Africa, Asia and Latin America are sources of new mission enthusiasm that stretches the contours of historical Protestant ecumenical thinking.

My own perspective is that of a Methodist, a theological Wesleyan, influenced by the Protestant ecumenical past, very sympathetic to the Lausanne Movement, instructed by my interaction with Catholic colleagues, especially in the Divine Word Order, and attentive to sundry Orthodox theologians. I am Protestant from a minority background, moved by circumstance into a large global context, the CEO of a large mission agency in daily contact with mission worldwide. In that process I have learned an important ecumenical lesson, namely, that one's context within the community of churches affects how one sees the church as a whole and understands the scriptural mission mandates in ecumenical perspective.

I grew up in the United Methodist Church in Germany, a small community to which ecumenical participation was enormously important. We gained recognition and status from ecumenical collaboration. We also learned a great deal about evangelism and mission from the larger Lutheran and Catholic churches. I was surprised to discover that the sizeable American embodiment of United Methodism, related to a truly global constituency, did not value ecumenical involvement as much as that I had

experienced in Germany, or even while serving as a missionary in Brazil. Bigness seems to breed ecumenical isolation. The chief executive of a US ecumenical relief organization begged me to attend meetings of the heads of its member-churches. 'The United Methodists haven't seen it as important to meet with the leaders of mostly small denominations,' he said. I have been attending the meetings, sometimes with impatience, I will admit, as I am becoming increasingly aware that mission perspectives are significantly moulded by context and expectation.

Mission in the Future

What will Christian mission be like in the future? We know already that mission tomorrow will not be the exclusive domain of European and North American institutions or energy. The pendulum of Christian growth has already swung to the global South, where religious faith is expanding even as it contracts in the old missionary-sending lands. Mission zeal for conversions to Jesus Christ is pulsating in the global South. Many expressions of Christianity are growing, for example, in Africa and Asia, and reaching into the global North and West; Pentecostalism is gaining traction everywhere. Will *TTL* speak to this situation? Can it enrich mission in the global South? Could it contribute to the renewal of church life in the older mission-sending lands? Possibly. I hope so.

TTL is an excellent manual with the potential for strengthening Christian mission in general and for drawing the churches closer together in the practice of mission. I say this from experience, having used it with multicultural groups of young persons and adults, laity and clergy, and ethnically mixed audiences. I have found that young mission professionals on the staff of my agency draw upon *TTL* in their work with new church starts, congregational revitalization, and social and health ministries in the US and on the international level. I have rarely encountered an ecumenical mission statement that in my context has generated as much attention and proved to be as useful as *TTL*.

Teaching Themes and Hopes

I find four *TTL* themes particularly useful in mission education, and I have elsewhere cited these four as components for evaluating and shaping mission going forward.[1] The four are the concept of *missio Dei*, reliance on the Holy Spirit, 'mission from the margins', and health and wholeness as components of mission. Here, I want to briefly treat each of these expressed as hopes.

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[1] Thomas Kemper, 'The Missio Dei in Contemporary Context'. in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* 38 (October, 2014), 188-90.

- I hope that the study of *TTL* will help the whole church to understand the enormity of what it means to say that mission is God's mission.
- I hope that the study of *TTL* will lead us to real and renewed reliance on the Holy Spirit.
- I hope that the study of *TTL* will better equip us to take seriously the fact that mission is coming from the margins, and allow God to reform our inherited mission theology and activities in ways that welcome and respect this reality.
- I hope that the study of *TTL* will lead to a lasting embrace of health and healing as expressions of mission without letting the humanitarian overcome the spiritual dimension of wholeness.

Missio Dei

TTL is neither an historical nor a theological explication of *missio Dei* but it is a good place to begin a study of the implications of a term used across the broad spectrum of Christianity today. Virtually all theological perspectives affirm mission as 'God's mission', but understandings are not the same among all users. The Latin term clearly means that mission belongs to God, but what does this mean operationally for the church and for Christian discipleship? The meaning is not self-evident. Is the church the channel of God's mission, or is it the church's duty to look for and join God in mission staked out by the divine in social, political and economic spheres? Is it a matter of participating in a course God sets, or allowing God to guide the existing ships of faith? These two perspectives have competed and sometimes coalesced since the term began to gain currency in the 1950s, entering the ecumenical mission vocabulary at a 1952 International Missionary Council conference in Willingen, Germany.[2] The most informative theological and historical investigation of *missio Dei* is David Bosch's *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*.[3]

TTL offers this definition:

> The affirmation of God's mission (*missio Dei*) points to the belief in God as One who acts in history and in creation, in concrete realities of time and contexts, who seeks the fullness of life for the whole earth through justice,

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[2] For a discussion of the use of the term in missiology, see Tormod Engelsviken, '*Missio Dei:* The Understanding and Misunderstanding of a Theological Concept in European Churches and Missiology', in *International Review of Mission*, Vol. XCII, No. 367 (2003), 481-97, and Jacques Matthey, 'Missiology in the World Council of Churches: Update: Presentation, History, Theological Background and Emphases of the Most Recent Mission Statement of the World Council of Churches', in *International Review of Mission*, 90, No. 359 (2001), 429-30.

[3] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

peace and reconciliation. Participation in God's ongoing work of liberation and reconciliation by the Holy Spirit, therefore, includes discerning and unmasking the demons that exploit and enslave. For example, this involves deconstructing patriarchal ideologies, upholding the right to self-determination for indigenous peoples, and challenging the social embeddedness of racism and casteism.[4]

This sounds like agreement with the participatory option. Yet, at another place, the community of faith as bearer of mission is invoked:

> Mission begins in the heart of the Triune God and the love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation. The missionary God who sent the Son to the world calls all God's people (John 20:21), and empowers them to be a community of hope. The church is commissioned to celebrate life, and to resist and transform all life-destroying forces, in the power of the Holy Spirit.[5]

Another strong affirmation of the role of the church in God's mission comes in §10:

> The church is a gift of God to the world for its transformation towards the kingdom of God. Its mission is to bring new life and announce the loving presence of God in our world. We must participate in God's mission in unity, overcoming the divisions and tensions that exist among us, so that the world may believe and all may be one (John 17:21). The church, as the communion of Christ's disciples, must become an inclusive community and exists to bring healing and reconciliation to the world. How can the church renew herself to be missional and move forward together towards life in its fullness?[6]

Section 8 further asserts: '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.'[7]

I find it invigorating that non-exclusive interpretations of the operation of *missio Dei* are found in *TTL*. This inclusiveness offers the opportunity to investigate common or differing perspectives of mission according to theological stream or denominational doctrines and confessions. All of us need to comb through our particular tradition to gain theological clarity on mission historically, and to learn how choices are currently made about mission functionality. There are many, many styles and options for mission and evangelism. How do we determine which embody or represent *missio Dei*? This is an essential question for mission in the future and is one closely related to the issue of reliance on the Holy Spirit.

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[4] *TTL,* §43.
[5] *TTL,* §2.
[6] *TTL,* §10.
[7] *TTL,* §8.

The Holy Spirit

Some power besides human effort must sustain mission commitment, especially when mission is seen as belonging to God. Historically and psychologically, that power is the Holy Spirit, the progenitor and prime actor in *missio Dei. TTL* is seriously Trinitarian with regard to the nature of God. The Spirit is active in creation. The Spirit empowers Jesus at baptism and in ministry, sustains him in crucifixion, and acts in resurrection. The Spirit is universally present and provides the incentive for mission: 'By the Spirit we participate in the mission of love that is at the heart of the life of the Trinity… All who respond to the outpouring of the love of God are invited to join in with the Spirit in the mission of God.'[8]

The Trinitarian framework no doubt reflects Orthodox influence, and the strong Spirit emphasis, Pentecostal contributions. Perhaps *TTL* has such strong appeal to me because my first reading of it came in the wake of months of work on a mission theology statement for the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries, part of that time as a director before I was staff of the agency. We struggled to write a relatively short statement that took account of scripture, history, experience and reason – matters important to Methodists. Methodism was born as a mission movement and never moved away from it, yet seeks to restate its basic nature in successive generations. The last such United Methodist statement, 'Grace Upon Grace: God's Mission and Ours' in 1988 has continuing value, but we needed a succinct affirmation in a social media era. Our goal was 850 words, and we accomplished it with a great deal of prayer. I was not surprised by the instructive insight into the nature of God's mission that came from local pastors and laity.

The Holy Spirit became our guide and also the organizing theological concept via the Trinity in our statement, which begins with confession of our mission as *missio Dei*. It moves from creation, to the incarnation of undying love in Jesus Christ, to the community of faith animated and sustained by the Spirit in pursuit of God's purposes in the world.

We found hope and determination by keeping the focus on *ru'ach*:

> God's Holy Spirit calls the church into being for mission. The Church is one sign of God's presence in the world and of God's intention in creation. In response to God's call and the leading of the Holy Spirit, women and men, young and old, of all nations, stations and races, and in all times and places, unite as the living body of Christ to join God's mission of redemption, bearing witness to God's presence in the world.[9]

> Transforming witness, sustained by the Spirit, is the substance of mission.

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[8] *TTL,* §18.

[9] General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, 'Theology of Mission Statement': www.umcmission.org/Learn-About-Us/About-Global-Ministries/Theology-of-Mission

> The Church in Mission lifts up the name of Jesus in thought, word and deed, proclaiming Jesus Christ as 'the Word become flesh' through its own incarnate living; deeds of love; and service, healing and renewal.[10]

An affirmation of the universal presence of God follows, with the statement concluding with an opening to God's new challenges in the future:

> The Spirit is always moving to sweep the church into a new mission age. With openness and gratitude we await the leading of the Spirit in ways not yet seen as God continues to work God's purposes out in our own day in a new way.[11]

I go into the details of my own organization's understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in mission to underscore the value of *TTL*'s Spirit-based theology to a real community of mission practitioners in the 21st century.

'Mission from the Margins'

The phrase 'Mission from the Margins' is one of the most valuable teaching tools in *TTL* because it is so dramatic and fresh. It testifies to the global nature of the church, to the inclusion of the poor in the community of faith, and to the demand for greater equality in awareness and respect for Christian witness and service.

This awareness that an old mission paradigm is no longer sound or possible is well stated in *TTL*:

> 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 from the margins are claiming their key role as agents of mission and affirming mission as transformation. This reversal of roles in the envisioning of mission has strong biblical foundations because God chose the poor, the foolish and the powerless (1 Corinthians 1:18-31) to further God's mission of justice and peace so that life may flourish.[12]

The concept and reality of mission from the margins has developed in concert with the shift of Christianity's centre of gravity from the West to the global South and East. In that respect, it is not as prophetic as it is simply descriptive, but it requires a significant shift in the direction of mission perception. The inherited presumption was that mission comes from well-established, well-funded, institutional-centred churches and is directed towards the poor, marginalized parts of the world, notably in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This has long been under challenge by the mission-founded and indigenous churches of the global South, at least since the IMC conference held in Whitby, Canada, in 1947. At Whitby, the younger churches made it clear that they intended to assume a greater role

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[10] GBGM, 'Theology of Mission Statement'.
[11] GBGM, 'Theology of Mission Statement'.
[12] *TTL,* §6.

in selecting the missionaries they would receive, and intended, as they were able, to become part of the church's evangelization and service.

The presentations given and papers written at Whitby speak of 'partnership in obedience to God' in identifying with God's mission.[13] Churches in some former mission-receiving countries – I think of such diverse places as South Korea, Brazil and Nigeria – have become primary players in the practice and support of world mission; movement has been slower in most areas, though not in intention and zeal. While still financially dependent upon American and European support, our United Methodist missionaries are today at least 50% from the global South.

I have experienced a sense of partnership in obedience to God with Christian refugees from Africa coming to Europe, where they infuse struggling traditional congregations with new vigour and mission vision.

TTL states the case in moving away from the perception that 'mission can only be done by the powerful to the powerless… People on the margins have agency, and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view'.[14]

'Agency' is an essential quality of mission, and faith, hope and love are agencies even more than dollars, organization and educational resources. Those on the margins are often gifted with great agency: faith, hope and love and, as *TTL* states, 'people in positions of privilege have much to learn from the daily struggles of people living in marginal conditions'.[15]

Let us, however, not polarize here. At the margins and at the centre we find gifted people engaged in God's mission. However, at the margins and at the centre we also find a lack of human and civil liberty, and there can be places with no organizational stability or transparent financial systems. Partnership then also requires action to ensure human rights, access to educational opportunities and, most of all, respect for those who bring the gospel of Jesus Christ from the margins. And partnership in obedience to God means that those with material abundance have the responsibility of facilitating mission from the margins.

Health and Healing

Health and healing have long been parts of practical Christian service, but seldom recognized in theological statements on mission and evangelism. That these themes are prominent in *TTL* is in no small part the outcome of decades of reflection and advocacy by the WCC's Christian Medical Commission, and work within the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. The 2005 World Missionary Conference explored the topic 'Come, Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile', with the subtitle, 'Called in

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[13] Charles W. Ranson (ed), *Renewal and Advance: Christian Witness in a Revolutionary World* (London: Edinburgh House, 1948).
[14] *TTL,* §38.
[15] *TTL,* §38.

Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities'. A great strength of *TTL*'s affirmation is its holistic approach, and this gives me hope that missiologists, missionaries and church members in the future will understand, in the words of the statement, that 'Health is more than physical and/or mental well-being, and healing is not primarily medical'.[16] *TTL* offers a biblical view of health that embraces spiritual, emotional and physical aspects of life. This view sees 'a human being as a multi-dimensional unity, and the body, soul, and mind as interrelated and interdependent. It thus affirms the social, political and ecological dimensions of personhood and wholeness'.[17]

Health, in *TTL*, is a 'sense of wholeness', and God's mission of wholeness incorporates not only persons but families, communities and the fullness of creation. As I have written, 'This emphasis on community as an ingredient of health and wholeness: 1) recognizes that congregations today are becoming involved in local and global health mission and ministry, and 2) promotes the expansion of this form of the *missio Dei*.'[18]

An understanding of health, healing and wholeness as expressions of God's grace – as mission, not human charity – is gaining acceptance, even enthusiasm, in my United Methodist Church. Real grassroots interest undergirds our new unit on Global Health at the General Board of Global Ministries. This responds in part to expansion of community-based primary health care by missionaries and volunteers, and partnership with non-profit and governmental organizations. It found broad acceptance through an anti-malaria campaign in Africa that depended upon community-based training and volunteers. 'What else can we do together and with partners?' church members asked. Energy has been generated for a new wholeness campaign, based on Jesus' assurance in John 10 of 'abundant life'. Tentatively called: 'Abundant Life – Our Promise to Children', the campaign, likely to be launched in 2016 at the United Methodist General Conference, pledges the church to reach one million children with life-saving interventions by 2020, as part of a broad-based collaborative effort to significantly improve global health for all by 2035.

There is a danger to be avoided in expanding attention to health ministries, and the same applies to church-based response to natural and human-caused disasters – the danger of letting the humanistic and altruistic motives overshadow the theological and spiritual aspects of mission. It is often easier to advertise response to hunger, suffering, homelessness and disease than it is demonstrate that Christian service is a response to divine grace, not an end in itself. Of course, Christian disaster relief and follow-up community development, health ministries and the promotion of human rights make no distinction as to religious affiliation, nationality, ethnicity,

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[16] *TTL,* §51.
[17] *TTL,* §51.
[18] Kemper, 'The Missio Dei in Contemporary Context', 189.

gender or sexual orientation. The objectives are to give evidence to God's love for all, to indicate that the church as the instrument of divine grace cares about the entire human family. Recipients may not be aware of the spiritual and missional motivation, but the providers certainly must be.

In using *TTL* in mission education with regard to health and wholeness, this paragraph is essential:

> Actions towards healing and wholeness of life of persons and communities are an important expression of mission. Healing was not only a central feature of Jesus' ministry but also a feature of his call to his followers to continue his work (Matt. 10:1). Healing is also one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:9; Acts 3). The Spirit empowers the church for a life-nurturing mission, which includes prayer, pastoral care and professional health care on the one hand, and prophetic denunciation of the root causes of suffering, transformation of structures that dispense injustice, and pursuit of scientific research on the other.[19]

It really is about God.

Conclusion

Together Toward Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes has become a valuable resource in the library of mission resources of the United Methodist Church. It was at the centre of the March/April, 2015 issue of *New World Outlook*, our bi-monthly mission magazine. The overall theme was 'Reflections on Mission and Evangelism', and featured perspectives on *TTL* from various cultures and theological points of view. We use it in missionary training. We feature responses to it by staff members on our website. The overall tone and content of the statement track well with our experience of mission in a time when we believe that the Holy Spirit is truly at work in changing mission landscapes.

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[19] *TTL,* §50.

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE:
AN EVANGELICAL ASSESSMENT

Samuel Escobar

For this Evangelical commentary on *Together towards Life* (*TTL*) to make
sense to the reader, this writer has to describe the perspective from which
he is writing.[1] During a recent trip from Spain to Brazil over the Atlantic
Ocean, I had time to read *TTL* and reflect about Christian mission in
relation to it. I was attending a theological consultation in São Paulo, at
which the Latin American Theological Fraternity (LATF) celebrated its
45th anniversary. With my colleagues René Padilla and Pedro Arana, we
had been among the signers of the *Declaración de Cochabamba*, the
founding document with which we launched the LATF in 1970. One of the
joys of this celebrative occasion in São Paulo was to meet a new generation
of theologians which were pursuing the vision of the LATF. We were
guests of the Baptist Church of Agua Branca, one of the liveliest
Evangelical churches I have visited recently. Among the people I met was
Alzira Nascimento, the director of the mission department of the church.

Alzira was a missionary in Angola for seventeen years, during the civil
war, and is now a professor and promoter of mission work. She is also a
missiologist who reflects systematically about her practice in the light of
God's word. I was struck by sections of her recent book *Evangelização ou
Colonização?*[2] which are very similar in content and style to the text of the
TTL. Her experiences in the context of post-colonial Angola made her
question the primary missionary approach that she had been practising until
then. She had to learn to overcome the tendency to treat people in her
mission service as *objects* instead of *subjects*. She had to learn the
difference between evangelization and colonization. It was not easy. She
came to realize that the colonialist paradigm was deeply entrenched in the
missionary practice of her church, both at home and abroad. Her book
reflects missiology at its best, particularly in relation to the practice of
mission. In my view, Evangelical missiologists like Alzira will be the ones
primarily working with the agenda set by *TTL*.

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[1] This chapter is an expanded version of Samuel Escobar, 'Together towards Life:
Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes', in *International Bulletin of
Missionary Research,* 38/4 (October 2014), 193-95.
[2] Alzira Nascimento, *Evangelização ou Colonização?* (Viçosa, Brazil: Ultimato,
2015).

A Brief Historical Approach

When my generation founded the Latin American Theological Fraternity (LATF) back in 1970, we were part of a growing number of Evangelical pastors, missionaries and theological educators searching for answers to questions that came from our evangelistic and missionary commitment and activity.[3] It was a vocation to serve the theology emerging from churches that were relatively new at the time, committed to evangelization and fast-growing within the overall framework of a Christendom in decline. As Evangelical theologians, we found ourselves on the margins of the dominant cultural establishments of our countries but at the centre of the missionary action of our churches. We were part of communities that saw the world as a territory to be 'conquered for Christ', and the gospel as a transforming message that was going to bring forth a new spiritual, social and political creation, even though there was no clear 'project' to visualize the outcome of that process.[4]

For our generation it was obvious that liberation theologies born in Roman Catholic soil could offer no adequate answers for urgent questions about the meaning of the gospel and the evangelistic mission of the church. We acknowledged, however, promising signs in the post-Vatican II self-criticism, in the return to biblical sources and in the emphasis on relating theology and praxis.[5] On the other hand, we perceived much of the theology developed in the 1960s and 1970s within the ecumenical foci related to the World Council of Churches as a theology that, in spite of its impressive academic dress, was shaped by a disposition and stance that reflected the uncertainties and the fatigue of a declining Protestantism in Europe.[6] Catholic liberation theologies were heavily dependent on the assumption that Latin America was a 'Christian continent', and their ecumenical Protestant counterparts would not question that assumption. In

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[3] For a history and evaluation of the LATF, see Sharon E. Heaney, *Contextual Theology for Latin America: Liberation Themes in Evangelical Perspective* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2008); Daniel Salinas, *Latin American Evangelical Theology in the 1970s* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

[4] I use the word 'project' in the sense described by Paul Freston in 'In Search of an Evangelical Political Project for Brazil: A Pentecostal 'Showvention', in *Transformation,* 9/3 (July-Sept 1992); especially 31.

[5] For a later elaboration of these points, see C. René Padilla, 'Liberation Theology: an Appraisal', in Daniel S. Schipani (ed), *Freedom and Discipleship* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989); Emilio A. Núñez, *Liberation Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985); and Samuel Escobar, *Liberation Themes in Reformational Perspective* (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt College Press, 1989).

[6] See the foundational documents of the Latin American Theological Fraternity in Pedro Savage (ed), *El debate contemporáneo sobre la Biblia* (Barcelona, Spain: Ediciones Evangélicas Europeas, 1972); see Samuel Escobar, 'Identity, Future and Mission of Latin American Protestantism', in *Theological Fraternity Bulletin* 1/2 (1978).

such theologies, there was no room for the fundamental evangelistic stance of our churches.

It became clear for us as Evangelical theologians that we had to engage in the development of a contextual theology that would aim to be 'forged in the heat of Evangelical reality in Latin America, in faithfulness to the Word of God'.[7] We perceived that such theology could not limit itself to be 'an adaptation of an existing theology of universal validity to a particular situation… aided by benevolent missionary paternalism'.[8] Rather, its aim would be to offer 'a new open-ended reading of Scripture with a hermeneutic in which the biblical text and the historical situation become mutually engaged in a dialogue whose purpose is to place the Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in its particular context'.[9]

This agenda was followed in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s up to the present, and the participation of Latin American Evangelicals in the consultations and debates of these decades contributed to an ongoing dialogue in the Evangelical world and beyond. After all those years, the tone and the content of *TTL*, echoing also the voice of many churches, came as a surprise as much as a challenge! To read an official statement on mission and evangelism from the World Council of Churches that reflects so many of the concerns expressed by Evangelicals through the years is exciting indeed.

In 2010 we celebrated the centennial of Edinburgh 1910, and then in 2014 we were celebrating forty years of the *Lausanne Covenant* and the movement that followed it. In fact, the *TTL* affirmation has reminded me of what I consider providential convergences for Christian mission in the mid-1970s. First, in 1974 Evangelicals gathered in Lausanne and issued the *Lausanne Covenant*, which reaffirmed commitment to mission and evangelism. But the Covenant also contained a critical reflection about the way in which evangelism and mission were carried out up to that moment, with a call to repentance and a commitment to explore realistically a more Christ-like way of going about it.

That same year the Synod of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church asked Pope Paul VI to issue a renewed call to evangelism, and in 1975 he promulgated the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* about evangelization in the modern world. The same year the WCC had its fifth Assembly in Nairobi with renewed attention to the themes of mission and evangelism. Missiologist James A. Scherer says that, in Nairobi, 'Assembly statements about "confessing Christ" had a strongly Christocentric, Trinitarian and churchly ring, echoing Eastern Orthodox and Roman

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[7] Samuel Escobar, 'Biblical Content and Anglo-Saxon Trappings in Latin American Theology', in *Occasional Bulletin,* Latin American Theological Fraternity, 3 (October 1972); 2.

[8] René Padilla, 'Biblical Foundations: a Latin American Study', in *Evangelical Review of Theology,* 7/1 (1983), 86.

[9] René Padilla, 'Biblical Foundations: a Latin American Study'.

Catholic influence but also responding to evangelical criticisms'.[10] Soon after, in 1982, the first WCC mission and evangelism affirmation was published.

The chronicle, by Jooseop Keum, published in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* in April 2014, provides a fascinating description of the setting from which *TTL* came into being.[11] Though its structure and the style are different from the *Cape Town Commitment* that came out of the Lausanne III gathering in South Africa in 2010, I find that there are also important theological convergences between the two.

Trinitarian Conviction and Pneumatological Emphasis

At several key points *TTL* affirms a Trinitarian position. The first and second paragraphs are clear theological statements in this regard and the missiological unfolding of the faith which is affirmed comes in §3:

> 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. This mission spirituality has a dynamic of transformation which, through spiritual commitment of people, is capable of transforming the world in God's grace. How can we reclaim mission as transformative spirituality which is life-affirming?

Though Trinitarian in its foundation, the document has what I would call a pneumatological structure. However, my own missiological emphasis on Christology resonates with the statement in §16: 'Therefore, a pneumatological focus on Christian mission recognises that mission is essentially christologically based and relates the work of the Holy Spirit to the salvation through Jesus Christ.' The four main sections of *TTL* are built upon statements about the nature of the Holy Spirit: the Spirit of mission, the Spirit of liberation, the Spirit of community and the Spirit of Pentecost. I find it significant that the section about liberation is connected with the affirmation of 'mission from the margins'.

Probably many Evangelical pastors, teachers and even theologians would not relate the work of the Holy Spirit to liberation the way *TTL* does. But in the last three decades I have followed the search for a renewed understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit and the way he works. Let me mention a couple of milestones which address key theological themes from a liberationist perspective. In 1992 Eldin Villafañe, a Pentecostal theological educator published his book *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an*

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[10] James A. Scherer, *Gospel, Church and Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Mission Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004)*,* 40.

[11] Jooseop Keum, 'Shift in the Center of Gravity for the Ecumenical Movement? WCC Busan Assembly and the Korean Churches', in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* 38/2 (April 2014), 64-67.

Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic.[12] Villafañe was the founder and director of the Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME) in Boston. In 1986 Joseph Comblin, a respected Belgian Catholic missionary and liberation theologian published (originally in Portuguese) his book *The Holy Spirit and Liberation*.[13] Both these works anticipated in important ways the relationship between pneumatology and liberation which we find in *TTL*.

These days in Spain, mission is taking place in new and creative forms. I know of several Latin American evangelical women migrants who earn their living caring daily for old people in Madrid or Valencia, and share with them spontaneously the good news of God's love in Christ. They would never describe this as actual 'mission' work. I can also think of a young Argentinian missionary in North Africa who is a soccer coach and thus can reach dozens of teenagers with whom at some points he can talk about Jesus Christ in a spontaneous and natural manner.

In a way, we have witnessed the end of the imperial age of mission in which the gospel was presented 'from above' by Spanish conquistadores, British merchants and American enthusiasts who sometimes followed too closely the colonial or neo-colonial patterns of their nations. Now the younger churches are carrying on mission 'from below', not only through missionaries but also through Filipino maids in Muslim countries, illegal immigrants in the United States and African university students in Europe. As *TTL* states in §15: 'The Holy Spirit works in the world often in mysterious and unknown ways beyond our imagination' (Luke 1:34-35; John 3:8; Acts 2:16-21). We missionaries and missiologists must be ready for surprises as the Spirit keeps mission going, in his own way. The agenda for the future is very well stated in §106: 'We affirm that today mission movements are emerging from the global South and East which are multi-directional and many-faceted. The shifting centre of gravity of Christianity to the global South and East challenges us to explore missiological expressions that are rooted in these contexts, culture, and spiritualities.'

I find it necessary to state a point of clarification: §38 of *TTL* about margins and marginalization describes the emergence of a new missionary movement: 'Mission from the margins seeks to counteract injustices in life, church and mission. It seeks to be an alternative missional movement against the perception that mission can only be done by the powerful to the powerless, by the rich to the poor, or by the privileged to the marginalized.' This paragraph seems to attribute to the new missionary movement a kind of fighting attitude with what one could interpret as a vindictive intention and tone. In the attitude of Latin American or Korean missionaries that I have observed through the years, the joy of obedience and a sense of

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[12] Eldin Villafañe, *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992).

[13] Joseph Comblin, *The Holy Spirit and Liberation* (London: Burns & Oates, 1989).

privilege seem to be the predominant mood and attitude, in spite of their limited resources and the lowliness of their social status.

Widening the Meaning of Spirituality

The above-quoted paragraph also has a reference to spirituality which is then developed in §29-35, in the section on 'Transformative spirituality'. In the Evangelical tradition, missionaries have been known as spiritual giants. Their exercise of the spiritual disciplines has been an inspiration and example. I trace it back to the strong influence of Pietism in the development of the Protestant missionary movement. *TTL* has kept several of the key elements of this tradition but it also calls us to a *transformative spirituality*: 'Mission spirituality resists and seeks to transform all life-destroying values and systems wherever these are at work in our economies, our politics, and even our churches' (§30).

Later on, in §48, *TTL* invites us to a painful self-examination: 'In reality, however, mission, money and political power are strategic partners. Although our theological and missiological talk says a lot about the mission of the church being in solidarity with the poor, sometimes in practice it is much more concerned with being in the centres of power, eating with the rich and lobbying for money to maintain ecclesial bureaucracy. This poses particular challenges to reflect on what is the good news for people who are privileged and powerful.'

A moving case of missionary self-examination is described by Gerald M. Costello in his book *Mission to Latin America: The Successes and Failures of a Twentieth Century Crusade*.[14] This book gives an account of the crisis of conscience that was experienced by many American Catholic missionaries in the 1950s and 1960s when they realized that their church was part of the political machinery that in certain cases exploited the poor in Latin America. The new awareness made many of them practise 'a preferential option for the poor' long before the Bishops adopted it in the now famous Conference of Medellín (1968). Some of them paid with their lives or were ostracized by the national hierarchies, and their self-examination preceded the coming of liberation theologies.

In spite of the 'preferential option for the poor' that the Roman Catholic Church started to practise in the late 1960s, popular forms of Protestantism continued to grow. One could say that in Latin America the poor seemed to take a preferential option for Protestantism, a situation that made some theologians in Latin America feel perplexed and full of questions. They call to mind John the Baptist who, when he was imprisoned and the situation developed differently from his expectations, sent his disciples to ask Jesus 'Are you the one who was to come or should we expect someone else?'

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[14] Gerald M. Costello, *Mission to Latin America: The Successes and Failures of a Twentieth Century Crusade* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979).

(Matthew 11:3). Jesus' answer was a simple call to consider the facts: 'Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 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. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me' (Matthew 11:4-6). Today, perplexed theologians are also invited to look at the facts of an emerging 'Third Church'.[15] It is the emerging church of the poor, of oral theology, narrative preaching, dreams and visions, signs and wonders, and the transformative spiritual power which at given points does far more for the poor than the elaborate social agendas of traditional denominations. Maybe in North and South the time has come for theologians to do on a global scale what Richard Mouw calls 'consulting the faithful', i.e. intellectuals learning from popular religion.[16]

Mission and Freedom of Religion

I find relevant and necessary the statements in the final paragraphs of *TTL* about the nature of mission and evangelism (§109), and dialogue and co-operation in mission (§110), particularly after having participated in the origins of the Lausanne movement since 1966, when in the Berlin Congress of Evangelism John Stott invited us to reconsider the Great Commission in the Gospel of John. Working together with René Padilla on the development of a concept of mission that would have Christological structure, we found Stott's emphasis in Berlin refreshing and seminal. By the time of the Lausanne Congress in 1974, the follow-up to the Berlin process with regional congresses in Europe, Asia, the USA, Canada and Latin America had confirmed the validity and relevance of what we had been trying to do in Latin America under René Padilla's leadership.[17]

What I find missing in *TTL* is a more specific and detailed reference to mission in the context of post-Christendom situations, like the one in which I now live in Spain. §10 states: 'Authentic evangelism is done with respect to freedom of religion and belief, for all human beings, as images of God. Proselytism by violent means, economic incentive or abuse of power is contrary to the message of the gospel. In doing evangelism, it is important to build relations of respect and trust between people of different faiths.'

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[15] The expression was coined by missiologist Walbert Bühlman to describe the new global church, contrasting it with the dominant Eastern Church of the first thousand years of our era, and the dominant Western Church of the second millennium.

[16] Richard Mouw, *Consulting the Faithful* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

[17] I have described this process in Chapter 1 of my book *The New Global Mission* (Leicester, UK: IVP, 2003), and in the Chapter I contributed to Jeffrey P. Greenman and Gene L. Greene (eds), *Global Theology in Evangelical Perspective* (Leicester, UK: IVP, 2012). René Padilla's theological contribution to the Lausanne movement is gathered in his book *Mission Between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom,* revised and updated (London: Langham Monographs, 2010).

Evangelical missionaries in Spain find themselves doing mission in one of the most traditional contexts of Christendom. The Roman Catholic Church has lost much of the power of social coercion that it had until the 1970s, the point at which Spain had to adopt religious freedom if it wanted to become part of the European Union. Nevertheless, the church still has money, power, properties and an array of educational institutions, many of which are partially supported by the state. It is indeed sad to realise that in most cases when bishops raise their voice it is in order to defend old privileges. In the past, the church attempted to create a negative image of Protestants, while Spanish bishops bitterly opposed the concept of religious freedom during Vatican II. Thus, the evangelistic activity of Evangelical churches, instead of being occasionally perceived as proselytistic, can be seen as the manifestation of the existence of other ways to live out Christianity.

With few exceptions, there is no co-operation in mission between Catholics and Protestants in Spain. Among the exceptions one could mention the co-operation between Catholics and Protestants in the Bible Society. Since 2008 they have been working together on an inter-confessional translation of the Bible, an attempt that finds growing acceptance in Spain and Latin America. Moreover, some Protestants are part of the Juan XXIII Theological Association that has an annual theological congress attended by as many as 1,500 theologians. The Association, however, does not enjoy the blessing of the Bishops. A book published in 2010 compiled the final declarations or messages of the first thirty congresses that met since 1981. On certain points the concept of mission that these declarations present comes very close in language and style to sections of *TTL*.[18]

For many Catholics the Protestant presence is a non-issue. I was very happy when I received my copy of the *Atlas of Global Christianity* edited by Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, published for the centennial of Edinburgh 1910.[19] Rosemary Dowsett and I had contributed a chapter about Evangelicals, and I was fascinated and thankful for the final product. However, I felt disappointed and saddened when I read the chapter about Southern Europe: Spain, Portugal and France, among other countries. Not once in the whole chapter are Protestants mentioned. It appeared as if they simply did not exist.

In spite of the above-mentioned facts, there is a Protestant missionary presence at work in Spain, and missionaries are trying to learn how to co-operate with the small existing Protestant churches, and at the same time how to shape mission in response to the present historical and cultural situation. In 2013 I spoke at a gathering of Latin American missionaries in

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[18] Asociación de teólogos/as Juan XXIII, *Congresos de Teología.* (Madrid: *Mensajes*, 2010).

[19] Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Atlas of Global Christianity, 1910-2010* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

Europe. Over a hundred of them met at Torrox, near Málaga, representing fifteen countries. After that I crossed the peninsula to Seville in order to teach an intensive course about Christian mission organized by Irismenio Ribeiro, a Brazilian missionary who leads an extension theological centre for the region. It was hosted by the Baptist church of Montequinto, where the pastor is Stella Maris Merlo, an Argentinian who has been serving as a missionary in Spain for 33 years. During the course we prayed for a team of Spanish missionaries that serve in Equatorial Guinea in West Africa under the European Baptist Mission. At meals we were hosted by Gladys, a lady from El Salvador, a hardworking immigrant, and one of the hundreds of Latin American volunteers that are active in Spanish churches these days. This is the reality of the global church in the 21st century, and as I experience it in Spain, I cannot but praise the Lord as I trace back this reality to the two centuries of missionary work that have preceded us.

On the other hand, it is rather puzzling, how the Roman Catholic Church in Spain, despite its ageing clergy and the continuous loss of popularity among the population, sends abroad a strong missionary force of 14,000 men and women. There are, for instance, 969 Spanish missionaries in Perú, 968 in Venezuela, 666 in Argentina, 26 in China, 17 in Indonesia, and 116 in India.[20] The presence of these missionaries in Latin America is focused among the poorest segments of society and in remote areas. Some of them, such as Pedro Casaldaliga in Brazil or the six Jesuits who were killed in El Salvador, have been very vocal in their defence of the poor and in their opposition to structures of injustice and exploitation.

Through instruments such as the above-mentioned Atlas we have at our disposal an incredible amount of data about peoples, nations, sociological trends and cultural patterns. Some of us are also familiar with a formidable set of missionary institutions, denominational and interdenominational, each one with their agendas that reflect their theological convictions as well as an accumulated wisdom that cannot be despised. There is data that cannot be changed but institutions and patterns need to be open to change. *TTL* provides inspiration, theological foundations and challenging questions. As we practise our mission, we must be attentive to the Holy Spirit. We also have to be attentive to new and spontaneous missionary developments in unexpected places which may contain suggestions as to the way in which the existing missionary enterprise may be reformed. This should not be difficult for people who believe in an *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*. And we can add that the renewal of spiritual vitality has had an impact on mission when it has been matched with creativity in regard to structures and methods.

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[20] 'Más de 14,000 misioneros españoles dan su vida en el mundo para dar a conocer el Evangelio': www.religionenlibertad.com/artículo=25466 (accessed 28th June 2013).

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE:
A PENTECOSTAL ASSESSMENT

Timothy T. N. Lim

This chapter appraises *Together towards Life* (*TTL*) after a concise account of global Pentecostalism, its ecumenical dialogues, and missional expressions.[1] The appraisal examines aspects of *TTL* that Pentecostals would affirm, are likely to affirm, and not amenable to agree, with reasons and sources for further investigation.

Global Pentecostalism

Contemporary global Pentecostalism traces its origins to William Seymour and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street in 1901.[2] Reports uncover other indigenous Pentecostal outpourings before, during and after 1901, both at Azusa Street and elsewhere (e.g. Pyongyang).[3] In our milieu, global Pentecostalism contributes to societal transformation and the renewal of Christianity.[4] Pentecostalism transmutes into various streams (classical, neo-Pentecostal, charismatic, neo-charismatic and 'third wave'). Occasionally, some streams maintain exclusivity from other streams. Nearly all share similar phenomenological experiences of the Spirit – Spirit baptism, *glossolalia*, manifold operations of charismata, power encounters,

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[1] Readers may also be interested in my review essay, 'Comparative Pneumatology in Together towards Life, Evangelii Gaudium, and the Cape Town Commitment', in *International Review of Mission* 104.2 (2015) 203-16.

[2] Mel Cecil Robeck Jr,, *Azusa Street Revival* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

[3] A.H. Anderson, 'Pentecostalism in East Asia: Indigenous Oriental Christianity?', in *Pneuma,* 22:1 (Spring 2000), 115-32; Young-Hoon Lee, 'Korean Pentecost: The Great Revival of 1907', in *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies,* 4:1 (2001), 73-83; Hwa Yung, 'Endued with Power: The Pentecostal-Charismatic Renewal and the Asian Church in the Twenty-First Century', in *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 6:1 (2003), 63-82, esp. 68-69; Sung Won Yang, *The Influence of the Revival Movement of 1901-1910 on the Development of Korean Christianity* (Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002).

[4] Allan Heaton Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth* (Oxford: OUP, 2013); Allan Heaton Anderson, 'To All Points of the Compass', *Enrichment Journal* (Springfield, MO: The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Spring 2006); Donald E. Miller, Kimon H. Sargeant and Richard Flory (eds), *Spirit and Power* (Oxford: OUP, 2013).

healing, exorcism and deliverance ministries.[5] Phenomenological explanations do not fully account for the multi-complex religious, socio-economic-political, divine-temporal engagements or the religious community despite the similar, confluential and convergent narratives about the experiences of the Holy Spirit.[6] The movement's diversity is shaped by global, cultural, theological-ecumenical, linguistic and indigenous expressions in various social locations.[7] And because of the plurality of localized expression, it is almost impossible to gather a team to speak representatively for the varieties within this movement.[8] Statistics report nearly 18,810 independent, indigenous, post-denominational groups of global neo-charismatics, 1,500 intra-denominations in North America, and another fifteen hundred Pentecostal denominations in Chile.[9] The challenges for this global movement abound, as does its potential.[10]

Pentecostals in Ecumenical Dialogue

Ecumenical dialogues have been continuing across various communions.[11] Pentecostals have moved from being a marginalized community to becoming an invited dialogue partner at world, national and regional levels. Pentecostal dialogue with other churches is no longer a novelty.[12] The Joint Consultative Group between the World Council of Churches and Pentecostals formed in 2000 has paved the way for Pentecostal participation in bilateral and multilateral meetings.[13] The *Focolare*

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[5] W. Paul Williamson and Ralph W. Hood, 'Spirit Baptism: A Phenomenological Experience', in *Mental Health, Religion and Culture,* 14:6 (2011), 543-59; Peter D. Neumann, *Pentecostal Experience*. Princeton Theological Monograph 187 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012).

[6] Stephen C. Torr, *A Dramatic Pentecostal/Charismatic Anti-Theodicy* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 107. See also Vinson Synan and Amos Yong (eds), *Global Renewal Christianity* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2015), 4 vols.

[7] Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock and Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 'Introduction', 3.

[8] Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity*, Vol. II (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 4, 9, 10, cf. 1-31.

[9] Ed van der Maas and Stanley M. Burgess (eds), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), xx.

[10] Nigel Paul Willis, *The Pentecostal Movement, Its Challenges and Potential* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013).

[11] Example of reports: https://ecumenism.net/docu/dialogue.htm (2015) (accessed 25th April 2015).

[12] Wolfgang Vondey, 'Presuppositions for Pentecostal Engagement in Ecumenical Dialogue', in *Exchange,* 30:1 (Brill, 2001), 344-58.

[13] Pentecostals participate in the WCC's Commissions on Faith and Order, World Mission and Evangelism, and in more than forty national councils of churches and

movement's course on ecumenism at Castelgandolfo, Italy, in April 2014, emphasized Pentecostal and Charismatic expressions in Protestant and Catholic Christianity.[14] The Vatican claims 120 million Charismatic-renewed faithful worldwide, and with the blessing of various Popes, though not without resistance from some Catholic bishops.[15]

   The longest-standing dialogue with Pentecostals, the International Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue, has continued since 1972 and recently entered its sixth phase. Though Pentecostals showed distrust for theology at the first Quinquennium of the dialogue, Pentecostals engaged in topics of vital importance for Pentecostal-Catholic relations in subsequent phases of dialogue.[16] Hollenweger's lament of the difficulties (in 1999) has since been replaced with Cecil Robeck's appraisal of being warmly welcomed by Catholics although, internally, many Pentecostals are still suspicious about ecumenism.[17]

   Reformed-Pentecostal dialogue has entered the third cycle. The first two official dialogues occurred in 1996-2000 and 2002-2011, between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Pentecostal World Conference.[18] In November 2014, the World Communion of Reformed

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other ecumenical agencies. Pentecostals have ongoing dialogues with Roman Catholics (since 1972), World Communion of Reformed Churches, formerly World Alliance of Reformed Churches (since 1996), Lutheran World Federation (since 2005), and World Alliance (since 2011), and have entered informal conversations as steps towards dialogue with the Anglican Communion, Mennonite World Conference, and the Synodal Committee for Inter-Orthodox and Inter-Christian Affairs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

[14] www.focolare.org/en/news/2014/04/29/dialogo-con-i-pentecostali (29th April 2014) (accessed 5th February 2015).

[15] Kilian McDonnell (ed), *Open the Windows* (South Bend, IN: Greenlawn Press, 1989), cited from Cecil M. Robeck Jr,, 'Creative Imagination and Ecumenism in Light of Global Demographic Changes': lecture delivered 4th February 2013 at Catholic University of America for Washington Theological Consortium, 19, 18-19, n. 23.

[16] Juan Usma Gomez, 'Dialogue with Pentecostals', Eternal World Television Network (2001): https://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/pccupent.htm (accessed 9th June 2015).

[17] Walter J. Hollenweger, 'Roman Catholics and Pentecostals in Dialogue', in *The Ecumenical Review,* 51:2 (April 1999), 147-59; Cecil M. Robeck Jr, 'Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity: A Pentecostal Perspective', David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross (ed), *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now* (Oxford: Regnum, 2009), 290-303; I analyzed the suspicion, not just of Pentecostals, but also of Anabaptists, Baptists, Evangelicals and Presbyterians, towards ecumenism in 'Recognition and Reception: Towards a Joint Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017', in *Ecclesiology*, Part III.

[18] Cecil M. Robeck, 'First International Reformed-Pentecostal Dialogue', in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies,* 33:3 (June 1996), 442; 'Word and Spirit, Church and World', Pentecostal-Reformed Dialogue 1996-2000: https://ecumenism.net/archive/docu/2000_pent_warc_word_spirit_church_world.pdf (2000) and http://pctii.org/

Churches, the Reformed Church of Hungary and the classical Hungarian Pentecostals held an international dialogue focusing on 'mission' in Berkfürdö, Hungary. Both communions appreciate the principles of mission theologically, and recognize differences in the way mission is practically expressed.[19]

Lutherans, under the umbrella of the Lutheran World Federation, have been dialoguing with other church families since the 1960s. International conversation with Trinitarian Pentecostals, which formally began in 2004, continued for another six years in Strasbourg, Pasadena, Zurich and Tampere. The exchange focuses on how each tradition encounters Christ in their various charismas, sacraments and rites, and on each communion's mutual response to the other historically.[20]

Baptists and Pentecostals have agreed to seek common ground, a significant step because of their history of mutual repudiations.[21] Historically, Baptists and Pentecostals disagree about the implications of receiving the Scriptures as the final authoritative revelation for churches of all ages, the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers and the church after the apostolic age (known as cessationism and non-cessationism respectively), and the understanding of sanctification and perfectionism (depending on their roots in Calvinistic theology or Arminian theology respectively). While Baptists increasingly adopt Pentecostal modes of worship, Duke University's Baptist theologian Curtis Freeman insists that Baptists are not 'Bapticostals'.[22] Or is a shift to accept Pentecostals possible after the International Missions Board of the Southern Baptist Convention revision of its policy to admit missionary candidates

cyberj/cyberj8/WARC.html (20th December 2001); Cecil M. Robeck, 'The Challenge of the Pentecostal Movement and the First Dialogue Results on the World Level': Strasbourg Institute Lecture 2011: http://strasbourginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Seminar2011-Strasbourg-LWF-Dialogue-Cecil-ROBECK.pdf (2012); and http://reformatus.hu/mutat/10397/ (7th January 2015) (accessed 5th February and 25th April 2015).
[19] http://wcrc.ch/news/wcrc-opens-new-round-of-dialogue-with-pentecostals/ (5th December 2014) (accessed 25th April 2015).
[20] www.strasbourginstitute.org/dialog/lutherisch-pfingstlerischer-dialog (Institut für Ökumenische Forschung, 2015) (accessed 5th February 2015); Lutherans and Pentecostals in Dialogue (Institut für Ökumenische Forschung in Strasbourg, and David du Plessis Center for Christian Spirituality, in Pasadena, and the European Pentecostal Charismatic Research Association in Zurich, 2015).
[21] http://baptistnews.com/archives/item/7022-baptists-pentecostals-seek-common-ground (20th December 2011), and http://ecclesialtheology.blogspot.com/2012/08/update-on-baptist-pentecostal-dialogue.html (9th Aug 2012) (accessed 5th February 2015).
[22] Curtis Freeman, 'Pentecostal Power', in *Baptist News Global* (25th May 2012): https://baptistnews.com/opinion/commentaries/item/7452-pentecostal-power (assessed 10th June 2015).

who speak in tongues, a Pentecostal/Charismatic phenomena of the Spirit?[23] Still, the prospects for better relations are hopeful.

Pentecostals have historically adopted a pacifist position as far back as 1917 until the Assemblies of God embraced nationalism and militarism.[24] The historic, mutual contempt between Pentecostals and Mennonites[25] has been ameliorated with dialogues between the Mennonite Church USA and the Church of God Cleveland taking place in 2005 and 2006.[26]

Despite some internal puristic tendencies, the movement has maintained its harbinger role for plurality. Though it may be too early to claim that Pentecostalism is making waves in ecumenism, the hopeful developments in these dialogues show that it has reversed an older negative assessment regarding its potential for participation in collaborative, ecumenical mission.[27]

Pentecostal Missional Expressions

Pentecostal mission expressions are as diverse as the movement's plurality.[28] Several biblical promises provide the foundational premise and approach for Pentecostals' obedience to the Great Commission mandate (Matthew 28): 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you' (Acts 1:8), the continuing fulfilment of Joel's prophecy on dreams, visions and manifestations of the Spirit (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28), with healing and restoration as a regular manifestation that continues in Peter's reply: 'Silver and gold I have none' (Acts 3:6-16). Nimi Wariboko claims that the Pentecostal Spirit, who gives the many tongues of the Spirit in the church, is the Pentecostal principle that allowed these many missional manifestations.[29] Among some Charismatics, the gospel mission emphasises the message of prosperity, health and wealth, which proponents

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[23] www.religionnews.com/2015/05/14/southern-baptists-open-ranks-missionaries-speak-tongues/ (14th May 2015) and Southern Baptist Convention's perspectives: www.sbc.net/faqs.asp (both accessed 9th June 2015).

[24] Paul Alexander, *Peace to War* (Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2009); Paul Alexander, *Pentecostals and Nonviolence: Reclaiming a Heritage* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 350.

[25] Alan Kreider, *Social Holiness; A Way for Living for God's Nation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008; previously published as *Journey Toward Holiness* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1987), 15-16.

[26] Cheryl Bridges Johns, 'Overcoming the Holy Spirit Shyness in the Life of the Church', in *Vision,* 13:1 (Spring 2012), 6-15.

[27] www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj5/bundy.html (accessed 9th June 2015); cf. the dated article by David Bundy, 'The Ecumenical Quest for Pentecostalism', in *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research*, n.d.

[28] Ma, Kärkkäinen and Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*.

[29] Nimi Wariboko, *The Pentecostal Principle: Ethical Methodology in New Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

read to be implicit in Paul's wishes for the soul's prosperity (3 John 1:2).[30] Global Pentecostalism and Charismaticism have become agents and witnesses of the Spirit's renewal despite the historic churches' contestation of the movement's claims.[31]

Not all missional expressions are affiliated with historic classical Pentecostals. Newer indigenous movements, such as African Initiated Churches, and the Pentecostal-like China house church movements, have been observed.[32] The social and political expressions of Pentecostal mission and witness in North America, Latin America, Africa and Asia, continue to expand, and these theologians, social and political scientists have analyzed these movements.[33] Recent trajectories include a systematic Pentecostal missiology.[34] Do these ecumenical, missional developments within renewal movements (Pentecostals and Charismatic Christianity) signal a positive reception of *TTL*?

Renewed Mission and Evangelism Affirmation

CWME's desire to include older, historic, and newer Christian churches is evident when *TTL* begins with Nicea's Trinitarian position. Though Pentecostals were not major conversational partners in the World Council of Churches' dialogue towards convergence on *Confessing One Faith* in the 1990s, Pentecostals have gradually participated in discussions on *The Nature and Mission of the Church,* and *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, both of which eventually became foregrounds to the convergence

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[30] This Charismatic prosperity teaching has received several criticisms. For instance, Timothy Lim, 'Blessings in the Prophets and the Wisdom: A Response to Charismatic Christian Hermeneutics and a General Application for Christian Living', in *Evangelical Review of Society and Politics Special Edition on Money, Prosperity and Economics,* 6:1/2 (2012/2013), 77-103.

[31] Ma, Kärkkäinen and Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, 1.

[32] Here I register that most Chinese house church movements would not affiliate themselves with historic Pentecostals or Charismatics, despite sharing similar spiritual passion and Pentecostal-like phenomena.

[33] E.g. Timothy J. Steigenga, *The Politics of the Spirit: The Political Implications of Costa Rica and Guatemala* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002); Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Social Engagement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007); Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: the Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Michael Wilkinson and Steven M. Studebaker (eds), *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010); Miller, Sargeant, Flory (eds), *Spirit and Power*.

[34] Amos Yong, *The Missiological Spirit: Christian Mission Theology in the Third Millennium Global Context* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014).

text, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*.[35] With the exception of Oneness Pentecostals,[36] Pentecostals and Charismatics would strongly welcome *TTL*'s Trinitarian basis of Christian mission as rooted in God who creates, redeems and sustains life with his incarnational love for the world, and his empowerment of the church for renewing the whole creation.

Pentecostalism has always emphasized the ministry of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers for sanctification and in the work of the gospel, although perspectives vary on whether the 'finished work of Christ' on the cross translates into Christians attaining sinless perfection instantly or gradually in this temporal life; the variations depend on whether they are Wesleyan, Keswick or Classical Holiness in conceiving the triumphant Christian life.[37] Still, as Jesus has instructed, the disciples of Christ are to wait for the Spirit to anoint them for ministry. Despite the empowerment on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1–2), churches disagree as to whether Christ's disciples in each subsequent era have to receive the Spirit's manifold charismas for manifold service.[38]

The Introduction to *TTL* provides the strongest rationales for multi-faceted missional expression.[39] As Pentecostal-Evangelical systematician and missional theologian Amos Yong argues, 'The plurality of tongues of the Spirit' will give witness to the manifold works of the Spirit of the one God so that the church may fulfil her missionary thrust![40] Hence, Christian mission is rightly understood 'in a cosmic sense, and to affirm all life, the whole *oikoumene*, as being interconnected in God's web of life'.[41] 'Life in the Holy Spirit' is conceived as 'the essence of mission', identity, being and doing of Christians.[42] At least two Pentecostal theologians have recently affirmed life in the Spirit as missional, albeit without documenting

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[35] See Wolfgang Vondey, 'Pentecostal Perspectives on The Nature and Mission of the Church: Challenges and Opportunities for Ecumenical Transformation', in Paul M. Collins and Michael A. Fahey (eds), *Receiving 'The Nature and Mission of the Church'* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2008), 55-68.

[36] Gregory A. Boyd, *Oneness Pentecostals and the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992); Bruce Tucker, *Oneness Pentecostal Churches* (New York: Xlibis, 2011); Matthew J. Cawthorn, *American Oneness Pentecostalism* (CreateSpace, 2012).

[37] Charles W. Burtner, and Robert E. Chiles (eds), *John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1982), 141.

[38] Some argue that Pentecost is a once-and-for-all event and not repeatable. Others suggest that believers in each era need their initial and continual filling with the Spirit.

[39] *TTL*, §1-11, especially §1-4, 8, 10.

[40] E.g. Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 26, 124, 173.

[41] *TTL*, §4.

[42] *TTL*, §3.

any awareness of *TTL*.[43] Thus, all Christians and churches are God's messengers and gifts to, and for loving and transforming, the world.[44] *TTL* underscores the need for healing and reconciliation among the churches towards communal inclusivity and unity for her mission.[45]

TTL would appeal to many Pentecostals and Charismatics for various reasons. *TTL*'s explicit recognition of the Trinity in Christian mission – when CWME significantly adumbrates the Spirit of Christian mission and the Spirit's operation in Christian mission – is a favourable change from the Spirit's less prominent role in WCC's earlier mission text, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* (1982)! *TTL*'s recognition of the renewal movements' global expansion and expressions could correct the historic and mainline churches' negative reception of these global renewal movements in the middle of the twentieth century.[46] While it may be a far cry to say that Pentecostals are now accepted in all churches and traditions, communions outside the Pentecostal movement are more willing to befriend believers outside their fold, even if these communions are still not in theological agreement with Pentecostals, as evidenced in the many dialogue reports. Still, many non-Pentecostal and non-Charismatic churches have renewed their worship services to become more contemporary, or at least participatory, thanks to the 'Spirit-led' worship renewal movements within this diverse tradition that have unfortunately also created 'music wars' when they deviated from the liturgies and practices of classical Christian worship.[47] *TTL*'s multi-faceted recognition of the local praxes to faith, and acknowledgement of the plurality of Pentecostal self-

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[43] Andrea D. Snavel and Joel P. Okamoto, *Life in the Spirit* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015).

[44] *TTL,* §8, 10.

[45] *TTL,* §8, 10. Unlike *TTL*'s introduction, *EA* begins with the scandal of the churches' divisions before explicating the biblical, theological and ecumenical grounds and convictions for mission and witnessing. Thus, *TTL* would be ecumenically more inviting for churches.

[46] *TTL,* §5. *TTL* is right in how Christians identify who, where and what the 'centre' of Christianity is, while the outreach missions have been changing as a result of a) the global expansion of Christianity, which is by no means only a consequence of the successes of Pentecostalism (which §5 seems to imply), b) the phenomenon of migration, and c) the increasing trajectory of the margins recognizing themselves as agents of mission (rather than as the targets or recipients of mission). After the introduction, *TTL* did admit to the churches' historic faults in mission when churches denigrated local wisdom and local cultures in their missional history to indigenous peoples (cf. *TTL,* §27).

[47] For a global Pentecostal expression of worship, see Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong (eds), *The Spirit of Praise* (Penn State University Press, 2015). For a different perspective, see Ruth C. Duck, *Worship for the Whole People of God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013). For a historic perspective, see James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 3rd edition (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2001).

understandings, are important because Pentecostals are experiential in their faith and thus do not receive well a singular, universal concept and practice of the church.[48]

Pentecostals in the Majority World are likely to welcome *TTL*'s dual-direction of pursuing mission. To the older paradigm of 'mission to the margins', *TTL* now adds 'mission from the margins' of the 'powerless', 'the poor', and 'marginalized'. *TTL* affirms that missions could move in both directions simultaneously. *TTL* recognizes that the margins possess God-given gifts for serving both in their own contexts and in transnational contexts. They could use their gifts 'to counteract injustices in life, church, and mission' because they experienced the 'misuse of power and use of the wrong kind of power in mission and in the church' from the rich, the powerful, and western centres of power. According to *TTL*, because the western missionary enterprise had unfortunately perpetuated injustices rather than furthering 'the causes of justice, dignity and life',[49] the shift in missional paradigm towards 'mission from the margins' is now desirable. The change will find favour with Pentecostals, not merely because *TTL* is now embracing a liberation ethos, articulated decades ago.[50] Rather, *TTL*'s explicit encouragement of 'mission from the margins' affirms that those at the margins have something to teach the rest of the mainstream churches that have marginalized them.[51] Churches at the margins are also God's missional instruments not just to their own local contexts but also to the dominant and powerful in western Christianity. As Kenneth Ross' interpretation of *TTL* in the context of 'liquid modernity' has suggested (and with insights from Lamin Sanneh), re-evangelization of the western world may occur from the Spirit who actually brings about the transmigration of people in a global world![52]

However, certain formulations in *TTL* may or may not excite some Pentecostals and Charismatics. The reception on these formulations may range from ambivalence to rejection. The first ambivalence concerns *TTL*'s framing of mission inclusively.[53] The current approach towards inclusivity may inhibit a positive reception, especially by churches that see Christian

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[48] Simon Chan, 'Mother Church: Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology', in *PNEUMA,* 22:2 (Fall 2000), 177-208.

[49] *TTL,* §33, 38, 39-42, 45, 46-49.

[50] Liberation theology is much older, although the ethos entered Pentecostal expression only in recent decades, as seen in R. Andrew Chesnut, *Born Again in Brazil* (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Samuel Solivan, *Spirit, Pathos, and Liberation*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology,* Supplement 14 (New York: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 1998).

[51] E.g. Chad M. Bauman, *Pentecostals, Proselytization, and Anti-Christian Violence in Contemporary India* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), ch. 3, 70-93.

[52] Kenneth R. Ross, 'Together towards Life in the Context of Liquid Modernity', in *International Review of Mission,* 103.2 (November 2014), 249-50; cf. 240-55; Lamin Sanneh, *Summoned from the Margin* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012).

[53] *TTL,* §8-10.

mission either as a counter-cultural force or as focusing primarily on eternal salvation. Though *TTL* has duly acknowledged these perspectives, the inclusive framing will be difficult for some in the Renewal tradition to embrace, for the following reasons.

TTL suggests that evangelism could be understood, not just as the proclamation of the gospel leading the unbeliever to conversion, but also as the witnessing of Christian mission in social justice and solidarity with the poor, oppressed and marginalized.[54] The crux for a proper reception on *TTL*'s views on evangelism boils down to: what constitutes evangelism and gospel proclamation? To be sure, *TTL* affirms that the fundamental basis of their faith and the thrust of the gospel rest on the eternal salvific revelation of Jesus Christ: this explicit affirmation of Christ as the thrust of the gospel might help Evangelicals and Pentecostals overcome their prior assessment of WCC's Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation projects (JPIC) as liberal deviations from the gospel.[55] As we now know, some Pentecostals in the Majority World have expressed their faith counter-culturally when they explicitly seek to be conduits of societal transformation through concrete projects in social justice advocacy, but even these social witnesses are conducted without relegating the direct proclamation of the salvific message of Jesus Christ.[56] *TTL*'s inclusivity and reframing of what counts as evangelism would remain a challenge: Pentecostals and Charismatics, together with Evangelicals, would be likely to disagree with *TTL*'s acceptance of solidarity as a form of evangelism, and *TTL*'s relegation of the direct proclamation of Jesus Christ's salvation message as only 'an essential part of the way we convey God's love to the world'. In Renewal and Evangelical understanding, evangelism is not merely an aspect of

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[54] *TTL,* §85.

[55] *TTL,* §9; Jonas Jonson and Norman A. Hjelm, *Wounded Visions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013). That said, apart from a few dissenting voices, Pentecostals would readily affirm the need to co-operate with 'other religions and cultures in building societies of love, peace and justice' in our 'multi-religious and multi-cultural' world. Daniel Castello, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2012) proposes an eschatological reframing of Pentecostal moral theology to allow the possibility of Pentecostal mission in the world. Though Castello did not directly address issues of social advocacy, justice, and ecological care, the appropriation is well within an application of Castello's work (cf. Castello, *Revisioning Pentecostal Ethics*, 51). Monte Lee Rice, 'Renewing the Pentecostal Vision and Witness of the Justified People of God', in *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies,* 16:2 (August 2013), 85-98, offers an example of a Pentecostal social witness.

[56] David H. Lumsdaine (ed), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Asia* (Oxford: OUP, 2009); Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang (eds), *Asian and Pentecostal* (Oxford: Regnum, 2nd edition, 2011).

Christian proclamation; evangelism is primarily about the saving of souls eternally: salvation is the gospel itself![57]

Nonetheless, *TTL* and Renewal churches can affirm that social witnessing does not exclude evangelism. As *TTL* states, because 'the mission of God's Spirit encompasses us all in an ever-giving act of grace … we are therefore called to move beyond a narrowly human-centered approach and to embrace forms of mission which express our reconciled relationship with all created life'.[58] *TTL* rightly points out that to presume that believers can seek eternal salvation without caring for JPIC is 'to falsely believe [that] we can belong to God without belonging to our neighbour', and in so doing, 'fall into a spirituality that simply makes us feel good while other parts of creation hurt and yearn'.[59] Also, *TTL* explains that Christian proclamation and witness as 'good news for all' should not succumb to forces of individualism, secularism and materialism 'that end up 'promoting falsehood, injustice and oppression': the caveat would be a lesson for Pentecostal mission, given Pentecostals' varying approaches to secularity and materiality, as we shall shortly examine.[60]

On another aspect of *TTL*'s inclusive missional framing, the inter-faith position articulated in *TTL* may also find an ambivalent reception. *TTL*'s inter-faith position is also rather mild in its presentation. One could easily read *TTL*'s position as arguing for an open, inclusive and collaborative listening and dialogue with other religions towards their shared responsibilities as part of humanity in the protection of religious liberty and solidarity.[61] Here, Pentecostals are unlikely to fully stand with *TTL*, though promoting religious liberty and solidarity are certainly part of Christian witness![62] On the whole, since Pentecostal reflection on its mission is still

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[57] *TTL,* §8. Here, *TTL*'s use of direct proclamation as 'an essential' in the larger backdrop of the churches' wider witness implies, albeit unintentionally, that direct witness is one among other messages of the gospel witness; the relegation of evangelism as only an essential remains a problem for renewal readers. Nonetheless, the clarification of a more moderate perspective in *TTL,* §19-23 that Christian mission would seek the flourishing of creation eco-justice, and respect of the earth and advocacy for the oppressed and marginalized, against the backdrop of §83 that conceives evangelism as the sharing of faith and conviction with other people as the ultimate gift to another fellow human being, would be more acceptable to renewal readers.

[58] *TTL,* §19.

[59] *TTL,* §21.

[60] *TTL,* §91.

[61] *TTL,* §93-96.

[62] Tony Richie, *Speaking by the Spirit* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2011); Tony Ritchie, *Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Religions* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2013); for a more inclusive and pluralistic voice, see Steven M. Studebaker, 'Christian Mission and the Religions as Participation in the Spirit of Pentecost', in Amos Yong and Clifton Clarke (eds), *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism, and the Great Commission* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2011), 71-95.

emerging, one could speculate that Pentecostals are likely to concur with aspects in *TTL* that conceive salvation through evangelism and witnessing through advocacy as necessary to the gospel and the mission of the church, although they would not affirm *TTL*'s relegation of direct proclamation or a subdued role in interreligious engagement.[63]

It would also be interesting to see how Pentecostals and especially Charismatics would respond to both *TTL*'s rejection of the saving power of the market economy and mammon, and *TTL*'s acknowledgement of communicating the gospel in the global market economy.[64] On the one hand, Pentecostals and Charismatics, including factions that embrace a prosperity gospel, seem to use this-worldly materiality as a means or a platform for proclaiming the gospel.[65] Thus, *TTL*'s introduction in §7 and commentary in §31 may offer a pushback for Pentecostals. *TTL*'s point would definitely not affect groups that see 'the creation of wealth and prosperity' as an end in itself.[66] On the other hand, Pentecostal and Charismatic spirituality would agree with *TTL* that transformational mission would 'confront idolatrous assumptions, unjust systems, politics of domination and exploitation in our current world economic order' so that the church would be motivated 'to serve God's economy of life, not mammon, to share life at God's table rather than satisfy individual greed, to pursue change for a better world'.[67] On either spectrum, there will be respondents who will embrace or critique *TTL*'s rejection of the market economy and mammon: the litmus test will be whether economy and mammon are regarded as a means and instruments of the gospel or ends in themselves. Amid the political economy of exchange, Amos Yong argues that an informal economy is at work when believers share and exchange goods and services in the spirit of Christian love, and hence one cannot totally reject the capabilities of economy and mammon, despite the real dangers of misusing or abusing them.[68]

Ecclesiology underlies the missional expression of the church, and thus one would expect *TTL* to give substantial treatment to the church. *TTL* speaks accurately about the gift of the church to the world: the church

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[63] Ma, Kärkkäinen and Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*. Norbert Hintersteiner, 'From Cultural Translation to Interfaith Witness: The Intercultural Transformation of Missiology', in Linda Hogan, Solange Lefebvre, Norbert Hintersteiner and Felix Wilfred (eds), *From World Mission to Inter-religious Witness*. Concilium 2011/1 (London: SCM, 2011), 85-94.

[64] *TTL,* §7.

[65] Amos Yong and Katherine Attanasi (eds), *Pentecostalism and Prosperity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Calvin L. Smith, 'The Politics and Economics of Pentecostalism: A Global Survey', in *The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2014), 175-94.

[66] *TTL,* §31.

[67] *TTL,* §30.

[68] Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 304-10.

transforms society by bringing new life and announcing God's love and presence. *TTL* also affirms the fundamental ecclesiological unity of the church on the basis of the Trinitarian vision, and hopes to facilitate the churches' unitive witness as disciples of Christ and as agents of healing and reconciliation to the world.[69] Pentecostals would concur here. As Peter Althouse suggests, Pentecostal ecclesiology is anchored in the missional life of the Triune God: the church becomes the sent and sending community to live out its mission.[70] Nonetheless, *TTL* frames its ecclesiology to inclusivity without offering substantial qualifiers: the lack of nuance about what sort of inclusivity would characterize the gospel-centric community of disciples is unlikely to find acceptance with puristic churches in Evangelical and Pentecostal communities, although to a certain extent, the gospel would prize inclusivity. Pentecostal churches, as with Evangelical communities, would wish to remind the drafters of *TTL* that the gospel is also exclusivist – whoever believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour shall be saved and those who deny Christ will be denied by the Father (Matthew 10:33; 1 John 2:22-23)![71]

TTL drafters may have wanted a wide reception of the text, and hence *TTL* is not formulated only with exclusivist churches, like Pentecostals and Evangelicals, in mind. Still, I wish that *TTL* had presented their alternative model without needing readers to choose between their preferred inclusivity or the implicit contrasting exclusivist approach to gospel mission. *TTL* remains attractive because it clarifies that Christian mission, as a step towards welcoming others, entails not just the practice of hospitality to aid inclusivity, but also implies the crossing of boundaries. The notions of hospitality and crossing boundaries are certainly not foreign to Pentecostal spiritual ethos; from the beginnings of Pentecostalism, it was called a harbinger for plurality. Nonetheless, the movement still has much to do to expand its inclusivity.[72] Thus, *TTL* has unwittingly offered some correctives for Pentecostals and Evangelicals.

> §25: 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). When we have discerned the Holy Spirit's presence,

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[69] *TTL,* §10.

[70] Peter Althouse, 'Towards a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: Participation in the Missional Life of the Triune God', in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology,* 18:2 (2009), 230-45. For a wider study of Pentecostal ecclesiology, both theological and empirical, see Mark Cartledge, 'Renewal Ecclesiology in Empirical Perspectives', *PNUEMA* 36 (2014), 5-24.

[71] Clifton Shane, 'Pentecostal Ecclesiology: A Methodological Proposal for a Diverse Movement', in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology,* 15:2 (2007), 213-32.

[72] Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008) engages hospitality in the interreligious arena. Still, the principle of hospitality and its applied implication towards crossing boundaries would not be inconceivable for ecclesiology or ecclesiological mission.

we are called to respond, recognizing that God's Spirit is often subversive, leading us beyond boundaries and surprising us.[73]

§26: We are led by the Spirit into various situations and moments, into meeting points with others, into spaces of encounter and into critical locations of human struggle.[74]

§33: Mission provokes in us a renewed awareness that the Holy Spirit meets us and challenges us at all levels of life, and brings newness and change to the places and times of our personal and collective journeys.[75]

§44: The church's hope is rooted in the promised fulfilment of the reign of God. It entails the restoration of right relationships between God and humanity and all of creation. Even though this vision speaks to the eschatological reality, it deeply energizes and informs our current participation in God's salvific work in this penultimate period.[76]

Whether Pentecostals will receive the Spirit's invitation and *TTL*'s pneumatological mission proposal remains to be seen. Many of *TTL*'s encouragements, which could offer correctives for renewal churches, have been raised in one way or another by the late Baptist-Evangelical Renewal theologian Clark Pinnock's programmatic essay, 'Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit'.[77] The question then becomes: Will renewal churches advance the themes in their respective contexts in global, collaborative missions, outside their own communions in the coming era?

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[73] *TTL,* §25.
[74] *TTL,* §26.
[75] *TTL,* §34.
[76] *TTL,* §44.
[77] Clark H. Pinnock, 'Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit: The Promise of Pentecostal Ecclesiology', in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology,* 14:2 (2006), 147-65.

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE AND THE
CAPE TOWN COMMITMENT

Allen Yeh

The words 'evangelical' and 'ecumenical' have unfortunately been used in opposition to each other from the mid-twentieth century onwards. The reason this is unfortunate is that their respective meanings are 'about the good news' and 'about unity'. The *euaggelion* and the *oikoumene* are two things that Jesus calls all Christians to, and their interplay is at the heart of mission. It has been said that 'mission is the mother of ecumenism' because mission is so large that it requires an integrated co-operation inter-denominationally to achieve its goals. Para-church organizations are a case in point. They usually have missional functions but consist of Christians from a wide variety of denominations. The mission trumps parochial identity. But if one were to read Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, especially vv. 20-23, he prays, 'that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me'. If the unity of the church is a missiological sign to the world, then perhaps the inverse is also true: 'Ecumenism is the mother of mission'.

However, despite the fact that the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference is considered by many to be the birthplace of the modern ecumenical movement, it produced two 'children' that have often been seen as the opposite of each other: the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE). However, Andrew Walls says that this is not as it should be: 'Both "ecumenical" and "evangelical" today have their roots in Edinburgh 1910. If each will go back to the pit whence both were dug, each may understand both themselves and the other better.'[1]

It is perhaps not the fault of the missiologists or the missionaries that this unnecessary rivalry has occurred; rather, it can be traced to a development which had its origins prior to Edinburgh 1910, namely, the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy which took place largely in the United States and set the tone of western Christianity for about a century. The two most representative men of this era were a Presbyterian named J. Gresham Machen who wrote a book called *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923),

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[1] Andrew F. Walls, cit. Kenneth R. Ross, 'The Centenary of Edinburgh 1910: Its Possibilities', in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* 30/4 (October 2006), 177-79, at 178.

representing the Fundamentalist side, and a Baptist named Harry Emerson Fosdick who preached a sermon called 'Shall the Fundamentalists Win?' (1922) representing the Modernist side. The Fundamentalists stood for 'truth' often at the expense of 'unity', and the Modernists stood for 'unity' often at the expense of 'truth'. This false dichotomy of 'conservative' versus 'liberal' perpetuated for decades and has often coloured people's perceptions of what Lausanne and the WCC are about. Both organizations have produced significant documents on evangelism and ecumenism, and this chapter aims to explore their two most recent articulations of mission: *Together towards Life* (2012) and the *Cape Town Commitment* (2010), showing that there is far more in common between the two than is obvious on the surface.

The *Cape Town Commitment*

The *Cape Town Commitment* (*CTC*) will be addressed first because it was earlier in chronology. This was the third such major document produced by Lausanne, one coming out of each of their major Congresses: the *Lausanne Covenant* which came out of Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974 (when the movement was named); the *Manila Manifesto* which was birthed out of Manila, Philippines, in 1989; and *CTC* itself from Cape Town, South Africa, in 2010. Lausanne III was called the 'most diverse gathering ever' of Christian leaders in history by *Christianity Today*[2] and *CTC* was a much-needed addition (as opposed to revision) to the two previous documents. In the Preamble to *CTC*, it states its reaffirmation to the other two:

> *First*, we remain committed to the task of bearing worldwide witness to Jesus Christ and all his teaching. The first Lausanne Congress (1974) was convened for the task of world evangelization. Among its major gifts to the world church were: (i) The *Lausanne Covenant*; (ii) a new awareness of the number of unreached people groups; and (iii) a fresh discovery of the holistic nature of the biblical gospel and of Christian mission. The Second Lausanne Congress**,** in Manila (1989), gave birth to more than 300 strategic partnerships in world evangelization, including many that involved co-operation between nations in all parts of the globe.

> And *second*, we remain committed to the primary documents of the Movement – the *Lausanne Covenant* (1974), and the *Manila Manifesto* (1989). These documents clearly express core truths of the biblical gospel and apply them to our practical mission in ways that are still relevant and challenging. We confess that we have not been faithful to commitments made in those documents. But we commend them and stand by them, as we seek to discern how we must express and apply the eternal truth of the gospel in the ever-changing world of our own generation.

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[2] John W. Kennedy, 'The Most Diverse Gathering Ever', in *Christianity Today,* 54/9 (29th September 2010), 66.

The references to (ii) unreached people groups and (iii) holistic mission heavily influenced much of the language in the *Lausanne Covenant* and were a result of plenary addresses by Ralph Winter and C. René Padilla, respectively, during the Lausanne I Congress which was convened by Billy Graham.[3] These were probably the most memorable and seminal parts of that Congress other than the production of (i), the *Lausanne Covenant* itself, of which the chief architect was John Stott.

The *Lausanne Covenant*'s Evangelical pedigree is clear because it coheres with David Bebbington's Quadrilateral, the classic definition of what an Evangelical is. The Bebbington Quadrilateral consists of biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism and activism.[4] The *Lausanne Covenant* was written in fifteen paragraphs, of which only ten actually deal with missional issues such as conversionism and activism.[5] The other five are actually systematic treatments of theological commitments that all Evangelicals share, including biblicism and crucicentrism.[6]

The *Manila Manifesto* has not had the same lasting influence that the *Lausanne Covenant* had,[7] nor did the Lausanne II Congress have the same memorable historical impact. Still, it is worth mentioning because *CTC* stands on the shoulders of both documents and both Congresses, and the *Manila Manifesto* was important for what it contributed at the time. It consisted of 21 theological and missiological affirmations which solidify Evangelical identity, followed by twelve points which fall into three main categories: The Whole Gospel;[8] The Whole Church;[9] and The Whole World.[10] Much of the purpose of this document had to do with addressing interdenominational and inter-agency partnerships, especially with the AD

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[3] Ralph D. Winter, 'The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism', and René Padilla, 'Evangelism and the World', in J.D. Douglas (ed), *Let the Earth Hear His Voice* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 213-41 and 116-46.

[4] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 2-3.

[5] 4. The Nature of Evangelism; 5. Christian Social Responsibility; 6. The Church and Evangelism; 7. Co-operation in Evangelism; 8. Churches in Evangelistic Partnership; 9. The Urgency of the Evangelistic Task; 10. Evangelism and Culture; 11. Education and Leadership; 12. Spiritual Conflict; 13. Freedom and Persecution.

[6] 1. The Purpose of God; 2. The Authority and Power of the Bible; 3. The Uniqueness and Universality of Christ; 14. The Power of the Holy Spirit; 15. The Return of Christ.

[7] One potential explanation could simply be that the first often has more impact and influence than subsequent editions; another is that *The Lausanne Covenant* has a conciseness that its sequels do not have.

[8] 1. Our Human Predicament; 2. Good News for Today; 3. The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ; 4. The Gospel and Social Responsibility; 5. God the Evangelist.

[9] 6. The Human Witness; 7. The Integrity of the Witnesses; 8. The Local Church; 9. Co-operating in Evangelism.

[10] 10. The Modern World; 11. The Challenge of AD 2000 and Beyond; 12. Difficult Situations.

2000 and Beyond movement.[11] But theologically, it was a further updating, incorporating concepts like *missio Dei*, mission in the context of world Christianity ('from everyone to everywhere'), ecumenical openness to non-Evangelicals, and challenges like modernity, communism, pluralism and persecution.

The *Cape Town Commitment* (2010) came much longer after the *Manila Manifesto* (1989) than *Manila* came after the *Lausanne Covenant* (1974). Part of the reason is that the Lausanne movement became somewhat dormant in the 1990s to be revitalized under the leadership of Doug Birdsall from 2004. But as a result, the world had changed massively in the intervening period. Between 1989 and 2010, the world had witnessed 9/11, the advent of the Internet and a shift to popular post-modernism, as three examples of massively consequential changes to the world's political, technological and philosophical landscapes. Clearly, Lausanne had some catching up to do.

CTC was different from its predecessors in that it was written both before *and* after the Congress. Part I, 'For the Lord we love' (the confession of faith), had started five years prior to the Lausanne III Congress in Cape Town, South Africa, and was presented in its final version there. Part II, 'For the world we serve' (the call to action), was the result of a listening process begun three years before Lausanne III, continued throughout the Congress, and finished a year later. 'Love' was the framing word for Part I, as it was developed in ten sub-points.[12] Part II consisted of six key issues which became the structure of the Congress.[13] The link between Parts I and II can be seen as either: belief and praxis; or, primary truths and secondary issues. The World Evangelical Alliance assisted in the production of this document, showing a further co-operative spirit.

Some of the new or missing issues that *CTC* addressed that were not in the previous iterations included: oral cultures, seminaries, cities, children, prayer, HIV/AIDS, homosexuality, creation care and egalitarianism.

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[11] After the movement ended in 2001, it was continued in another form as the Joshua Project. The AD 2000 and Beyond movement was originally a breakaway from the Lausanne movement.

[12] 1. We love because God first loved us; 2. We love the living God; 3. We love God the Father; 4. We love God the Son; 5. We love God the Holy Spirit; 6. We love God's Word; 7. We love God's world; 8. We love the gospel of God; 9. We love the people of God; 10. We love the mission of God.

[13] A. Bearing witness to the truth of Christ in a pluralistic, globalized world; B. Building the peace of Christ in our divided and broken world; C. Living the love of Christ among people of other faiths; D. Discerning the will of Christ for world evangelization; E. Calling the Church of Christ back to humility, integrity and simplicity; F. Partnering in the body of Christ for unity in mission.

Together towards Life:
Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes

Similar to the *Cape Town Commitment* being the third in a series, *Together towards Life* (*TTL*) was not the first of its kind. This document was preceded by the 1982 text, *Mission and Evangelism – an Ecumenical Affirmation* (*EA*) which was prepared by the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.[14] Similar to *CTC* and the earlier documents in its series, *TTL* differed from its predecessor in length (40 pages instead of 15) and in topics. *EA*'s seven points[15] are similar to the *Lausanne Covenant* in that they cover evangelism, social justice, holistic mission, etc. The main difference between them is not related to their content but to their 'colour'. *EA* is more corporate in its call than the *Lausanne Covenant*: e.g. conversion is not just of people but of nations and families; the gospel is meant to transform structures, not just individuals; it emphasizes the physical public presence of the church, not just its spiritual presence; mission is not just verbal and physical, but it's about the totality of the Lordship of Christ; and the agency of the powerless and solidarity with the poor are affirmed.

EA actually has more resonance with the *Manila Manifesto*, e.g. in its call to grapple with issues of modern technology, ecumenism and world Christianity. Perhaps these similarities are not surprising, considering that *EA* is closer chronologically to Lausanne II than Lausanne I. But it not only anticipates *Manila* but *CTC* as well, in its emphasis on love: 'Conversion happens in the midst of our historical reality and incorporates the totality of our life, because God's love is concerned with that totality',[16] and 'In all communications of the Gospel, power must be subordinate to love'.[17] Perhaps one of the reasons the Evangelical community has been late to 'catch up' is because of the lingering effects of the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy, where the former camp majored on truth/theology and the latter camp emphasized unity/love. It seems, however, there is now a coalescing of the Evangelical and ecumenical communities in comparing *CTC* with *TTL*.

This evokes earlier attempts to achieve convergence. One of the points of contention in the *Manila Manifesto* is under Section 9, Co-operating in Evangelism: 'Some of us are members of churches which belong to the World Council of Churches and believe that a positive yet critical participation in its work is our Christian duty. Others among us have no link with the World Council. All of us urge the World Council of Churches

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[14] *International Review of Mission,* 61.284 (1982), 432-37.

[15] 1. Conversion; 2. The Gospel to all Realms of Life; 3. The Church and its Unity in God's Mission; 4. Mission in Christ's Way; 5. Good News to the Poor; 6. Mission in and to Six Continents; 7. Witness among People of Living Faiths.

[16] *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation,* §11.

[17] *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation,* §28.

to adopt a consistent biblical understanding of evangelism.' In addition to this, Evangelicals drafted a letter at the WCC's sixth Assembly in Vancouver, Canada, in 1983, stating:

1.   Although the WCC Central Committee had approved (1982) an illuminating and thoroughly evangelical study: Mission and Evangelism – an Ecumenical Affirmation, we were disappointed that it was not referred to in any plenary address. We were gratified that the Affirmation received strong support in the Programme Guidelines Committee Report, in other reports and in the Assembly's Message to the Churches. No ecumenical document has been so welcomed by evangelicals. Actually, evangelical counsel was widely sought in its preparation. Furthermore, the Assembly did not give central place to the shameful fact that at this late hour in the history of the church, more than three billion have yet to hear the Gospel of Christ – despite Christ's mandate that it be proclaimed to all peoples. We did not feel that the Assembly adequately treated either Gospel proclamation or the invitational dimensions of evangelism.

2.   On occasion, terminology became fuzzy and theology worse. For example, while the Assembly frequently heard that sin brings social alienation, little was said about spiritual alienation – from God himself. As a result, the redemptive dimension of Christ's sufferings on the Cross was not particularly stressed. Moreover, while larger issues of social ethics were frequently treated, more personal ethical concerns rarely surfaced. In sum, there were times when we wished that evangelical voices in the churches were given the prominence accorded some theological mavericks. Fortunately, in the issue and discussion groups, we heard evangelical men and women participate whose evident concern was to remind fellow delegates of the biblical authority and witness to the issues under review. Evangelicals are convinced that if Jesus Christ is the life of the world, his claim that his words are spirit and life (John 6:63) should not be downplayed.[18]

Other points which may have caused Evangelicals consternation are the use of the word 'moratorium' on mission (to be fair, 'Moratorium does not mean the end of the missionary vocation nor of the duty to provide resources for missionary work, but it does mean freedom to reconsider present engagements and to see whether a continuation of what we have been doing for so long is the right style of mission in our day… There can never be a moratorium of mission, but it will always be possible, and sometimes necessary, to have a moratorium for the sake of better

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[18] 'An Open Letter: Evangelicals at the Sixth Assembly of the WCC', in *Mid-Stream,* 23.1 (1984), 130.

mission'[19]), and Christians needing to receive 'witness' from those of other faiths (the clarification of this being: 'Life with people of other faiths and ideologies is an encounter of commitments. Witness cannot be a one-way process, but of necessity is two-way: in it, Christians become aware of some of the deepest convictions of their neighbours. It is also the time in which, within a spirit of openness and trust, Christians are able to bear authentic witness, giving an account of their commitment to the Christ, who calls all persons to himself'[20]). One of the reasons that *TTL* came into being was to address such concerns. But it was also a necessary update, as the time between *EA* and *TTL* (thirty years) was much longer than between the *Manila Manifesto* and the *Cape Town Commitment* (21 years).

TTL is structured with 112 paragraphs listed under four main sections, each of which has four sub-sections, all centred on the Spirit. It updates *Mission and Evangelism – an Ecumenical Affirmation* for our times, not only highlighting contemporary issues but creating a robust theological framework which was missing from *EA*.

The *Cape Town Commitment* and *Together towards Life*

There is much to be affirmed about the similarities between these two documents. Both begin with the Triune God and the importance of *missio Dei*. They both grapple with massive social changes in this world. Creation care is featured prominently in each document. There is a mutual awareness of world Christianity as the backdrop of all mission work that we do today, that mission is polycentric and multi-dimensional, and that migration is a global reality for many people today. Both documents have a call to repentance and humility, for ourselves to be renewed and freed from sins such as materialism and paternalism. At the same time, both contain cautions about the abuse of spiritual gifts such as false prophets and a prosperity gospel. Ecumenical unity is a shared goal. Respectful evangelism is affirmed while proselytism is decried. Religious freedom and ethnic diversity are values to be cherished, as they symbolize dignity for all peoples. Instead of the false dichotomy of Evangelicals caring only about theology/truth and ecumenicists being concerned only with unity/love, *CTC* emphasizes love as its main controlling paradigm, while *TTL* is much more heavily theological than its predecessor *EA*.

However, the differences are also stark: *CTC* tends to lean in a more Christocentric direction,[21] whereas *TTL*'s accent is more pneumato-centric. This is obvious in noting that *CTC* mentions only the Second Person of the

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[19] Point 6.

[20] Point 7.

[21] This is especially seen in Part I, Sec. 1, which describes the God we love, and Sec. 8, which articulates what the Gospel is; and in all of Part II.

Trinity in the titles of all six sections of Part II,[22] while *TTL* mentions only the Third Person of the Trinity in the titles of all four sections of the entire document.[23] Another major difference is their approach to theology. *CTC* devotes fully half of its document to theology and the other half to praxis. *TTL* is more integrative, weaving theology and praxis throughout each of its 112 paragraphs. *CTC* asserts many core beliefs in its Part I, while *TTL* asks many questions, following each of its first ten theological statements, wondering aloud how convictions will impact eventual action. The implications are: *CTC* sees theology as the foundation upon which to do mission, without which we would not be properly rooted. *TTL*, on the other hand, uses theology as a launching point for praxis, basically not seeing propositional truths as ends in and of themselves but rather for how they can aid the cause of mission.

For all the agreements on the definition of 'mission' in the two documents, perhaps the sections in *TTL* that Evangelicals would understand most differently would be the following:

§22: 'We tend to understand and practice mission as something done by humanity to others. Instead, humans can participate in communion with all of creation in celebrating the work of the Creator. In many ways creation is in mission to humanity; for instance, the natural world has a power that can heal the human heart and body.'

§32 delineates the cross as a panacea for earthly rather than spiritual ailments:

'In situations of oppression, discrimination and hurt, the cross of Christ is the power of God for salvation (1 Cor. 1:18). Even in our time, some have paid with their lives for their Christian witness, reminding us all of the cost of discipleship. The Spirit gives Christians courage to live out their convictions, even in the face of persecution and martyrdom.'

§46 talks about the purpose of baptism initiating people into the act of inclusivity:

'The good news of God's reign is about the promise of the actualization of a just and inclusive world. Inclusivity fosters just relationships in the community of humanity and creation, with mutual acknowledgement of persons and creation, and mutual respect and sustenance of each one's sacred worth. It also facilitates each one's full participation in the life of the community. Baptism in Christ implies a lifelong commitment to give an account of this hope by overcoming the barriers in order to find a common identity under the sovereignty of God (Gal. 3:27-28).'

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[22] It is worth clarifying that in Part I, Sec 5, it says: 'Our engagement in mission, then, is pointless and fruitless without the presence, guidance and power of the Holy Spirit… All we do in the name of Christ must be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit.'

[23] Still, in §16, it says: 'A pneumatological focus on Christian mission recognizes that mission is essentially christologically based and relates the work of the Holy Spirit to the salvation through Jesus Christ.'

Many of these come from the section on marginalization (Sec. 2, 'Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins'), whereas just about everything under the section on evangelism (Sec. 4, 'Spirit of Pentecost: Good News for All') would be language quite familiar to Evangelicals.

CTC, in contrast, has a heavy emphasis on Truth, but not understood as simply propositional statements. As Part II, Sec. A ('Bearing witness to the truth of Christ in a pluralistic, globalized world') says:

'Jesus Christ is the truth of the universe. Because Jesus *is* truth, truth in Christ is (i) personal as well as propositional; (ii) universal as well as contextual; (iii) ultimate as well as present.

Part II, Sec. B ('Building the peace of Christ in our divided and broken world') articulates the role of the cross as restoring relationships and pathways:

'Reconciliation to God is inseparable from reconciliation to one another. Christ, who *is* our peace, *made* peace through the cross, and *preached* peace to the divided world of Jew and Gentile. The unity of the people of God is both a fact ("he made the two one"), and a mandate ("make every effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"). God's plan for the integration of the whole creation in Christ is modelled in the ethnic reconciliation of God's new humanity.'

And Part II, Sec. F ('Partnering in the body of Christ for unity in mission') describes baptism as the consummation of evangelism:

Both tasks [evangelism and church planting] are integrated in the Great Commission, where Jesus describes disciple-making in terms of evangelism (before 'baptizing them') and 'teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you'.

These are nuanced approaches. *CTC* would see diversity as more ethnic and cultural, *TTL* as more a matter of giving the marginalized an equal voice. *TTL* would affirm life as more justice-oriented, while *CTC* sees it as more spiritual. *CTC* would view unity as more inter-agency co-operation rather than denominational as *TTL* would. The old Evangelical and ecumenical camps still hold some sway.

Yet, *CTC* and *TTL* are not mutually exclusive. The 'L' in *TTL* stands for *Life* and that is something all Christians can affirm. Perhaps by forging new Evangelical ('about the Gospel') and ecumenical ('about unity) alliances, both groups can allow one another to address areas which need bolstering. §65 of *TTL* holds out the greatest hope of this becoming a reality:

'A growing intensity of collaboration with Evangelicals, especially with the Lausanne Movement for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Alliance, has also abundantly contributed to the enrichment of ecumenical theological reflection on mission in unity. Together we share a common concern that the whole church should witness to the whole gospel in the whole world.'

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE AND THE EVANGELII GAUDIUM: LIFE AND JOY IN DIALOGUE

Stephen Bevans, SVD

Introduction: Two Major Documents on Mission

The year 2013 was an extraordinary one for both missiologists and ecumenists. In early November that year, the World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) presented its new document on mission *Together towards Life* (*TTL*) to the delegates of its tenth Assembly in Busan, South Korea. Later that month, Pope Francis published his first Apostolic Exhortation, entitled *Evangelii Gaudium* (*EG*) or, in English, *The Joy of the Gospel.*

Pope Francis's Apostolic Exhortation had its origins in the Vatican's 2012 Synod of Bishops on the theme of the 'New Evangelization'.[1] Since 1975, with the publication of Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN)*,[2] it has been the custom of the Pope to issue a document (technically called an Apostolic Exhortation) to reflect on the discussions of the Synods of Bishops that are held at various intervals in Rome. Pope Francis's document is his reflection on the 2012 Synod, although in the document he widens his understanding of evangelization and mission and uses the term 'New Evangelization' only twelve times. It seems that neither *TTL* nor *EG*

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[1] The term 'New Evangelization' had its origin in several talks by Pope John Paul II throughout his pontificate. He spoke of the need for an evangelization that was new 'in its ardour, methods and expression' (see John Paul II, Discourse to the XIX Assembly of CELAM (9th March 1983), 3: *L'Osservatore Romano*: Weekly Edition in English, 18th April 1983, 9: AAS 75 (1983), 778. Although the focus was wider, John Paul emphasized the need for such an evangelization within the more secularized countries of Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Subsequently, Pope Benedict XVI established the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization and announced that the 'New Evangelization' would be the topic for the 2012 Synod of Bishops (See Benedict XVI, Apostolic Letter *Ubique et Semper*: www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apl_20100921_ubicumque-et-semper_en.html). See also Stephen Bevans, 'Beyond the New Evangelization: A Missionary Church for the Twenty-First Century', in Richard R. Gaillardetz and Edward P. Hahnenberg (eds), *A Church with Open Doors: Catholic Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2015), 3-22.

[2] Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN*): http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html

had influenced writing of the other, although, as we will see, several of the themes and issues treated in the documents are similar.

   Both documents' main focus is on mission – God's mission, *missio Dei* – in which the church subsequently shares as a graced privilege and task. The goal of that mission, for *TTL*, is the abundant *life* that the gospel brings (John 10:10), and the commitment to oppose all that opposes life; *EN* emphasizes the *joy* that is the result of accepting that gospel, and the joy with which the gospel is witnessed to and preached. But each document includes a substantial ecumenical sensitivity as well. This is naturally so in regards to *TTL*, since it is the product of a body dedicated to ecumenical practice and witness. As that document insists, 'practically as well as theologically, mission and unity belong together', even though it admits that 'we have to continue this journey in our century with fresh attempts so that the church becomes truly missionary' (§60). *EG*'s recognition of the ecumenical dimensions of mission is less pronounced since it is a document addressed primarily to members of the Roman Catholic Church, but towards the end of the document, in a special section on ecumenical dialogue, Francis writes that 'the credibility of the Christian message would be much greater if Christians could overcome their divisions', and that 'we must never forget that we are pilgrims journeying alongside one another' (*EG* §244). Although, as I've pointed out, neither document is influenced by the other, the reference to the word 'journey' in both passages is quite felicitous, especially since this dovetails quite nicely with the WCC's emphasis in the next several years on an ecumenical 'pilgrimage of justice and peace'.[3]

   What this chapter intends to accomplish is to put *TTL* and *EG* in dialogue with each other so that the ecumenical journey or pilgrimage undertaken by both the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church can be more clearly delineated. We might say that we are putting Life and Joy in dialogue. Since Kirsteen Kim's essay summarizes the contents of *TTL*, this essay will offer only a brief summary of *EG*, and then certain commonalities will be highlighted, followed by a reflection on some of the differences of emphasis in each document. A final section will suggest several areas in which each document, as the result of the pilgrimage so far, has learned and can learn from the other.

EG: Summary

EG is a much larger document than *TTL*, over twice its size. It consists of eighteen introductory paragraphs and five subsequent chapters, and has

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[3] See Dagmar Heller, 'Reflections on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace', in *The Ecumenical Review,* 66/2 (July 2014), 135-38: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/erev.12090/abstract. WCC:
 www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/ pilgrimage-of-justice-and-peace

been described by Pope Francis himself as the 'plan of my Pontificate'.[4] Because of its length, it is very rich and impossible to summarize briefly, but we can offer some of its main points, taking up more details later. Chapter One is entitled 'The Church's Missionary Transformation' (*EG* §§19-49), and calls for a church that 'goes forth' as 'a community of missionary disciples' (*EG* §24). The Pope explains this as taking a 'missionary option… capable of transforming everything' (*EG* §27), as putting 'all things in a missionary key' (§34), as being 'A Mother with an Open Heart' (see the title of I.V). Chapter Two is named 'Amid the Crisis of Communal Commitment' (*EG* §§50-109) and is a lengthy reflection on 'the context in which we all have to live and work' (*EG* §50). The Pope speaks against an 'Economy of Exclusion' and the 'Idolatry of Money', challenges that come from Culture and Urbanization, the temptations of 'spiritual workers', and the challenge of laity, women's participation, and laity in the church. Chapter Three takes up a reflection on 'The Proclamation of the Gospel' (*EG* §§110-175), insisting that this is the task of the entire People of God as it engages in inculturation, personal witness, and uncovering the resources of the piety of ordinary Christians. Included in this section is an extended treatment of the homily given especially at the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. Chapter Four deals with 'The Social Dimension of Evangelization' (*EG* §§176-258), and focuses on what has already become a hallmark of Francis's papacy: the commitment to and inclusion of the poor in the work of evangelization. Francis also includes in this chapter reflections on the common good, the dialogue of peace, and ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. Chapter Five outlines a mission spirituality under the title 'Spirit-Filled Evangelizers' (*EG* §§258-88) and ends with a thoughtful and powerful reflection on Mary, the Mother of Evangelization.

TTL and *EG*: Commonalities

A Missionary Church

The very first line of *TTL* is very much in line with the now traditional WCC and CWME perspective of *missio Dei*: '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 works in the world to affirm and safeguard life.' God's mission calls for a missionary church: '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

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[4] This is on the word of the Prefect of the Congregation of the Evangelization of Peoples, Cardinal Fernando Filone, in a talk he gave (attended by the author), entitled 'Mission in *Evangelii Gaudium*' at a conference at the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome in April 2015.

heaven and new earth' (§1). Later on in the document, in the chapter that specifically focuses on the church, we read that 'the life of the church arises from the love of the Triune God' (§55), and that the church, 'both theologically and empirically, came into being for the sake of mission' (§57). Even though there is no note on the allusion, the reference to Faith and Order's 2013 document *The Church: Toward a Common Vision* (also presented at the 2013 Busan Assembly) is clear: 'It is not possible to separate church and mission in terms of their origin or purpose. To fulfil God's missionary purpose is the church's aim' (§57).[5]

Although Francis alludes to the passage in Vatican II's decree on mission activity that adopts the *missio Dei* perspective for the Roman Catholic Church (*EG* §179), he rather surprisingly does not cite it in a footnote.[6] There is, nevertheless, no doubt that, for Francis, 'by her very nature the Church is missionary' (*EG* §179). Indeed, realizing the centrality of missionary activity in the church would lead to the deeper realization that 'missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church's activity*' (*EG* §15). Francis writes that the church is a church that 'goes forth as a community of missionary disciples' (*EG* §24), a description of the church from the Latin American Bishops' conference at Aparecida, Brazil, that he has taken as his own.[7] He calls for pastoral ministry to be done in a 'missionary style' (*EG* §35), and to 'put all things in a missionary key' (*EG* §34). Again, with the Latin American Bishops, he urges the church to be 'permanently in a state of mission' (*EG* §25).[8] Perhaps most extraordinarily, however, he writes that he dreams '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,

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[5] See Commission on Faith and Order, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (TCTCV): www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision. In the 'Historical Note' of this document (TCTCV 46), it is acknowledged that the CWME document had a strong influence on the final version. This is true especially of the first chapter. See Stephen Bevans, 'Ecclesiology and Missiology: Reflections on Two Recent Documents from the World Council of Churches', in *Dialog: A Journal of Theology,* 54/2 (Summer 2015), 126-34.

[6] The reference is Vatican Council II, Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, *Ad Gentes (AG)*: www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html, 2. As we will see in the following section, the lack of the *Missio Dei* perspective is one of the key points of difference between *EG* and *TTL*. Rather remarkably, the Vatican II document on mission is never cited in the Apostolic Exhortation.

[7] Conference of Latin American Bishops, Fifth General Conference at Aparecida, Brazil, 2007: www.aecrc.org/documents/Aparecida-Concluding%20Document.pdf. It should be mentioned that, as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the then Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was the chair of the writing group of this document.

[8] Aparecida Document, 551.

language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation' (*EG* §27).

Care of Creation

A second commonality that *TTL* and *EG* share is a concern for the care of creation as something integral to the mission and life of the church. This concern is a major one in *TTL*, and one of its major contributions to missionary thinking and practice today. *TTL* speaks of mission as the 'overflow of the infinite love of the Triune God', and so creation is understood as God's first act of mission (§19). Right from the beginning, therefore, mission is a call to move from an anthropocentric understanding to one that has the entire creation at its heart. Because of this, 'our participation in mission, our being in creation, and our practice of the life of the Spirit, need to be woven together, for they are mutually transformative' (§21). Salvation is not a merely spiritual reality, but one that involves cosmic wholeness and healing (§29). Consequently, rather than thinking about a mission *to* creation (or, as will be repeated later in the document, *to* other humans), Christians are in mission *with* creation. Indeed, 'in many ways creation is in mission to humanity; for instance, the natural world has a power that can heal the human heart and body' (§22). Nevertheless, mission with creation calls for its protection and care by human beings, especially in the light of the exploitation and pollution that humanity has caused (§29).

The care and protection of creation is not a major theme in *EG*, although it has been a prominent feature of Pope Francis's pontificate, included in the homily as his installation as Pope in March 2013, and reiterated many times since. In June 2015, he issued a lengthy encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, 'On the Care of our Common Home'.[9] Because the Pope addresses the encyclical to all women and men in the world, he does not connect ecological concern with the mission of the church directly, but he does do so in *EG*, towards the end of the document. Here Francis speaks of creation as one of the poor 'who are frequently at the mercy of economic interests or indiscriminate exploitation'. As the Pope says quite eloquently, 'Thanks to our bodies, God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement. Let us not leave in our wake a swath of destruction and death which will affect our own lives and those of future generations' (*EG* §215). All Christians, the Pope concludes, 'are called to watch over and protect the fragile world in which we live, and all its peoples' (*EG* §216).

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9 Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Mission from the Margins

The other major feature of *TTL* – in fact, its 'defining perspective' according to one of the document's principal authors[10] – is the idea of 'Mission from the Margins'. *TTL* insists on a reversal of thinking about mission. Classically, mission was conceived as a rich, powerful centre going to poor, powerless people on the world's margins. However, such a perspective only contributes to the continuation of oppression and marginalization. People on the margins, however, can offer important lessons to those at the centre. 'People on the margins have agency, and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view. People on the margins, living in vulnerable positions, often know what exclusionary forces are threatening their survival and can best discern the urgency of their struggles' (§38), and marginalized people have gifts that only they can bring to the missionary effort (§39). As such, people on the margins are 'reservoirs of the active hope, collective resistance and perseverance' that the entire church needs to witness to and proclaim the reign of God (§39). Mission should no longer be directed *at* people, but *with* people, acknowledging the agency that people on the margins have. 'The marginalized in society are the main partners in God's mission' (§107). Such a commitment to the dignity and power of people on the margins gives new emphasis and energy to working for justice and inclusivity for the poor, since it calls for the poor themselves to claim the agency that is truly theirs.

EG does not use the phrase 'Mission from the Margins', but it has the same understanding of the importance of the poor as the church's primary evangelizers. This is particularly true in a sub-section of Chapter Four, 'The Inclusion of the Poor in Society' (*EG* §§187-216). On the one hand, the Pope is clear that 'each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society' (*EG* §187). This involves, in the first place, real solidarity with all peoples, and a recognition of their right to equal dignity and participation in society's processes (*EG* §§188-90). But, in a way that echoes *TTL*, the Pope speaks of the need to learn from the poor, for 'they have much to teach us'. 'The new evangelization is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to put them at the center of the Church's pilgrim way.' Christians are called to find Christ in the poor, to lend their voice to their causes, but – more importantly in the light of *TTL*'s insights – to listen to them and 'to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them' (*EG* §198).

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[10] Metropolitan Geevarghese Coorilos, 'God of Life, Lead Us to Justice and Peace: Some Missiological Perspectives', in *International Review of Mission,* 102/1 (396) (April, 2013), 9.

Critique of the Global Economy

Particularly in the introductory statements at the beginning and the summary affirmations at the end, *TTL* is extremely critical of today's global economy. 'We are living in a world in which faith in mammon threatens the credibility of the gospel' and critiques a 'market economy' that promises to save the world through 'unlimited growth' (§7). Today's globalized economy, *TTL* claims, 'has effectively supplanted the God of Life with mammon', and so mission has to be counter-cultural, prophetic action, 'offering alternatives to such idolatrous visions' (§108). Such strong language is repeated in the body of the document. Unlimited growth promoted by the free market 'is an ideology that claims to be without alternative' (§31), amounting to idolatry. Jesus Christ, the document says, confronts and transforms all that denies life, including 'cultures and systems which generate and sustain massive poverty, discrimination and dehumanization, and which exploit or destroy people and the earth' (§37).

Although Francis puts in a good word for business as a 'noble vocation' (*EG* §203), he is equally critical of any kind of business that does not work ultimately for the common good and for the equal distribution of goods to all (*EG* §§202-08). Perhaps his most devastating critique comes in the second chapter of the Apostolic Exhortation. Citing the fifth Commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill', Francis writes that 'today we also have to say 'Thou shalt not' to an economy of exclusion and inequality' because 'such an economy kills' (§53). Referring to today's consumer culture in which people buy things, use them for a while, and then throw them away, Francis compares this to a 'disposable' or throwaway culture that is spreading. In this new development of the free market economy (*EG* §54), 'those excluded are no longer society's underside or its fringes or its disenfranchised – they are no longer even a part of it. The excluded are not the "exploited" but the outcast, the "leftovers"' (*EG* §53). Again, Francis writes, 'The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase; and in the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us' (§54). The answer to all of this, then, is a resounding 'No to the New Idolatry of Money' (*EG* §§55-56), 'No to a Financial System which Rules Rather Than Serves' (*EG* §§57-58), and 'No to the Inequality which Spawns Violence' (*EG* §§59-60). Anticipating the subtitle of his encyclical on protecting creation, *Laudato Si'*, Francis writes: 'Economy, as the very word indicates, should be the art of achieving a fitting management of our common home, which is the world as a whole' (*EG* §206). Those involved in the pursuit of economic growth need to be keenly aware, in today's global economy, of the global repercussions of every economic or financial decision.

Evangelism, Culture, Inter-faith Dialogue, and Spirituality

TTL includes a chapter on Evangelism, which it describes as seeking to share the good news of the gospel 'with all who have not yet heard it', and so inviting 'them to an experience of life in Christ' (§80). *EG* begins with a long, enthusiastic section to encourage Christians to share the 'joy of the Gospel', by which 'those who accept [Jesus'] offer are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness' (*EG* §1).

For *TTL*, Evangelism includes both sensitivity to culture and commitment to interreligious dialogue. 'Respect for people and their cultural and symbolic life-worlds are necessary if the gospel is to take root in those different realities' (§97), the document insists. It also insists on understanding that 'God is there before we come (Acts 17) and our task is not to bring God along, but to witness to the God who is already there' (§94). Dialogue, therefore, is an essential part of mission. Pope Francis places great emphasis on culture in the process of evangelization, observing astutely that 'we would not do justice to the logic of the incarnation if we thought of Christianity as monocultural and monotonous' (*EG* §117). His treatment of interreligious dialogue is not as extensive as his treatment of culture, but he clearly is in continuity with the church's teaching that it is an essential part of the church's missionary activity (*EG* §§250-54).[11] He insists, however, that true openness to 'the other' does not compromise the convictions of either side and avoids a 'facile syncretism' (*EG* §251).

Both documents call for a deep spirituality to accompany the church's missionary work. *TTL* develops this briefly, speaking of a 'transformative spirituality' that works for justice and 'provokes in us a renewed awareness that the Holy Spirit meets us and challenges us at all levels of life, and brings newness and change to the places and times of our personal and collective journeys' (§34, see §§29-35). *EG* devotes an entire chapter to the cultivation of 'Spirit-filled evangelizers', who are rooted in contemplation of God's Word (*EG* §264), moving beyond self-regard (*EG* §272), and dedicated to prayer (*EG* §§281-83).

TTL and *EG*: Differences

The commonalities in *TTL* and *EG* greatly outweigh their differences, but there are several significant differences that need to be mentioned as the two documents are put in dialogue with one another.

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[11] This essential connection is implied rather than expressly stated. For such a statement, see John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio* (*RM*): http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html, 55.

Missio Dei

The missionary nature of the church in *TTL* is rooted firmly, as we have said already, in a Trinitarian perspective of *missio Dei*. 'Mission begins in the heart of the Triune God', and 'the missionary God who sent the Son to the world calls all God's people (John 20:21), and empowers them to be a community of hope' (§2). In contrast, as mentioned above, the church's missionary nature in *EG* is spoken of without any reference to the Trinity or God's mission (see *EG* §179). There is, nevertheless, a subtle understanding that the church's mission is indeed Christians' participation in the prior mission of God. The church is a 'mystery rooted in the Trinity', 'whose ultimate foundation is found in the free and gracious initiative of God' (*EG* §111). The church is a 'community of missionary disciples', that 'knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (1 John 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, going out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast' (*EG* §24). God sends the Spirit into Christians' hearts, Francis writes at the beginning of the chapter about the proclamation of the gospel, to transform Christians and help them to respond to God's love by the way they live. Christ sends the church on mission to be a sacrament of God's love. In the act of evangelization, the church 'co-operates as an instrument of that divine grace which works unceasingly and inscrutably' (*EG* §112). The Trinitarian formula is not expressed as clearly in *EG* as in *TTL*, but it is there.

The Holy Spirit

One of the most important features of *TTL* is its emphasis on 'the mission of the Holy Spirit within the mission of the Triune God' (§11). From the beginning, the Spirit 'moved over the waters' (Gen. 1:2), bringing life to humankind and wisdom and prophecy to Israel. This same Spirit, *TTL* notes, came upon Mary 'and brought forth Jesus', and commissioned Jesus for mission at his baptism, raised him to life after his resurrection, and through the risen Christ was poured on the Jesus community at Pentecost, anointing them for mission (§12-15). Christians 'by the Spirit… participate in the mission of love that is at the heart of the life of the Trinity' (*EG* §18). Today, the Spirit 'works in the world often in mysterious and unknown ways beyond our imagination' (§15). Because of this, 'the claim that the Spirit is with us is not for us to make, but for others to recognize in the life we lead' (§28). References to the Holy Spirit abound in the document (e.g. §§56, 66-67, 85, 87, 93, 101-12), so much so that some critics have claimed that the document lacks a true Christological focus.[12]

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[12] I refer especially to a discussion I had with several Finnish theologians in August 2013.

Such Christological focus is not lacking, however, in *EG*, and there is certainly not as strong an emphasis on the Spirit. *EG*'s first line is 'The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus… With Christ, joy is constantly born anew' (*EG* §1). For Francis, life 'in the Spirit' 'has its source in the heart of the risen Christ' (*EG* §2). Francis therefore begins his Apostolic Exhortation with a strong evangelistic appeal: 'I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day' (*EG* §3). A bit further on in the document, Francis writes: 'Jesus can also break through the dull categories with which we would enclose him, and he constantly amazes us by his divine creativity. Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs, and words with new meaning for today's world' (*EG* §11). Like Trinitarian language, language referring to the Spirit is present, and rather abundantly, but used rather incidentally. While the word 'Spirit' appears less than a hundred times, the words 'Jesus' and 'Christ' appear over three hundred times. The emphasis is clearly Christological.

Internal Church Issues

Not surprisingly, *TTL*'s focus on concrete issues internal to the church is much more general than that of Pope Francis. As a WCC document, *TTL* can only offer general guidelines for action, whereas Francis can speak very specifically. Accordingly, he speaks intriguingly of his own role as Pope and of the need to de-centralize power in the church to make room for the role of local bishops and conferences of bishops in particular areas (*EG* §§16, 31-32). He reminds priests that the confessional – in which is celebrated the sacrament of reconciliation – 'must not be a torture chamber' (*EG* §44), and emphasizes that 'the Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and mercy for the weak'. In the same paragraph he warns that Baptism should not be withheld from parents who seek it for their children (*EG* §47). His message of a church with open doors (*EG* §§46-49) has been greeted by Catholics as a fresh approach in pastoral practice that focuses on making the church a community that attracts rather than challenges or even repels (see *EG* §14).

TTL and *EG*: Learning from One Another

It is remarkable, in reading both documents, how much the churches and ecclesial communities of the WCC and the church of Roman Catholicism have already learned from one another in this last century in which ecumenical dialogue and co-operation has been a prominent feature in the

church's life. From the mutual suspicion that marked the Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches at the 1910 World Mission Conference at Edinburgh, to the mutual trust as pilgrims that Pope Francis calls for in *EG* §244, is a transformation that can only be the result of God's grace. That pilgrim journey (*TTL* §60) is not complete, but there is no question that the quest for unity is one to which both the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church are committed.

On the side of the *TTL*, there is evidence of learning from Catholicism in its rather new emphasis on 'transformative spirituality' (§29-30) in which 'worship and sacraments play a crucial role' (§74). A Catholic reading *TTL* would feel very much at home. But it is also clear that Catholic thinking about mission has learned a great deal over the years from their Orthodox and Protestant sisters and brothers on the journey. The foremost of these learnings is the radical missionary nature of the church which, although it appears within the Catholic tradition as well, was most clearly articulated in the twentieth century at the 1954 conference of the International Missionary Council (predecessor of CWME) in Willingen, Germany.[13] While, as we have noted, the conviction is not expressed strongly in *EG* in terms of the Trinitarian *missio Dei*, it is expressed forcefully in terms of Pope Francis's 'missionary option' (*EG* §27) and the call to be a church of 'missionary disciples' (*EG* §24).

Could more be learned by engaging *TTL* and *EG* in dialogue? Certainly. Catholic mission thinking embodied in *EG* could learn much from a stronger, more intentional development of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's role in salvation history and the church's missionary life. *TTL* in turn could profit by a more explicit Christological reading of the text. The Christology is there, of course, but in the light of *EG* it could be made more explicit and pervasive.

There is a need for both documents to reflect more deeply and consistently on *TTL*'s pioneering reflections on 'Mission from the Margins'. Both documents offer much wisdom on this fresh and ground-breaking perspective, but WCC members and Roman Catholics have just begun to think about mission from this angle. As Christendom continues to unravel, and as the churches of the global South become more and more prominent in the church's missionary activity, this new missiological perspective will need to be reflected upon more carefully.

Finally, *TTL*'s rather earnest tone could learn from Pope Francis's breezy, quotable, and sometimes even humorous, style, one that embodies the title of his document: *The Joy of the Gospel*. The Pope has been quoted extensively about his remark that Christians should not seem like women and men who live as though there were only Lent without Easter, that they

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[13] The great Roman Catholic ecclesiologist Yves Congar acknowledged this influence on Vatican II's *Ad Gentes*. See Yves Congar, 'Principes Doctrineaux', in Johannes Schütte (ed), Vatican II: *Activité Missionaire d'lÉglise*, Unam Sanctam 67 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967), 186.

should not live life as though they had just come back from a funeral, that they should not live like 'sourpusses' (*EG* §85). On the other hand, the perspective of *TTL* that mission is about the promotion of Life in all its forms, and the opposition to any persons or forces that oppose or oppress it, is one that Roman Catholics need to ponder and develop more fully as well. That the gospel is about life is something that women and men need to hear today – indeed, many think that the church and the gospel stand for just the opposite![14] Life and Joy, therefore, need to be in a mutually fruitful dialogue. Reading these powerful documents together can do just that. It is this kind of mutually appreciative and mutually critical dialogue from which the ecumenical movement can profit today.

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[14] See Peter Cruchley Jones, ''You Have Not Sought the Lost: A Reflection from Europe on the WCC Theme', in *International Review of Mission,* 102/1 (396) (April 2013), 69-81.

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE AND THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Roderick Hewitt

Introduction

The topic calls for a critical engagement with the contextual realities of the Global South in conversation with the changing landscape of Christianity as articulated in the World Council of Churches document, *Together towards Life: The Changing Landscape of Christianity in the 21st Century* (hereafter *TTL*). The issues that will emerge in this exploration are construed from key terms of Global South, Changing Landscape, and Christianity. Each concept will require clarification in what is meant because they are shaped by unique contextual nuances in meaning.

This chapter begins by identifying what is meant by the term 'Global South' and then proceeds to describe and critique the characteristics of that phenomenon. It will then proceed to postulate the different ways in which the landscape of Christianity has and is changing in response to the contextual challenges of the Global South. The subject under discussion will be deeply influenced by the author's identity and vocation that has been shaped primarily by missional formation within the Global South. The first point of reference is the context of the Caribbean region – a melting pot of cultures from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas. In this region, it may be best to speak about 'seascape' rather than 'landscape'. The diverse small islands, in which a Euro-American brand of Christianity dominates the religio-cultural setting with an overlay of other religious expressions from Africa and Asia, have given birth to a pulsating syncretistic mixing of different cultures that has made the people open to external influences.[1] The second hermeneutical lens has been shaped by missional experiences through service with the Council for World Mission.[2] Thirdly, ecumenical and missiological learning through decades of involvement in the WCC Commission for World Mission and Evangelism

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[1] Roderick R. Hewitt, 'Sun, Sand, Sea, Reggae! The Challenge of Tourism for Church and Society in the Caribbean', in Caesar D'Mello, Wati Longchar and Philip Mathew (eds), *Deconstructing Tourism: Who Benefits? A Theological Reading from the Global South* (Kolkata, India: SCEPTRE, 2013).

[2] CWM was created in 1977 and incorporates the London Missionary Society (1795), the Commonwealth Missionary Society (1836), and the (English) Presbyterian Board of Missions (1847): www.cwmission.org/index.php/about-us (accessed 3rd July 2015).

(CWME); and, finally, theological and ministerial formation perspectives through ongoing academic research work. These resources will be used to interrogate the key question of this chapter: 'What are the ways in which the urgent issues that give shape to the realities of life in the Global South converse with the missiological affirmations of the *TTL* document?'

What is the Global South?

The term Global South is used in this paper to describe the concept 'Third World' which was popularly used during the East-West tensions and Cold War era between the USA and the former USSR that emerged after World War II.[3] Those developing countries that existed primarily in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, most of Asia and the Pacific Islands, were prejudicially classified by the more wealthy northern countries as 'Third World'. Although there are different understandings of what constitutes the Global South, the phenomenon is characterised by contexts that Volker Boege, Anne Brown, Kevin Clements and Anna Nolan describe as the hybrid political order of emerging states.[4] In a comparative analysis of the Global North and Global South economies in 2010, E.L. Odeh states:

> While Global North countries are wealthy, technologically advanced, politically stable and ageing as their societies tend towards zero population growth, the opposite is the case with Global South countries. While Global South countries are agrarian-based, dependent economically and politically on the Global North, the Global North has continued to dominate and direct the Global South in international trade and politics.[5]

Among these states are emerging expressions of different brands of democracies in which many citizens do not have equal entitlement or access to the scarce benefits of state services. Countries such as China, India, Brazil and South Africa had more advanced and developed economies than the typical Third World country and therefore did not readily embrace the concept to describe their identity, but political and economic changes driven by globalisation and greater investment in technology since the 1990s have led them to embrace the concept of Global South to describe their status in political solidarity with those countries that were previously classified as Third World. The term 'Global South' has therefore emerged as a contemporary expression to describe how

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[3] The term was popularized by the Brandt Commission reports published in 1980 and 1983.

[4] Volker Boege, Anne Brown, Kevin Clements and Anna Nolan*, On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: State Formation in the Context of 'Fragility'*: http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2011/2595/pdf/boege_etal_ handbook.pdf (accessed 2nd July 2015).

[5] L.E. Odeh, 'A Comparative Analysis of Global North and Global South Economies', in *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa,* 12/3 (2010) 1.

developing economies, most of which are in the Southern hemisphere,[6] are coping with the onslaught of the socio-economic impact of globalisation on their different societies. It is worth noting however that the concept of 'Global South' cannot strictly be linked with socio-economic problems affecting only those countries that exist to the south of the Equator.

The Context of the Global South

The contemporary era has seen increasing state fragility, failure and even collapse in parts of the Global South that has engendered violent conflict and the disintegration of societies.[7] According to Krasner and Pascual, state fragility constitutes 'one of the most important foreign policy challenges of the contemporary era'.[8] Increasing state fragility constitutes a receptive environment for extremist political and religious groups to engage in transnational terrorism, providing safe havens for human trafficking, and trading in illegal weapons, drugs and commodities.[9] Developmental issues of poverty and inequality cannot be adequately addressed with the full national focus that is required because of overriding security threats. Therefore, within many political contexts of the Global South:

> One cannot be sure about what it means to live in a nation-state or in communities. Social change has resulted in pluralities and diversities that sometimes breed conflict, and many persons are no longer willing to give their allegiance to any centre. Democracy in the contemporary neo-liberal model functions like a bubble in a very delicate state of existence that can easily burst and have its life-sustaining contents spilt.[10]

State formation with 'Western-style' democratic models of governance has failed in many contexts to meet the basic needs of people in the Global South. Poor quality of governance therefore constitutes a burning issue in many countries of the Global South. Political parties that evolved from popular liberation movements that successfully fought colonialism have proved to be also weak in fostering good government. The paradox is that these political movements of liberation have won electoral victory of the political left, but the economic power has remained with the political right

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[6] With the two exceptions of the economies of Australia and New Zealand.

[7] Examples of South Sudan, Somalia, Syria and Iraq.

[8] S.D. Krasner and C. Pascual, 'Addressing State Failure*'*, in *Foreign Affairs,* 84/4 (2005), 153-63.

[9] The rise of groups such as Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria, El Shabbah in Somalia, Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria, the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, the FRAC Group in Colombia, and many other such groups in Asia, have all emerged in contexts of fragile states.

[10] Roderick R Hewitt, 'Spirituality for Democracy: Spiritual resources for democratic participation in the 21st century', in *Verbum et Ecclesia* (2014), 35(3), Art. #1345, 7 pages: http://dx.doi. org/10.4102/ve.v35i3.1345

that produced a 'democracy' that produces progressive poverty, high inequalities and exclusion for the common people.

The forces of neo-liberal globalization seek global domination and this has resulted in the creation of the liberalization and deregulation of markets. Instead of globalisation serving primarily as an opportunity for building more just global relations between nations, this global system promotes the insatiable consumption of human and natural resources to serve contexts of expanding economic, social and ecological imbalances. This deceptive and enslaving instrument of development masks itself as working in the best interests of all. It uses the language of 'Free Trade' that in practice is experienced as an unfair system designed to ensure that wealthy northern economies continue to access and exploit the commodities of underdeveloped and developing nations of the Global South. The market has therefore become a system organised for cheating the poorer nations whose economies cannot be distributed according to market logic alone. Daley and Cobbs Jr. refer to this as a 'misplaced concreteness of the market because of its false claim that:

> Its strengths are to be found in its capacity to use independent, decentralised decisions to give rise not to chaos… Individual consumers know their preferences better that anyone else and act directly to satisfy them in the market-place. Individual producers know their own capacities and options better than anyone else and they too act on this information in the market.[11]

The rosy picture of national well-being painted by this perspective belies the awesome forces of violence and injustice that are unleashed by this dehumanizing force that is designed to enrich the few at the expense of denying fullness of life, especially to those who live on the margins of society. The toxic combination of the forces of a dysfunctional state and economy have produced an intractable problem of refugees and migrants moving away from war, ethnic and religious conflicts, and economic instability to any place and by whatever means, to seek peace and a better future. In such situations, women and children are the most vulnerable. The political and economic realities that characterised the context of the Global South have to a great extent been heightened by influences caused by the dominating world power relationships that embody the controversial concept of 'Empire'. The nuanced understanding of the concept was popularised in the ecumenical debates and became embedded in the Accra Declaration (2004) of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC):

> The convergence of economic, political, cultural, geographic and military imperial interests, systems and networks for the purpose of amassing political power and economic wealth. Empire typically forces and facilitates the flow

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[11] H.E. Daley and J.B. Cobbs Jr, *For The Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Towards Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future* (Boston, MS: Beacon Press, 1898), 44-45.

of wealth and power from vulnerable persons, communities and countries to the more powerful.[12]

The Global South is still 'work in progress'. There are immeasurable positive assets of human development that have been accomplished but there are also intractable challenges. The rich and pulsating kaleidoscope of cultures, the potentially wealthy but underdeveloped resources, young and growing populations – all represent positive potential to be harnessed for development of the people. The different systems of government that have evolved since independence are still expiring pains because they have been in existence for a relatively short time period of time. Their experience of independence did not necessarily produce the formation of a strong and mature state that was politically and economically equipped to offer effective management of their developmental challenges. The threats to life in many states that are weak, fragile, failing, failed and collapsed have accentuated to precipitous proportions in the core areas of politics and good governance, economy and ecology, religion and culture. It is these areas that the changing landscape of Christianity and the mission of the church advocated in *TTL* must address.

Church Presence and Christian Witness in the Global South

Whereas in the global North, most Christians live in countries where Christianity is the majority religion, this is the opposite in the Global South where in many contexts millions of Christians live as minorities in plural communities. The key terms of Christians, Christianity and Church are used for their sociological significance rather than their specific theological meanings to describe religious followers, their ideology and institutions that impact on the cultures in which they live. This broad scope of understanding of the key terms is necessary for engaging with the issues raised in *TTL* and exploring ways in which they affect fullness of life in the pluralistic and changing landscapes of the Global South. According to the Global Christianity report of the Pew Forum:

> In 1910, about two-thirds of the world's Christians lived in Europe, where the bulk of Christians had been for a millennium, according to historical estimates by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity. Today, only about a quarter of all Christians live in Europe (26%). A plurality – more than a third –are now in the Americas (37%). About one in every four Christians

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[12] *The ACCRA Confession*, developed and published by the North American Covenanting for Justice Working Group (RCA Communication and Production Services, 2007), 6.

lives in sub-Saharan Africa (24%), and about one in eight is found in Asia and the Pacific (13%).[13]

Christianity and the church's mission has been a force for good in many parts of the Global South in improving the lives of people. However, it must also be recognised that some expressions of the faith have contributed to instability in societies that deny people fullness of life. In some areas, fundamentalist religious fervour has gained momentum, reshaping the identities and actions of people in ways that have resulted in clashes and violent conflicts.

The central theme of *TTL* is the affirmation of fullness of life, constructed in a triune framework in which God the Creator is affirmed as the giver of life, Jesus as the Saviour for the whole universe and the Holy Spirit as the sustainer that empowers life and renews the whole creation (Genesis 2:7; John 3:8). This missional document has received a warm reception from churches in the Global South for being Biblically centred and contextually relevant to the issues that impact on the changing landscape of Christianity. In the geographical expansion of Christianity since 1910, the ecclesial landscape of the global South has become the locus where the majority of the world's Christian population resides or have their origins. If at the beginning of the twentieth century only Europe could claim to be the centre for global Christianity, then the contemporary landscape does not give that status to any single continent or region. The changing landscape of Christianity has resulted in the Global North no longer being able to dominate global Christianity in the same way that it did one hundred years ago.[14] It no longer has veto powers or monopoly to determine the identity, vocation and witness of global Christianity.

TTL identified the following shifts in global Christianity since 1980:

- Majority of Christians either are living or have their origins in the Global South and East.
- Migration has become a worldwide, multi-directional phenomenon which is reshaping the Christian landscape.
- The emergence of strong Pentecostal and charismatic movements from different localities is one of the most noteworthy characteristics of world Christianity today.
- People at the margins are claiming their key role as agents of mission and affirming mission as transformation.

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[13] Pew Forum from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, MS. Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life, *Global Christianity* (December 2011), 9.

[14] According to the Pew Report, 'the fastest growth in the number of Christians over the past century has been in sub-Saharan Africa (a roughly sixtyfold increase, from fewer than nine million in 1910 to more than 516 million in 2010) and in the Asia-Pacific region (a roughly tenfold increase, from about 28 million in 1910 to more than 285 million in 2010)': Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life, *Global Christianity*, 10.

- The church lives in multi-religious and multicultural contexts and new communication technology is also bringing the people of the world into a greater awareness of one another's identities and pursuits.[15]

The values that undergird *TTL*'s focus on the life-giving, life-saving and life-sustaining character and mission of the Triune God are pertinent to the contextual realities of the Global South. As Christianity, through the mission of different churches, makes increasing inroads into different contexts, this has led to fresh questions being raised about the understanding and praxis of God's mission. The societal challenges of wealth, poverty, ecology, political violence, corruption, migration, and law and order instability can no longer be neglected by churches that seek to be missional because these threats impact upon the fundamental well-being of all people.[16]

The spread of Christianity in the Global South is communicated less by what is read and more by what is seen, heard and recited.[17] Therefore, this methodology of transmission and reception of the gospel will more likely result in followers who express greater passion towards what they embrace and what motivates them to engage in action. A radical shift has therefore taken place over the last century in the quantity and quality of missional agents. The decline of long-term, full-time professional missionaries from the Global North to the South has been replaced by short-term, part-time and lay missional agents. Also, a significant rise in local indigenous mission agents is facilitating the growth of Christianity in the Global South.

The continuing changing landscape of Christianity has seen the advancement of Pentecostal and Charismatic types of churches as the dominant shapers of how Christianity engages with the social, cultural, economic and political culture. This brand of Christianity is significantly influenced by what can be classified a strategic alliance with the powerful influence of the USA's brand of evangelical Christianity that journeys in partnership with the global political, cultural and economic agenda of their imperial foreign policy that promotes the continuing educational, economic, cultural and political power of the West.[18] The continuing

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[15] *TTL,* §5, 9.

[16] Church and Society Commission, Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias and Conference of European Churches, CEC-CLAI Globalization Final Report: *Threats and challenges of globalization: Churches in Europe and Latin America in dialogue* (September 2010).

[17] J. Philip and J.J. Myers, 'The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South': https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/studio/multimedia/20061011/ 5399.html/_res/id=sa_File1/The_New_Faces_of_Christianity.pdf (accessed 3rd July 2015).

[18] M.F. Shaw, 'Robert Wuthnow and World Christianity: A Response to Boundless Faith', 179: www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2012-04/2012-04-179-shaw.pdf (accessed 2nd July 2015).

growth of Christianity seems to suggest multi-faceted reasons. Significant is the fact that population growth is being experienced at a phenomenally faster rate than in most countries in the Global North which are experiencing increasing gentrification in their population and an overall low birth rate that varies from -0.2 to a high +0.2%.[19]

The fast growth rate of Christianity must therefore be linked with the growth in population within many countries of the Global South. It could therefore be argued that the significant growth of Christianity in many parts of the global South (primarily Africa, Latin America and Asia) may be directly linked with rapid population growth. The religious movements of Pentecostalism and Charismatics, with their attractively packaged products that appeals to the world of youth culture, would be the beneficiaries of that growth in membership.[20] Significantly, it is in these geographical areas where the USA's spheres of political, economic and cultural influences are present that its brand of evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity is making impact.[21] According to Shaw, the American churches are (*fast*) becoming airports of a new globalization.[22] The third major factor that facilitates the growth of Christianity is the effectiveness of indigenous independent missional groups that evangelise without any reference to external partnerships of support by missionary networks from the West such as the evangelising work of the Karen people of Burma (Myanmar).[23]

TTL envisages the missional reformation of church that will give leadership to the issues that pose the most severe threats to life. It offers a broader understanding of the missional challenge facing the Church in the contemporary era that removes the understanding of salvation from its classical anthropocentric bias to a broader 'all creation' perspective. For example, in the context of the global, this church's mission must include advocacy for climate justice that involves working assiduously for climate protection, advocacy of international policies in favour of ecological debt to those vulnerable countries in the South, cancellation of illegitimate debts that enslave developing nations, advocating national food sovereignty, available and affordable quality health care and access to clean water as a

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[19] World Population Data Sheet is an annual report: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW (accessed 4th July 2015).

[20] For a fresh paradigm perspective to understand the current role of Western mission in world Christianity, see D. Miller and T. Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (California: University of California Press, 2007).

[21] According to Shaw, 'Robert Wuthnow and World Christianity', 180. North American Christianity of American churches spent over \$4 billion on overseas ministries.

[22] Shaw defines globalization as an embodiment of paradoxes in which a mixture of 'economic, political and cultural forces that produces the paradox of sameness and diversification': Shaw, 'Robert Wuthnow and World Christianity', 180.

[23] J.C. Riley, *An Unpredictable Gospel: American Evangelicals and World Christianity, 1812-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), xi, 311.

human right.[24] This missional understanding of fullness of life is also referred to as 'The Economy of Life' because it places the whole *oikoumene* – the household of God – at the centre of the Church's mission:

> The Economy of Life cares for land and sea, the whole inhabited Earth, which has its own God-given integrity. It is against the commoditization of all aspects of nature, including water, air, forests and other commons. The bounty of creation is not a commodity to be plundered; rather, it is a divine gift to celebrate life through mutual sharing. The Economy of Life is where all creation glorifies God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, so that all may reach fullness of life (John 10:10).[25]

The ecumenical focus on addressing the global issues of the interconnectivity between poverty, wealth and ecology are central to the threats to life in the Global South. The WCC's Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth (AGAPE) global conference of 2012 offers an apt analysis of the challenges facing the churches:

> Theologies of human arrogance and domination… have failed to question and even legitimated systems and ideologies founded on unlimited growth, accumulation and exploitation of 'natural resources' … we have turned a blind eye to ecological destruction and the plight of victims of globalisation… we neglected to examine and change our own production, consumption and investment behaviour… we confess our complicity in systems of oppression.[26]

TTL's vision of life envisions intentional interdependence between politics, economics and civil society where financial markets are guided by human and environmental concerns. The global financial and economic regime must no longer be based on neo-liberal principles such as unlimited profit maximisation and growth but, on the contrary, must be founded on the goal of provisioning for life. The mission of the church must also regard itself as an economic agent that advocates and embodies the core values of: economy from an ethical standpoint, embedding the market economy in a social and cultural context, ensuring the ecological and social sustainability of competition, and strengthening the primacy of politics in a global context.[27]

TTL calls for a re-evaluation of the way in which evangelism is understood and practised in the multi-religious and multicultural contexts

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[24] *Threats and challenges of globalization*: Churches in Europe and Latin America in dialogue, Church and Society, Commission Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias and Conference of European Churches, 23-38.

[25] WCC, *The Economy of Life: An Invitation to Theological Reflection and Action: Theological Consultation on Economy of Life* (27th-30th October 2014), Chennai, India.

[26] J.C. Riley, *An Unpredictable Gospel*, xi, 311.

[27] Evangelical Church of Westphalia, 'Re-modelling the Social Market', Altstädter Kirchplatz 5 / D-33602 Bielefeld, Germany: www.evangelisch-in-westfalen.de, quicklink 257-58.

in which many Christians live. In addition, the new communication technology that has entered many unprepared communities and transformed traditional methods of networking into global networking, calls for attention in terms of how it affects identity. The movement of migrants into many cities has resulted in the presence of many different global religions. This changing environment of religious plurality constitutes a serious challenge to the churches, and new ways must be found to engage inter-faith dialogue that is characterized by reciprocity, shunning proselytization and instead embracing respectful cross-cultural communication.

Finally, *TTL* has introduced 'mission from the margins' as a fresh understanding of the contemporary mission of the church. Within the global context, people who live on the margins usually live in a permanent state of vulnerability, being excluded from active participation in the political and economic decisions that shape their lives. Although they make up a large number of the people that attend church, they are often objects rather than subjects of the church's mission. In some cases, those that live on the margins are deceived by corrupt 'prosperity preachers' with promises of healing and financial well-being, but often they are then fleeced through religious systems of greed that benefit the few powerful elites within the group. The churches in the South will need to experience a cathartic repentance because their hands are not clean in their mission with people that live on the margins. The transformation needed does not call simply,

> To move people from the margins to centres of power but to confront those who remain the centre by keeping people on the margins. Instead, churches are called to *transform* power structures.[28]

Conclusion

One must be very careful not to exaggerate the claims of Christianity in the Global South as though the phenomenon has led to the emergence of independent, self-propagating, self-financing and self-governing churches and Christian movements. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the changing landscape of global Christianity has to a great extent been shaped by forces linked with the phenomenon of globalisation. In this driving force, religious movements are not immune from this infectious force. In the same way that western missionary Christianity became an accompaniment of colonialism, the contemporary growth of Christianity in the global South is accompanied by the phenomenon of globalisation. Therefore, this chapter argues that the umbilical cord of the Global North that influences and controls global Christianity still continues today through the contemporary era through the phenomenon of globalisation.

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[28] *TTL,* §6.

American Christianity continues to influence the growth of Christianity in the Global South because of the USA's continued role as a superpower that promotes its trade, finance, travel, culture and mass media, especially through its foreign aid programme. Therefore, as Wuthnow has argued, despite the demographic shift to the Global South, 'the notion of a shift of influence… cannot be inferred from such evidence.'[29] He therefore dismisses the claim of a global shift in Christianity from North to South as a 'hyperbole', and argues that it is still the impact of western missionary Christianity that is shaping the growth of Christianity in the Global South and that a key component of the growth is a higher birth rate.[30]

The threats to life in the Global South are not reducing, and this makes the missional challenge of the church even more urgent. However, in the midst of the threats people still celebrate. They never surrender to any of the life-denying forces that are at work but demonstrate 'a never giving up' resilience. Darkness will never overcome light and death will never overcome life. It is these people that set the agenda for the church's mission.

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[29] Shaw, 'Robert Wuthnow and World Christianity', 181.
[30] Shaw, 'Robert Wuthnow and World Christianity', 181.

Together towards Life and the Context of the Global North

Kenneth R. Ross

A New Frontier

Evidence abounds of a recession of Christian faith in the global North.[1] With minor local variations, there is an unmistakable trend: church attendance is in decline, numbers of baptisms are reducing, numbers of church weddings are reducing, numbers of church funerals are reducing. It has become perfectly possible to live one's life in many parts of the global North without participation in, or even much awareness of, the Christian faith. The sharp decline in religious identity and participation is evidenced by innumerable surveys. The results of the 2011 Scottish Census, for example, show that those identifying themselves as 'Church of Scotland' fell from 42% in 2001 to 32% in 2011. Meanwhile, those identifying themselves as 'no religion' rose from 28% in 2001 to 37% in 2011.[2] While religious affiliation and practice is higher in the USA than in Europe, a similar trend is evident there. The Pew Research Center reported in 2015 that its 'major new survey of more than 35,000 Americans finds that the percentage of adults who describe themselves as Christians has dropped by nearly eight percentage points in just seven years, and from 78.4% in an equally massive Pew Research survey in 2007 to 70.6% in 2014. Over the same period, the percentage of Americans who are religiously unaffiliated – describing themselves as atheist, agnostic or 'nothing in particular' – has jumped more than six points, from 16.1% to 22.8%.[3] How can we account for such changes?

Charles Taylor suggests that we have moved '… from a condition in 1500 in which it was hard not to believe in God, to our present situation just after 2000, where this has become quite easy for many. A way of

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[1] A more extended version of this chapter can be found in Kenneth R. Ross, *'Together towards Life* in the Context of Liquid Modernity: Mission and Evangelism in the Age of Secularization', in *International Review of Mission,* 103.2, 399 (2014), 240-55.

[2] Scotland's Census 2011: Shaping our Future – Detailed Characteristics on Ethnicity, Identity, Language and Religion in Scotland: www.scotlandscensus. gov.uk/news/census-2011-detailed-characteristics-ethnicity-identity-language-and-religion-scotland (accessed 20th March 2014).

[3] Pew Research Center, 'Religious Landscape Study', www.pewforum.org/ religious-landscape-study/ (accessed 2nd May 2015).

putting our present condition is to say that many people are happy living for goals which are purely immanent; they live in a way that takes no account of the transcendent.'[4] Despite centuries of Christian influence on their culture, language, literature, architecture, politics and values, many in the global North are opting to live with a frame of reference in which Christian faith has practically no place. As Reinhard Hempelmann observes: 'We talk about "inculturation" when the gospel finds a place in a certain cultural context. In our society today, Christian faith is in a stage of "exculturation".'[5] This presents a new, hitherto unexplored, frontier for Christian mission.

Lesslie Newbigin, a generation ago, was a pioneer in urgently drawing the attention of the churches to this new frontier which they now have to face. At a time when it was still widely assumed that the global North was the 'home base' of Christianity and that mission was something to be done elsewhere in the world, Newbigin demonstrated how far the tables had turned. For him, as a missionary returning from India to the UK in the 1970s, this was a profoundly personal experience. He described his experience of ministry on return to England as '… much harder than anything I met in India. There is a cold contempt for the gospel which is harder to face than any opposition… England is a pagan society and the development of a truly missionary encounter with this very tough form of paganism is the greatest intellectual and practical task facing the Church'.[6] This led him to pose what has proved to be the great unanswered mission question of our time: 'What would be involved in a missionary encounter between the gospel and this whole way of perceiving, thinking and living that we call "modern Western culture"?'[7]

Thirty years later, there can be little doubt that there was accuracy and acuity to Newbigin's analysis. While there is a resurgence of religion worldwide, there is also an advance of secularism, particularly in the global North but also making its mark wherever western culture exercises influence. How far does *Together towards Life* address this reality?

The New Frontier: Wider and Stronger

In assessing the context of the global North, while acknowledging the prophetic quality of Newbigin's analysis, it is also necessary to recognize significant developments which have occurred since his time. The

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[4] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 143.

[5] Reinhard Hempelmann, 'The Context of Christian Witness in the 21st Century', in *International Review of Mission,* 92.364 (2003), 45-55, at 47.

[6] Lesslie Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda: An Autobiography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 249.

[7] Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1986), 1.

secularizing trends identified by Newbigin in the 1980s have intensified during the subsequent decades. The strident voices of the 'New Atheists' have enjoyed a high profile in the global North. Scholars like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens have not only made the case for atheism but have powerfully argued that religion is a divisive, violent and destructive force in human life.[8] Though their rhetoric, ironically, in some respects mirrors the religious fundamentalism to which they are opposed, they have succeeded in creating an environment where it is no longer taken for granted that religion is on the side of virtue. It is not difficult to puncture their complacent assurance that, while religion fosters ignorance, fanaticism and violence, atheism is enlightened, tolerant and progressive.[9] Nonetheless, they have had some considerable success in giving religion a bad name. This is evident, for example, in the work of groups which campaign to end religious observance in the public education system.

The context for Christian mission in much of the global North is one of repudiated Christianity. Conscious rejection of Christianity presents a challenging context for the church's witness today. A yet greater difficulty, however, for Christian mission is the direction which has been taken by late modernity during recent decades. Its celebrated 'incredulity towards metanarratives'[10] has continued to deconstruct and demolish any attempt to establish a stable way of understanding reality. This has been described as 'liquid modernity'. What makes modernity liquid, according to Zygmunt Bauman, is 'its self-propelling, self-intensifying, compulsive and obsessive "modernization" as a result of which, like liquid, none of the consecutive forms of social life is able to maintain its shape for long'.[11] Whereas an evangelistic strategy in earlier times could identify the 'plausibility structure' of any given context and establish points of contact for the gospel, this has become much more difficult and improbable in the fluid context prevailing today. A continuously changing and ever more fragmented and atomized society presents a challenge yet more severe than that discerned by Newbigin a generation ago.

What does *TTL* have to offer to those at work on this new frontier? In its introduction it acknowledges the question: 'How can we proclaim God's love and justice to a generation living in an individualized, secularized, and materialized world?'[12] When it considers local congregations, it recognizes

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[8] See Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam, 2006); Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007).

[9] See e.g. Terry Eagleton, *Reason, Faith, and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

[10] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), xxiv-xxv.

[11] Zygmunt Bauman, *Culture in a Liquid Modern World* (London: Polity Press, 2011), 11.

[12] *TTL,* §8.

both a new context and new initiatives: '… in the secularizing global North, new forms of contextual mission such as "new monasticism", "emerging church" and "fresh expressions" have redefined and revitalized churches.'[13]

Nonetheless, at first reading, *TTL* might seem to be little engaged with the liquid modern culture of the secularized western world. It might be argued that a mission affirmation at the beginning of the 21st century ought to have been more explicit in acknowledging this particular and unprecedented context. Its methodology, however, is to start from the content of the faith – 'We believe in the Triune God…'[14] – and to unfold its meaning in ways that address the contemporary situation. This chapter argues that this methodological approach succeeds in offering critically important suggestions as to the shape and direction of Christian mission in the context of the liquid modernity of the global North, though there are points where it might have been helpful to make these more explicit.

Mission in Pneumatological Mode

A distinctive feature of *TTL* is that it speaks of mission in terms of the Holy Spirit. While the spirituality of those engaged in mission has always been vital, this is now foregrounded in a new way: '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 the deepest meaning to our lives and motivates our actions.'[15] This talks the language of people immersed in the culture of 'liquid modernity' who struggle to connect with heavily institutional religion but yearn for a viable spirituality.

For the understanding and experience of Christian faith, *TTL* marks a departure from the privileging of the rational and cerebral which was adopted in an attempt to come to terms with the European Enlightenment. This was always a reductionist approach and its shortcomings have been laid bare, particularly by the worldwide revolution known as Pentecostalism which has recovered the spiritual core of New Testament Christianity.[16] Besides Pentecostalism, many other branches of the church, in their own way, are rediscovering the spiritual dimension – as demonstrated by the positive reception accorded to *TTL* by so many different church constituencies.

Given the discrediting of religion and widespread aversion to heavily institutional forms of organization, there is an urgent need for the spiritual

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[13] *TTL,* §72; see further, Jonathan R. Wilson, *Living Faithfully in a Fragmented World: From* After Virtue *to a New Monasticism* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2010); David Goodhew, Andrew Roberts and Michael Volland, *Fresh! An Introduction to Fresh Expressions of Church and Pioneer Ministry* (London: SCM, 2012).

[14] *TTL,* §1.

[15] *TTL,* §3.

[16] See further, Wonsuk Ma and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Mission Spirituality and Authentic Discipleship* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013).

quality of Christianity to be demonstrated. Unfolding the meaning of Christian mission in terms of the Holy Spirit is a timely initiative. It is intriguing and inviting language. It challenges everyone to look beyond their dogmatic defences to discover the authenticity of life in the Spirit. Such is the mystery of the Spirit that all are reminded of their finitude and vulnerability, while all may be inspired by possibilities of growth and transformation.

Admittedly, there is an element of risk in taking a pneumatological approach in a liquid modern culture. Will distinctive points of Christian faith also end up being dissolved? Though *TTL* itself could hardly be more firmly anchored in Trinitarian and Christological belief, questions might be raised about the direction of travel. Such questions are acknowledged in *TTL* by the emphasis it places on 'discernment of spirits'.[17] Still, when 'affirmation of life' is given as the key criterion for such discernment, does it win in terms of communication and solidarity at the cost of losing clarity and definition? Gerrit Noort, on the basis of Dutch responses to *TTL*, has suggested that 'a critical step has been taken without sufficient theological debate about the implications for mission'.[18]

This is a healthy area of debate since the journey of inculturation invariably raises the question as to whether faithfulness to the gospel has been sustained in the necessary quest for relevance. Mission has to walk that fine line. Meeting a liquid modern culture with an open, pneumatological understanding of mission may entail an element of risk, but is this not the kind of risk that every true missionary would recognize? The recent work of Ben Quash helpfully opens up what is involved in the dialectic between what is 'given' in Christ and what is 'found' as the gift of the Spirit: 'The givens come alive only in this indefinitely extended series of encounters with new circumstances, and the Christian assumption ought to be that no new-found thing need be construed as a threat to what has been given, for we have to do with the same God both in the given and in the found. The God who has "stocked our backpack for the journey", so to speak, also "places things in our path", up ahead of us.'[19] Such a perspective gives the courage needed to meet a new context with the confidence evoked in *TTL*, that 'God is there before we come…'[20]

Mission and Social Transformation

Lest anyone imagine that the pneumatological turn in the understanding of mission would lead in an entirely other-worldly direction, *TTL* does not

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[17] *TTL,* §24.

[18] Gerrit Noort, '"So What?" – Dutch Responses to the New Mission Statement', in *International Review of Mission*, 102.2 (397), November 2013, 191-98, at 195.

[19] Ben Quash, *Found Theology: History, Imagination and the Holy Spirit* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), xiv.

[20] *TTL,* §30.

lose time before turning to questions of economics and economic justice. Given the growing inequality and injustice of today's world, it might be expected that there would be a great political movement aiming to put things right. However, as Pope Francis has observed: 'Something has happened to our politics… It is out of ideas…'[21] Faced with gross injustice on a global scale, it seems that politics has been eviscerated and rendered impotent. As Collier and Esteban have argued: '… the culture of economism leads ultimately to a form of totalitarianism, where the only thing demanded from all political institutions is not to interfere with the "free working of the market" – a euphemism for the freewheeling and dealing of the money oligarchy that dominates the world economy and makes a charade of democratic institutions.'[22]

TTL is perhaps at its most trenchant when confronting the domination of the global free market: 'This is a global system of mammon that protects the unlimited growth of wealth of only the rich and powerful through endless exploitation. This tower of greed is threatening the whole household of God. The reign of God is in direct opposition to the empire of mammon.'[23] If the note of spirituality in some respects says 'yes' to our liquid culture, the affirmation that it is a *transformative* spirituality provides a thundering, prophetic 'no' to a central tenet of late modernity – its claim of supremacy for the global free market. For those who are troubled by the acute inequality and injustice found in today's context, for those who want to believe that 'another world is possible', *TTL* uncompromisingly meets their concerns.

It will also strike a chord with the many who are concerned by trends towards ecological devastation. Again, *TTL* has strong words: 'Consumerism triggers not limitless growth but rather endless exploitation of the earth's resources… Eco-justice cannot be separated from salvation, and salvation cannot come without a new humility that respects the needs of all life on earth.'[24] It is apparent that the culture of economism and consumerism is coming unstuck against the magnitude of the ecological crisis now unfolding. The scale of the crisis is such that it is clearly not resolvable within the limitations of the normal political cycle. It may be that only a vision inspired by faith will suffice to create the resources needed to resolve it. By integrating mission more closely than ever before with a theology of creation, and by nurturing a transformative spirituality which embraces all life on earth, *TTL* addresses crucial points of concern on which late modern culture appears to lack answers. Prophetic critique is offered along with a call to a form of spirituality which can effect transformation.

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[21] Paul Vallely, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 29.
[22] Jane Collier and Rafael Esteban, *From Complicity to Encounter: The Church and the Culture of Economism* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1998), 39.
[23] *TTL,* §31.
[24] *TTL,* §23.

Mission from the Margins

The currently prevailing social and economic system leaves many people marginalized. *TTL* not only recognizes this but takes a radical and surprising direction when it suggests that it is the marginalized who are the agents of the mission of God, the vanguard of transformation. Here it is necessary to acknowledge that Christianity has been used ideologically to support a global economic system governed from the centre. Much missionary engagement operated on the presuppositions of this view of the world and became, whether intentionally or not, complicit in the system. It is in this context that *TTL* calls for a fundamental repositioning of Christian mission so that it operates not from the centre but from the margins: 'People on the margins have agency, and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view.'[25]

It is from the margins that Lamin Sanneh discerns possibilities for a re-evangelization of the secularized world: '… the evangelization ferment of the frontier contains forces of renewal that can banish the growing shadows of materialism spreading over Europe, and thus open the way for the return of theistic faith there. Instead of bemoaning the slide into neo-paganism and rehashing old theological assurances in response, the West can recapture the initiative it unwittingly surrendered in its costly pact with secularism.'[26] A key feature of the 'changing landscapes' is the large-scale migration which is bringing the peoples of the world together as never before. This creates new possibilities for missional engagement. TTL holds open the possibility that effective mission to late modern culture might come from unexpected quarters, from those regarded as marginalized who now '… re-imagine mission as a vocation from God's Spirit who works for a world where the fullness of life is available for all.'[27]

Mission and the Life of the Church

One quarter of the *TTL* text is devoted to the life of the church. In today's context, it may be already a counter-cultural move to speak of 'living out our faith in community'.[28] In the context of liquid modernity, as Zygmunt Bauman explains '… networks replace structures, and an uninterrupted game of connecting to and disconnecting from those networks, and the never-ending sequence of connections and disconnections, replace determination, allegiance and belonging'.[29] By insisting that mission finds

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[25] *TTL,* §38.
[26] Lamin Sanneh, *Summoned from the Margin: Homecoming of an African* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 232.
[27] *TTL,* §37.
[28] *TTL,* §59.
[29] Bauman, *Culture in a Liquid Modern World*, 14.

expression in the communal life of the church, *TTL* challenges current trends and offers an alternative view of the purpose of life.

TTL's insistence on mission and church being inextricably intertwined may touch a raw nerve in the context of late modernity. As Alasdair Macintyre concluded his devastating account of the loss of moral bearings in the western world: 'We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another – doubtless very different – St Benedict.'[30] This was a note which resonated with Lesslie Newbigin and informed his conviction that '… the only possible hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation which believes it'.[31] If anything, today the process of disintegration has gone much further and the need for a convincing and viable form of church life is yet more urgent. This is not to take a conservative option. Rather, it is to look for that renewed form of church life which will be accessible to people formed by the culture of liquid modernity.

Mission Embracing Plurality

An irreducible feature of late modernity is the fact that we live in close proximity to 'others', including those who profess a different religion and/or understand ultimate reality in a different way. Wolfgang Welsch has suggested that plurality is *the* key issue in post-modernity.[32] In that case, *TTL*'s approach to plurality has a great bearing on the question of its applicability and usefulness in the liquid modern context.

TTL's contribution, working out of its pneumatological understanding of mission, is to encourage an open and adventurous approach: 'We believe that the Spirit of Life brings joy and fullness of life. God's Spirit can be found in all cultures that affirm life.'[33] It fosters an engaging approach, making the radical and thought-provoking suggestion that 'authentic mission makes the "other" a partner in, not an "object" of, mission.'[34] This points the way towards a public witness to the gospel which engages a context of plurality.

TTL emphasizes the importance of dialogue. Rather than regarding dialogue and evangelism as separate, or even opposed, approaches, *TTL* proposes that they are interrelated: 'Although Christians hope and pray that all people may come to a living knowledge of the Triune God, evangelism is not the purpose of dialogue. However, since dialogue is also "a mutual

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[30] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd edition (London: Duckworth, 2007), 263.

[31] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (London: SPCK, 1989), 232.

[32] Wolfgang Welsch, *Unsere Postmoderne Moderne* (Darmstadt, Germany. 1991); cf. Jan-Olav Hendriksen, 'Multifaceted Christianity and the Postmodern Condition: Reflections on its Challenges to Churches in the Northern Hemisphere', in Rolv Olsen (ed), *Mission and Postmodernities* (Regnum: Oxford, 2011), 3-21, at 6.

[33] *TTL,* §93.

[34] *TTL,* §93.

encounter of commitments", sharing the good news of Jesus Christ has a legitimate place in it.'[35] Might the plurality of liquid modernity function for Christian mission as, in the words of Tomás Halik, 'a summons to a new Areopagus'?[36] *TTL* seems to point in this direction with its proposal that 'Evangelism entails not only proclamation of our deepest convictions, but also listening to others and being challenged and enriched by others'.[37] By recovering the spiritual roots of the faith and fostering an open, dialogical approach to a context of plurality, *TTL* offers an understanding of mission which has traction in the liquid modernity of the global North.

Mission and Proclamation

The note of confidence is clearly evident in *TTL*'s call to evangelize: 'Evangelism is mission activity which makes explicit and unambiguous the centrality of the incarnation, suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ 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.'[38] This includes 'the invitation to personal conversion to new life in Christ and to discipleship'.[39] It is important that *TTL* in this way opens up the personal dimension of faith and discipleship. It will be for those who consider it in the context of liquid modernity to further explore what this will mean in terms of meeting the personal existential crisis that is a common feature of the late modern world. Charles Taylor detects much evidence of '… a profound dissatisfaction with a life encased entirely in the immanent order. The sense is that this life is empty, flat, devoid of higher purpose'.[40] The discontents of late modernity can act as an invitation for Christian witness.

Perhaps it is the question of what it means to be human which offers the most promising ground on which Christian evangelists might meet with contemporaries whose outlook is shaped by liquid modernity. Charles Taylor suggests that '… for any liveable understanding of human life, there must be some way in which this life looks good, whole, proper, really being lived as it should'. He suggests that 'the swirling debate between belief and unbelief, as well as between different versions of each, can… be seen as a debate about what real fullness consists in'.[41] The question of what it means to be truly human is an urgent one in today's liquid modernity and offers

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[35] *TTL,* §95.
[36] Tomás Halik, 'The Soul of Europe: An Altar to the Unknown God', *International Review of Mission,* 95.378/379, 265-70, at 269.
[37] *TTL,* §95.
[38] *TTL,* §80.
[39] *TTL,* §85.
[40] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 506.
[41] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 600.

perhaps the most promising point of engagement for the Christian proclamation.

Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, seeks to engage the emotional level, observing, for example, that 'our technological society has succeeded in multiplying occasions of pleasure, yet has found it very difficult to engender joy'.[42] Perhaps it is the joy of the gospel that holds the key to touching the heart of a post-modern generation? Neither institutional authority nor rhetorical brilliance makes much impression in the context of liquid modernity. This is a disillusioned, distrustful and suspicious age. Hence the value of expressing the faith in an emotional key.

The ministry of proclamation in our contemporary situation is not unconnected with the witness for social justice and transformation outlined above. It is worth recalling the words of David Bosch: 'As we call people (back) to faith in God through Jesus Christ, we must help them to articulate an answer to the question: "What do we have to become Christians *for*?" At least part of the answer to this question will have to be: 'In order to be enlisted into God's ministry of reconciliation, peace and justice on earth.'[43] With this in view, *TTL* makes the point that 'the gospel is liberative and transformative. Its proclamation must involve transformation of societies with a view to creating just and inclusive communities'.[44] To have integrity in the context of liquid modernity, evangelism must be a matter of encounter that is transformative for all involved, as together we discover new ways in which the gospel meets the crisis of our time

Conclusion: Challenging Relevance

Lesslie Newbigin liked to recall a phrase coined by A.G. Hogg to describe what it takes to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ: 'Challenging relevance'. As Newbigin explained: 'The Gospel must be heard as relevant. It must speak of things which are real things in the life of the hearer. It must therefore begin by accepting his issues, using his models and speaking his language. But relevance alone is not enough. The Gospel must at the same time challenge the whole worldview of the hearer.'[45] This chapter has attempted to show how *Together towards Life* strikes notes which resonate in the context of liquid modernity while also making a call to conversion and transformation. It offers, in short, 'challenging relevance'.

The importance of this is underlined by the realization that secularization is no temporary blip. It represents a permanent reshaping of human consciousness from which ever fewer of the human community remain

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[42] *Evangelii Gaudium,* §7.
[43] David J. Bosch, *Believing in the Future: Toward a Missiology of Western Culture* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1995), 34.
[44] *TTL,* §91.
[45] See Geoffrey Wainwright, *Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 196.

immune. Pervasive liquid modernity defines the context for mission and evangelism in the world of the 21st century. Bert Hoedemaker stated the scale of the challenge: 'The problem of secularization… requires a reformulation of the goals, means, and motives of mission. Beyond that, it requires a rethinking of the position of Christianity in a religiously and culturally plural world, even a reconstruction of its tradition in that perspective.'[46] In many respects, *TTL* has stepped up to this challenge, even if its response is often implicit and inviting further development.

With its orientation to the spiritual dimension of life, its robust challenge to the culture of economism, its solidarity with those on the margins, its insistence that faith must be expressed in community, its unhesitating embrace of plurality, and its confidence in the power of the gospel to address the human crisis, TTL suggests a series of points of engagement with the culture of liquid modernity. The task ahead is to critique, deepen, exemplify and expand its suggestions. TTL may then come to be regarded as a ground-breaking resource for mission and evangelism in the context of the global North.

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[46] Bert Hoedemaker, *Secularization and Mission: A Theological Essay* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1998), 40.

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE AND CONTEMPORARY ASIAN THEOLOGY

Atola Longkumer

'The past should not be resurrected in order to justify oppression in the present, but rather it should be retold to enable the liberation of all' – Kwok Pui Lan.[1]

'… Christianity is also slowly coming of age in this vast continent, reaching a critical mass both demographically and intellectually, so much so that important breakthroughs are likely to emerge in the next couple of decades' – Felix Wilfred.[2]

Introduction

A paradoxical condition prevails in contemporary Asian society. On the one hand, there is much freedom for many people and from many aspects of societal circumstances and cultural expectations. Yet, on the other hand, restraint and suppression for many from different dimensions of society are existential realities. Today's Asia presents a multiplicity of possibilities as well as difficulties, conditioned by the socio-economic locations of communities. An undeniable phenomenon of modern Asia is the explosion of economic growth and the inevitable changes this has ushered into Asian communities. WCC/CWME's mission document *Together towards Life* (hereafter *TTL*), provides a critical resource for Christian mission at an opportune time, particularly with its emphasis on the Spirit as the source and foundation of mission.

Spiritus as breathing and life-giving, enabling and transforming humanity towards the Kingdom of God, presents a liberating encounter marked by freedom from all forms of oppression and suppression – the human condition of sinfulness, selfishness, greed and a structured hierarchy of domination.[3] In the context of contemporary Asia, a spirit of freedom, as derived and sustained by the good news as taught and lived out by Jesus of Nazareth, needs continued, critical and constructive articulation. *TTL* celebrates life and calls on communities of faith to enable life to flourish as

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[1] Kwok Pui Lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2000), 18.
[2] Felix Wilfred, 'General Introduction', in Felix Wilfred (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.
[3] *TTL,* §10.

God intends for his creation. This chapter will argue that contemporary Asian theology needs to articulate a spirit of freedom. There is need for a theology informed by *TTL*'s vision of Christian mission as proclaiming the good news to all humanity and creation,[4] bringing forth new life and announcing the loving presence of God in our world,[5] and a theology informed by the challenges and opportunities of contemporary Asia. In having this conversation, contemporary Asian theology advocates a spirit of freedom from suppression and the negation of embedded power structures such as religious fundamentalism, ecclesiastical rigidity, parochial socio-cultural practices, and divisive political and economic forces.

Together towards Life and the Context of Contemporary Asia

TTL was prepared by a global community of theologians and mission scholars, relatively representative in denominational, gender and regional perspectives. The participation of Evangelicals, Orthodox, Protestants and Roman Catholics is reflected in the document. The leadership of Asian theologians – Jooseop Keum, the Secretary of the CWME, and Geevarghese Mor Coorilos, the Moderator of the CWME – in the production of the document itself lends significance for Asian Christians. Since the 1982 document *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation*, *TTL* in 2012 is the most significant document that redefines, redirects and renews the understanding and practice of mission for the church.[6] It has received critical acclaim and reviews from scholars of missions and from a variety of church traditions. Among these, the review by missiologist Stephen B. Bevans demonstrates the value and relevance of *TTL* for Christian missions.[7]

Some of the distinctive features of *TTL* are: the emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit for mission as the initiator and enabler of the transformation of people and cultures towards the loving God (*TTL* §34); the recognition

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[4] *TTL*, §101.

[5] *TTL*, §10.

[6] Other church and mission documents have followed, sharing common vision of a healed, restored humanity by the Good News of the Gospel: see *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), 2013, Apostolic Exhortation by Pope Francis: www.vatican.va/evangelii-gaudium/en; the *Cape Town Commitment* by the Lausanne Movement: www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment (accessed 27th July 2015).

[7] See Stephen Bevans, 'Together towards Life: Reflections on the Proposed WCC Mission Statement', in www.cmsm.org/forum/forum_fall13_WCC_Statement.html June 2015 (accessed 20th June 2015). See also Byung Joon Chung, 'An Assessment of Together towards Life: Korean Responses', in *International Review of Mission,* 102.2 (November 2013), 199-204; Petros Vassiliadis, 'An Orthodox Assessment of the New Mission Statement', in *International Review of Mission,* 102.2 (November 2013), 174-78.

of the structural sins of socio-economic discrimination and exploitation of the creation (*TTL* §§30, 49); Christian mission as characterised by striving towards a life that is nourishing for all, as encapsulated in the following passage: 'Jesus Christ relates to and embraces those who are most marginalized in society, in order to confront and transform all that denies life. This includes cultures and systems which generate and sustain massive poverty, discrimination and dehumanization, and which exploit and destroy people and the earth' (*TTL* §37).

The theme of evangelism in relation to Christian mission is addressed comprehensively, clarifying the myopic limitations that have often centred on human efforts and church traditions. The proclamation of the good news has also too often been undertaken in a way which leads to cultural exclusivism. In contrast to these limitations, *TTL* states emphatically that 'evangelism is sharing one's faith and conviction with other people and inviting them to discipleship, whether or not they adhere to other religious traditions… it leads to repentance, faith and baptism… It provokes conversion, involving a change of attitudes, priorities and goals. It results in salvation of the lost, healing of the sick, and the liberation of the oppressed and the whole creation' (*TTL* §§83, 84). Taking cognizance of the criticism of Christian mission for its often parochial tendencies and good intentions gone awry in actual expression, *TTL* underlines the core of Christian mission as God's unlimited grace revealed in the life and work of Jesus. Therefore it is crucial to understand that in mission, 'Jesus calls us out of our narrow concerns of our own kingdom, our own liberation, and our own independence' (Acts 1:6) by unveiling to us a larger vision, and empowering us by the Holy Spirit to go 'to the ends of the earth' as witnesses, in each context of time and space, to God's justice, freedom and peace. Our calling is to point all to Jesus, rather than to ourselves or our institutions, looking out for the interests of others rather than our own' (*TTL* §100).

The clarity and commitment for a renewed and relevant Christian mission expressed in *TTL* adds impetus to contemporary theology as it offers both affirmation and a critique of Asian multiple contexts. Today's Asia presents both 'promises and crises'[8] with unprecedented developments taking place in the continent. Contemporary Asia is experiencing unprecedented economic growth, while simultaneously the misery of the poor and the powerless is most vividly reflected in the migration of labourers from and within Asia.[9] Contemporary Asia is also marked by

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[8] Pui Lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology,* 12.

[9] For an excellent theological analysis of the phenomenon of migration, wherein the magnitude and the experience of migrants make it imperative to make migration a locus of theology, see Gemma Cruz, *An Intercultural Theology of Migration: Pilgrims in the Wilderness* (Leiden: Brill, 2010)*.* In 2012, CCA-CATS VII, Seoul, Asian theologians deliberated on the theme of hospitality within the migration

frequent environmental tragedy amidst rapid construction of modern infrastructure. After the Fukushima nuclear disaster, the collapse of unsafe factory buildings in Bangladesh, the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the discovery of the mass graves of suspected migrants in Malaysia, the growing assertion of a Hindutva ideology in India, endemic gender violence (most vividly illustrated in the rape of a medical student in Delhi, 2012), tension surrounding the South China Sea – amongst many other events – contemporary Asian theology cannot ignore the shift of the geopolitics of the region, and the cost in human lives and the environment by a profit-making economic force. Additionally, the growing response to Christianity and the significance of Christianity in many Asian nations needs to be considered in articulating a contemporary Asian theology.[10] Anri Morimoto states, 'From inception throughout its history of two millennia, Christian theology has always been contextualised.'[11] Hence, contemporary Asian theology arises from the contexts of 'promises and crises' of a rapidly changing Asia. A contemporary Asian theological articulation incorporates the lament of the marginalised on one hand while, on the other, it enunciates the empowerment delivered in the incarnation event that radically inaugurated a spirit of freedom from all forms of domination. Prior to elaborating more on the theme of freedom in contemporary Asian theology, a brief discussion of the term 'Asia' is necessary.

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phenomenon as a resource for Asian theology: www.cca.org.hk/clusters/fmu/programs/cats7/cats7-call.htm (accessed 23rd July 2015).

[10] Christianity as integral to many communities in Asia is a consensus among historians, theologians and sociologists: see *The Oxford Handbook of Asian Christianity*; Peter C. Phan (ed), *Christianities in Asia* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Georg Evers, *The Churches in Asia* (New Delhi: ISPCK, 2005); Sebastian C.H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion* (London: Continuum, 2008). Each Asian country has many historical texts on Christianity from micro-contexts. For instance, for some recent publications, see Leonard Fernando and George Gispert-Sauch, *Christianity in India: Two Thousand Years of Faith* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004); Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Sebastian C.H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2014), Daniel H. Bays (ed), *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Mark R. Mullins (ed), *Handbook of Christianity in Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). A helpful list of Asian Christians and Christianity is Scott W. Sunquist (ed), *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001).

[11] Anri Morimoto, 'Asian Theology in the Ablative Case', in *Studies in World Christianity,* 17.3 (2011), 201-15.

'Asia is Many': A Myriad Asian Theologies

Douglas J. Elwood, in the volume he edited on Asian theology in the last quarter of the twentieth century, stated emphatically, 'Asia is not one but many.'[12] A single, or even a few, representative contexts or articulations, cannot comprehensively portray Asia in its entirety. It is known that the idea of the continent of Asia is more a convenient term tracing back to the antiquity period and solidified during medieval times as the planet was divided into three parts: the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa.[13] However, to understand Asia today, it is essential to take account of its complex diversities and multi-layered socio-cultural and economic contexts. In fact, keen awareness of the differences and plurality of circumstances in Asia serves as a *raison d'être* for a theology that exposes the victims produced by the differences and a theology that explicates a reality of freedom from the entanglement of the oppressive and contesting differences. In other words, taking cognizance of the plurality of contexts in Asia is vital to any articulation of theology in contemporary Asia.[14] A contemporary theology of Asia, therefore, includes not only the geographical nation-states of the continent of Asia, but is aware of the many Asias demarcated by socio-economic locations.

It is therefore aware that Asia is a growing economic region, Asia is a source of cheap labour (both skilled and unskilled) for the global economy,

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[12] Douglas J. Elwood, 'Asian Christian Theology in the Making: An Introduction', in Douglas J. Elwood (ed), *Asian Christian Theology: Emerging Themes,* revised version (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1980), 23-39.

[13] Folker Reichert, *Das Bild der Welt im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2013), 9-42.

[14] Among the many resources that define, describe and delineate Asia in its diverse regions, see Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Atlas of Global Christianity, 1910-2010* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 134-53; Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia,* 2 vols (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998); Namsoon Kang, 'Re-constructing Asian feminist theology: toward a glocal feminist theology in an era of neo-Empire(s)', in Sebastian C.H. Kim (ed), *Christian Theology in Asia* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 205-26; Nami Kim, 'Cutting Edges: "my/our" comfort not at the expense of somebody else: Toward a Critical Global Feminist Theology', in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 21.2 (Fall 2000), 75-94. Among the many Asian scholars and theologians who have provided critical commentary on the term 'Asian' and cautioned against homogeneity is Nami Kim, 'The "Indigestible" Asian: The Unifying Term "Asian" in Theological Discourse', in Rita Nakashima Brock, Jung Ha Kim, Kwok Pui Lan and Seung Ai Yang (eds)*, Off the Menu: Asian and Asian North American Women's Religions and Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 23-43; Nami Kim, 'Which Postcolonialism? The Relevance of Resistance Postcolonialism to Postcolonial Asia', in *Asian Christian Review,* 6.1 (2012), 23-35; Peter C. Phan (ed), *Christianities in Asia* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 2-8; Wong Wai Ching, 'Negotiating for a Postcolonial Identity of "the Poor Women" in Asia', in *Journal of Feminist Studies of Religion*, 16.2 (Fall, 2000), 5-23.

Asia is the cradle of ancient civilizations, and Asia is the home of mushrooming religious communities. Asia has produced critical contextual theologies and continues to pose critical interrogation to a Eurocentric theology that has for long held sway in Christianity.[15] Assessing theology from a global perspective, Stephen B. Bevans affirms this fact, stating, 'Asian Christians are engaged in some of the most exciting and creative theologizing in the world today.'[16] A contemporary Asian theology also acknowledges the historical fact of Asia as the cradle of Christianity, which ironically has encountered the most vehement resistance from other ancient civilizations.[17] Contemporary Asian theology includes critical awareness of the tremendous impact of Christianity in Asian cultures and societies. As Felix Wilfred writes, 'The impact of Christianity in Asia cannot be overestimated; it led to intellectual revolutions, religio-cultural confrontations and social conflicts, but also to fundamental transformation of Asian societies.'[18] By the same token, the encounter of Christianity with Asian cultures also occasioned critical theological questions often seen in theological controversies as well as the expansion of theological perspectives, in the process transforming Christianity.[19]

Given Asia's multiple contexts and plurality of cultures and a history spanning millennia, the articulation of theology must entail not just one theology but rather a myriad theologies. Any theology is rooted in lived contexts of faith communities and expressed within socio-cultural locations. Contemporary Asian theology therefore is markedly plural in content and aspiration, and consciously avoids the perils of expressing a homogeneous theological discourse. With these points in mind, we proceed to present a theology of contemporary Asia arising from diverse contexts, calling for radical commitment to a spirit of freedom as a mark of the mission of the Triune God expressed in the work of the Holy Spirit.

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[15] To name a few, Aloysius Peiris, R.S. Sugirtharaj, Kwok Pui Lan, Sebastian C.H. Kim, Mary John Mananzan, Chung Hyun Kyun, K.C. Abraham, Felix Wilfred, Amos Yong, Gemma Cruz, Wati Longchar, Peter C. Phan, Anri Morimoto, among others. Apart from these, there is an earlier generation of Asian theologians, for which see Douglas J. Elwood (ed), *Asian Christian Theology: Emerging Themes;* and for a helpful bibliography of Asian Christian Theologies in three volumes, see John C. England et al, *Asian Christian Theologies: A Research Guide to Authors, Movements, Sources* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).
[16] Stephen B. Bevans, *An Introduction to Theology in Global Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), 311.
[17] Felix Wilfred, *The Oxford Handbook of Asian Christianity*, 2. For a Catholic Church perspective, see Georg Evers, *The Churches in Asia*, xx-xxi.
[18] Wilfred, *The Oxford Handbook of Asian Christianity*, 2.
[19] Wilfred, *The Oxford Handbook of Asian Christianity*, 2.

The Spirit of Freedom: A Mark of Contemporary Asian Theology

TTL emphasises a pneumatological focus on Christian mission, making it clear that mission is directed by the work of the Holy Spirit to proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ (*TTL* §16). Mission is to witness to the flourishing of life that Jesus Christ announced through his life and work, wherein the Holy Spirit empowers and enables the transformation and affirmation of life. This understanding of mission as an act of the Triune God expressed by the Holy Spirit is described under four main headings in *TTL*: Spirit of Mission: Breath of Life, Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins, Spirit of Community: Church on the Move, Spirit of Pentecost: Good News for All (*TTL* §11). A close reading of these four dimensions of the mission of the Holy Spirit within the mission of the Triune God reveals a spirit of freedom that runs through the four sections in the document (*TTL* §§30, 33, 43, 44, 54, 66, 70, 94). A commitment to freedom from different aspects of subjugation and restraint is a pronounced distinction of *TTL* in its articulations of mission. The mission of the Triune God is an invitation to 'the Feast of Life, through Jesus Christ who came "that they may have life and may have it in all its fullness" through the Holy Spirit who affirms that vision of the reign of God' (*TTL* §112). A spirit of freedom as a mark of contemporary Asian theology is discussed under three major categories: the proclamation of freedom in the good news, the cultures of Asia, and ecclesial unity.

The Proclamation of Freedom in the Good News

Asia is home to a number of indigenous peoples who were, historically, among the most responsive groups of people to the work of Christian mission. For instance, from the remote highlands sandwiched between India and Myanmar, are the Chins, Mizos and Nagas. Likewise the Torajas in Indonesia are people who are identified by their oral cultures and affinity to the natural world around them. Such peoples comprise a sizeable Christian population in the continent. Not only is Christianity a meaningful presence but these communities are becoming an important source of South-to-South evangelism, as Philip Jenkins defines the efforts of taking Christianity beyond one's community in the phenomenon of Christianity's shift to the global South.[20] To be sure, response to Christianity in the continent is not isolated to these indigenous communities. The statistics of growth of Christian presence in Asia is significant, although Christianity is still a minority religion in most nation-states of Asia.[21]

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[20] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[21] David Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends, AD 20-AD 2200: Interpreting the Annual Christian Megacensus* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001); Johnson and Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity, 1910-2010.*

There is a plethora of keen analyses on the response and embrace of Christianity, and a fundamental consensus is the freedom experienced by communities in the transition to the new religion, notwithstanding the acute critique in terms of imposition and often supposed cultural destruction. While not trivialising the critique of aspects of mission that were influenced by imperial power and cultural superiority, it is also fair to recognise that transmission of Christian values were transformational for many communities. Christian mission was indeed Good News for many of the marginalised, politically suppressed, culturally ridiculed and economically deprived – measured from the unstoppable modern *geist* that was set apace by globalisation and imperialism.[22] Despite the resistance from external forces and the limitation inherent in the church, Christianity continues to attract people, as illustrated by the growing number of adherents to Christianity in the region.[23] The mega-churches in the Republic of Korea, the Philippines and India, the personal stories of converts themselves, and the existence of indigenous mission activities, all attest to the fact that Christianity provides meaning to millions in Asia.[24]

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[22] An excellent analysis for illustrating the social-political empowerment afforded by marginalized peoples, such as indigenous peoples, is the example of the tribals or *adivasis* of India, as rightly stated by Frykenberg: 'Moreover, modern education and literacy in Roman script has not only given them easy access to all of India but to the entire Anglophone world'; see Frykenberg, *Christianity in India,* 422; Wong Wai Ching Angela, although critical of 'the hegemony and homogeneity of Western modernity' invariably linked with Christianity, she acknowledges the enormous impacts and development it initiated in Asia: see her, 'Modernity and Change of Values: Asian Christian Negotiations and Resistance', in Wilfred, *The Oxford Handbook of Asian Christianity*, 200-214; Christine Lienemann-Perrin, Atola Longkumer and Afrie Songco Joye (eds), *Putting Names with Faces: Women's Impact in Mission History* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012); Kwok Pui Lan, *Chinese Women and Christianity, 1860-1927* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992); Naw Eh Tar Gay, 'Tribal Women in Asian Churches', in Hope Antone, Wati Longchar, Hyungju Bae, Huang Po Ho and Dietrich Werner (eds), *Asian Handbook for Theological Education and Ecumenism* (Taiwan: PTCA, 2013), 368-76.

[23] For instance, despite the complex relationship between the state and Christianity, by all measures, Christianity persists to exist and attract adherents in China: see Fenggang Yang, *Religion in China: Survival and Revival Under Communist Rule* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[24] David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002); Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Julie Ma and Wonsuk Ma present a missiology of Pentecostal/Charismatic churches with case studies of growing Pentecostal/Charismatic churches in Asia:, see Julie C. Ma and Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic Missiology* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010); David Martin, 'Issues Affecting The Study of Pentecostalism in Asia', in Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang (eds), *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (Oxford: Regnum, 2005), 27-36.

This aspect of freedom and meaning-making experienced in Christianity cannot be ignored in contemporary Asian theology. In this, it is critically important to note that *TTL* clarifies the practice of evangelism as an embodiment of Christ-like values, balancing verbal proclamation and authentic action (*TTL* §86). Hence, it is both a sharing of one's faith in the Triune God, leading to an invitation to a transformed life in Jesus Christ, and deeds of compassion springing from the commitment to the vision of inclusive justice inherent in God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Informed by a renewed clarification of the church activities of evangelism as proclamation of life abundant in Jesus Christ, and that 'mission is not a project of expanding churches but of the church embodying God's salvation in the world' (*TTL* §58), contemporary Asian theology seeks to include proclamation of the good news as seen in the incarnation event. Christianity is potentially about good news of freedom from oppressive systems and their inherent web of domination. This also forms a part of the reason for the resurgence of Christianity in the South. Wilfred affirms that Christianity brought 'a message that came to us through Jesus Christ, which is credible not because of its presumed metaphysical basis, but through its radical appeal to our deeper humanity and the contingencies of our lives (individual and collective), and indeed through Jesus' unconditional love and grace, and through his becoming one in solidarity with the poor'.[25]

In the light of *TTL* and its vision of the flourishing of life for all, an explicit and persuasive articulation of the freedom inherent in the Gospel as seen in the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth is made imperative in any discourse on contemporary Asian theology.

Cultural Constrains and the Freedom of the Gospel

The concept and practice of culture remains a perennial and provocative topic in formulating theological discourse and in the practice of mission. The gamut of contextual theologies is a product of the challenges posed to theology and mission by the diversity of human cultures encountered by the gospel. Stephen B. Bevans' *Models of Contextual Theology* remains a resourceful text for a comprehensive theological appreciation of cultures.[26] A discussion on the etymology and taxonomy of the term 'culture' is not the intent here; however, 'a thick description' can be reduced to emphasize

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[25] Felix Wilfred, *Asian Public Theology: Critical Concerns in Challenging Times* (New Delhi: ISPCK, 2010), 186.

[26] Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002). See also Volker Kuster, *Einfuhrung in die Interkulturelle Theologie* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), where Kuster argues that diverse cultures and their cognates inform and are imperative in doing an intercultural theology. Christianity challenges and is indigenized by the cultures of the place – see further Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 26-36.

that culture is understood as the defining and distinctive practices, beliefs and behaviours of human societies that also serve as identifiers of communities.[27] In the Asian context, the use of culture is accentuated by the invariable plurality of cultures. If culture is broadly understood as a signifier of communities, it then includes the variety of cognates of human society: gender roles, caste, class, rituals, myths, stories, economic production modes, religiosity, habits of consumption, authority, ownership and social kinship among others. Each of these cognates of society presents a complex concept, rationale and expression, often intertwined with another aspect of the society in question. Put in a simplified way, the adherence of these dimensions of society in turn contributes to the demarcation of cultural boundaries.

From the perspective of Christian mission and theology, the cultural signifiers have often been criticised, obliterated by coercion, ridiculed, reformulated and re-adapted into the new religion: Christianity. However, there has been a paradigm shift in appropriating cultures of communities which have been Christianised. For instance, in the context of indigenous cultures and Christianity, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC) declared the resourcefulness of the cultures: 'Much of the indigenous peoples' worldview and ethos is compatible with the Christian faith, [hence] the traditional beliefs, rites, myths and symbols of indigenous peoples provide material for developing indigenous theologies and liturgical ceremonies.'[28] Appreciation of diverse cultures and the encounter of the Good News are also affirmed by *TTL*, which states: 'The gospel takes root in different contexts through engagement with specific cultural, political, and religious realities. Respect for people and their cultural and symbolic life-worlds are necessary if the gospel is to take root in those different realities' (*TTL* §96). The firm conviction that the Triune God is the source and goal of life enlightens the faithful to appreciate diverse human cultures as inspired by the Spirit, and this conviction also enables mission 'to acknowledge, respect, and cooperate with life-giving wisdoms in every culture and context'(*TTL* §27).

While respect for diverse cultures enables the encounter between many different categories of others and enhances dialogue, it is important to note that culture also presents a complicated dilemma in terms of the intricate web of power upholding the status quo. Human cultures also present constraints and oppressive structures. There are human cultural practices that discriminate, exclude, negate and dehumanise – for instance, the Brahmanical religio-social hierarchy that produced and perpetuates caste

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[27] Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Cultures: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1997).
[28] Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC), *The Spirit at Work in Asia Today* (Hong Kong, 1998).

hierarchy, victimising Dalits and tribals in India.[29] Patriarchy, tribalism, land rights, gender roles and economic production rights are often tied to cultures which are parochial, alienating and exclusive. In such cultural contexts, the Spirit enables radical, courageous witness to Christ, the liberator of all oppressive structures, and the Spirit empowers a mission of integrity towards inclusive justice and freedom. The insights of Walter Brueggemann motivate a contemporary Asian theology that is prophetic in advocating freedom, as 'the task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us'.[30] The mission of the Triune God expressed in the work of the Holy Spirit emphatically presented in *TTL*, offers an alternative perception of socio-cultural realities wherein 'people see their own history in the light of God's freedom and his will for justice'.[31]

Ecclesial Unity and a Spirit of Freedom

Mission and Unity was Theme Eight of Edinburgh 2010. The study group included Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Ecumenical participants. A significant document reviewed was prepared by the Roman Catholic *Institut Africain des Sciences et la Mission* in Kinshasa. The study group reiterated the theological and biblical foundations for Christians to exist as the Body of Christ united as a community by the confession of Christ as the Lord who proclaims the Kingdom of God, in whom there is reconciliation and fellowship.[32] The issue of mission and unity has been the source of a deep wound in the history of Christian mission: 'Parallelisms, competitions, conflicts and divisions on what was then called "the mission fields" gravely undermined the credibility of the witness of the love of Christ', causing a scandal to the good news of freedom in Christ.[33] Unfortunately, these divisions from the heyday of mission are a sad legacy in many Christian contexts in Asia, wherein competitions, conflicts, bias and the isolation of fellow Christians exist. A contemporary Asian theology is required to participate in a reconciled Christian fellowship for common witness to Christ and his good news of freedom.

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[29] One of the earliest and most brilliant critiques of caste practice as a distinct mark of Hinduism came from Bhimrao Ambedkar, a Mahar (an 'untouchable' as defined by Brahmanical cultural criteria): see B.R. Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste: Annotated Critical Edition,* with an Introduction by Arundhati Roy (New Delhi: Navayana Publishing, 2014 [1936]).

[30] Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination,* 2nd edition (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 3.

[31] Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 116.

[32] Daryl Balia and Kirsteen Kim (eds), *Edinburgh 2010: Witnessing to Christ Today* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), 209.

[33] Balia and Kim, *Edinburgh 2010*, 200.

With keen awareness of the historical divisions, *TTL* has continued the drive to work towards unity among different church traditions, affirming: 'Together we share a common concern that the whole church should witness to the whole gospel in the whole world' (*TTL* §65). Further, *TTL* calls on the different Christian traditions to come together for partnership in common witness to Christ: 'The Christian communities in their diversity are called to identify and practise ways of common witness in a spirit of partnership and co-operation, including through mutually respectful and responsible forms of evangelism' (*TTL* §63). In sharing a common call to witness to Christ, partnership in evangelism has significant potential to pave the way for greater unity and inclusive fellowship (*TTL* §§85, 86). A contemporary Asian theology needs to articulate and participate in forging ecclesial unity, as enabled by the Holy Spirit to overcome historically constructed divisions: 'The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of unity, unites people and churches too, to celebrate unity in diversity both pro-actively and constructively' (*TTL* §66).

Conclusion

A contemporary Asian theology in the light of *TTL* will be forged in the crucible of critical and candid conversation with the many Asian cultures and contexts. The conversation is undergirded by a fundamental faith in the good news that Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed. Further, Asian contemporary theological articulations espouse a radical reality of freedom as enabled by the Holy Spirit. A life of flourishing and freedom for every citizen of every community is the objective and mark of contemporary Asian theological discourse in all its diversity. Written a decade after the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the atomic bomb, the words of the hymn, *Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather*[34] by Tokuo Yamaguchi, written during the 14th World Council of Christian Education Convention, Tokyo, 1958, continue to inspire Asian theological articulation marked by freedom in Jesus Christ for the many cultures and peoples of Asia:

> Many are the tongues we speak, scattered are the lands
> Yet our hearts are one in God, One in love's demands
> E'en in darkness hope appears, calling age and young;
> Jesus teacher, dwell with us, For you are the truth.
> Grant, O God, an age renewed, filled with deathless love;
> Help us as we work and pray, send us from above
> Truth and courage, faith and power, needed in our strife;
> Jesus Master, be our Way, be our Truth, our Life.

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[34] www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-here-o-lord-your-servants-gather (accessed 28th July 2015).

Together towards Life and Contemporary Pacific Theology

Cliff Bird

Introduction: Two Statements

We believe that the mission of the churches is the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the beginning of his ministry, he proclaimed that he was sent to preach the good news to the poor, to set the prisoners free, feed the hungry, cloth the naked and to proclaim the time of salvation (Luke 4:18-19). In essence, this is the central message of our Lord's image of the "Kingdom of God". In this respect, we hold that the mission of the church is God's mission and we are God's instruments… We hold that the characteristics of God's mission are that it is life-giving, life-saving, justice-seeking, healing and reconciling. These become the tasks of the church in the current context of a globalised world.[1]

Mission begins in the heart of the Triune God and the love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation. The missionary God who sent the Son to the world calls all God's people (John 20:21), and empowers them to be a community of hope. The church is commissioned to celebrate life, and to resist and transform all life-destroying forces, in the power of the Holy Spirit.[2]

The above two quotations are significant in various ways, two of which are that the statements are quite recent and were produced within two years of each other; their gist resonates in various ways with a very strong and clear focus on the primacy of life. In the light of this, the current chapter is an interactive and reflective engagement of *Together towards Life* (*TTL*) and contemporary theology in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). This approach seeks to establish the relevance and resonance of key affirmations of *TTL* with the PICs' contemporary theology. In this way, too, the chapter is quite focused and does not delve into the history of missions in general in the PICs.[3] However, elements of shifts in mission theology and theological

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[1] 'The Mission Call from Viwa to the Pacific Churches', Viwa Island, Fiji, 17th April 2010, 1. This 'mission call' was the outcome of the third missionary conference which was organised by the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), Pacific Theological College (PTC) and the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS). The conference was attended by all the member-churches of the PCC. The first mission conference was in 1961 and the second one in 1985.

[2] *TTL*, §2.

[3] For an informative and engaging overview of the history of missions to the PICs, see the trilogy by John Garrett: *To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in*

perspectives over time will be highlighted as indications of developments in theological thinking regionally, and of the influence of global theological emphases and flows. Admittedly, it is impossible within the prescribed length of this chapter to cover the entire range of theological thinking in the region. What is presented here is a representative selection of contemporary Pacific theology.

Salvation of Souls Then and Now

In order to appreciate the shifts in theological perspectives since the intrusion by western missionaries into the Pacific at the close of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century, it is necessary to state at the outset that the primary goal of missionary activities was for the salvation of the heathens through the gospel of Jesus Christ. This followed from the great spiritual awakening in the eighteenth century as noted by Garrett: 'Missionary activity was a product of great religious changes in Europe and America.'[4] The LMS Fundamental Principle, which was formulated in May 1796, expressed the evangelical zeal to '… send… the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God to the heathen'.[5] Other mission agencies also had very similar conversion-oriented theologies. *From Darkness to Light in Polynesia*, for instance, was not simply the title of the book by W.W. Gill but was the great theme of the missionary project throughout the Pacific. What David Hilliard said about missionaries in Melanesia resonated with other parts of the Pacific, namely, that they [missionaries] tended to regard traditional religion 'as a collection of absurd superstitions – "filthy", "degrading", "horrible" and "cruel".'[6] The call by missionaries to abandon traditional religions and cultures and to convert to and embrace Christianity echoed throughout the islands. The Christian God was presented in terms of power encounters and complete distinction from the gods of traditional religions. This is typified in how one missionary for instance described the Christian God as 'the Great Outsider'.[7] Bernard Thorogood laments that 'by such a contrast the pre-Christian life of the islands was condemned as darkness and the mode established by the missions was affirmed as light. The sharpness of the

Oceania (Geneva: WCC, 1982); *Footsteps in The Sea: Christianity in Oceania to World War II* (Geneva: WCC, 1992); *Where Nets Were Cast: Christianity in Oceania Since World War II* (Geneva: WCC, 1997).

[4] Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars*, 8.

[5] The LMS missionaries arrived on Tahiti on 5th March 1797. See Marama Gaston Tauira, 'The Phase of "Translation": The LMS Missionaries' Labour in Tahiti 1797-1860', in *The Pacific Journal of Theology*, II.14 (1995), 17-19.

[6] David Hilliard, 'Protestant Mission in Solomon Islands: 1849 – 1942', (PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1966), 497. (see KR-TG email of 23 Feb).

[7] See Alan R. Tippett, *Solomon Islands Christianity: A Study in Growth and Obstruction* (New York: Friendship Press, 1967).

conversion experience was emphasised: from the Bible such a dramatic contrast is justified'.[8] Given the historical context out of which such a theology of mission developed, caution must be exercised to not over-criticise missionaries to the Pacific. It is indeed noteworthy and heartening that the mission theology of *TTL* highlights the importance and necessity of people's cultures and symbolic worlds for the meaningful transmission of the good news of God.

While there have been significant shifts and transformations in theological thinking and perspectives (which will be discussed shortly), this rather narrow and limited theology of mission, which stresses the salvation of souls, persists still. In a major research that was conducted in most of the churches in the Pacific, one of the main findings is that an individualistic and futuristic understanding of salvation is a characteristic feature of new religious groups as well as some historic mainline churches.[9] Two examples could be taken as representing this finding: the New Methodist Christian Fellowship in Fiji, for instance, has the words 'Souls to Jesus' inscribed on many public places, including all vehicles owned by the church. The church's slogan is 'Souls to Jesus at Any Cost'; the Methodist Church in Fiji, which is by far the largest historic mainline church in the country, through its Connexional Plan 2015-2019, has as its 'Pillar One – Salvation of People' and its 'Key Strategic Area 1 – Salvation of Souls'.[10] One major difference between these two is that whereas the New Methodist Christian Fellowship emphasis on salvation is so other-worldly-focused and detached from the realities of earthly life, the Methodist Church in Fiji situates and connects its emphasis with current and emerging contexts and the lived experiences of the people. This divergence connects directly with a more fundamental theological issue, which is Christological in nature and substance: the theology of salvation and the role of Jesus Christ and faith in Jesus Christ.

Together towards Life and Contemporary Pacific Theology

There is no consensus amongst theologians in the Pacific on the question of what description or label should be given for 'Pacific-specific theology'. It would seem that theologians are content with the variety in theological perspectives and articulations. Nevertheless, I would argue that the various theological perspectives could be viewed in what I would like to describe as 'themes of contemporary Pacific theology'. I say 'themes' because in one way or other all the theological articulations in the Pacific have one

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[8] Bernard Thorogood, 'After 200 Years – The LMS Legacy'*,* in *The Pacific Journal of Theology*, 2.14 (1995), 5-15.

[9] Manfred Ernst (ed), *Globalisation and the Re-Shaping of Christianity in the Pacific Islands* (Suva: Pacific Theological College, 2006).

[10] 'Methodist Church in Fiji: Pillars and Key Strategic Areas': Connexional Plan 2015-2019, unpublished document.

thing in common, namely, all are contextual and are outgrowths of the contextual dynamics and particularities of the people. These theological themes are not independent of each other, but are interconnected, and are not exhaustive.

Cultures, Cultural Identity and the Gospel

The biggest breakthrough for theology in the Pacific as well as for the developing world in general was in terms of the broadening of sources for theology to recognise 'context' in addition to the Bible and Christian traditions.[11] Bevans points out further that cultures were a necessary and crucial part of context.[12] The use and acceptance of the 'contextualisation' of theology was official by the early 1970s,[13] and contextual theology, with the primary use of and reliance on cultures and symbolic systems, took off in the PICs. *TTL* states categorically that 'the gospel takes root in different contexts through engagement with specific cultural, political and religious realities. Respect for people and their cultural and symbolic life-worlds are necessary if the gospel is to take root in those different realities'.[14] There are two interrelated developments to this realisation for theology in the Pacific. The first development resonated strongly with the *TTL* statement: the gospel needs cultures in order to enter into the meaning-making systems and processes of the people. The realisation, especially on the part of later missionaries, was/is that meaningful communication of the gospel cannot, and indeed must not, be done outside the cultures of a people. What Paulo Koria said is quite representative of this Pacific perspective:

> Linguistic idioms, proverbial sayings, imagery, symbolism, metaphors and the like, are all viable means for communicating the substance of the Gospel message… there are local stories, parables, island folk tales, legends, myths, narratives both oral and literary, which our Pacific people have accumulated and treasured as a communal source of knowledge. All these, together with customs, social etiquette, traditions, philosophies, religious beliefs, concepts, etc. have provided Pacific people with the means of understanding the world and reality. Taken together, they form a system of meaning by which life in the Pacific is lived. Because theology has to do with the totality of human life, all these resources are important for the expression and articulation of the Christian faith.[15]

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[11] See Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 9-15.

[12] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 9-15.

[13] Todd M. Johnson, 'Contextualization: A New-Old Idea', in *The International Journal for Frontier Missions* 4 (1987), 1-4. Johnson points out that it was Shoki Coe who first coined the term 'contextualization'.

[14] *TTL,* §97.

[15] Paulo Koria, 'Moving Toward a Pacific Theology: Theologising with Concepts', in *The Pacific Journal of Theology* 2:22 (1999), 3-14.

The second development builds on the first and is implied in what Koria says above. Not only were cultures a necessary medium for communicating the gospel – cultures were also an important source or starting point for theology. Theological articulations in the region from the 1960s drew heavily on cultures, particularly cultural worldviews, values, symbols, concepts, rituals, proverbs and processes. The seminal 'coconut theology' of Havea in the 1960s,[16] the 'grassroots theology' of Boseto in the 1980s and 1990s,[17] the '*vanua* (land) theology' of Tuwere in the 1990s and early 2000s,[18] the 'eco-theology' of Tofaeono[19] at the turn of the millennium, and the '*moana* (sea/ocean) theology' of Halapua[20] in the late 2000s, to name a few, were all rooted in and derived from elements of cultures in the Pacific. Meo describes the cultural-traditional values of 'inclusiveness, reconciliation, unity, participation, dialogue, partnership, fellowship, sharing and service' as hallmarks and gems of Pacific communities.[21] In a declaration, the contemporary significance of cultures for Pacific people and theology was affirmed and endorsed by all the heads and leaders of churches in the Pacific at a landmark conference in 2000: '… the traditional values of the Pacific Island societies are similar to Kingdom values… We

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[16] Sione, 'Amanaki Havea, 'Christianity in the Pacific Context', in *South Pacific Theology: Papers from Consultation on Pacific Theology, Papua New Guinea, January 1986* (Parramatta: Regnum Books and World Vision International South Pacific, 1986). Although Havea's theological thinking was published only later, he began to articulate such thinking in the 1960s and 1970s.

[17] Leslie Boseto has published a number of his writings. See his *I Have a Strong Belief* (Goroka, Papua New Guinea: Unichurch Books and The Melanesian Institute, 1983); 'God as Community – God in Melanesian Theology', in *The Pacific Journal of Theology,* 2.10 (1993), 41-48; 'Toward a Pacific Theology of Reality', in *The Pacific Journal of Theology* 2.12 (1994), 53-61; *Lauru Land Conference of Tribal Community: Philosophy, Theology and Guiding Principles* (Suva: Pacific Conference of Churches, 1995.)

[18] See the following works by Ilaitia Sevati Tuwere; 'Making Sense of the Vanua (Land) in the Fijian Context: A Theological Exploration' (PhD thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 1992); 'Indigenous People's Struggle for Land and Identity: An Account from Fiji. Indigenous People's Struggle for Land Identity in the Pacific: A Joint Seminar of the World Council of Churches Indigenous People's Programme, the Pacific Desk of the World Council of Churches, and the Pacific Conference of Churches', Fiji, September 2000, unpublished paper; *Vanua: Towards a Fijian Theology of Place* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies/University of the South Pacific, 2002).

[19] Ama'amalele Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology: AIGA – The Household of Life, A Perspective from Living Myths and Traditions of Samoa* (Erlangen, Germany: Erlangen Verl. Für Mission und Okumene, 2000).

[20] Winston Halapua, *Waves of God's Embrace: Sacred Perspectives from the Ocean* (Norwich, UK: Canterbury Press, 2008), and '*Theomoana*. Toward an Oceanic Theology', in *Concilium*, 5 (2010), 23-33.

[21] Jovili Iliesa Meo, 'Gems of the Pacific: Sharing and Service', in *The Pacific Journal of Theology,* 2.16 (1996), 84-101.

are not saying that traditional values… are identical with the Kingdom of God preached by Jesus… if lived traditions are put together, they offer viable alternatives to the destructive ways associated with globalisation.'[22] The reversal of early missionary demonisation and relegation of cultures to lower-level spirituality, coupled with the reaffirmation of various positive and life-affirming elements of cultures, were progressive movements in theology in the Pacific.

The Primacy and Fullness of Life

The title *Together towards Life* holds two key themes: life – life in all its fullness – and the journey towards life as a corporate and communal commitment and undertaking, not a solo venture. This life is rooted in and emanates from the very life of the Triune God: God the Creator who willed and continues to will creation ever anew; the Spirit, the life-giver who sustains and empowers all life – human and non-human – and renews the whole creation; Jesus, the Christ whose vision and passion it is for all God's people to enjoy abundant life. At the very heart of God's mission in and for and with the world is life: 'God's mission is nothing less than the sending of the Holy Spirit from the Father through the Son into the world, so that this world should not perish but live. The Gospel of John tells us quite simply what it is that is brought into the world from God through Christ: *life*.'[23]

The centrality and significance of life is a key theme in Pacific theology. This theme has been expressed in various and related ways over time: '… most fundamental value… continuation, protection, maintenance and celebration of Life',[24] a common ground of 'Pacificness' and Christianness' in any Pacific theology is their 'life-centredness',[25] 'ancestral theo-cosmic convictions… conserving the ecology of life'[26] and 'primacy of life'[27] as characteristic of a unique Pacific contribution to global theological reflection in an age of climate change. The life of which Pacific theologians speak is not compartmentalised but is one complete whole, and includes and at the same time transcends biological life. This is obvious from the

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[22] *Island of Hope: A Pacific Alternative to Economic Globalisation* (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 91.

[23] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life* (London: SCM, 1997), 19.

[24] Darrell Whiteman, 'Melanesian Religions: An Overview', in Ennio Mantovani (ed), *An Introduction to Melanesian Religions* (Goroka, Papua New Guinea: The Melanesian Institute, 1984), 91.

[25] John Havea, 'A Reconsideration of *Pacificness* in a Search for a South Pacific Theology', in *The Pacific Journal of Theology,* 2.10 (1993), 5-16.

[26] Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology: AIGA*, 186.

[27] Philip Gibbs, 'Emerging Indigenous Theologies in Oceania', in *Concilium,* 5 (2010), 34-44.

languages of the Pacific where life is immediately and directly connected with breath and spirit. It is also life in relationships and interrelationships with and between people, between people and their immediate environments, and between people and the divine. Along the kataphatic (or cataphatic) tradition, primacy and fullness of life in Pacific cultures could be stated as the human desire for well-being and fulfilment in every aspect of life, be it health, success, fecundity, respect, honour and egalitarianism. Along the apophatic tradition, it could be stated as the absence of forces that stand in destruction tension with life, such as sickness, conflicts, in-fecundity, poverty, dishonour and death. This view and understanding of the primacy and fullness of life resonates well with the affirmation in *TTL*. In Pacific contemporary theology, life is experienced as one whole and at the same time is interconnected.

Interconnectedness of Life

TTL is clear that God's mission is primarily for the fullness of life in all its dimensions. 'Theology of interconnectedness' is how theologians of the Pacific describe this miracle and mystery of life. The land, sea and atmosphere and all lives therein are interconnected. This land-sea-atmosphere web of life has readability characteristics that enable people to live in a meaningful relationship with their environments.[28] Whiteman speaks of life as one integrated whole where the physical, spiritual, sacred and secular dovetail.[29] Tuwere[30] and Bird[31] speak of the interconnectedness of the rhythms and processes of the land with those of the ocean and the moon in the sky, and of how human life is intricately interwoven with these rhythms and processes;[32] Tofaeono speaks of the interconnectedness of human life with the divine and other existents; Halapua,[33] concurring with Hau'ofa,[34] speaks of how the oceans and seas connect the islands of the Pacific rather than separating them. Underlying all of this is the assurance that fullness of life is only possible within the interconnectedness of all life. Boseto says, 'Our existence and our survival can never be separated from our land and sea. Our life in God is in creation. God is our bread of life and our water of life in our land and sea… Our tropical forest is the home and

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[28] Cliff Bird, 'Hermeneutics of Ecology and its Relationship to the Identity of the Oikos in Oceania', in *The Pacific Journal of Theology* 2.46 (2011), 19-33.
[29] Whiteman, *Melanesian Religions*, 88.
[30] Tuwere, *Vanua* (2002).
[31] Cliff Bird, '*Pepesa* – The Household of Life: A Theological Exploration of Land in the Context of Change in Solomon Islands' (PhD thesis, Charles Sturt University, Australia, 2008).
[32] Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology – AIGA*.
[33] Halapua, *Waves of God's Embrace*.
[34] Epeli Hau'ofa, *A New Oceania: Rediscovering our Sea of Islands* (Suva: University of the South Pacific in association with Beake House, 1993.)

garden of many species as well as our human communities… Our land and sea are us and we are them. Do not separate us. If you do so, you are murdering us.'[35]

Implicit in the above statement by Boseto is that, in the Pacific theo-cosmological interpretation, salvation is inseparable from the interconnectedness of all life. The earlier missionary tendency to both spiritualise and abstract salvation to some purely futuristic existence in heaven has come under criticism from academic theologians. Amongst others, Tuwere contends that we cannot speak of salvation without also speaking of the *vanua* (land-sea),[36] a position which Bird also articulates.[37] Within the worldviews and experiences of Pacific peoples, the following could be argued:[38] salvation was temporal and pragmatic in the sense that it was time-related and earth-oriented; salvation was experienced in connection with the immediate environment in which people live, thus highlighting the saving and healing qualities of the flora, fauna and maritime life; and salvation was seen and experienced in terms of the basic human welfare of the communities which was lived out within the context of their environments. *TTL* makes a similar affirmation: 'In many ways creation is in mission to humanity; for instance, the natural world has a power that can heal the human heart and body.'[39] The salvation Pacific theologians speak of is not some low 'mundane matters' in contrast to the Christian 'great spiritual salvation of man' [*sic*] as earlier alleged by Tippett;[40] it is God's salvific, healing, gracious and interactive presence within the 'very [exceedingly] good'[41] creation that God has joyfully willed into being. The life-nurturing and life-affirming qualities of the land-sea-atmosphere are an inherent and integral part of God's work of creating, after which God 'was refreshed'.[42] The mission of God through the permeating and renewing presence of the Spirit and through the enfleshed Word neither nullified nor replaced the interconnectedness of life which was part and parcel of God's original creation and vision. For Pacific theology, God's mission reaffirms this primacy of interconnected life, and

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[35] Leslie Boseto, 'Do Not Separate Us from Our Land', in *The Pacific Journal of Theology,* 2.13 (1995), 69-72.

[36] Tuwere, *Vanua*.

[37] Cliff Bird, 'Re-conceptualising Salvation: Some Insights from a Solomon Islands Culture toward a Relevant Theology of Salvation for Today', in *The Pacific Journal of Theology,* 2.42 (2009), 23-39.

[38] Bird, 'Re-conceptualising Salvation' (2009).

[39] *TTL,* §22.

[40] Alan Tippet, *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory: a collection of addresses and discussions that were prepared for a special week of missionary presentations at Lincoln Christian College and Seminary* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1973), 21. See also his *Aspects of Pacific Ethnohistory* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1973.)

[41] Genesis 1:31, Expanded Bible.

[42] Exodus 31:17, New Revised Standard Version.

through both the *paraclete* and the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God walks and lives with humanity, not only to say. 'Walk ye this way'[43] so as not to miss the mark of God's vision for creation again, but also to keep reminding humanity that the life-denying, life-negating and life-destroying forces have been overcome. Peoples of the Pacific are called to celebrate life, life in all its fullness, life in all its interconnectedness.[44]

Eco-Theology: Oikos of God and Oikos of Life

Home and household are important themes in Pacific theology. Pacific peoples have a deep sense of attachment to place, to home;[45] even now with migration, Pacific people continue to have a strong sense of belonging to their motherland, and to their particular 'place' in it. The land and sea comprise the immediate and tangible *oikos* or home for the people of the Pacific. In fact, the everyday life of the majority of people in PICs is grounded primarily in an interrelatedness of land and sea and atmosphere.[46] At the same time, the land and sea is home to many other existents[47] – flora and fauna and others. All these do not live outside the economy (Greek *oikos-nomos*) of God. As *TTL* affirms, 'Creation's life and God's life are entwined'.[48]

With the growing threats and worsening impacts of anthropogenic climate change for the PICs, especially the low-lying atoll island countries,[49] the focus on *home* as a theological issue is a pertinent one. Tuwere,[50] Tofaeono,[51] and Bird[52] deal centrally with the theological construct of *oikos*. Theology of home is founded on the interconnectedness of life between human beings and their environments. Home or *oikos* is

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[43] See Isaiah 30:21; Jeremiah 7:23.

[44] See Bird, 'Re-conceptualising Salvation'.

[45] See Tuwere, *Vanua*.

[46] Edvard Hviding, *Guardians of Marovo Lagoon: Practice, Place and Politics in Maritime Melanesia* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1996). See also Te'o I. J. Fairbairn and DeLisle Worrell, *South Pacific and Caribbean Islands: A Comparative Study* (Brisbane, Australia: The Foundation for Development Co-operation, 1996).

[47] Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology: AIGA*.

[48] *TTL,* §19.

[49] Patrick Nunn, 'Bridging the Gulf Between Science and Society: Imperatives for Minimizing Societal Disruption from Climate Change in the Pacific', in A. Sumi et al (eds), *Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies for Climate Change* (New York: Springer, 2010). Nunn summarizes the threat in the Pacific area to be: a) temperature rise, at least 2.5ºC higher in 2100 than in 1990, but perhaps even more; b) sea level rise, projected by the IPCC to be a maximum of 58cm; and c) more storms (235).

[50] Tuwere, *Vanua* (2002).

[51] Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology: AIGA – The Household of God*.

[52] Bird, '*Pepesa* – The Household of Life'.

about our 'sea of islands'[53] and the Earth, and is intricately connected with both economics (Greek *oikos-nomos*) and ecology (Greek *oikos-logos*). *Oikos-nomos* means rules of the home or rules of the household. *Oikos-logos* means the study of the home or household; it is the study of the way things relate to make the home or household work. These two belong together, as de Gruchy points out: 'At heart, economy and ecology should cohere; after all, they are both about the earth, our *oikos*, or home. Ecology, as *oikos-logos*, concerns the wisdom of how our home functions; and economy, as *oikos-nomos*, is about the rules that should govern the way we run our home.'[54] Mindless and rampant capitalism, with its doctrine of more economic growth, is being pushed at the expense of ecological integrity and justice.

'For Pacific people, anthropogenic climate change is an issue of justice – those who contribute least to global warming and the climate change-induced sea level rise are the ones who are affected most. The Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) is leading the way for churches to speak out for justice and seek alternatives. In their *Island of Hope* declaration, the heads and leaders of all churches in the Pacific identified family life, communal relationships, environment, spirituality and traditional economy as Pacific alternatives to the destructive impacts of economic globalisation.[55] In a declaration in Kiribati in 2004, the WCC and WCC member-churches in the Pacific stated as follows: 'Here on the small atoll islands of Kiribati, the impacts of human-induced climate change are already visible. The sea level is rising. People's homes are vulnerable to the increasingly high tides and storm surges. Shores are eroding and the coral reefs are becoming bleached. The water supplies and soil fertility are being threatened by the intrusion of salt water. Weather patterns are less predictable, posing risks to fisher-folk and farmers.'[56] Climate change is perhaps the biggest threat to the *oikos* of many Pacific people today. The PCC has taken this further in an attempt to rethink the household of God in Oceania concept with the addition of sufficiency, solidarity, inclusiveness and participation as hallmarks of the *oikos* of God in the Pacific.[57] The *TTL*

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[53] Hau'ofa, *A New Oceania*.

[54] Steve de Gruchy, 'An Olive Agenda: First Thoughts on a Metaphorical Theology of Development', unpublished paper.

[55] *Island of Hope,* 192-94.

[56] 'The Otin Taai Declaration: A Statement and Recommendations from the World Council of Churches and WCC member-churches in the Pacific' (6th-11th March 2004, Tarawa, Kiribati).

[57] 'Rethinking the Household of God in the Pacific: Towards Sufficiency and Solidarity, Inclusiveness and Participation. Concept Paper to Oceania Island Leaders' (Pacific Conference of Churches, 2010), unpublished paper. See also 'Rethinking the Household of God in the Pacific – Literature Review' (Pacific Conference of Churches, 2013), unpublished paper.

affirms that creation will not be destroyed but will be renewed and redeemed. This affirmation is at the heart of the Pacific theology of home.

Being Church in Mission in the Pacific Today

What does being church in the Pacific mean? How do the churches engage in mission in the context of rapid change? If the mission of God is centrally about abundant life as affirmed in *TTL*, how might the churches ensure that God's people do actually enjoy such abundant life? In the light of all these pertinent questions, the 'Mission Call from Viwa' acknowledged and affirmed 'the call of God for the churches to again engage in new and innovative ways in mission activity', and that the 'present context in the Pacific requires much solidarity, unity and witness by the churches as our issues are converging in many ways'.[58] The 'Mission Call' identifies and affirms 'today's [six] mission fields': theology and the meaning of mission in the Pacific context; politics, justice and governance; development and social challenges; multicultural societies – race relations and nation-building; political and gender violence; poverty, wealth and ecology.[59] What stands out is that almost all the 'mission fields' affirmed transcend the earlier missionary understanding and practice of mission. What is called for is the life-giving and life-nurturing presence of God's Spirit through the churches in spheres beyond their walls. What is implicit in the mission affirmation is the challenge to shift from one way of *being* church to another (or others) that frees and enables it to engage in innovative and fresh mission activities. This is also an affirmation of *TTL*.

However, to be able to engage in innovative mission activities, a church needs to be more self-aware, self-reflective and self-analytical because the church's self-understanding determines to a large degree its responses to challenges that are external to its inner life. For Pacific churches, this involves several aspects, including the following:[60] the institution of the church and its capacity and adaptability to respond to problems and challenges faced by its members and others; the capability of the church in engaging in appropriate hermeneutics, its willingness to let go of interpretations that deny and negate life, and its openness to accept hermeneutical alternatives and interpretations that affirm and protect life; the willingness of the church to burst its theological boundaries and abandon theologies, doctrines and policies that dehumanise and deny fullness of life; the realisation by churches that worship does not happen only, and end, within the walls of its church buildings, but continues in the

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[58] 'The Mission Call from Viwa', 2.

[59] 'The Mission Call from Viwa', 2-4.

[60] Bird, Cliff, 'Deep Sea Thinking: A Call to 21st Century Oceania Churches for (Self)-Critical Awareness and Prophetic Presence in the Context of "Seas of Change"'. Paper presented at the Third Consultation of Bread for the World Partners in Oceania, Sonaisali, Fiji, October 2013.

events and situations of daily life; that the Body and Blood of Christ and the word of God must be afforded their healing, life-affirming and transforming presence in the world outside the church walls, where the battered, bruised, beggars, homeless, sex workers, ordinary folk and perceived sinners have their being. It is also where the powers-that-be have their being and shape the being of others. As Tissa Balasuriya points out, 'The Eucharist has an *extraordinary potential* for being an agent of *personal and global transformation*'[61], and as Izunna Okonkwo says, 'By extending the liturgical celebration of Christ's memorial sacrifice into real life, one can talk of the link the Eucharist has with social transformation.'[62] All of this means bringing the church into the lived experiences of people rather than expecting them to turn up in church. This is one way of *being* church that takes seriously God's mission to bring fullness of life to all people.

Conclusion

TTL as an affirmation of God's mission has much in common with contemporary Pacific theology, as this brief sketch has demonstrated. There is much more in contemporary Pacific theology that could be written but space does not allow. One of the biggest challenges for contemporary Pacific theology is to move beyond the zones of comfort and familiarity, and to begin to really and truly engage in mission activities affirmed in 'The Mission Call from Viwa' and in *TTL*. This is a challenge that must be addressed because it is a challenge that opens and widens doors, brightens horizons, and enlivens hope for God's fullness of life to be enfleshed in humanity and in all creation.

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[61] Tissa Balasuriya, *Eucharist and Human Liberation*, in Quest Series 50 (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Centre for Society and Religion, 1977), 82.
[62] Izunna Okonkwo, 'The Eucharist as Community Builder: Eucharistic Communion and Social Transformation' (Glasgow, UK: n.d.).

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE AND CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN THEOLOGY

Néstor Míguez

> 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 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 (TTL §6).

The history of Christian missions in Latin America is mostly a history of conquest, impositions, cultural alienation and humiliation, amidst a dreadful genocide and the devastation of natural resources. In the first half century (1500-1550) of the conquest by European powers (Iberian Christianity), the native population was cut to a half.[1] Far from good news, evangelization resulted in the oppression of the native people, exploitation and even massacres and the degradation of creation.[2] It is true that some voices were lifted in defence of the indigenous peoples and their rights,[3] but an overview shows that the forces that came into the continent from the so-called Christian world mixed their beliefs with a thirst for gold, riches and prestige, with very little consideration of the content of the Gospel they claimed to present or represent.[4] Though it was justified as a civilizing enterprise, 'evangelization' resulted in compulsory conversions, forced labour and the dreadful experience of oppression.

Despite that false start, the power of the Gospel found its way in, and the Spirit created a renewed faith among many of the local people. Not only recently, but even in the struggles for their rights and dignity (in 17th and 18th centuries), many aboriginal leaders appealed to the Scriptures and the

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[1] There are different interpretations of the causes of this demographic catastrophe. The numbers are also subject to discussion. The invasion, the conquest wars, ecological changes, diseases unknown to the local population, forced labour and the cultural and social destruction, all contributed to the decimation of the original native population. But overall, most studies agree that the population suffered extreme reduction, both in numbers and dignity.

[2] See Eduardo Galeano, *Open Veins of Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973).

[3] The Dominican Friar Bartolomé de las Casas was the most outspoken defender of the indigenous population. See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).

[4] See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Dios o el oro de las Indias* (Lima: CEP, 1989).

sufferings of the Christ to defend their cause.[5] Also, during the days of the Independence wars (19th century), we can find people and movements that took inspiration from the Christian message and affirmed their right to freedom from an understanding of the Gospel which made them confront, on many occasions, their church institutions.

The evangelical missionaries who came to the continent in the 19th and 20th centuries also understood that their missions had a beneficial and educational purpose, though many despised native beliefs and promoted cultural alienation, contributing to the dominion of the new neo-colonial powers.[6] Protestantism grew little during the first years of those missions. It experienced a larger growth under the impact of the Pentecostal churches, but their theology was almost totally imported. Yet, in many cases, a certain syncretism between Pentecostal experience and local popular culture gave these churches a vernacular flavour.

However, especially in the second half of the 20th century, there grew a new awareness of the liberating power of the Christian message, with an impact that ran through the different Christian churches and confessions. This mobilized millions of Christians into a new reading (*relectura*) of the Bible, and a life-giving engagement in the struggles for social justice and the integrity of creation. This gave birth to a new ecumenical theological stream, Latin American Liberation Theology.

This movement spread into all Latin American countries, notwithstanding strong repression from dictatorships and foreign intervention.[7] It took different forms and shades according to local situations, and also to the different subjects that expressed their particular claims and concerns: native people, women, Afro-descendants, urban workers and peasants, ecological militants, migrants and exiles. At the same time, we must acknowledge the growth of a certain Pentecostal fundamentalism and so-called 'Prosperity theology'. (Not all Pentecostals are fundamentalist; in Latin America there are also very progressive and

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[5] See the defence of Tupac Amaru in his trial in front of the Spanish Court, in Daniel Bruno and Néstor Míguez, 'History of the Bible in Latin America', in John Riches (ed), *The New Cambridge History of the Bible* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), 427-60; and the writings and drawings of Guamán Poma de Ayala, in Néstor Míguez, 'Sociopolitical Context of Postcolonial Studies in Latin America', in Joseph Duggan (ed), *Pressing On: Next Generation of Indecent Theologians*, Borderless Press.

[6] See Jean-Pierre Bastian, *Historia del protestantismo en América Latina* (México, Ediciones CUPSA, 1990).

[7] In 1969, Nelson Rockefeller made a trip to various countries in Latin America and issued a document known as 'The Rockefeller Report on Latin America'. In it he explicitly mentions the 'danger' of the new theological trends in Latin American churches and theology. In similar fashion, the so-called 'Santa Fé Document', prepared in 1980 for President Reagan, established the political lines for the relationship of North and South America, including the need to control the Latin American churches and their theology.

ecumenical Pentecostal churches and theologians). That provides us with a very complex panorama when trying to consider the contemporary situation of Latin American theologies and church mission. Yet, since fundamentalism and prosperity theology is not a Latin American product, even if in many cases adapted to local conditions, I will concentrate on those theological trends that we can envision as 'together towards life'. In doing this, we try to show the contribution Latin American churches can offer to the witness of the Reign of God in our world today.

Suma Qamaña, 'the Good Living'[8]

> We affirm that the purpose of God's mission is fullness of life (John 10:10) and that this is the criterion for discernment in mission. Therefore, we are called to discern the Spirit of God wherever there is life in its fullness, particularly in terms of the liberation of the oppressed peoples, the healing and reconciliation of broken communities, and the restoration of the whole creation. We are challenged to appreciate the life-affirming spirits present in different cultures and to be in solidarity with all those who are involved in the mission of affirming and preserving life. We also discern and confront evil spirits wherever forces of death and negation of life are experienced (TTL §102).

This expression, in the Aymara language, has become a useful slogan for the new theological trends in Latin America. It is the gift of the Spirit through the ancestral cultures of the original peoples of this land. *Suma Qamaña* (the good life; or *Ñande reko* – our harmony, in the Guarani language) involves not only human relationships, but also, in its traditional and ancestral use, the way that humans relate to the *Pachamama* (Mother Earth), *Inti* (the Sun and skies God), the *Achachilas* (the mountains/the ancestors). It rests on community mutual support. In the Guarani tradition, it relates to the *ivi maraei*, the 'land without hardships' (or worries; it can also be translated as 'the land without evil'), presided over by the Moon deity. The Bolivian government has established that *Suma Qamaña* (or *sumac kawsay* in Quechuan) should be the goal of every law and governmental action, and so it is mentioned in the Preamble of the new Constitution of the Multinational State of Bolivia. Similar concerns have been expressed by the Ecuadorian authorities and other Latin American political leaders.

Suma Qamaña is not 'living better', as a western understanding might propose, in the sense of having more goods or comfort, 'The best things in life are not things.'[9] Obviously, it is about housing and education, health

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[8] For an introduction to the origin and meaning of this term, see Javier Albó, 'Suma Qamaña = El buen convivir' available at: https://sumakkawsay.files.wordpress.com/2009/06/albo_sumaqamana.pdf (accessed June 2015).

[9] The sentence was 'tweeted' by one of the people who recovered their identity after being kidnapped in childhood by the military dictatorship in Argentina. The

and work – that is, the totality of living conditions. But it is also about
freedom and collective dignity, about family life and spiritual welfare,
about equality and integrity. But most of all, and as a summary of all these,
it is about the way to 'get along well' among people, and between people
and the whole of creation. It presupposes the possibility of a certain
harmony. Yet that harmony cannot be a static equilibrium, a motionless
ideal, where everything reaches its perfection as in ancient Greek
philosophy, and the homeostatic tendencies of today. Life is motion,
change, unexpected events and situations, and harmony is to learn how to
deal with these happenings in peace and justice. In the Guaraní
understanding, it is a constant pilgrimage in search of the land without
worries, the Moon Valley. But that *ivi maraei* is neither a spiritual post-
mortem ideal nor an unreachable worldly utopia, but a way of life, an
understanding of life based on hope.

That is to say, it includes most of the assertions of the Latin American
Liberation Theology of the 1970s, the struggle for Human Rights under the
repressive dictatorships of the late 1970s and 1980s, and adds the
contribution of the new theological trends that are concerned with gender,
ethnic and class identity and ecology. It provides a way of understanding all
these different approaches as part of an all-embracing concept of life. Yet,
we must not be idealistic: *Suma Qamaña* is a concept that flourishes in the
indigenous agricultural environment. It now has to be rethought in new
situations, where people live in crowded cities, where the economy is
related to different industries, where the simple life of the self-supporting
village (if it was ever simple) has turned into the complex life and economy
of a globalized world described in the WCC Document *TTL* (especially §7,
9 and 31). If by this motto we propose a way back into an idealized
primeval life, we will do little favour to the real needs and living conditions
of people today. 'Good living' is to be related to the problems and
challenges that modernity has brought, to which we must respond in a
creative and responsible way, and not by shying away into a utopian and
irretrievable past.

The Earth and the Poor

We are therefore called to move beyond a narrowly human-centred approach
and to embrace forms of mission which express our reconciled relationship
with all created life. We hear the cry of the earth as we listen to the cries of
the poor and we know that from its beginning the earth has cried out to God
over humanity's injustice (Gen. 4:10) (TTL §19).

'Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo' were able to identify more than 115 of those kidnapped
as babies by the military when their parents were assassinated or disappeared, and
restore them to their true identity and to their remaining families.

Sometimes we find a kind of implicit 'either/or' in the debate about poverty and ecology. On the one hand, some ecological trends tend to emphasize the preservation of nature as a goal in itself, without any deep concern for the social implications of ecology. On the other hand, some political leaders who promote inclusion and development, well intended in the sense of raising up those impoverished in society, are relatively careless about the environmental damage done to the places where those same people have lived and will live through generations.

The common problem in both approaches is the 'top-down' direction in which many proposals are made or decisions taken. Often those in power pretend to know what is best and what should be done, but they do it from an idealistic stand or a disengaged position, when not in the egotistic drive of self-interest. No matter how well intentioned they might be, they declare their message before hearing the real concerns and wisdom of the people. This error has been the unhappy way of Christian mission through centuries, and can now be repeated even by those who consider themselves engaged and progressive. Without a pondered dialogue on the part of all concerned, and an ear attentive to the whispers of creation, guided by the Spirit that empowered creation, nothing good or sustainable will emerge.

No real concern for the environment can be conceived without a concern for the people, especially for those more vulnerable, poor and oppressed.[10] No real ecological wisdom will come without hearing the claims of those who toil every day in the hardships of daily living, who have to struggle with unproductive land, with floods and drought, or work in poisonous factories. At the same time, no real social progress can be made or justice be found if we consider nature just as a resource and not as a gift to be cared for. Some development programmes that today may offer alleviation of poverty might tomorrow result in the destruction of the living conditions for those same people or their descendants. But the preservation of a depopulated land does not solve the problem either.

Sustainability must consider the needs of the people as part of the health of creation. Social and economic justice cannot be separated from the care of other living creatures or the environment. That is what we read in *Suma Qamaña*. This is also why we have to overcome a static concept of nature. The current concept of nature that emerged from modernity is that of a self-perpetuating entity, a universe with its laws and regularities, with its own equilibrium. Some naturalists think that human activity should not interfere and that, when it does, it creates chaos. In many ways, that understanding is related to deism, in the sense of a God that launched the universe and left it on its own. If God does not interfere, why should humans? It is interesting to note, as we shall see later, that defenders of the neo-liberal imperial

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[10] A similar concern has been expressed at great length and with careful study in the 2015 Encyclical by Pope Francis: *Laudato Si'*.

economy use this same kind of argument in order to avoid any regulation of the total free market.

A theological understanding of creation should be able to overcome this idea of nature (that is not valid even for the most advanced scientific vision of today) in order to see the dynamic interaction of many factors, including human culture, social justice and economic developments. One of the conflicts that we find today in political and social discourse is the problem of exclusion, of the marginalization of the people from access to the basic needs of life (*TTL* §§36-42); therefore, there is a need to include the excluded. But a question remains: to include where? If inclusion, as understood by some social development ideology, is to make the excluded part of the same system that excluded them, to include people in a mode of production that is polluting land, air and water, the remedy is worse than the malady. The question is not inclusion in this way, but rather: 'Inclusivity fosters just relationships in the community of humanity and creation, with mutual acknowledgement of persons and creation and mutual respect and sustenance of each one's sacred worth' (*TTL* §46). It is not only inclusion as a social goal, but transformation.

> Transformation can be understood in the light of the Paschal mystery: 'If we have died with Christ, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him' (2 Timothy 2:11-12). In situations of oppression, discrimination and hurt, the cross of Christ is the power of God for salvation (2 Corinthians 1:18). Even in our time, some have paid with their lives for their Christian witness, reminding us all of the cost of discipleship. The Spirit gives Christians courage to live out their convictions, even in the face of persecution and martyrdom (TTL §32).

The People and the Empire

> Jesus has told us, 'You cannot serve God and mammon' (Matt. 6:24, KJV). The policy of unlimited growth through the domination of the global free market is an ideology that claims to be without alternative, demanding an endless flow of sacrifices from the poor and from nature. 'It makes the false promise that it can save the world through creation of wealth and prosperity, claiming sovereignty over life and demanding total allegiance, which amounts to idolatry.'* This is a global system of mammon that protects the unlimited growth of wealth of only the rich and powerful through endless exploitation. This tower of greed is threatening the whole household of God. The reign of God is in direct opposition to the empire of mammon (TTL §31).

> *World Alliance of Reformed Churches, *The Accra Confession: Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth* (2004), §10.

In the biblical narrative, we find time and again this opposition between the people and the empire. It is not only the presence of empires with their military and political violence (which unfortunately we still see), but what

we may call the 'Spirit of Empire'.[11] It is the attempt of the powerful to accumulate power and wealth without limit, subjugating all people. But it is also the temptation of some elites of subalternized nations who seek the protection of empires and negotiate their own petty power over against the common people of their own societies. And this can happen also with those who invoke God, as the prophets of old declare many times (Amos 5, Hosea 12, Isaiah 1, Jeremiah 7, to mention only a few examples). In the biblical narrative, we can clearly see the case of Ezra and Nehemiah who, in order to build the Second Temple, reject the *'am ha'aretz,* the people of the land. Nehemiah, with the use of torture (Nehemiah 13:25), forces Jews married to non-Jewish women to oust their wives and children for the sake of purity,[12] that same purity and the same Temple that Jesus condemns (Matthew 21:12-14; Luke 21:1-6). Even if Nehemiah pleads for God's blessing at the end of the book, we can see in him imperial power and local elite prejudice working together against life. It is that kind of sectarian Judaism that Jesus wants to transform and that Paul rejects.

So it is also with the new post-modern Empire, as described in *TTL*. The name of the globalized post-modern Empire is 'free market'. It is ironic enough that this so-called *free* market is imposed with the help of the armed forces and institutional violence. In the name of freedom, innocent people are bombed from unmanned planes, suspects are tortured and kept captive without trial, and cutbacks in social welfare are imposed while banks are baled out. And even worse, these are defended as something 'natural'. The rules of economy are presented as if they were part of human evolution, a kind of God-given equilibrium (the invisible hand) that prevents chaos.[13] Humans are expected to blindly follow market laws, and not interfere out of moral apprehension or well-intended but useless intentions. Yet the outcome is evident: the market satisfies the desires of the rich and neglects the needs of the poor. Less than 15% of the world's population enjoys more than 80% of the world's resources, while the overwhelming majority is left with what remains, and the poorest 20% have less than 1.3%.[14]

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[11] See Néstor Míguez, Joerg Rieger and Jung Mo Sung, *Beyond the Spirit of the Empire: New Perspectives on Theology and Politics* (London: SCM, 2009).

[12] In those times, to expel a woman or a child from a community was almost equal to a death sentence, or at least suffering the perils of poverty, hunger and defencelessness. According to Nehemiah, even Moses would have had to banish his wife and children! (Exodus 2:21-22; Numbers 12:1).

[13] So it was defended by Friedrich von Hayek, one of the ideologists of the free market, in his Nobel Price speech: 'The Pretence of Knowledge': www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economic-sciences/laureates/1974/hayek-lecture.html

[14] United Nations Report on World Population: *El estado de la población mundial 2001*: *www.unfpa.org/swp/2001/espanol/ch01.html*. See also: www.worldhunger.org/articles/Learn/world%20hunger%20facts%202002.html.

From a theological point of view, we should apply to market laws the same critique that Paul makes against the Law as a device: it is the law of greed and covetousness; it is the law that ends in sin and death (Romans 7:7-11). Against that injustice of the law of the market, in which everything has a price (there is nothing free in the free market), there is the justice of grace, the priceless victory of life over death, of the salvation of human life against the condemnation of the law (Romans 5).[15]

Imperial practices, ideology and spirit, destroy the people, create prejudice and disunity, and expel and oppress. Through the whole Old Testament and in the history of the Christian church, we can see how the imperial spirit brings about division, injustice and death. While the God-given mandate is to create a people, empires destroy them. Abraham is called to form a people that would be a blessing for all peoples (Genesis 12:3), and Moses is elected to free that people from the slavery of the Egyptian Empire. Yet, when Israel, against Samuel's warning (1 Samuel 8), chooses to have a king 'as other nations', that kingship becomes oppressive, and ends up dividing the people and pitting one side of Israel against the other. We are to condemn imperial practices and ideology, not only because of economic and social harm, but also because of their cultural and spiritual consequences. We need to grow in our awareness of how that ideology, that economic practice, and the idolatrous and sacrificial character of the Empire, affects our subjectivity, how it influences our culture, our way of seeing things and even our faith.

But it is not simply that we are called to adopt an anti-imperialist stand. Rather, the issue is what we are *for*, the positive action of love. In Latin American theology and politics, the concept of 'people' (in the sense of the Greek *laos,* or the Latin *populus*) becomes central. In the rebirth of democratic rule, after the criminal dictatorships of the past century, the real meaning of the rule of the people has to be rethought. Is democracy only a way to elect authorities, a system of government, a way to manage state affairs? Or is it something more profound, a construction of dignity that arises from the deep roots of being human in the image of God, of considering the integrity of all humans in their mutual relationships and amidst creation? Is it not the mandate to meet the needs of the needy, to respond to the claims of the *populus*? Some recently elected governments in Latin America arose from the social struggles of the workers. Both President Lula in Brazil and President Morales in Bolivia were the heads of workers' unions before being elected to office. They have aimed to take care of social inequalities, to make a better distribution of the goods necessary for living, to overcome poverty. Curiously enough, they are contemptuously called 'populist', as if responding to the real demands of the *populus* was a sin against democracy instead of its fulfilment.

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[15] See Néstor Míguez: 'Grace in Pauline Theology: Political and Economic Projections', in *Neotestamentica,* 46.2 (2012), 287-98.

What we aspire to, in the political arena, working *together towards life*, is to go beyond the formalities of democracy (after all, the Empire uses formal democratic methods in its dominant countries) and respond to the people, to construct a people, what we have called a *laocracy*.[16] That is, to be able to hear the cry of the oppressed, as Jesus did, always surrounded by the *laos*, in order to heal, bless, feed, educate, and give sense and meaning to the life of the despised by the elites and the powerful. That is, to live up to the hope of freedom in the Messianic promise (Rom. 8:18-27).

It is true, the rule of the people is not always the rule of nature nor the rule of God, and even these popular governments have serious ecological and political demands to face. Similarly, the preservation and growth of the church in its institutional dimension is not our goal, but to build church unity in the wider concept of the people of God (*laos tou Theou*) (*TTL* §§67-71). It is the dynamics of the interaction between social justice, the wisdom of ancient inhabitants and care for creation, together with the witness of our faith, that can guide us in a way of life that can become *Suma Qamaña*.

The Art of Dialogue

Dialogue is a way of affirming our common life and goals in terms of the affirmation of life and the integrity of creation. Dialogue at the religious level is possible only if we begin with the expectation of meeting God who has preceded us and has been present with people within their own contexts. God is there before we come (Acts 17) and our task is not to bring God along, but to witness to the God who is already there. Dialogue provides for an honest encounter where each party brings to the table all that they are in an open, patient and respectful manner (TTL §94).

Paul, in Romans 7, recognizes the ambiguity of our human condition. Far from being a defect, we recognize that ambiguity is necessary for open dialogue. When we become aware of our own flaws and failures, we will be more inclined to hear the other and learn from others instead of judging them. In Latin America, inter-faith dialogue cannot be limited to the great world religions, but has to take into account the many different native visions of the cosmos, the ancient cults of the original peoples and the diversity of spiritual learning brought by the different migrations, forced or voluntary.

There is little place for formal dialogue and doctrinal discussion. Meeting the other is a live experience that traverses peoples and cultures in the quest for good living. This is certainly a decisive matter in our continent, where more than five centuries of western domination has influenced every field of human life. So-called syncretism is the rule, not the exception. It cannot be considered as a defect in the missionary

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[16] For the concept of laocracy, see Míguez, Rieger and Jung, *Beyond the Spirit*, chapter 6.

enterprise, but as the outcome of the way in which local people can really take hold of the Gospel message, out of their own categories and understanding, from their own way of feeling, reasoning and worshipping.

In Latin America, notwithstanding our different ethnic precedence, cultural background or religious stance, we are all transcultural (forgive the neologism) in our being. We are, more than in an intercultural dialogue, in a transcultural setting, where even language can give testimony to how the words and modes of expression have mixed in such a way that we use them without really knowing from which cultural trend they might have originated. The same thing happens with the arts, whether sculpture, pictorial or musical, in literature and artisan's craftsmanship.[17] Dialogue occurs within one's own community and even within one's own self. Our ambiguity is the uncertainty of all human beings, but also the product of our history and our hopes. Only fear born out of prejudice and haughtiness takes steps to deny our pluralistic heritage, and generates a shameful negation of what we really are. The true dialogue of faith is the assertion of our own diversity, and should be considered a unique opportunity to enjoy the plurality of which we are part.

The 'feast of life' in Latin America has many different musical sounds and dances. We will hear some dominant languages in many versions and, at the same time, the many languages of native peoples and migrant groups. We will appreciate the different skin shades of the original people, the Latin conquerors, of the blond north and East European migrants, together with people of African descent whose ancestors were brought in by slavery, or the many *mestizo* whose origins lie in the extensive interweaving that occurred. But it would be congregated around the *Suma Qamaña*, the search for good living.

Working towards Life in Mission

How does this affect our theological understanding and education? How does this affect Christian mission? Traditional missions, whether the Catholic conquest or the evangelical mission wave, despised and condemned as superstition and demonic the local religions and visions of the cosmos. Yet, these prove today to have a better perception of the complex relationships of the universe than the rationalist and logocentric understanding brought about by the conceptual theology and dogmatism, or the exalted spiritualism imported from the North Atlantic missionary centres. The mission of the Christian faith today in Latin America is the fourfold task of caring for and enjoying the richness of creation, of building a people with its agreements and also its conflicts, of searching for social justice in the continent with the most uneven distribution of wealth, and thus proclaiming, in open dialogue and witness, hope in the life that, by

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[17] See Míguez, 'Sociopolitical context'.

grace, we receive from the Creator God, in Jesus, the Messiah and the life-giving breath of the Spirit, the community of Godself that inspires human community.

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE AND CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN THEOLOGY

Kenneth R. Ross

It is well known that Africa has been the scene of dramatic growth of Christianity, with the number of professing Christians increasing from an estimated 11,663,000 to 494,668,000 between 1910 and 2010.[1] As a result, the continent has become an important theatre for the exploration of the meaning of Christian faith. This exploration has been undertaken principally at a local level and in African languages. In recent decades, the results of this engagement with the faith have found expression also in more formal theological work. Three main trends can be discerned in contemporary African theology: inculturation, liberation and reconstruction.[2] This essay will consider the new World Council of Churches mission affirmation *Together towards Life* (*TTL*) using the lens provided by these three leading trends. First, however, there is a more fundamental matter to consider.

The World of Spirit

Of great importance to communities right across the African continent is the world of spirit. Besides the physical world that is perceptible to our senses, Africans have been alert to the unseen world of the spirit as an equally valid sphere in shaping human life and destiny. In fact, the spirit world is considered the ultimate source of power. It has therefore been a source of perplexity to many that the new faith of Christianity, as introduced by western missionaries, seemed to have little connection with the spiritual dimension of life. They have found it compelling and convincing in many ways, but there has been a mismatch at the spiritual level, explained by Andrew Walls in these terms: 'Western theology is in general too small for Africa; it has been cut down to fit the small-scale

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[1] Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Atlas of Global Christianity, 1910-2010* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 112.

[2] See further, Francis Anekwe Oborji, 'Theology', in Kenneth R. Ross, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu and Todd M. Johnson (eds), *Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Edinburgh Companions to Global Christianity, Vol. 1* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming 2017); see further, Francis Anekwe Oborji, *Trends in African Theology since Vatican II: A Missiological Orientation,* 2nd edition (Rome: Leberit Press, 2005).

universe demanded by the Enlightenment, which set and jealously guarded a frontier between the empirical world and the world of spirit. Much of humanity lives in a larger, more populated universe, in which the frontier is continually being crossed. It is a universe that comprehends what Paul calls the principalities and powers. Such is the background of the majority of the world's Christians, and it requires a theology that brings Christ to bear on every part of that universe.'[3] In pursuit of such a theology, Africans have created their own spiritual movements – whether by forming African Independent ('spirit') churches, joining the Pentecostal movement that is a dynamic force in today's Africa, or renewing the life and worship of their mission-founded churches so as to give them a more spiritual quality.

It is therefore music to the ears of African Christians to find *TTL* acknowledging the world of spirit that has always been of great importance to them: 'The early Christians, like many today, experienced a world of many spirits. The New Testament witnesses to diverse spirits, including evil spirits, 'ministering spirits' (i.e. angels, Heb. 1:14), 'principalities' and 'powers' (Eph. 6:12), the beast (Rev. 13:1-7), and other powers – both good and evil. The apostle Paul also testifies to some spiritual struggle (Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 10:4-6) and other apostolic writings contain injunctions to resist the devil (James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8)'.[4] More than in any previous ecumenical statement of the meaning of mission, *TTL* is a Holy Spirit document. Its confidence in the Holy Spirit leads it to engage spiritual reality with confidence: 'One of the gifts of the Spirit is the discernment of spirits (1 Cor. 12:10). We discern the Spirit of God wherever life in its fullness is affirmed and in all its dimensions, including liberation of the oppressed, healing and reconciliation of broken communities, and the restoration of creation. We also discern evil spirits wherever forces of death and destruction of life prevail.'[5] Thinking of Christian mission in these terms puts it on a wavelength that will have a wide reach in Africa.

The call to engage the spiritual level is foundational to *TTL*. Its introduction includes the following statement that will strike a chord in Africa: '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 the 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. This mission spirituality has a dynamic of transformation which, through the spiritual commitment of people, is capable of transforming the world in God's grace.'[6] Such an orientation goes a long way towards answering the African cry for a more spiritual expression of the faith. We turn our attention now

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[3] Andrew F. Walls, 'Commission One: "Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World"', in David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross (eds), *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now* (Oxford: Regnum, 2009), 27-40 at 38.

[4] *TTL,* §25.

[5] *TTL,* §24.

[6] *TTL,* §3.

to another major concern of African theology – to ascertain whether or not it is met by the affirmations of *TTL*.

Inculturation of the Gospel

The first generation of African theologians, whose work was being published from the 1970s, were greatly preoccupied with countering the widely-held view that Christianity was a western religion imposed upon Africa. As Desmond Tutu wrote: '[The missionaries] have consciously or unconsciously sought to Europeanise us before they could Christianize us. They have consequently jeopardised the entire Christian enterprise since Christianity has failed to be rooted sufficiently deeply in the African soil, since they have tended to make us feel somewhat uneasy about what we could not alter even if we had tried until doomsday – our Africanness.'[7] *TTL* strikes a chord with African sensibilities when it admits: 'The connection of evangelism with colonial powers in the history of mission has led to the presupposition that Western forms of Christianity are the standards by which others' adherence to the gospel should be judged.'[8] It issues a ringing call to the churches to take an entirely different direction:

> The Spirit inspires human cultures and creativity, so it is part of our mission to acknowledge, respect and co-operate with life-giving wisdoms in every culture and context. We regret that mission activity linked with colonization has often denigrated cultures and failed to recognize the wisdom of local people. Local wisdom and culture which are life-affirming are gifts from God's Spirit. We lift up testimonies of peoples whose traditions have been scorned and mocked by theologians and scientists, yet whose wisdom offers us the vital and sometimes new orientation that can connect us again with the life of the Spirit in creation, which helps us to consider the ways in which God is revealed in creation.[9]

African theologians who have struggled long and hard to express Christian faith in terms of African culture will surely feel vindicated by this Spirit-centred affirmation of indigenous wisdom and culture offered by *TTL*.

In fact, they have already advanced a long way down the path proposed by *TTL*. As Kwame Bediako has observed: 'The main thrust of African Christian scholarship has been the argument that "conversion" to Christianity must be coupled with cultural continuity. In its specific application to Africa, the argument has meant that, against all the odds, space had to be made for a positive pre-Christian religious heritage in the African Christian consciousness on the grounds that "religion informs the

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[7] Desmond M.B. Tutu, 'Some African Insights and the Old Testament', in Hans-Jürgen Becken (ed), *Relevant Theology for Africa* (Durban, RSA: Lutheran Publishing House, 1973), 40-46 at 41.
[8] *TTL,* §98.
[9] *TTL,* §27.

African's life in its totality".'[10] In order to open up such space, African theologians set out to express Christian faith in terms of African culture. This led them into a sustained dialogue with African Traditional Religion. This was something that had been implicit in the engagement of African communities with the Christian message but was now articulated through the work of scholars like John Mbiti and Bolaji Idowu.[11] Mbiti called on African Christians to express in theological terms the leading role they now occupied in world Christianity, the goal being to bring to expression an African Christianity that is both fully African and fully Christian.

The central question in this enterprise was expressed by Congolese theologian Bénézet Bujo in these terms: 'In which way can Jesus Christ be an African among the Africans according to their own religious experience?'[12] The attempt to answer this question has involved understanding Christ in terms of categories familiar within African culture such as liberator, ancestor, firstborn son, master of initiation, healer, king, chief, mediator, saviour, and redeemer with power. Particularly potent has been the idea of Christ as ancestor which seems to have suggested itself independently to numerous African theologians in different parts of the continent. It has been expounded in great depth by Bujo himself, by John Pobee of Ghana[13] and by Charles Nyamiti of Tanzania in his seminal work, *Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective*.[14] These theologians found it meaningful to speak of Jesus as Ancestor par excellence, for in him are fulfilled all the qualities and virtues that Africans ascribe to their ancestors. In other words, the historical Jesus fulfils the highest ideals ascribed to the ancestors in African thought – he heals, he cures, he raises the dead, and so on. In short, he imparts life force in all its fullness. This love and power he bequeaths, after death, to his disciples. It is precisely in his death and resurrection, with its soteriological meaning, that Jesus transcends the ancestors. Considering the meaning of faith in Christ in terms of the cherishing of ancestors found throughout Africa is one way in which theologians such as Bujo, Pobee and Nyamiti have sought to root Christian faith in African reality.

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[10] Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, and Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 77.

[11] See E. Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Longmans, 1962); E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition* (Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books: 1974); John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969); John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (London: Heinemann, 1975).

[12] Bénézet Bujo, *African Theology in its Social Context* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 75.

[13] John S. Pobee, *Towards an African Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979).

[14] Charles Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective* (Eldoret, Kenya; Gaba Publications, 1984).

In its section on 'Evangelism and Cultures', *TTL* calls for an approach that is deeply rooted in the kind of inculturation that has been championed by African theologians: 'The gospel takes root in different contexts through engagement with specific cultural, political and religious realities. Respect for people and their cultural and symbolic life-worlds are necessary if the gospel is to take root in those different realities. In this way it must begin with engagement and dialogue with the wider context in order to discern how Christ is already present and where God's Spirit is already at work.'[15] This is a mandate which has already been taken up and fulfilled with remarkable results, though the enterprise is still in its first generation and ripe for further development. African theologians are already actively mining their cultural heritage so as to be able to contribute fully to the expression of Christian faith envisaged by *TTL*: 'We cannot capture the complexities of the scriptures through one dominant cultural perspective. A plurality of cultures is a gift of the Spirit to deepen our understanding of our faith and one another.'[16]

African theologians, in turn, may bring to the wider *oecumene* the kind of challenge expressed in the words of John Mbiti: 'There cannot be theological conversation or dialogue between North and South, East and West, until we can embrace each other's concerns and stretch to each other's horizons. Theologians from the southern continents believe that they know about most of the constantly changing concerns of older Christendom. They would also like their counterparts from the older Christendom to come to know about their concerns of human survival.'[17] The time is ripe for a pilgrimage of true theological reciprocity and mutuality. The steps in this direction taken by *TTL* will be welcomed within African Christianity as something long overdue.

The Cry for Liberation

Deep in the soul of African Christians lies the yearning for their faith to be rooted in their culture. The quest for inculturation remains fundamental. Yet there is another cry to which African theologians have felt obliged to respond. There are urgent social, political and economic questions to be addressed. A theology of inculturation, on its own, may not be enough. As Desmond Tutu has written: 'I fear that African theology has failed to produce a sufficiently sharp cutting edge. It has indeed performed a good job by addressing the split in the African soul, and yet it has by and large failed to speak meaningfully in the face of a plethora of contemporary

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[15] *TTL,* §97.
[16] *TTL,* §100.
[17] John S. Mbiti, 'Theological Impotence and Universality of the Church', in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (eds), *Mission Trends No. 3: Third World Theologies* (New York: Paulist, and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 6-18 at 17.

problems which assail the modern African. It has seemed to advocate disengagement from the hectic business of life, because very little has been offered that is pertinent, say, about the theology of power in the face of the epidemic of coups and military rule, about development, about poverty and disease and other equally urgent present-day issues.'[18] The need to address the multi-faceted crisis in which Africa has been embroiled in its recent history has concentrated the mind of many African theologians.

Perhaps the most representative is Jean-Marc Éla who has sought to articulate theology out of his pastoral experience with the Kirdi people of Tokombèrè village in northern Cameroon and turn it into a theological paradigm. For Éla, the shock which the local church might have experienced through its pastoral experience was the realization that even though a greater part of Africa is a deeply and massively Christian region, 'it tends to remain a veritable empire of hunger'.[19] He asks the question: how could the local church co-exist with such a situation without 'shocking' it with the gospel? In his writings, Éla captures various angles of this 'shock' as he describes the frustration, the apparently meaningless existence, the extreme and paralyzing poverty, the violation of basic human rights, the colonial and neo-colonial violence, and the multinational exploitation, as well as hunger experienced by the people. It is this 'rough ground' that, according to Éla, provides the unique context and challenge for Christianity and theology in Africa today: 'Our practice of Christian faith faces a major challenge from African men and women who agonize over where their next meal is coming from.'[20]

Éla has no hesitation in facing up to these harsh realities now presenting themselves in post-colonial Africa: 'The battles for independence gave birth in the hearts of so many Africans to hope for a new world. But after more than twenty years of experience with democracy African-style, independence has turned out to be a sham and a decoy. For many, the situation is worse than it was before. Black persecutes, tortures, murders black…'[21] While he is by no means unsympathetic to inculturation theology, Éla's analysis leads him to be critical of an African theology that seems to assume that African society and churches 'can achieve their identity by considering only anthropological and cultural problems'.[22] In his view, such preoccupation with cultural identity could be a dangerous alibi, employed so as to ignore the more burning issues in contemporary

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[18] Desmond Tutu, 'Black Theology/African Theology: Soul Mates or Antagonists?', in James S. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Theology: A Documentary History, Vol. I 1966-79, 2nd edition* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 385-92 at 386.

[19] Jean-Marc Éla, *My Faith as an African* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 87.

[20] Éla, *My Faith as an African*, 87.

[21] Jean-Marc Éla, *African Cry* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), 46.

[22] Éla, *My Faith as an African,* 118.

Africa. What is needed instead, according to Éla, is an inculturation which is relevant to the culture that is being born out of daily struggles of Africans for survival.

The daily social and political realities which shape African life form the context in which theology requires to be done. 'In our environment,' Éla contends, 'our faith does not ask questions about the sex of angels or the infallibility of the Pope; instead we question the lack of any genuine application of the critical function inherent in Christian faith. How can we show that the African church is blocked by an ecclesiastical praxis that is, in fact, a kind of museum of narrow moralism, a ritualistic sacramentalism, a disembodied spirituality and a withering dogmatics?'[23] Éla himself attempts to give a lead in awakening the critical function inherent in Christian faith: 'We have been permanently reduced, it seems, to a situation where poverty and oppression surround a few islands of affluence. A multitude of the oppressed are up against an elite that always tends to reinforce its position of power by setting up a system whose results are clear.'[24] Éla is not afraid to identify the forces which operate to create such a situation: 'Almost everywhere throughout the black continent, the various forms of coercive apparatus of the multinationals guarantee optimal conditions for the over-exploitation of human labour and natural resources.'[25]

The 'cry' articulated by Éla and others finds an emphatic answer in *TTL*. While it grounds Christian mission, more fundamentally than ever before, in spirituality, it is clear that what it seeks to promote is a *transformative spirituality*[26] – one which is fully engaged with the kind of realities with which Éla is concerned. 'Mission spirituality,' argues *TTL*, 'motivates us to serve God's economy of life, not mammon, to share life at God's table rather than satisfy individual greed, to pursue change toward a better world while challenging the self-interest of the powerful who desire to maintain the status quo.'[27] It quotes from an earlier WCC document to ground its commitment to transformation and justice: 'Our faithfulness to God and God's free gift of life compels us to confront idolatrous assumptions, unjust systems, and the politics of domination and exploitation in our current world economic order. Economics and economic justice are always matters of faith as they touch the very core of God's will for creation.'[28]

TTL is perhaps at its most trenchant when addressing the injustice inherent in the prevailing economic system of globalization: 'The policy of unlimited growth through the domination of the global free market is an

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[23] Éla, *My Faith as an African*, 153.

[24] Éla, *My Faith as an African*, 89-90.

[25] Éla, *My Faith as an African*, 89.

[26] *TTL,* §29.

[27] *TTL,* §30.

[28] *Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth (AGAPE): A Background Document* (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 13; cf. *TTL,* §30.

ideology that claims to be without alternative, demanding an endless flow of sacrifices from the poor and from nature.'[29] In offering a prophetic critique of the currently prevailing system of economic globalization, *TTL* quotes from the 2004 'Accra Confession' of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches: 'It makes the false promise that it can save the world through creation of wealth and prosperity, claiming sovereignty over life and demanding total allegiance, which amounts to idolatry.'[30] An answer to Jean-Marc Éla's 'African cry' can be found when *TTL* strikes a confrontational note: 'This is a global system of mammon that protects the unlimited growth of wealth of only the rich and powerful through endless exploitation. This tower of greed is threatening the whole household of God. The reign of God is in direct opposition to the empire of mammon.'[31]

The need to counter systems of injustice and bring liberation to the oppressed has perhaps had no clearer articulation on the African continent than it has in the Black Theology of South Africa.[32] In a highly polarised situation where power, wealth and privilege were concentrated on one side, and poverty, oppression and suffering on the other, proponents of Black Theology like Mokgethi Motlhabi, Allan Boesak and Manas Buthelezi took up the biblical theme that God takes sides with the oppressed, just as God did when the people of Israel were being oppressed in Egypt. In the perspective of Black Theology, the social location of the theologian is critical to the formation of a proper understanding of God. When the church has moved to the centre of society and is identified with the rich, the powerful and the dominant, then it becomes so much bound up with their interests that it finds it impossible to come to terms with the God of the Bible. It is only those who look from the margins, from the vantage point of poverty and suffering, who are in a position to understand the God who revealed himself to the poor and suffering, as indicated in the biblical record. For its own integrity, theology must move out to the margins of society and see things with the eyes of the poor.

Advocates of Black Theology will surely feel that their point has been taken when they find that 'mission from the margins' is one of the most distinctive and provocative emphases of *TTL*: 'Mission from the margins recognizes that being in the centre means having access to systems that lead to one's rights, freedom and individuality being affirmed and

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[29] *TTL,* §31.

[30] World Alliance of Reformed Churches, *The Accra Confession: Covenanting for Justice: in the Economy and the Earth* (2004), §10; cf. *TTL,* §31.

[31] *TTL,* §31.

[32] See Mokgethi Motlhabi, 'Black Theology: A Personal View', in Basil Moore (ed), *Black Theology: the South African Voice* (London: C. Hurst & Co.,1973); Allan A. Boesak, *Black Theology Black Power* (London: Mowbray, 1978); Allan A. Boesak, *Black and Reformed* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984); Manas Buthelezi, 'African Theology and Black Theology', in Becken, *Relevant Theology for Africa*, 18-24.

respected; living on the margins means exclusion from justice and dignity. Living on the margins, however, can provide its own lessons. People on the margins have agency, and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view.'[33] One of the core convictions of *TTL* is that it is precisely from the margins that authentic Christian mission can be undertaken. It works from the basis that 'Jesus Christ relates to and embraces those who are most marginalized in society, in order to confront and transform all that denies life. This includes cultures and systems which generate and sustain massive poverty, discrimination and dehumanization, and which exploit or destroy people and the earth. Mission from the margins calls for an understanding of the complexities of power dynamics, global systems and structures and local contextual realities'.[34] The understanding that mission needs to be undertaken from the margins is one that connects with both African Theology and Black Theology.

Time for Reconstruction

Just as African theology of inculturation was criticised for its lack of attention to the social, political and economic dimensions of life, so the corrective efforts of theologians like Jean-Marc Éla have been subject to criticism for offering a Liberation Theology that begins and ends only in lamentations without showing a way of 'getting out of the jungle'. It is perhaps significant that Allan Boesak entitled the final chapter of his book on Black Theology, 'Beyond the Sorrow Songs'.[35] A sense that there was need for a more constructive theology was the inspiration for a conference called by the All Africa Conference of Churches in Mombasa in 1991. The Cold War had ended, the apartheid system in South Africa was finally crumbling, and soon there would be talk of an African Renaissance. There was a need for a theology which would engage these new realities. The response to this challenge generated by the Mombasa conference was styled a theology of reconstruction, with Kenyan theologian Jesse Mugambi as its chief architect.[36] This new theological direction was not an abrupt departure since it continued to emphasise the themes of inculturation and liberation, but it did bring a new awareness of the responsibility of theologians to contribute, in a positive way, to the transformation of society.

   This was a call to which theologians in different parts of the continent were ready to respond. Notable work was done, for example, by Charles

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[33] *TTL,* §38.

[34] *TTL,* §37.

[35] Boesak, *Black Theology*, 123-52.

[36] See Jesse N.K. Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995); Jesse N.K. Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction* (Nairobi: Acton, 2003).

Villa-Vicencio in South Africa, Kä Mana of the DRC, and Valentin Dedji of Cameroon.[37] In the view of these theologians of reconstruction, both inculturation and liberation responded to a situation of ecclesiastical and colonial bondage which no longer obtains. In place of the inculturation-liberation paradigm, which they saw as 'reactive', they sought to install a 'pro-active' theology of reconstruction. Instead of being preoccupied with the ascendancy of liberation over inculturation or vice versa – a matter which is still of great debate – advocates of a theology of reconstruction call for an innovative transcendence of both. It is theology addressed to the public domain, seeking to bring a vision of Christ crucified and risen to bear on the challenges of creating new social, political and economic structures in Africa.

The African theology of reconstruction will find its concerns are voiced also in *TTL*. The new WCC mission statement is inspired by a lofty theological vision, but is equally aware that this vision needs to be brought to expression in concrete terms in our contemporary societies:

> The affirmation of God's mission (*missio Dei*) points to the belief in God as One who acts in history and in creation, in concrete realities of time and contexts, who seeks the fullness of life for the whole earth through justice, peace and reconciliation. Participation in God's ongoing work of liberation and reconciliation by the Holy Spirit, therefore, includes discerning and unmasking the demons that exploit and enslave. For example, this involves deconstructing patriarchal ideologies, upholding the right to self-determination for indigenous peoples, and challenging the social embeddedness of racism and casteism.[38]

A significant contribution to the theology of reconstruction has been made by African women theologians, such as Mercy Oduyoye, Musimbi Kanyoro and Isabel Phiri, who have sharply questioned the hierarchical and discriminatory patterns which have prevailed both in church and society.[39] Their critique finds an echo in *TTL* with its insistence that, 'Participation in God's mission follows the way of Jesus, who came to serve, not to be served (Mark 10:45); who tears down the mighty and powerful and exalts the lowly (Luke 1:46-55); and whose love is characterized by mutuality, reciprocity and interdependence. It therefore requires a commitment to

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[37] Charles Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-Building and Human Rights* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992); Kä Mana, *L'Afrique va-t-elle Mourir: Bousculer L'imaginaire Africain. Essai D'éthique Politique* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991), Valentin Dedji, *Reconstruction and Renewal in African Theology* (Nairobi: Acton, 2003).

[38] *TTL,* §43.

[39] See Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro (eds), *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa* (Maryknoll: New York, 1992); Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995); Isabel Apawo Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa Women in Central Malawi* (Blantyre: CLAIM, 1997).

struggle against and resist the powers that obstruct the fullness of life that God wills for all, and a willingness to work with all people involved in movements and initiatives committed to the causes of justice, dignity and life.'[40]

Another contribution of African women theologians has been to promote a collaborative, collective, rather than individualist, approach to the task of theology. This concern is also evident in the theology of reconstruction, with reference being made to the conversational and communicative styles in African cultures, which are captured in the writings of some African scholars with the word *palaver*. Drawing on strong African traditions of resolving issues through community discussion, theologians like Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator have advocated a more conversational and communicative mode of doing theology.[41] This sense of interrelation and reciprocity, which draws on currents that run deep in African life, chimes in well with the *TTL* affirmation: 'The good news of God's reign is about the promise of the actualization of a just and inclusive world. Inclusivity fosters just relationships in the community of humanity and creation, with mutual acknowledgement of persons and creation, and mutual respect and sustenance of each one's sacred worth.'[42] It is also notable that one quarter of *TTL* is devoted to 'Spirit of Community: Church on the Move' – the communal expression of Christian faith.[43]

Conclusion

Space does not allow for the exploration of other features of *TTL* that resonate with contemporary African theology, such as the need to relate mission to the flourishing of creation,[44] the call to confident but sensitive evangelism,[45] or the importance of dialogue with people of other faiths as a 'mutual encounter of commitments'.[46] However, by noting the spiritual key in which *TTL* is set and tracing its relevance to the leading concerns of African theologians – inculturation, liberation, and reconstruction – it is already apparent that this is a mission affirmation which has embraced major issues facing Christianity in Africa today. There is good reason to believe that it will prove to be a highly relevant text for the consideration of

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[40] *TTL,* §45.
[41] See Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (ed), *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace: The Second African Synod* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011); Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (ed), *Theological Re-imagination: Conversations on Church, Religion, and Society in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines, 2014).
[42] *TTL,* §46.
[43] *TTL,* §55-79.
[44] *TTL,* §19-23.
[45] *TTL,* §80-88.
[46] *TTL,* §89-96.

mission questions in Africa, and to be confident that its emphases will be broadened and deepened as they are explored in the African context.

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE AND CONTEMPORARY WESTERN THEOLOGY

Beate Fagerli

Introduction

This chapter will attempt to give some perspectives on the document *Together towards Life (TTL)* based on input from some western churches. To give a fuller account of western theology in dialogue with *TTL* would not be possible in this format. While preparing this article, information and material was collected from churches in Europe and North America, by contacting colleagues in church and mission, asking for official responses or personal reflections on *TTL*. Some of these will be presented at the beginning of this chapter. In order to single out certain themes for further discussion, parts of the contemporary missiological discussion in Norway will be presented. Based on this, this chapter will suggest some main challenges for western churches as well as challenges for continued missiological discussion in the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). The theological perspectives presented here will therefore basically be the perspectives coming from certain historic churches in Northern Europe, predominantly from Protestant traditions and from the evangelical movement.

Background

After the WCC Central Committee's approval of *TTL* in 2012, the document was widely distributed to churches and organisations. Since responses to my request for information on the reception of *TTL* in the churches are limited, this article cannot do justice to all contemporary western theology. It is therefore based on feedback largely received from Northern Europe.[1] However, these responses indicate that the content and style of *TTL* has made it well suited for further study. It seems *TTL* has been widely distributed within churches and mission organisations. Many

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[1] In preparing this article, an informal request was sent to colleagues in a number of churches. Information on reception processes have come from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the Finnish Missionary Council, Church of Sweden, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, the Danish Mission Council, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church of Scotland, the Church of England, as well as the Christian Council of Norway, the Church of Norway and the Norwegian Mission Council.

churches, organisations, mission boards or Christian councils have translated the document, initiated studies locally, and made it the topic of thematic consultations and ecumenical dialogues. The document is also being studied in missiological departments of educational institutions.

The informal responses received have overall been positive to, and even enthusiastic about, *TTL*. The feedback suggests that the angle chosen in the document, by anchoring the concept of God´s mission (*missio Dei*) in the Trinitarian God, and developing a pneumatological perspective rooted in Trinitarian theology throughout the document, provide renewed and refreshing missiological insight. Furthermore, although the definition of mission is very broad, many churches seem to agree with *TTL*´s overall definition of mission given in the first part of the document (*TTL* §§1-11). A holistic scope of mission which includes not only all people, but the whole of creation, is also much appreciated (e.g. *TTL* §20). The importance of the shift of the centre of gravity for world Christianity from the West to the South and East is recognized by western churches. Also, the responses seem to agree that the concluding affirmations of the document (*TTL* §§101 and 112) provide an updated view on mission.

On a more critical note, the feedback received from different churches raises questions on some of the topics in the document. One important question concerns the use of the term 'marginalized' and the concept of 'mission from the margins'. It is not felt that Jesus is making a case for the poor that seems to be critically questioned. Rather, it is the definition of 'margins', and who makes that definition, which raises a question. Has the document been written *by* the marginalised, or for the marginalised, or is the use of 'marginalisd' a way of idealising the other'?[2]

Another main point of criticism seems to be linked with the understanding of evangelism and what it entails. Although the pneumatological reading of God´s mission rooted in a Trinitarian understanding is much appreciated, several churches and mission bodies seem to be expressing the fact that they miss a deeper Christological understanding of mission.[3] Some questions are raised regarding the use of scriptural passages, which in places seem to be somewhat arbitrary or slightly superficial. The most significant questions are raised in connection with Jesus´ teaching on the coming of the Reign of God and the understanding of what salvation means in regard to this.[4]

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[2] Email from the Revd Dr Tomi Karttunen of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, 11th June 2015, summarising analyses of *TTL* offered in the (Finnish language) *Journal of Mission Theology*, Vol. 16 (2013).

[3] Email from Tomi Karttunen, 11th June 2015.

[4] Rolf Kjøde, 'Spirit of Pentecost: Good news for all! An approach to evangelization and dialogue'. Paper presented at the Missiological Forum, Oslo, 22nd November 2012: http://norme.no/aktuelt/detaljer/journey-together-again

In order to try to understand the content of these questions, we will look more closely at contemporary missiological discussion in Norway in the wake of *TTL*.

Mission from the Margins

Following the Central Committee's approval of *TTL* in 2012, the Norwegian Council for Mission and Evangelism (NORME) invited Dr Jooseop Keum, the director of CWME, to introduce the document at a Missiological Forum day in Oslo, Norway, on 22nd November 2012. His introduction was on 'Dynamism and Diversity',[5] and was followed by a number of responses to different parts of *TTL* given by Norwegian church leaders, ecumenists and missiologists. The responses were largely very positive. The Revd Knut Refsdal, the General Secretary of the Christian Council of Norway, put it as follows:

> It is my hope that this document can contribute to the building of bridges between different directions within the churches and guide us all towards a deeper understanding of what it means to be church in our time.[6]

The document also inspired thoughts on mission at the heart of the very being of the church, as well as on the link between mission and ecumenism. The Rt Revd Helga Haugland Byfuglien, the presiding bishop of the Church of Norway, picked up from *TTL* the need for the church to be on the move, because God is on the move. This movement is created by God's love, which always reaches beyond itself. *TTL*'s potential as an ecumenical study project for church unity and mission as the essence of being church was thereby highlighted. From there she goes on to describe how mission and ecumenical theology are intertwined, linking it with the geographical shift in mission:

> … if mission is the essence of the **entire** Church… if mission belongs to the **whole** church, not only to churches of western societies, mission is ecumenical and something that we need to do together. Churches in the West must be influenced by the mission activity of churches from the South. The reason for this is that context always influences missional activity. The social location of all engaged in mission must therefore be taken into account.[7]

It seems Bishop Helga Byfuglien grasps a key point in *TTL*: that the shift of the centre of world Christianity must influence the way we do mission, and that 'mission from the margins' may provide a necessary change of perspective. She does not understand this change of perspective to be

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[5] Jooseop Keum, 'Dynamism and Diversity: An Ecumenical perspective on Mission in Changing Landscapes', Missiological Forum, 22nd November 2012.

[6] Knut Refsdal, 'Together towards Life'. Presentation given at the Missiological Forum, Oslo, 22nd November 2012.

[7] Helga Haugland Byfuglien, 'Spirit of community: Church on the move'. Presentation given at the Missiological Forum, Oslo, 22nd November 2012.

exclusive, however, but as inclusive: '… so is the gospel of Christ a gospel that does not belong only to one part of the world, but to the entire world, crossing all cultures and nations.' However, since Refsdal was giving a response to the *TTL* chapter 'Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins', he raised a question regarding this perspective:

> One last comment and question regarding the terms 'margins' and 'centre': I understand the rationale behind this terminology. Nevertheless, as I read the Bible, and especially the teachings of Jesus, who again and again turned things upside down, the only people that are located on the margins are those that believe that they are in the centre. Are we among them? If so, we have to rethink this terminology.[8]

As I understand Refsdal, he is not against a change of perspective, but questions whether the terms 'margins' and 'centre' are useful when describing a change of perspective based on the teaching of Jesus, who turns perspectives upside down. The use of this terminology was discussed further, raising questions about who the marginalised are, and in which context. What is a majority and a minority when defining who the marginalised are? Is a polarised division between people living on the margins and people at the centre an accurate description in any context? This question is particularly relevant with regard to the aim of mission as described in *TTL*:

> The aim of mission is not simply to move people from the margins to the centres of power but to confront those who remain the centre by keeping people on the margins. Instead, churches are called to *transform* power structures (*TTL* §40).

From Finland, another question is raised regarding the concept 'mission from the margins', and whether it tends to idealise the notion of 'the other'.[9] The Theological Commission of the Council on Ecumenical and International relations in the Church of Norway has noted that the term 'marginalised' has become a central term in several ecumenical documents. But since the meaning of 'marginalised' is dependent on which context it is being used, a clearer definition and further analysis of the understanding of the terms 'power' and the 'centres of power' would be useful.[10]

All these questions may seem to rise from the perspective of a western context, historically understood to be at the 'centres of power'. In that case, churches and mission in the western world should be directly challenged by the change of perspective *TTL* brings. This, however, may be to oversimplify the question of context.

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[8] Knut Refsdal, 'Together towards Life'.

[9] Email from Tomi Karttunen, 11th June 2015.

[10] From the Theological Commission's discussion on the WCC document *Diakonia in the Twenty First Century: Theological Perspectives*, minutes of the Theological Commission meeting, 4th-5th October 2012.

In Denmark, Dr Anna Marie Aagaard, a well-known missiologist, gave a keynote address on 'Spirit and Mission' to the Danish Mission Council in 2014.[11] She gives a positive account of the renewal of the pneumatological understanding of mission in *TTL*. However, towards the end of her address, she looks at the phrase in the title of *TTL* '… in changing landscapes', and asks for a more in-depth analysis of why the landscapes (in which mission takes place) are changing. In a time of globalisation and climate change, it is easy to get the feeling that things are out of hand, she says: the world is out of control. In such a context, fear has become a worldview. This must be part of the background for understanding mission in changing landscapes. Mission must challenge fear as a worldview.

The Reign of God

Another central theme running through *TTL* is the understanding of Jesus´ teaching on the coming of the Reign of God as a world where fullness of life is available for all.[12] There seems to be no contradiction to this understanding from the material we have collected from the churches. But several questions related to the understanding of Christ´s role in the coming of the reign of God have been raised. Although supportive of the Trinitarian basis of *TTL*, feedback from Finland indicates that a weakness of the document is that the pneumatological approach rules out Christology. As a consequence, it becomes unclear why reconciliation is needed.[13] Although the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ are mentioned (§56, 80), *TTL* does not develop the theme as central to the reconciliation between God and Creation.[14]

At the Missiological Forum in November 2012, I was asked to give a short response to *TTL* with a special consideration of the future.[15] In this presentation I referred back to the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Athens in 2005, and the two main themes of that conference: healing and reconciliation. *TTL* has taken up and developed the

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[11] Dr Anna Marie Aagaard: 'Ånd og Mission', keynote address given at the Danish Mission Council in 2013: https://soundcloud.com/dansk-missionsrad/anna-marie-aagaard-nd-og (accessed 17th June 2015).

[12] *TTL,* §37, 44, 46, 56, 67, 88, 91, 102.

[13] Email from Tomi Karttunen, 11th June 2015

[14] This view does not take into account the work of CWME on 'Reconciliation as a new paradigm for Mission', following the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in 2005. See J. Matthey (ed), *Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile! Called to be Reconciling and Healing Communities – Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece* (Geneva: WCC, 2008), and *International Review of Mission*, 103.2 (399) (November, 2014): 'Evangelism as Discipleship' (entire volume).

[15] Beate Fagerli, 'Mission and Evangelism today and for the future – Mission in Dialogue, Dialogue in Mission', Missiological Forum, Oslo, 22nd November 2012.

pneumatological focus from the Athens conference, and a holistic view on healing in mission is set out. But the theme of reconciliation has not received the same kind of attention in *TTL*, at least not from a Christological point of view. In classical western theology, the concept of reconciliation is closely connected with the death and resurrection of Christ, which is God's ultimate act in reconciling the sinful world with the Creator. The point of my input was the need for dialogue between a classical western understanding of salvation and *TTL*'s notion of the Reign of God.

The question of *TTL*'s view of salvation became a major issue at the Missiological Forum. First, the Revd Dr Tormod Engelsviken gave a historical account of the dialogue between CWME and the World Evangelical Alliance,[16] where he outlined the main reasons and the main obstacles for co-operation between CWME and the evangelical movement. Traditionally, evangelical mission has given priority to the proclamation of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus' teaching on the coming of the Reign of God has thus been related to faith in Christ defeating death, where salvation is understood strictly as eternal life for the faithful. For the evangelical movement, one of the main obstacles to co-operation with the WCC has been that the WCC has not given enough priority to proclamation of the Gospel understood as the only way to salvation.

This understanding of salvation was reiterated by the input of the Revd Rolf Kjøde, the then General Secretary of Normisjon, a major mission organisation in Norway. In his input he makes a comparison between *TTL* and the *Cape Town Commitment* (*CTC*):[17]

> I struggle to find clear expression in *TTL* about the ultimate goal of the gospel and consequently of God's mission through his church: eternal salvation. In its preamble, *CTC* is very clear on what it calls 'unchanged realities': the lostness of human beings in sin and rebellion under the judgement of God. This is the background for the Gospel, which saves us through faith in Jesus Christ alone, a salvation which stretches far beyond death and resurrection in the coming Kingdom of God.[18]

Kjøde's input must be seen in the light of the invitation to join the CWME given by Dr Jooseop Keum to NORME, where Kjøde's organisation Normisjon is a member. The invitation is historic, as the Norwegian Mission Council (NORME's predecessor) left the International Missionary Council (IMC) in 1961, when IMC joined the WCC. NMC left on the grounds of disagreement over the question of a leading norm for

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[16] Tormod Engelsviken, 'Some perspectives on Mission and Evangelisation the last thirty years'. Paper given at the Missiological Forum, Oslo, 22nd November 2012.

[17] The *Cape Town Commitment*, © The Lausanne Movement, 2011. The document can be downloaded at: www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment

[18] Rolf Kjøde, 'Spirit of Pentecost: Good news for all! An approach to evangelization and dialogue'.

theology and mission.[19] Through his response, Kjøde turned the invitation down:

> Although I am in favour of good relations and forums for conversation, we must admit that the gap between the evangelical and the ecumenical movement is still so significant on decisive questions that we should still journey separately.[20]

The missiological discussion in Norway continued between representatives of the ecumenical and evangelical movements through meetings and in journals. Evangelical representatives clearly expressed the conviction that the positive change in church ecumenism regarding views on evangelism was a signal that the churches of the South and East were being strengthened at the expense of more liberal ones in the North and West.[21] This not only expresses what, from an evangelical point of view, is seen as a positive development in documents like *TTL*. It also presupposes that churches in the East and South now have greater influence on what is said in ecumenical documents and assumes that these churches are less liberal than those in the North and West. This point is reiterated in the desire that the evangelical voice of the Church of Norway can help voices from the South and East to be further strengthened against the liberal understanding with which westerners have too long dominated church ecumenics.[22]

This point of departure is based on a certain traditional Lutheran theology, where 'faith alone' has priority for salvation. Salvation is understood as eternal salvation for the faithful, located in an after-life. God has a linear plan for salvation, which takes place in a particular salvation history, which differs from human history. When the coming of the Kingdom of God is understood in this way, it rules out the possibility of the church being actively instrumental in the coming of the Kingdom within human history. The urgent missionary task of the church is therefore conversion of all people to faith in Christ, with a particular priority for the unreached. Whether a dualistic and linear understanding of salvation history makes any sense everywhere in the world, or in most churches, is doubtful. Whether churches in the South and East in general are less liberal must therefore be questioned. Nevertheless, a continued dialogue on salvation is called for.

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[19] An account of the discussion has been given in Beate Fagerli and Knud Jørgensen, 'Together towards Life: Norwegian reflections', in *International Review of Mission*, 103.1 (398) (April, 2014).

[20] Rolf Kjøde, 'Spirit of Pentecost: Good news for all! An approach to evangelization and dialogue'.

[21] Øyvind Åsland and Rolf Kjøde in *Dagen*, a Christian daily newspaper, January 2013. See also: http://norme.no/aktuelt/detaljer/journey-together-again

[22] Øyvind Åsland and Rolf Kjøde in *Dagen,* January 2013.

Concluding Remarks

Although based on limited material, we can draw some conclusions on certain issues that have come up for discussion based on *TTL*, at least in Northern Europe.

Mission in a World on the Margins

Feedback from some churches in Northern Europe indicates that the concept of 'mission from the margins' is difficult to grasp if it is not further defined. Looking more closely into the current state of missiological discussion in Norway, we see that there seem to be several reasons for this reaction. It is often assumed that western churches in general are not living on the margins. In that sense, Bishop Byfuglien's response at the Missiological Forum could be understood positively: that to be true to God's mission, western churches need to welcome the perspective of the marginalised. Refsdal's reading of the Bible, however, suggests that Jesus turns all perspectives upside down. Therefore, the categorisation of people into 'powerful' or 'marginalised' may be challenged by Scriptures itself.

Feedback from churches and missiological discussions implies that churches in the West don't necessarily see themselves as the centre of power any longer, or as opposed to the marginalised. This is partly as the picture is changing because of the secularisation of society. The centre of Christianity is moving to the South and East, and western churches are losing ground. Many traditional western churches are losing their privileges and influence, and struggling to survive. Partly also, the picture is changing because of migration. Although growing in numbers, many western migrant churches find themselves living on the margins when it comes to establishing themselves and gaining access to rights and resources. Thus, changes in church demography complicates the picture and makes it difficult, even meaningless, to understand 'mission from the margins' based on a traditional understanding of the North/South divide. Also, 'mission from the margins' may be understood philosophically. This has led some churches to question whether this is a way of looking at the marginalised as 'the other', thereby risking cementing the old divide between 'us' and 'them'.

Finally, western churches have welcomed *TTL*'s inclusion of the whole of creation into the understanding of salvation. Increased awareness of climate change has led many churches to actively engage in climate justice, locally and globally. In many western societies, this means opposing political authorities, challenging economic priorities, and encouraging a 'green shift' by upholding the hope of re-creation as an alternative to a dying creation. The earth itself is living on the margins, increasing risk for all aspects of life. It is in this context that Professor Aaagard talks about mission being a calling to encourage hope in the midst of a worldview of

fear. This is an important insight when reflecting further on the definition of 'mission from the margins'.

Reconciliation and the Reign of God

TTL explores a pneumatological approach of mission. Based on the answers presented at the beginning of this article, it seems that many western churches welcome this. However, some miss a more Christological approach. From the limited material we have looked at, it has not been possible to discern whether this means that some churches lack a traditional understanding of the starting point for mission in *TTL*, based in Jesus´ calling and sending of his disciples (Matthew 28:18-20), or whether they lack a Christological reasoning for mission based on Jesus´ act of reconciliation through his death and resurrection. *TTL* does not explicitly incorporate Christological reflection on reconciliation as it has been developed in CWME during and after Athens 2005. We may therefore assume that further reflections on a Christological view on reconciliation linked with *TTL*´s pneumatolocigal insights on mission would be welcomed. The reflection process around reconciliation as a new paradigm for mission may be of use in this regard.[23]

On one hand, the missiological discussion in Norway reflects a development similar to that between WCC and the evangelical movement. The churches and the evangelical movement do come together to discuss God´s mission, and have come closer on a number of areas. In this regard, *TTL* has been well received. However, the discussion shows quite clearly that parts of the evangelical movement do not find the soteriological reasoning they are looking for in *TTL*, which is their very starting point for, and essence of, mission. A major challenge for a continued common journey will therefore be to further explore mission and the Reign of God from a soteriological perspective.

Not being able to present a full view on *TTL* and western theology, I nevertheless hope some important matters arising from current discussion on *TTL* have been presented. These are as much challenges to western churches and the evangelical movement as to the global ecumenical movement.

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[23] See, for instance, Robert Schreiter, 'Mission as a Ministry of reconciliation – Norwegian Contributions'. Keynote address at the 2013 O.G. Myklebust Memorial Lecture at the Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo, 29th January 2013.

TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE AND THE CHALLENGE OF MISSIONAL FORMATION

Bård Mæland

Introduction

What does it mean to 'walk by the Spirit' (Galatians 5:16)? And what does it mean that we, every human being, and even the creation at large, shall receive 'fullness of life' (John 10:10) by the coming of Jesus Christ? Reading such New Testament passages *after* having studied *Together towards Life* (*TTL*) certainly adds some perspectives to these biblical texts. This is so because of the prominence of pneumatology and the focus on 'life' in *TTL*, but also because these notions capture so well the core of the Gospel and the Reign of God.

Yet, what impact should such passages and the whole approach of *missio Spiritus* for the sake of life have for our lives and service as Christians? This is the question I want to pursue in this chapter. For these texts are not merely informative excerpts from the Bible; they are *formative* texts, meant to be embodied in a missional life of individual Christians, but also of congregations and the entire church of Jesus Christ.

The methodology I employ is to search for perspectives and concepts in *TTL* to explore, that together may throw some important light on the challenge of missional formation.

Before I move on, let me propose a very simple working definition of 'formation', which is 'the development of something into a particular thing or shape'.[1] Employing such a definition of *TTL* could help us rephrase missional formation below. I also want to make clear from the beginning that this chapter is not about theological education as such, nor about training missionary professionals more specifically, even though our analysis of missional formation based on *TTL* may have many implications for such training and formation. I have therefore included a separate section on this. All in all, this chapter is therefore about how a missional life shaped by the challenges brought forward by *TTL* may inspire, form and develop Christians in their thoughts and actions as participants in God's ongoing mission in the world.

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[1] See http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/formation (accessed 7th August 2015).

The Pragmatics of Mission as a
Foundation for any Missional Formation

Having said all this, I have already stated a fundamental point about *TTL* from the perspective of missional formation: the understanding of mission and evangelism in *TTL* is not primarily concerned with missional *understanding* and the *idea* of God's mission, but with understanding *and* commitment, practice and action.

A 'proof' of this is the practical guide that was added to *TTL* after the January 2013 meeting of the working group of the Commission for World Mission and Evangelism in Kochi, India. The concern was to bring *TTL* into 'missional action'. Hence, simply reading the *TTL* with its added practical guide one realizes that *TTL* is a markedly pragmatic (Greek *pragma,* a thing done, a fact) document. It aims at commitment, and it should have an impact far beyond becoming an interesting ecumenical document on mission and evangelism adding to the stockpile of ecumenical readings. Based on this observation, it is no surprise when the editor of *TTL*, CWME Secretary Dr Jooseop Keum, in his foreword states that:

> The CWME is thankful to God that the world church and mission bodies of the WCC have been able to reach a common *understanding of and commitment to* God's mission today. The commission is also grateful that the affirmation is provoking fresh interest in the new vision of ecumenical mission *thinking and action* (vii; my emphases).

Hence, if anything, at least 'commitment', 'action' and 'practice' are part of what missional formation aims at, according to *TTL*, and this makes *TTL* challenging. Put differently, one cannot be missional, nor participate in the mission of God and the Spirit merely in theory. Rather, on the contrary, *TTL* aims at a journey and a process 'towards' life (viii). Consequently, *TTL* reveals a missional 'intention'.[2]

Of course, this pragmatic aim of *TTL* has vast implications for how mission is thought of, discussed and done in all kinds of learning environments, from the academic classroom to the communal life of a congregation. Put simply, as soon mission is made a theme in such learning sites, one should expect to be challenged to act and commit oneself. But how should it be done? This brings me to a second observation with relevance to my reading of *TTL*.

Formation through Discernment – Seeing with the Spirit

The notion of discernment is important in *TTL*, and for several reasons. The document itself begins with a quite programmatic statement: 'It is the aim

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[2] J.J. (Dons) Kritzinger, 'Training for Mission: Some Thoughts on Theological and Missionary Training in South Africa', in *Missionalia,* 30.1 (2002), 122-31; cited in Xolile Simon, 'Mission and Frontier-crossing and Identity Formation: An Integrating Contextual Missiology', in *Scriptura* 100 (2009), 89-103, at 92.

of this new ecumenical discernment to seek vision, concepts and directions for a renewed understanding and practice of mission and evangelism in changing landscapes.'[3] Again, we see how understanding and practice are kept intimately together. However, what interests us here is how 'discernment' seemingly does an integrative job in gathering together such notions as 'vision', 'concepts' and 'directions'. I will make an effort below to demonstrate how discernment is pivotal for integrating the theoretical and practical ideas of what it means to be missional.

Still, missional discernment does not work in a vacuum, but depends on the concept of God's mission in the world, and ultimately God's own mission in the world, for liberation, justice, peace – or, to use the L-word of *TTL*, Life! Hence, discernment is a theological discernment about God's own actions in the world in order to prepare for our own participation in God's mission.[4] So, what are the ways discernment is used in *TTL*?

The section on 'Spiritual Gifts and Discernment' (§24-28) makes spiritual discernment a theme, or better, discernment of the Spirit's work. This relates first to discerning 'the work of the life-giving Spirit sent into the world', which calls for response and action: 'When we have discerned the Holy Spirit's presence, we are called to respond.'[5] Again, we see how *missio Spiritus* and life are made central themes in this document.

It is very interesting to see how the churches are made the subjects of such discernment: '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).'[6] This may be understood as an institutional discernment (e.g. churches making strategic decisions about where the Spirit is at work, and where the church as an organization should prioritize their commitments), but such an understanding would appear awkward in the light of the document at large. There is reason to argue that, in this, we see rather a democratization of discernment, namely, to the whole church and all its members. Participation in God's mission is not an elitist endeavour for just a few, but for everyone. This conclusion is backed by an empirical argument, namely, that it is those who experience affirmations of life, or threats to life, who are best placed to discern God's life-giving mission in the world.

The strongest proof of this can be found in the section on 'Why Margins and Marginalization?' (§38ff), where another key issue of *TTL* comes to the fore, namely, mission from the margins:

> People on the margins have agency, and can often see what, from the centre, is out of view. People on the margins, living in vulnerable positions, often know what exclusionary forces are threatening their survival, and can best discern the urgency of their struggles; people in positions of privilege have

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[3] *TTL,* §3.

[4] *TTL,* §4.

[5] *TTL,* §25.

[6] *TTL,* §25.

much to learn from the daily struggles of people living in marginal conditions.[7]

The logic seems to be: those who experience the lack of fullness of life most should be the prime interpreters of what 'fullness of life' is, and is not. Hence, *TTL* put it bluntly: 'The marginalized in society are the main partners in God's mission,' and it is their 'special gift to distinguish what news is good for them and what news is bad for their endangered life'.

Yet, this is not their responsibility exclusively, because to discern what the life-giving Gospel is all about belongs also to those of the 'centre', whatever 'centre' should imply: 'Wherever the neglected or marginalized are brought together in love such that wholeness is experienced, we may discern signs of God's reign on earth.'[8] One may perhaps say that wherever the responsibility for discernment is shared, the primary capacity to discern rightly belongs to those who are closest to whatever may threaten life.

From this it follows that, as soon as one distinguishes the absence of life-sustenance, one also knows what life-giving mission must look like. In such situations, discernment is not enough, but needs to be followed by a 'confrontation of evil spirits wherever forces of death and negation of life are experienced'. When the *TTL* describes the 'view from the margins', its language is thus sharpened considerably:

> Participation in God's ongoing work of liberation and reconciliation by the Holy Spirit, therefore, includes discerning and unmasking the demons that exploit and enslave. For example, this involves deconstructing patriarchal ideologies, upholding the right to self-determination for indigenous peoples, and challenging the social embeddedness of racism and casteism.[9]

Apart from this strong language, to which I will return, we also see here how the whole notion of God's work, the mission of God, etc. is the point around which everything else revolves in *TTL*. Therefore also, any discernment must centre round this, as a mode of participating in God's mission (cf. the quotation above). To do this successfully, one needs the guidance of the Holy Spirit: 'We need constantly to seek the insight of the Holy Spirit in helping us to better discern where the gospel challenges, endorses or transforms a particular culture for the sake of life.'[10]

Consequently, so far, missional formation along the 'discernment route' seems to consist of the following components: a) It is all about deciphering how God is at work to secure life and to counter life-threatening forces, b) such discernment is best done by people most affected by whatever diminishes life, c) yet all others also share the same responsibility to discern and act, and lastly, d) we need the insightful guidance of the Spirit

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[7] *TTL,* §38.

[8] *TTL,* §51, in the section on 'Mission and Healing and Wholeness'.

[9] *TTL,* §43, in the section on 'Mission and Struggle and Resistance'.

[10] *TTL,* §100.

– the Life-Giver – to discern how God is active for the sake of abundant life.

There is, however, no doubt in *TTL* as to how the criterion for discernment is to be formulated:

> We affirm that the purpose of God's mission is fullness of life (John 10:10) and that this is the criterion for discernment in mission. Therefore, we are called to discern the Spirit of God wherever there is life in its fullness, particularly in terms of the liberation of the oppressed peoples, the healing and reconciliation of broken communities, and the restoration of the whole creation.[11]

It seems that the role of right discernment is so much emphasized in *TTL* that it has as one of its implications that no unity among the churches can be found without a common discernment of such issues as justice, inclusion and respect: 'Attempts to achieve unity must be in concert with the biblical call to seek justice. Our call to do justice may sometimes involve breaking false unities that silence and oppress. Genuine unity always entails inclusivity and respect for others.'[12] Hence, true ecumenism depends on a true participation in God's life-affirming and death-defying activity in the world.

TTL sees this struggle as one which requires good co-operation with people of other cultures and religious traditions. In non-conventional language, *TTL* here speaks of 'life-affirming spirits present in different cultures'.[13] To work in such co-operation is not to enter into foreign territory outside the domain of the church. As has been rather conventional ecumenical thinking for a long time, God's work is not limited to the church, and hence not limited by cultural, religious or other borders. The theological corollary for this is basically that 'Christ is already present' and 'God's Spirit is already at work'.[14]

Formation by Hope – a Force for Today's Struggles

As we know from stories of trial and struggle, hope can play an immense role in fighting forces which threaten to destroy and ruin persons and organisations. With the emphasis on marginalization in *TTL*, it is no wonder that the resources of hope are mobilized for the sake of affirming life. I will now look into how hope may have formative challenges for mission.

The first time hope is mentioned in *TTL*, mission, power and community are kept together: 'The missionary God who sent the Son to the world calls all God's people (John 20:21), and empowers them to be a community of

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[11] *TTL,* §102*,* in the section on 'Feast of Life: Concluding Affirmations'.
[12] *TTL,* §69.
[13] *TTL,* §102.
[14] *TTL,* §97, in the section on 'Evangelism and Culture'.

hope.'[15] This seems to be clearly in parallel with the disciples of Christ, following his resurrection: 'by the gift of the Holy Spirit, "the power from on high", they were formed into a new community of witness to hope in Christ (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).'[16] It belongs to the nature of hope that, despite its future orientation, it works in the present. Hence, eschatology is experienced as an actual reality through hope. That this eschatological-actual reality is regarded as powerful in *TTL* can be seen from various passages. A very obvious example is this one:

> The church's hope is rooted in the promised fulfilment of the reign of God. It entails the restoration of right relationships between God and humanity and all creation. Even though this vision speaks to an eschatological reality, it deeply energizes and informs our current participation in God's salvific work in this penultimate period.[17]

In *TTL,* such participation is related to suffering and the 'groaning' of Romans 8: 'As a community of imperfect people, and as part of a creation groaning in pain and longing for its liberation, the Christian community can be a sign of hope and an expression of the Kingdom of God here on earth (Rom. 8:22-24).'[18] Moreover, such participation in God's mission to provide life here and now certainly looks different from the viewpoint of marginalized people who lack basic resources and conditions for a 'life in its fullness'. For them, the hope may be comparably stronger and more important:

> Marginalized people have God-given gifts that are under-utilized because of disempowerment and denial of access to opportunities and/or justice. Through struggles in and for life, marginalized people are reservoirs of the active hope, collective resistance and perseverance that are needed to remain faithful to the promised reign of God (§39).

Thus, through hope an otherwise disempowered situation receives resources for perseverance and action. Similarly, the promise is also stronger for the ones who in this life did not enjoy the same gifts:

> Jesus promises that the last shall be first (Matthew 20:16). To the extent that the church practises radical hospitality to the estranged in society, it demonstrates commitment to embodying the values of the reign of God (Isaiah 58:6).[19]

In some passages this is fleshed out in a warlike manner, using words like 'confrontation' of evil spirits and cultures of oppression and dehumanization, and that 'demonic forces' should be defied. Hence the Gospel is not only good news to everyone:

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[15] *TTL,* §2.
[16] *TTL,* §14.
[17] *TTL,* §44.
[18] *TTL,* §54.
[19] *TTL,* §47.

> Although the gospel is ultimately good news for all, it is bad news for the forces which promote falsehood, injustice and oppression. To that extent, evangelism is also a prophetic vocation which involves speaking truth to power in hope and in love (Acts 26:25; Col. 1:5; Eph. 4:15).[20]

Hence, Gospel, Spirit, hope, life and love seems to go well together with struggle, confrontation and war against evil spirits. In this, our hope comes from the divine intervention through the sending of his Son: '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.'[21]

What we see here is certainly a formative challenge of hope, for hospitality and resistance alike, deeply based in what I described as the eschatological-actual reality of the community that God shaped after the resurrection of Christ. A Christian hope in Christ and the coming of the Kingdom of God challenges the church to be inclusive and confrontational at the same time.

Missional Formation and Leadership in TTL – Diagnosis and Remedies

How can missional action, discernment and hope be trained in a formative environment? In this part of the chapter, I will first explore how *TTL* itself makes formation an issue, and then move to voices from both the global South and North, and how they view the formative challenges of making God's mission central to their theologies and ecclesiologies.

Together towards Life does not say very much directly about formation and education. What it does say, however, is important, and may work as a point of departure for pursuing the issue through other voices.

First, *TTL* emphasises how the congregation and congregational life is a primary place of formation:

> Worship and the sacraments play a crucial role in the formation of transformative spirituality and mission.[22]

Also, reading the Bible contextually is important as this '[enables] local congregations to be messengers and witnesses to God's justice and love' (§74). The missional aspects of worship, sacraments and contextual Bible studies, however, can only be assessed against what we could call the 'pragmatic criterion' of '[living] out God's mission in our communities in our daily life'. Hence, 'local congregations are… impelled to step out of their comfort zones and cross boundaries for the sake of the mission of God' (§74).

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[20] *TTL,* §106.

[21] *TTL,* §78.

[22] *TTL,* §74.

Secondly, with this as a backdrop, the Practical Guide of *TTL* sees a challenge for churches, in particular pertaining to a crisis in leadership:

> The new mission affirmation also has significant implications for education and formation. Many church communities look in vain for leaders who enable them to move forward in the power of the Spirit, offering fullness of life for all. *Together towards Life* provides resources to meet this crisis of leadership.[23]

The resources are found in the Practical Guide, and of course prepared well in *TTL* itself, as my analysis has shown. The approach to resolving the leadership crisis is to '[involve] all members of the faith community, employing their unique spiritual gifts to discern and address the critical missionary challenges facing us today'.[24] Again, we see how a 'decentred' approach is employed in *TTL*, as well as how discernment is central for the issue of formation.

We shall now move on to see how a similar diagnosis of the lack of adequate missional formation and leadership, and how relevant remedies are prescribed by missiologists from different parts of the global church, as well as from different kinds of missiological conversations.

The Need for an Overhaul of Theological Education for the Sake of Missional Formation? Voices from the Global South

In his article, 'Evangelism as Discipleship: Implications for Theological Education and Leadership Formation',[25] South Africa-based Jamaican missiologist Roderick R. Hewitt calls for 'an overhaul of seminary- and university-based theological education careerism, because they serve as an encumbrance to nurturing effective contextual witness of churches'.[26] His concern is primarily directed to what he sees as a lack of 'dialogue, respect and relationship built on reciprocity'.[27] Writing from an Anglo-Caribbean context, with particular reference to Jamaica, he writes about colonial and neo-colonial evangelization strategies, where people were left without practically any viable option for rejecting 'the message of Jesus'.

Hewitt is critical towards both seminaries and university-based theological education. Whereas the former has become too concerned with numerical growth and the financial stability of the churches, the latter with its 'bias to Eurocentric orthodoxy and hermeneutics' has often produced ministers without the ability 'to inspire and connect because it lacks authenticity and spirituality', are 'unable to pray, preach and witness with

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[23] *TTL,* Practical Guide, 44-45.

[24] *TTL,* Practical Guide, 44-45.

[25] Roderick Hewitt, 'Missional Leadership Formation: Embodiment of Together towards Life', in *International Review of Mission*, 103.1 (2014), 144-47.

[26] Hewitt, 'Missional Leadership Formation', 200.

[27] Hewitt, 'Missional Leadership Formation', 202.

authenticity and confidence', ignore the felt needs of people, and are clergy-centred, overlooking the strategic importance of the laity.[28] Hewitt asserts for both kinds of formation that they have become 'disconnected and disorientated leaders from the church's missional task'.[29]

Hewitt has been central in the WCC Commission for World Mission and Evangelism and the *TTL* process.[30] In his article, he relates his diagnosis of theological formation to the *TTL*. What he finds in *TTL* makes him do at least two important things: a) The church must widen its horizon from a focus on individual converts to the wider impact of salvation for humanity and the entire creation in the name of the 'God of life'.[31] It is this God, best expressed in the life of Jesus, that people look to in order to receive 'greater personal experiences of the Spirit', b) Future pastoring must concern itself with what takes place at the margins, which Hewitt especially interprets as the displacement of the church from the centre of culture to the contested environment of religiously pluralistic societies.[32] The way to meet these challenges is to recruit, train and form persons who are willing to operate without the 'comfort zone' of majority churches, and to earn respect through sacrificial service. The kind of missional leadership that Hewitt deduces from this is a 'transformational spirituality' that will 'empower leaders to respond effectively to the diverse spiritual needs of people for wholesome living'.[33]

The best thing about university-based formation (what he describes as 'evangelism through education'!) is that it provides an informed faith and quality teachers of theology, and has often also an open ecumenical approach to theology and church.[34] But more is needed! Highlighting the Daniel figure of the Hebrew Bible as an example, candidates should also be 'equipped in intercultural learning and be ready to witness, full of God's Spirit, and must dare to speak truth to power and not be afraid to serve God on the margins of a pluralistic society'.[35] If such an amalgam of the best from seminaries and universities can be achieved, then, according to Hewitt, 'it may be possible to facilitate the emergence of new or fresh ways or expressions of being church'.[36]

Another missiologist with a strong foothold in the global South is Wonsuk Ma, a long-term director of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies,

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[28] Hewitt, 'Missional Leadership Formation', 205, 206, 208 and 212.
[29] Hewitt, 'Missional Leadership Formation', 214.
[30] Kenneth R. Ross, Eva Christina Nilsson, and Roderick Hewitt, 'Implementation of the New Mission Affirmation: Together towards Life', in *International Review of Mission,* 103.1 (2014), 71-76.
[31] Hewitt, 'Missional Leadership Formation', 209-10.
[32] Hewitt, 'Missional Leadership Formation', 210-12.
[33] Hewitt, 'Missional Leadership Formation', 210.
[34] Hewitt, 'Missional Leadership Formation', 204.
[35] Hewitt, 'Missional Leadership Formation', 212.
[36] Hewitt, 'Missional Leadership Formation', 212.

who in a recent article has made 'theological and missional formation' a theme within the context of what he understands as the 'New Christianity'.[37] In this article, he places a strong emphasis on the role of lay people and the local congregation. He does so by talking about 'bottom up-theologies' and that local congregations will gain increased importance for theological education. What we saw in Hewitt above as a rather sharp distinction between theological education (seminaries/universities), on the one hand, and people's needs and lives, on the other, has been moved even further in Ma. Whereas Hewitt describes how academic theology has ignored spirituality and congregational life, Ma puts the local congregation and its leadership in command of theological education. The leader of a congregation, often a part-time minister, will lead the theological process. Thus, the connection between theology and mission will be much closer than in the past, and only this way can lived theology get its right place with due attention to context and how the Gospel is relevant to every aspect of human life. According to Ma, there is no such thing as pure (academic) theology and, admittedly, what he maintains comes close to a revolution in the order of church practice and academic theology, of which he is well aware ('This is a very tall order'!).[38] Most interestingly, Ma sees this re-ordering as a result of the failure of western theology, and of global South taking over as a church power – from the margins, and against all odds of resource estimates:

> The new mission players from mission fields, struggling with resources, and culturally and politically 'weak' places, have the potential not only to revitalize Christian mission but also to restore the right 'rules of missionary engagement' as informed by the New Testament.[39]

So, independent of the state of power and resources, what Wonsuk Ma predicts is a reformation of theological formation by the global South in order to strengthen the relationship between theologizing and everyday life of ordinary people who very often will also be marginalized one way or another. In this, we hear a voice and a tone rather similar to that of Roderick R. Hewitt. These voices are the more important as there are trends that clearly show a weakening of formation – as seen, for example, in the shrinking number of denominational seminaries in parts of the world, especially in the global North.[40]

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[37] Wonsuk Ma, 'Theological and Missional Formation in the Context of "New Christianity"', in *The Ecumenical Review*, 66.1 (2014), 53-64.

[38] Ma, 'Theological and Missional Formation', 54.

[39] Ma, 'Theological and Missional Formation', 64.

[40] Dietrich Werner, 'Theological Education in the Changing Context of World Christianity – An Unfinished Agenda: Global and Ecumenical Perspectives from the Edinburgh 2010 Process and Beyond'. Lecture at the convocation of Philadelphia Lutheran Theological Seminary, 5th October 2010 and the meeting of the Board of the Foundation for Theological Education for South East Asia (FTESEA): www.ftesea.org/WernerLecture.pdf

Voices from the West/North – a Return to 'Missional' Theology and the Primacy of Apostolicity

It is easy to find fertile ground for such proposals for missional engagement and priorities, even though contexts may differ.

One such example is Darrell Guder, long-term professor of 'missional and ecumenical theology' at Princeton Theological Seminary. In his presidential address, when elected president of the American Society of Missiology some years ago, he made 'Missio Dei: Integrating Theological Formation for Apostolic Vocation' a theme.[41]

Guder is well-known from the 'missional church conversation' in the United States, where it has been a core issue to move away from ecclesio-centrism 'toward understanding the identity and purpose of the church within God's mission, subordinate to and focused upon God's purposes'.[42] The adjective 'missional' has been coined within this 'conversation'. Guder is well aware of the situation within western academic theology, where mission has simply been omitted from the mainstream theological imagination, and instead has had to be worked up as a permanent scaffolding, supporting other theological disciplines.[43] Against such a view, Guder maintains that 'we would not need that scaffolding if our theological work were shaped by the *missio Dei*, if the entire doctrinal enterprise were, in diverse ways, truly focused upon the formation and equipping of the church for its apostolate'.[44] He therefore raises suggestive questions such as:

> What does a thoroughly trinitarian definition and explication of the *missio Dei* mean for the task of theological formation of missional servant leaders of the church? How do our theological disciplines, as they have evolved over the centuries of Christendom, come together around the central task of missional equipping? How does apostolic vocation define and integrate theological formation?[45]

On the one hand, such questions reflect an approach to theology, mission and formation as found in *TTL*, as well as in Hewitt and Ma, with its emphasis on *missio Dei*, sent-ness and formation, even though the immediate context of Guder is 'Christendom' as found in western cultures, with a Christian majority culture and often strong state-church relationships. As the state-church relationship and the public role of the church has rapidly been weakening in most western countries during recent decades, the time is ripe for the church to reconsider what it means to be the (apostolic) church and to take part in *missio Dei*. With such a focus,

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[41] Darrell Guder, 'Missio Dei: Integrating Theological Formation for Apostolic Vocation', in *Missiology: An International Review*, 38.1 (2009), 63-74.

[42] Guder, 'Missio Dei: Integrating', 65.

[43] Guder, 'Missio Dei: Integrating', 65 and 67.

[44] Guder, 'Missio Dei: Integrating', 66.

[45] Guder, 'Missio Dei: Integrating', 64.

members and funding are not the main issues. Rather the contrary, to be a truly apostolic church, being 'witnesses for God's mission through everything that we are, that we say, and that we do',[46] what is needed is 'conversion':

> Congregations in our culture struggle with their missional vocation when the demands of institutional maintenance and the desire for organizational success assert themselves. I find more and more reasons to insist that the challenge before us is not one merely of renewal, or re-tooling, but of conversion – the conversion of the church to its radically simple missional vocation. Since conversion is a work of God's Spirit and is not under our control, our theological formation for apostolic vocation must be done in a posture of patient and confident prayer.[47]

There may be many ways to form a missional vocation. But, citing David Bosch, with immediate relevance for this chapter and in line with the spirit (!) of *TTL*, I think Darrell Guder resonates with *TTL*, Hewitt and Ma, when he hits the nail on the head in his address: 'It is not simply to receive that people are called to become Christians, but rather to give life.'[48] That is a broad perspective on mission, and a strong incentive to missional formation. I think this is the direction towards which missional formation is challenged to navigate.

Conclusion

TTL not only raises the challenge of missional formation; it also provides perspectives and concepts that can revitalize a discussion of this issue as well as formational processes and 'journeys'.

First, one may argue that the very pragmatic aim of mission, traditionally and as expressed in *TTL*, provides a foundation for working with the issue of missional formation. Secondly, we have seen how selected foci, such as discernment and hope, may throw light on how *TTL* challenges us with respect to this issue. Lastly, based on what *TTL* itself has to say about missional formation, and how missional formation is perceived as a major challenge for both churches and institutions of theological education, there is reason to suggest that working on missional formation is not only a good approach to conversing with *TTL*, but is also an issue that makes clear what is at stake for the churches and God's mission in today's world of very different life-affirming and life-threatening forces, mechanisms and contexts. In this, there is no room for working on spirituality, liturgy and mission as separated entities.[49] One must take an integrative approach to both what it means to be a church

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[46] Guder, 'Missio Dei: Integrating', 70.
[47] Guder, 'Missio Dei: Integrating', 73.
[48] Guder, 'Missio Dei: Integrating', 70.
[49] See Kenneth Berding, 'At the Intersection of Mission and Spiritual Formation in the Letters of Paul', in *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 6:1 (2013).

(identity) and how best to participate in God's mission at a particular place at a given time (context).[50]

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[50] See Simon, 'Mission and Frontier-crossing'.

CONCLUSION
TOGETHER IN GOD'S MISSION:
THE PROSPECTS FOR ECUMENICAL MISSIOLOGY

Jooseop Keum

Why should we be ashamed of the gospel, if our mission is life-affirming, not life-denying?

Why should we be ashamed of the gospel, if our mission is witnessing to the Kingdom of God, not our own kingdom?

Why should we be ashamed of the gospel, if our news is good to the suffering people in Galilee, not to the powers in Jerusalem?

Gospel, discipleship, courage, dynamism, passion, joy and hope… These were the words in my mind after the approval of the new mission statement at the tenth WCC Assembly, held in Busan, South Korea, in November 2013. The history of mission during the last century has been marked by many divisions and tensions, sometimes even misrepresentation of God's mission. Accusations and negative images of the missionary movement too much characterized our missiological debates during the past century. This is not to say that there were not mistakes to be corrected or wrongs to be put right. The development of authentic missiology depends on constructive criticism.

In my daily prayers during the drafting process of *Together towards Life*, I prayed, 'O God, may this new mission statement provoke a fresh interest in and commitment to world mission, that this new mission statement may create a positive image of mission so that the ecumenical missionary movement can be rejuvenated, re-energized in the power of the Holy Spirit!'

Peter Cruchley-Jones, a Welsh missiologist, evaluated: '*TTL* offers many horizons for those who would look out from the church doors at the changed landscapes of the world. The horizons and hermeneutics of justice, evangelism, dialogue, healing and unity are all gathered up under the overarching rainbow presence of the Holy Spirit in mission. *TTL* is full of hope and passion, as befits a mission affirmation, and offers itself as a fresh impetus for the Church to cross her own threshold and borders and locate herself in the joys and struggles of the world God loves. The title alone invites and charms us out of ourselves, queries our choice of direction and companion, and challenges all our aims and desires to be life-giving and

life-affirming.'[1] Given that, it seems no small leap of faith to imagine that the church, with all its bureaucracies, anxieties and vanities, can be trusted to be a true partner of the Holy Spirit in this mission and vision of life which moves far beyond the aims of the institutional church. Yet the statement strongly affirms that the Holy Spirit calls us to be a church on the move together towards life.

The question is: how can we live it out? How can we make an elephant dance in cold weather? The cold weather of cynicism against religions, the cold weather of a maintenance and reductionist approach in an age of church decline. It is becoming extremely difficult to share the story of Jesus Christ in secularized societies. People look at Christians as aliens who still believe that the way of Jesus is the true way to live our lives. It may be that we, the people of mission, have still survived. But survival mode is not what the Risen Christ wants us to live out and to carry forth.

Mission Spirituality

The conclusion of *TTL*'s practical guide reminds us that, following the crucifixion of Jesus, 'the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews' (John 20:19).[2] In today's world, disciples of Jesus can find many reasons to be afraid. We could easily be tempted to lock the doors and concern ourselves with self-preservation. The gospel, however, points in a different direction. Jesus came and stood among them saying: 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you' (20:21). Hiding behind locked doors was not their calling. Instead they were sent on a mission modelled after the mission of Jesus. Finally, he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (20:22).

Pope Francis summons us: 'Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, the delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow.'[3] Retreat is not part of our missionary gene. Our Lord called us, 'Don't be afraid' and 'Go in peace' to the world. Indeed, mission begins when the church meets the world, when Christians join in the mission of the Spirit which is already present and at work in the world. The pneumatological focus on mission in *TTL* is not merely theological jargon. Nor is it a copyright of the Pentecostal movement. *TTL* affirms, 'Mission spirituality has a dynamic of transformation which, through spiritual commitment of people, is capable of transforming the world in God's grace.'[4] In order to live out 'Together towards Life', the ecumenical

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[1] Peter Cruchley-Jones, 'Together towards Life & Missional Congregation', CWME Consultation on Missional Formation, 19th-24th October 2014, Pietermaritzburg, RSA, 1.
[2] *TTL*, §72.
[3] *Evangelii Gaudium*, 10.
[4] *TTL,* §3.

missionary movement has to be empowered by the Holy Spirit which is transformative and life-giving.

Therefore, I would like to suggest that a pneumatological paradigm for Christian mission in the pluralist context has to be continuously the focus for ecumenical missiology today.[5] If the previous studies of mission have mainly focused on the theological dimension of Christian mission with emphasis on rigorous rationale, systematic justification and methodological development, the distinctive contribution of *TTL* can be to shift missiological discussions so that they are conducted not only from a theological angle but also from the spiritual perspective. In this way, *TTL* points the direction for missiology in the Post-Enlightenment, post-western, and post-Christendom contexts of world Christianity.

Quality of Discipleship

The disciples dared to open the locked doors of their gated community. They went to people and encountered their daily challenges and hardships. Although they were small in number, poor in material terms, powerless in politics, marginalised in their religious tradition, they took courage to meet the people who were still hungry and sick, hopeless about their future. How then were the disciples able to create a new community of faith and hope after the experience of Pentecost?

In chapter 13 of the book of Acts, there was a shift of the centre of gravity in mission from Jerusalem to Antioch. The Christians in Antioch elected five leaders for their mission and ministry. One of them, together with Paul and Barnabas, was Simeon from Niger. A new-born religious community in Antioch, now taking the name 'Christian', elected a black African slave as their leader. Under the Roman Empire, the prevailing power of that time, slaves were treated no better than livestock. The election of a slave as leader of the community was such a shock that it stirred up the whole society, ultimately the entire Greco-Roman world! There was neither discrimination nor exclusion from the good news of salvation. In this way, powerful witness to the values of the gospel of the Kingdom of God was offered by the disciples. Indeed, it was a sign of hope and transformation for those people who were living in a hopeless situation.

We believe that the gospel has a power to transform the world – personality, value, class, system and society. The gospel of the Kingdom of God challenges the world that keeps the *status quo* of the hopeless situation. The world was not able to silence the small group of disciples. We, as the servants of God, have a mission to share the Good News to all humanity and creation which is longing for hope in their life. There is God's preferential love for the receivers of the good news in this process.

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[5] See further, Amos Yong, *The Missiological Spirit: Christian Mission Theology in the Third Millennium Global Context* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014).

The receivers are the ones to judge whether the news delivered to them is good or bad. The news which Jesus spread across Galilee was news of salvation – but it was utterly bad news for the people in Jerusalem because they understood the good news as a serious threat to their political, economic and religious powers and privileges. They had a strong faith, not in Jesus but in their money, power and religious hierarchy. Therefore, they crucified Jesus in order to silence this news so that they could continue enjoying their perpetual privileges.

What news are we sharing with the world today? Are we not talking only to ourselves? Are we not talking only in familiar and comfortable settings? Jesus did not start his movement of the Kingdom of God in the temple; rather, he began his ministry 'outside the gate' among the vulnerable people. If our eyes are turned towards the peoples at the margins, we will not need to be ashamed of the proclamation of the Good News. If we are bringing something really good to them, we have to take the courage to share the story of Jesus Christ.

People will know by the instinct of their hearts who we are. People know by the instinct of their hearts whether we do really believe in the vision of the new heavens and earth. *TTL* has beautifully expressed the reality that 'mission is the overflow of the infinite love of the Triune God'.[6] There are so many ways to share the love of God in this troubled world! Even in public spaces, the Holy Spirit is present and active. Therefore, we should pray for a fresh outpouring of the Spirit to empower our engagement with people and society. It is time to question ourselves as ecumenical mission leaders and workers: 'Are we true disciples of the gospel?' In my view, this question is more important than any other academic missiological discourse in today's context. It is not a matter of numbers or resources. It is the quality of discipleship that will prove decisive. It is time for the issues of authentic discipleship to be given priority attention in ecumenical missiology, given today's context where faith in mammon is threatening the credibility of the gospel.

Religion, Violence and Peace

The increasing levels of conflict that give rise to massive numbers of deaths, ethnic cleansing, the increase of displaced people on a large scale, and other acts of violence particularly committed against women and children, are a matter of profound concern for our mission. Particularly disturbing aspects of the violence we witness today are the inhuman conditions in which uprooted people are forced to live. Even basic human rights are ignored and war crimes perpetrated against women and children are so terrible that it is difficult to believe they are happening in the 21st century.

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[6] *TTL,* §19.

In many cases, religion has fuelled the escalation of conflicts. Even within the same religion, different sects and factions justify the conflicts in the name of their particular doctrinal convictions. Some argue that it is politicians who actually cause the conflicts and justify them in the name of religion. Even so, there remains the question, 'Can we refuse together to serve as the emperor's clothes?' The core of the teachings of the major world religions is wisdom of life. If we are preaching on the nature and salvation of life, we should be able to work together to safeguard life. Religion is a powerful source of peace and reconciliation in conflict situations, if we are able to work together. This is why the WCC is strongly committed to inter-faith dialogue and co-operation for life.

Individual churches often feel helpless in the face of such developments as war and violence. Therefore, it is necessary to expand our understanding of mission as common inter-faith witness in our community as well as in the public square. Public witness takes 'the world's' agenda as a missional agenda. We need to seek together to offer distinctive and constructive insights from our treasury of faith to help in the building of healing and reconciling communities. The ecumenical history of public witness testifies that unity in mission or common witness is a powerful source and symbol of solidarity and support and encouragement to overcome conflicts and violence. The WCC launched the 'Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace' at its tenth Assembly in Busan, South Korea, in 2013 as an overarching programmatic strategy to affirm life in the context of increasing conflict and violence on a global scale. Therefore, it is an imperative for ecumenical missiology today to actively contribute to the pilgrimage of justice and peace through developing a missional pilgrimage.

A Theology of Hospitality

Today, about 250 million people are on the move, carrying with them their cultural and religious backgrounds. At least 75 million have permanently settled in new lands and around half of them are Christians. Migration has become a worldwide and multi-directional phenomenon which is radically reshaping the Christian landscape. Today's context of large-scale worldwide migration challenges the churches' commitment to mission and unity in very practical ways because of the fact that many migrant churches are existing separately from the churches in the lands where they have settled. Churches can be a place of refuge for migrant communities; they can also be intentional focal points for inter-cultural engagement. The churches are called to be one to serve God's mission beyond ethnic and cultural boundaries, and so ought to create multicultural ministry and mission as a concrete expression of common witness in diversity. This may entail advocating justice in regard to migration policies and resistance to xenophobia and racism.

One of the reasons for the success of the missionary movement was its practice of hospitality. One of the key themes of the pneumatological approach in mission is the Spirit's mission of hospitality together with charisma, dynamism, healing, diversity and transformation. A fruit of mission spirituality is *shalom*: 'Go in peace'. God's *shalom* provokes a radical hospitality overcoming hostility. Martin Luther King Jr said: 'I have decided to stick with love; hate is too great a burden to bear.' God's *shalom* introduces the mission of a transforming hospitality of justice. Justice is not only a standard that rejects the evil of hostility and hatred towards refugees and migrants, but is also the power to transform hatred and hostility into hospitality. God's hospitality is unconditional and eschatological. It is not God's mission merely to extend an invitation to the guests and treat them nicely. Rather, this is a matter of ontological mission, of being together as one family in God's *shalom* – a missional vision of unity.

Pentecostal missiologist Amos Yong introduces three elements that constitute a pneumatological theology of hospitality:

1.   Christian hospitality is grounded upon the hospitable God who through the incarnation has received creation to himself and through Pentecost has given himself to creation. God gives of himself by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to all flesh, and by doing so welcomes and embraces all humanity; at another level, human beings receive the gift of God, effectively hosting the Spirit of God in their bodies.
2.   Christian hospitality is enacted by the charismatic practice of the church as its members are empowered by the Holy Spirit. The hospitality of God is thus embodied in a hospitable church whose members are empowered by the Holy Spirit to stand in solidarity and serve with the sick, the poor and the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19).
3.   Christian hospitality is realizable in a world of many faiths only when it is reciprocated by those in other faiths, and such reciprocity is made possible by the Spirit who is poured out on all flesh.[7]

In God's hospitality, there is no discrimination between the poor and the rich, between the Jew and the Gentile, between male and female, between centrality and marginality. God calls us to a new relationship of mutual hospitality, not only at the margins but also at the centre, not only within Christianity but also with other faiths, and not only the receivers of the news but also those who bring it need to be ready to be transformed through the encounter of marginality. A pneumatological theology of hospitality is an important missiological theme in the context of religious plurality and migration. Therefore the development of an ecumenical missiology of hospitality is urgently needed today.

It is the God of *missio Dei* who will continue to knock the gates of the church in the face of refugees and migrants. The term 'refugees and migrants' is not only a sociological term. In this 21st century of

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[7] Yong, *The Missiological Spirit*, 88-92.

globalisation, it represents a reality that calls for constant attention from every Christian who follows in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Migration is a mission issue and the theology of hospitality is the theological agenda today!

The Younger Generation

Globally, young people are turbulent. They are yearning to work, and yet finding themselves on the fringes of society, marginalized and excluded politically and economically. The competition and stress to fight for their future is at a level that is unprecedented in human history. Many of them have not been able to get even their first proper jobs. In some situations, this dismal reality has become fertile ground for religious extremism.

How are we addressing this issue through our missional work? Can the current structures and ways of working in the church and the ecumenical movement attract many young people? Agnes Abuom, moderator of the WCC central committee, stressed, in an address to the committee: 'If there is a growing sense that the global ecumenical movement is losing its prophetic cutting edge and instead becoming more and more institutionalized and bureaucratic, it is also because it has slowly but steadily been losing its youthfulness… Therefore, to bring back prophetic dynamism and movement emphasis into the ecumenical movement, we need to let the young generation own and define the ecumenical movement.'[8]

We need deliberately to invite and encourage young people if we want to revitalize the ecumenical missionary movement, if we want to have fresh visions in mission (Joel 2:28). It is time to take radical measures. It is important that we change ourselves to fit into the new generation, rather than asking them to fit into ours.

Equipping Congregations and Future Leaders

Will *TTL* help in enabling local congregations to be missional? Chammah Kaunda and Roderick Hewitt claim that the missional formation process of *TTL* should be intentionally interdisciplinary and ecumenical, taking seriously the theological education that shapes its development and examining whether the local congregation remains the primary agent of God's mission in the world. The pedagogical task needs to be reframed within the contextual model of missiological education for the formation of

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[8] Agnes Abuom, 'Moving Together Towards Communities of Justice and Peace', Moderator's Address, WCC Central Committee, 2nd-8th July 2014, Geneva, 5.

missional leaders. New forms of pedagogical transformation have to emerge that may facilitate fullness of life.[9]

Undoubtedly, *TTL* has significant implications for education and formation. It has already been widely taught in theological schools. It also suggests a new approach to missional leadership formation that involves all members of faith communities, employing their unique spiritual gifts to discern and address the critical missionary challenges facing us today and encouraging them to join in the mission of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is vital that ecumenical missiology should generate the resources and materials for missional formation based on *TTL* at the various levels of churches and mission bodies. The present volume is a fine example of what needs to be done. As CWME looks forward to its next world mission conference in 2018, it will engage in further work towards a process of missional formation, a pedagogical and contextualizing process of *TTL*. Work is underway to develop a missiological curriculum for the training of future mission leaders in theological schools, modules for equipping local congregations, and continuing education courses for missionaries and mission workers.

Convergence between Ecumenical and Evangelical Understandings of Mission

In the changing landscape of mission today, it is questionable whether the dichotomy of ecumenical and evangelical perspectives is still relevant to envisioning the future of world Christianity. One could also ask the question whether it is rather a hindrance to 'reformulating' the future of mission. In fact, it is imperative to articulate a new approach to revitalize mission through convergence and co-operation between the ecumenical and evangelical understandings of mission. It is vital to seek a way of overcoming the missiological confrontations of the last century and to attempt to develop a new synergy between the two approaches.

One of the most significant missiological developments in the early years of the 21st century has been an increasing exchange and mutual respect between the ecumenical and evangelical movements of mission. Edinburgh 2010 has enlarged the fellowship and led to reconciliation among different mission streams. It has increased confidence among the partners involved, allowed for the sharing of power and provided space to each. Its final aim was relational, reaching in the long-term a form of *koinonia* in mission. CWME intentionally remained in a more supporting role for Edinburgh 2010 to nurture the fellowship. CWME was open in

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[9] Chammah J. Kaunda and Roderick R. Hewitt, '"Together towards Life": Reconceptualising Missio-Formation in the Changing Landscape of World Christianity'. CWME Consultation on Missional Formation, 19th-24th October 2014, Pietermaritzburg, RSA, 20.

Edinburgh for constant updates, modifications and reformulations of its own positions on mission and evangelism, in the search for a new consensus on the matter.

An analysis of the *Common Call* produced at the Edinburgh conference shows that positions defended for decades by CWME have now become somewhat common ground: *missio Dei*, empowerment and humility, creation as scope of mission, the holistic content of the gospel, mission from everywhere to everywhere, unity and mission. There has also been a particular emphasis on pneumatology, where one can discern the influence of Pentecostal traditions. Indeed, Edinburgh 2010 was a moment of celebration, healing and convergence of the missionary movement.

TTL also affirms that evangelism is at the centre of Christian mission. The new mission statement has four main chapters – on spirituality, margins, church and evangelism. It is important to note that the entire section on evangelism was drafted jointly by the World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission and the CWME evangelism desk. The co-operation between WCC and WEA in the work of the 'Recommendations for Conduct'[10] and the new mission statement is a remarkable achievement – something that we could not have dreamt of during the last century, and a sign of overcoming the dichotomy and bringing synergy to our approach in mission.

Healing the wounds of division in world mission, nurturing the current co-operative relationship, and leading to a new opportunity of common witness to the good news of Jesus Christ in a world where the credibility of the Christian faith has been seriously challenged, is a significant task of ecumenical missiology.

Mission and Ecumenism

What can be the role of mission at this current juncture in the history of the ecumenical movement? During the last century, the missionary movement has both inspired and given shape to the modern ecumenical movement as the churches have sought to respond to the challenges of history and to be witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ for the world through visible unity. However, we are facing a sharp challenge to define the vision and relevance of the ecumenical movement within the changing ecclesial and global landscape of today.

There are three vantage points with regard to the distinctive role of mission within the wider ecumenical movement. First, mission can play a prophetic role in bringing together unity and justice discourses in the ecumenical movement. Mission provides a holistic approach that helps to affirm the integrity of the ecumenical movement because of the way in which it connects people and contexts. Mission can play a unique role in

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[10] *TTL,* §90.

connecting the scattered streams of the ecumenical movement today and strengthening the synergy between them, a point emphasized in *TTL*. This does not mean that mission is claiming a self-centred approach where we see our tradition as more important than others. Rather, it is placing mission in a position of serving the whole ecumenical movement.

Secondly, mission can play a creative role in the midst of dilemmas between movement and institution by bringing new vision to the ecumenical movement. It is inevitable that we develop institutions as a means of trying to secure the integrity of the movement. However, over time, the institution can lose the vision for the movement and fall into the temptation to only serve its self-interest. In such a situation, mission can provide the bridge between movements and institutions, through missiological imagination and action. As witnessed in the history of CWME, traced in Section 1 of this book, mission has constantly pioneered a new paradigm for the ecumenical movement.

Thirdly, mission has a distinctive role between the church and development agencies within the WCC. Vladimir Fedorov reminds us that, 'In 1961, the World Council of Churches entered into mission, not the opposite.'[11] Our forebears had an ambitious plan to challenge and transform churches to become missionary congregations, recognizing the role of the church as the primary agent of mission. In spite of this ambitious project, we must ask, 'Where is the location of mission in the WCC today?' What place can it find between the hierarchy of the church and the power of the resources of the development agencies?

Mission is all about the face-to-face encounter of people. It is about the stories of God's people responding to the calling to be common witnesses to the hope in Jesus Christ. Mission has an important role in reclaiming the human face, the powerful stories and testimonies of God's people, an experience that we have all enjoyed throughout our time together towards life. The human stories of all God's people contributing to God's mission in the power of God's Spirit can serve as a continuous and much-needed challenge to the church and the ecumenical movement. If mission fails in this role, it is doubtful whether the ecumenical movement can remain relevant among the generation who are living in the secularised context. Therefore, it is highly important to put the mission agenda at the heart of the church and the ecumenical movement today and tomorrow.

> The Triune God invites the whole creation to the Feast of Life, through Jesus Christ who came 'that they may have life, and may have it in all its fullness' (John 10:10), through the Holy Spirit who affirms the vision of the reign of God, 'Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth!' (Isaiah 65:17). We commit ourselves together in humility and hope to the mission of God, who

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[11] Archpriest Vladimir Fedorov, 'The Wind of Change: An Orthodox Point of View', in *International Review of Mission,* 101.2 (2012), 405.

recreates all and reconciles all. And we pray, 'God of life, lead us to justice and peace'[12]

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[12] *TTL,* §112.

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INDEX