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# Paradigm Shifts in Missiology

Denton Lotz

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MISSIOLOGY, OR THE science of missions (in German *Missionswissenschaft*) is the academic and critical study of the biblical basis, history, theology, methods and practice of the expansion of the Christian Church engaged in mission. Missiology, as an academic subject, struggled and in some places still struggles to be accepted as a proper academic discipline. The first chair of mission was actually initiated in 1867 in Edinburgh, Scotland with the former great missionary, Alexander Duff being the pioneer professor of missions. It was Gustav Wichern, however, the great German professor of missions who developed missiology as a separate academic discipline. North America and Germany continue to take the lead in integrating the study of missions into theological education. However, it is still a struggle in much of the-

ological education to confront students with the necessity of studying missions. The mission of the church is weaker because of that.

As missiologists one of the first things we must do is to recognize the signs of the times in which we are living. Therefore, I would like first to deal with the world context in which we today are called upon to be a missionary people!

## I The Present Context of Missiology

We are living in a period which in just a few decades has experienced a seismic shift in world history. Few generations have had the opportunity, as has ours, to experience such radical changes. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 symbolized not only the fall of communism and the end to a cold war which determined most of the course of 20th century history, but it also opened up a Pandora's Box of hopes, aspirations and determination of the Two-thirds world ethnic groups for freedom, justice and equality.

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## 1 The clash of civilizations

The end of the cold war was indeed the beginning of what Samuel Huntington calls 'the clash of civilizations'. This can be seen very clearly in what happened with the break-up of the Soviet Union. Suddenly tribal and ethnic peoples, accompanied by dreams of nationhood which had been suppressed by Soviet armed force, began to assert themselves with fierce and violent wars. This may be clearly seen in the many ethnic conflicts of former Soviet states: Azerbaijan against Armenia, Chechnya against Russia, Bosnia against Serbia, and Serbia against Croatia.

Tribal conflicts have also been the order of the day in Africa and Asia. How can one forget the holocaust of Rwanda where one million people were slaughtered in the terrible war between Hutus and Tutsis? Such conflicts are also part of the recent history of Asia as seen in the conflict of Pakistan and India over Kashmir, and the conflict between the Nagas in India and their government, as well as the tragic conflict between tribal groups in Indonesia. We must take Huntington seriously, even though we might not agree with many of his conclusions, that this conflict of civilizations is basically a conflict of religions. Although the US government maintains that the recent war in Iraq was not about Islam, the people of the Middle East maintain that it was. The fact is that religious conflicts, as never before, have already determined to a certain extent the conflicts of the 21st century. The wars mentioned above were basically religious in nature: Azerbaijan and Armenia, Muslim against Christian; Serbia

against Bosnia, Christian against Muslim; India against Pakistan, Hindu against Muslim, etc. The list goes on and on. For example, the destruction of the Baptist seminary in Kaduna, Nigeria and the consequent destruction of nineteen churches and the death of more than one thousand people was decidedly a conflict between Muslims and Christian. The conflict in Indonesia on the island of Ambon is a conflict of Muslims and Christians.

One cannot escape the fact that the context of Christian mission in the world today will be one where religions meet. The question is: Will it be a meeting where tolerance, understanding and dialogue take place or will it be settled by war and destruction?

The context of mission in the 21st century is not only determined by religious conflicts but, as we shall later discuss, also one that includes a massive list of problems: the rich North against the poor South, human rights violations by totalitarian governments, religious persecution, lack of education, poverty, hunger and the injustice that follows from crime and corruption, health problems, including the pandemic of HIV/AIDS and SARS. The question confronting mission in the 21st century is: 'Does the Church of Jesus Christ have a word of hope and redemption in the very context and struggles of daily life of millions of people suffering from the evil forces that are tearing them down?'

## 2 The state of world Christianity

We are indebted to David Barrett for the most extensive annual statistics not only of world Christianity, but all major religions. The total population of

the world is about 6.3 billion. Rounding off Barrett's figures, of the 6.3 billion people in the world 33.1% are Christians, whereas 20.2% are Muslims. If the present trend continues, by 2025 the percentages will be about the same with about a .2% increase of Christians and a .5% increase of Muslims. What is astounding about these figures, however, is that in 1900, at the end of the Great Century of missions, 34.5% of the world was Christian and 12.3% Muslims. In other words Islam has increased its total percentage of the world population by 10% during the past 100 years whereas Christianity has actually decreased. Of course we can attribute this to many factors, including the low birthrate of European Christians compared to the high birthrate of Middle Eastern and Asian Muslims. But it does give us pause to consider that in spite of all our talk of mission, all of our strategies and methods for world evangelization, the percentage of Christians in the world has been rather static.

Another more positive way of looking at these statistics is that in 1900 about 85% of Christians in the world were in Europe and North America. Today 55% of Christians in the world are in the so-called Two-thirds world of Africa, Asia and Latin America! Thus one could point to these figures as the sign of the 'success' of the world missionary movement.

This success of the world Christian missionary movement has been popularized recently for us by Professor Philip Jenkins's book, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. Jenkins popularizes what missiologists have been saying for the past fifty years: Christianity is moving south-

ward to the continents of Africa, Asia and Latin America: 'The era of Western Christianity has passed within our lifetime, and the day of Southern Christianity is dawning'.<sup>1</sup> The fact is, the next Christendom will not be white or European, but it will be African, Asian and Hispanic. This one can already see again in the statistics. Although Europe is nominally Christian and numbers 560 million, already Latin American totals are 480 million, Africa 360 million, and Asia 313 million Christians... and a greater percentage of these go to church!!

The conclusion of the book is a warning to western Christians. Jenkins maintains that 'Southern Christianity, the Third Church, is not just a transplanted version of the familiar religion of the older Christian states: the New Christendom is no mirror image of the old. It is a truly new and developing entity'.<sup>2</sup> The consequences of this new Christendom for the so-called older Christendom are immense. If it is true that 'Christianity is flourishing wonderfully among the poor and persecuted, while it atrophies among the rich and secure',<sup>3</sup> what does this mean for the former sending churches, for European and North American Christianity? It is to this context of the 'old Christendom' that we must briefly direct our attention!

### 3 The state of old Christendom

The Catholic Professor of Dogmatics at

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1 Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 3.

2 Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, p. 214.

3 Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, p. 220.

Tuebingen University, Peter Huenermann, states several theses that apply to the situation of the Christian Church in Europe: 1.) The European church as an institution is in a process of dissolution, 2.) The current crisis of the European church is linked to the crisis of the transformation of European society in modernity, in which the basic characteristics of the emerging society are in discontinuity with the institutional structure of the church.<sup>4</sup> Statistics for France show that although 45 million of the 57 million French consider themselves baptized Catholics, 47% of the French population consider themselves areligious or atheistic! In Germany 70% of the East Germans are without any religion. On the other hand, in cities such as Berlin and Frankfurt 20 to 30% of school age children are Muslims, numbering 3.3 million in all of Germany.

In Britain, home of William Carey and the main force of the modern missionary movement of the 19th century, the figures are similar. Simon Barrow, secretary of the Churches' Commission on Mission of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland paints a very bleak picture of the state of Christianity in the UK. He maintains that out of a total population of 50 million only around 900,000 attend an Anglican Church on Sunday morning. In the parish where he used to work, only 40,000 of 1.3 mil-

lion attended church on Sunday.<sup>5</sup> The British Cardinal O'Connor caused quite an uproar when he stated that the public influence of Christianity in Britain has 'almost been vanquished'.<sup>6</sup> Alastair McIntyre made the rude comment that 'the religion of the English is that there is no God, and it is wise to pray to him from time to time'.<sup>7</sup>

Barrows puts a positive twist to this decline by stating, '... the reality of traditional church decline in the West is perhaps the judgment we need in order to discover what is lacking...'<sup>8</sup> In addition, the good news for Britain and Europe is that the fastest growing churches here are mainly made up of immigrants from Africa. The former sending country is now a receiving country. There are 1500 missionaries from 50 countries in the UK today. The largest Baptist Church in Britain is an African Baptist Church in London made up mainly of Ghanaians and Nigerians!

The state of the church in North America gives no cause for arrogance about the state of the church in Europe. The fact is there has been a steady decline in church attendance. But more than this, secularism has eroded the church's influence on society. In the media, academy, and intellectual life the Christian faith is continually mar-

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Huenermann, 'Evangelization of Europe: Observations of a Church in Peril', *Mission in the Third Millennium*, Robert J. Schreier, ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001), pp. 58, 65.

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<sup>5</sup> Simon Barrow, 'From management to vision: issues for British churches negotiating decline and change', *International Review of Mission*, XCII:364 (Jan 2003), p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Barrow, 'From management to vision', p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Barrow, 'From management to vision', p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Barrow, 'From management to vision', p. 16.

ginalized and has less and less influence.

Obviously the above facts concerning the new Christianity of the Two-thirds world and the decline of the Church in the West is in itself a paradigm shift which we need to consciously consider when detailing the next thrust of this paper, that is, the paradigm shifts throughout history of missionary theology, methods and work.

## II Paradigm Shifts

It is a fact that the world has changed greatly since the birth of Christ. Also, our comprehension of the Christian faith has grown and changed with time. Christ is timeless but humans are fallible and finite. Christ is infinite and does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever! But you and I are very different from our grandparents' generation. When my maternal grandparents left Florence, Italy in 1900 and sailed for New York, they never intended going back to the old country. They had immigrated and left a way of life. The same was true for my paternal grandparents from Bremen, Germany. The airplane had not yet been invented. Today we think nothing of flying to Rome, or Paris, or Tokyo. As a result our way of thinking about travel has changed immensely. The concept of immigration has also changed greatly. The annual pilgrimage of Algerians leaving France for Algiers, travelling through Spain and then to Gibraltar and North Africa is an example of the new way of thinking about immigration.

In a much larger way, science today is very different from science yester-

day. The way we think about reality is changed by our scientific understanding of technology and time. Thomas Kuhn made a significant breakthrough in our understanding of this changed way of thinking. In analysing the way scientific discoveries are made, he realized that science does not just grow cumulatively but rather by revolutions. A group of scientists begin to understand that the old way of thinking about science was wrong and they begin to search for a new model of theoretical structure, or what Kuhn calls a new 'paradigm'.<sup>9</sup> In recent years this phrase 'paradigm shift' has entered our vocabulary and is used constantly to explain the need for the church to understand that the old way of doing things, that our old way of doing mission is no longer appropriate. We need a new paradigm, a new way of thinking!

Of course the new paradigm is not immediately accepted, and thus there is usually a conflict between the old way of thinking and the new. Misunderstandings take place because the 'proponents of the old paradigm often just cannot understand the arguments of the proponents of the new'.<sup>10</sup> However, as Bosch explains, 'the existing (or old) paradigm increasingly blurs, and the new one begins to attract more and more scholars, until eventually the

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<sup>9</sup> I am indebted to David J. Bosch's *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991) for this discussion of Kuhn, as well as our future discussion of paradigm shifts in mission theology.

<sup>10</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 184.

original problem-ridden paradigm is abandoned'.<sup>11</sup>

Jesus Christ does not change! Our theology changes, but it can never deny God's revelation in Scripture, his work through the people of Israel and his final revelation and redemption in Jesus Christ. But our understanding of reality and the implications of revelation for a particular time and culture may change. Therefore, with the advent of world Christianity we need to listen to one another. As Hiebert states, the Christian church should function as an 'international hermeneutical community'. That means that 'Christians and theologians from different contexts challenge one another's cultural, social and ideological biases'.<sup>12</sup>

### III Six Historical Paradigms of Mission

Probably the book on the Theology of Mission of the last century was that of David J. Bosch who was formerly head of the Department of Mission of the University of South Africa. He was tragically killed in an auto accident in 1993. His book, quoted above, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, presents a sweeping historical and theological review of the different paradigms in mission from the early church until today.

Before analysing Bosch's six paradigms we need to remind ourselves that this is not the first or last time that theologians will look back on Christian

history and discover various paradigms. Another generation may have spoken of 'periods of history'. Others may have spoken of different typologies, e.g. H. R. Niebuhr's *Christ and History* outlines five different types of ways in which the church related to the world throughout history. J.C. Hoekendijk often spoke of the four heroes of Christian faith throughout history and showed them as different paradigms or models for mission. He spoke of the four 'Ms': martyr, monk, milites (knights), and missionary. K. S. Latourette, the great Baptist historian of missions, has his own periodization: 1.) The First Five Centuries (to 500 A.D.), 2.) The Thousand Years of Uncertainty (500-1500 A.D.), 3.) Three Centuries of Advance (1500-1800 A.D.), 4.) The Great Century (1800-1914 A.D.), 5.) Advance Through Storm (1914 A.D.- Present).

However, Bosch's analysis of the history of missions is different. He analyses the six periods, not merely historically, but sees that there was an actual shift in the view of reality and comprehension of the faith which changed the way the church did mission. Bosch bases his six paradigms on Hans Kueng's six major paradigms: the apocalyptic paradigm of primitive Christianity; the Hellenistic paradigm of the patristic period; the medieval Roman Catholic paradigm; the Protestant (Reformation) paradigm; the modern Enlightenment paradigm; and the emerging ecumenical paradigm.

Bosch's analysis of these six historical paradigms is a brilliant tour de force of the way mission theology has changed throughout the years. What is most instructive, I believe, is to understand how each paradigm greatly influ-

11 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 184.

12 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 187.

enced the adherents to act in a particular way, often without reflection or thought as to the consequences. It is very helpful for us to review these to see how they could influence our Baptist understanding of mission in the 21st century!

## 1 The apocalyptic paradigm of primitive Christianity

For centuries the Christian Church had lost the sense of the apocalyptic and eschatological nature of the message of Jesus and the New Testament. In 1918 Karl Barth in his commentary on Romans stated very clearly: 'Christianity that is not entirely and altogether eschatology has entirely and altogether nothing to do with Christ.'<sup>13</sup>

The early Church understood that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was the paradigm shift of all history and all humanity. Jesus' incarnation was the beginning of the end. Therefore, we must view the early Church's paradigm in the light of Christ being the victor over the devil, over the evil powers of this world. It is not our responsibility to give a review of the apocalyptic nature of Jesus' message and the New Testament but merely to indicate that if we lost this emphasis we have lost the heart of the gospel message of Jesus! The New Testament was a missionary book. No wonder that Martin Kaehler many years ago could say that mission was the Mother of Theology. Hahn sum-

marises this view of New Testament understanding of mission: Mission is 'the Church's service, made possible by the coming of Christ and the dawning of the eschatological event of salvation... The Church goes in confidence and hope to meet the future of its Lord, with the duty of testifying before the whole world to God's love and redemptive deed.'<sup>14</sup> Every book of the New Testament to a certain extent is attempting to proclaim the crucified and risen Christ as the Saviour of all the nations. Jesus is victor and that gave life to the early community of faithful and continues to do so today!

## 2 The Hellenistic paradigm of the patristic period

The early Church in the first three centuries had to grow and live in an alien culture. As it grew it had to relate to that culture and the philosophies of that culture. We owe much to this period of history. Its definitions of the trinity, its defence of the divinity of Christ, its triumph over the decaying philosophies helped make the Christian message acceptable to the people and the empire. But beyond the philosophers the real triumph was that of the love of Christ in the life of the believer! Rosenkranz states: 'In this macabre world, submerged in despair, perversity and superstition, something new existed and grew: Christianity, bastion of love for God and brother, of the Holy Spirit, and of hope for God's coming reign.'<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cited in *The Last Things: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Eschatology*, edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jensen, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), p. vii.

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<sup>14</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 54.

<sup>15</sup> Rosenkranz, in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 192.



However, in defending the faith, 'the message became doctrine, the doctrine dogma, and this dogma was expounded in precepts which were expertly strung together'.<sup>16</sup> Eventually, however, eschatology and pneumatology were replaced by ecclesiology. It is sad to hear these words of Bosch, 'What began in primitive Christianity as a bold confession in the face of the emperor cult that Jesus was Lord, ended in a compromise where the emperor was to rule in "time" and Christ in "eternity"'.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, we owe a great debt to the Eastern Church for grounding the message and mission of Jesus in the love of God, a revolutionary message in the face of unmoved gods of Greece and Rome!

### 3 The medieval Roman Catholic paradigm

For the next thousand years the centre of Christianity moved from a Greek interpretation to that of a Roman understanding. Whereas Greek theology emphasized the incarnation, Rome emphasized the cross. Whereas Greek theology emphasized John 3:16 and God's love, Roman theology in mission emphasized Luke 14:23: 'compel them to come in...' As Bosch emphasizes, Christianity moved from being an oppressed sect to an oppressor of sects. Christendom became the unity of church and state. Boerwinkel concludes that the apocalyptic missionary movement of the primitive church gave

way to the expansion of Christendom!!<sup>18</sup>

Is it any wonder that many Christians in Latin America objected in 1992 to the 500th celebration of Christopher Columbus 'discovering the new world'? It was said by some that he was not Christopher (bearer of Christ), but Cultopher (bearer of culture). To a certain extent one could say that the colonial expansion of the church during this period was a triumph of culture over the tribal and indigenous peoples who were 'compelled' to come in to the church!

### 4 The Protestant (Reformation) paradigm

Cardinal Bellarmine included missionary activity as one of the marks of the true church. In condemning Protestantism he emphasized its heresy by its lack of mission: 'Heretics are never said to have converted either pagans or Jews to the faith, but only to have perverted Christians'.<sup>19</sup> This may have been true at the beginning of the Reformation, but certainly within Reformation life, and particularly the continual reformation as expressed by Pietism, there was a great movement of missionary activity.

Romans 1:16, which emphasizes that the just shall live by faith, became the missionary text for the Reformers. Thus faith was emphasized which viewed man in light of the fall and his personal sinfulness and thus the individual need for salvation; Scripture and

16 Van de Aalst cited in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 195.

17 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 202.

18 Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 237.

19 S. Neill, *History of Christian Missions*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 221.

preaching were thus emphasized. Because of this belief in the priesthood of all believers and the personal interpretation of scripture schisms occurred and still haunt Protestantism with its more than three hundred different denominations!

Whereas the Reformers wanted a reformation, the Anabaptists wanted a replacement of the church. Voetius, influenced by Calvinism, emphasized a threefold aspect of mission: conversion, church planting, and the glory and manifestation of grace. The Reformers did not believe in separation of church and state and this affected their view of mission. Pietists and Baptists often had to fight the colonial authoritarianism which was a hindrance to mission.<sup>20</sup> The Anabaptists considered all of Christianity apostate and thus saw Europe as a mission field. It was the Anabaptists who made the Great Commission mandatory for all believers.<sup>21</sup>

## 5 The modern Enlightenment paradigm

It is this paradigm with which we are most familiar. Of course the scriptural basis for this became The Great Commission (Matthew 28:20f.) 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel...' This still remains the leading scriptural basis for mission among most Baptists and evangelicals to this day. The Enlightenment paradigm has been the basis of most of our education and

most of our thinking. Characteristics of the Enlightenment had a great effect on mission, whether liberal, evangelical or conservative. The Enlightenment emphasized reason, the subject-object scheme, the elimination of purpose, the belief in inevitable progress, knowledge was factual and value-free, all problems were solvable and finally that people were emancipated, autonomous individuals.

The motives of missionary enterprise based upon Enlightenment thinking were as follows: The glory of God; Jesus' love; the gospel and cultural superiority; mission and 'Manifest Destiny'; mission and colonialism; mission and the millennium; Pre-Postmillennialism and Millennialism; voluntarism and mission societies; missionary fervour; optimism, and pragmatism.

We respect with awe and reverence the many accomplishments and saintly missionaries who gave their lives to the 'Great Century' of missions during the past century. However, we would be foolish not to listen to the critique of this period which had its failings due to Enlightenment thinking often contrary to the gospel. Bosch concludes his survey of this paradigm with these words:

The entire Western missionary movement of the past three centuries merged from the matrix of the Enlightenment. On the one hand, it spawned an attitude of tolerance to all people and a relativistic attitude toward belief of any kind; on the other, it gave birth to Western superiority feelings and prejudice. It is not always possible to divide these sentiments neatly between 'liberals' and 'evangelicals'. Moreover, and only seeming-

<sup>20</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 261, gives an excellent analysis of the ambivalences of the reformation paradigm.

<sup>21</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 246.

ly incongruously, tolerance as well as intolerance, relativism as well as bigotry could often be found side by side in the same person or group.<sup>22</sup>

Of course it is easy, one hundred years later, to be so critical of the mistakes of earlier missionaries, but must we not also commend them for their courage, their faith, their deep spirituality and commitment to evangelize the world in this generation? Should we not commend them and respect them for sacrificing all, leaving family, friends and giving their lives on foreign soil to proclaim God's love in Christ!?

Where do we go from here then in the 21st century? One of the leading missiologists of the 20th century was Keith Bridston who commented on the latter half of the century's events 'to be as radical in its implications for the missionary outlook of the Christian church as the Copernican revolution was for the scientific cosmology of its day'.<sup>23</sup> He concludes with these jarring words: 'The only ultimately effective solution to the widespread missionary malaise of today, which is sometimes hidden from our eyes because of our apparent missionary successes, is a "radical transformation of the whole life of the church"'.<sup>24</sup>

## 6 The emerging ecumenical paradigm

Bosch concludes his study of the para-

digm shifts by analysing what he believes will be the paradigm for the 21st century which he calls 'The emerging ecumenical paradigm'. The fact is we have to learn to live and witness together as Christians. The following factors have forced upon the whole church the necessity in this post modern period to seek a new paradigm:

- i) The West has lost its dominance in the world. In fact the world is seeking liberation from the 'stranglehold of the West'.
- ii) Unjust structures of oppression and exploitation are today challenged as never before in human history.
- iii) Western technology, development and the idea of progress is suspect. They have proven to be false gods of the Enlightenment.
- iv) We live in a shrinking world with finite resources. Environment and people are interdependent.
- v) We must work for peace and justice in light of the fact that for the first time in human history we are capable of wiping out humankind.
- vi) European theologies can no longer claim superiority over other parts of the world: 'Culture shapes the human voice that answers the voice of Christ.'
- vii) Freedom of religion is considered a basic human right. In light of this Christians are forced to reevaluate their attitude toward and understanding of other faiths.<sup>25</sup>

Professor Helmut Thielecke spoke of the necessity for a theology which emphasized personal salvation and

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<sup>22</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 344.

<sup>23</sup> Bridston, in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 345.

<sup>24</sup> Bridston, in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 345.

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<sup>25</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 188f.

also held it in creative tension with social salvation. He spoke of the need for simultaneity. In re-emphasizing the need for a recovery of a biblical eschatology in mission Bosch reminds us of the problem of over-emphasizing either a fixation on the parousia or a neglect of the transcendent: 'In its fixation on the parousia, the first has neglected the problems of the world and thereby crippled Christian mission. In its pre-occupation with this world to the exclusion of the transcendent dimension, the second has robbed people of ultimate meaning and of a teleological dimension without which nobody can survive.'<sup>26</sup> Must we not, however, rejoice that because of the sacrifice of the missionary movement there is indeed a church all over the world?

#### IV A New Paradigm for the 21st Century

Each of us here today has our own understandings and ideas of where we need to go if we are to be a missionary people in the 21st century. The question confronting us, however, is whether or not we have glimpses of a new paradigm and are led in faith to affirm that new paradigm as the divine imperative, or whether or not we still feel the present paradigm in which we operate, the Enlightenment model, is valid.

Emilio Castro concluded the Bangkok Conference of World Mission and Evangelism in 1973 by saying that the end of the missionary era was the beginning of the era of world mission. What will be the new paradigm for the

21st century of world mission? What will be the new paradigm of mission in the post modern world which is beginning to emerge? What will be our response to the evil and violent world in which we live...a world without hope, without judgment, without Christ and thus doomed and on its way to hell? How can we as Baptists recover the primitive Christian apocalyptic and be faithful to the call of Christ in our personal and social lives for the church of tomorrow? I feel that the new paradigm must be faithful to some of the following inklings and characteristics if it is to be faithful to Christ and his coming kingdom!

#### 1 The judgment of God and repentance

We could soothe ourselves by being boastful of the great success of modern missions as summarized by Jenkins in his book *The Next Christendom*. On the other hand, it is a judgment that Baptists are rarely mentioned. We could speak of the great success of Baptist mission in Congo and Nigeria, in Brazil, Myanmar and India. We could soothe ourselves that the true church is a little flock and thus we are called to be faithful and not successful.

On the other hand, if we take Africa, Asia and Latin America seriously, Baptists, with some exceptions, have not fared well. The Pentecostal or Charismatic Movement is the main driving force of Christian mission in the Two-thirds world. Have we taken seriously the social and economic problems under which so much of humanity lives? Have our mission policies encouraged and empowered national and young leaders? Have western

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<sup>26</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission* p. 508.

Christians tried to make the Two-thirds world church like the church back home? Have we given freedom and funding to the suffering believers? Have we modelled the church for the future or the church of the past?

Following the debacle of Christian missions in China in 1949, David Paton wrote a book entitled *Christian Missions and the Judgment of God* that has significance even today. The failure of the church in China experienced judgment because it was God's will, even though the Chinese communists did not understand it this way. Paton maintained that 'the entire structure and ethos of the church in China was, with minor much-paraded exceptions, Western'.<sup>27</sup> Roland Allen's stinging rebuke of western missions still hurts:

We have allowed racial and religious pride to direct our attitude towards those whom we have been wont to call "poor heathen." We have approached them as superior beings, moved by charity to impart of our wealth to destitute and perishing souls.... We have trained them, and ordained some of them. We have done everything for them, but very little with them. We have done everything for them except give place to them. We have treated them as "dear children", but not as "brethren."<sup>28</sup>

This judgment comes from more than fifty years ago, but in some places and among some mission agencies this

is still true. It is always difficult to take such criticism. We want to lift our voices in the West and say, 'But, there is another side to the story! You don't know how we tried, etc.' True repentance must stop making excuses and accept God's judgment. Then there will be healing and redemption for both the sending and receiving church. However, in the face of the non-believing world we must confess that they view much of Christian mission as western colonialism, associated with dominance and superiority. They have not seen the suffering Christ on the cross judging and forgiving all of us. They have not seen the sacrifice of the lamb but only the superiority of western civilization. Of this we must repent, even for the non-believing West!

John R. Mott, in his defence of the watchword for world evangelization, '*The evangelization of the world in this generation*', gave as one of the reasons repenting for the sins of western capitalism and colonialism. Indeed if we are to move to a new paradigm we, in the West need a prophetic repentance! And, let me add, the church in the Two-thirds world which has failed to follow Christ must also repent.

## 2 World Mission: international and global, sending and receiving

The biblical record makes it quite clear that mission belongs to the whole church. It is for this reason that Emil Brunner encapsulated this truth by saying, 'What fire is to burning, mission is to the church'. The command to world mission is not a western or NATO command. It is given to the whole people of God. Bishop Stephen

<sup>27</sup> David M. Paton, *Christian Missions and the Judgment of God*, edited with short biography by David M.M. Paton, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), p. 67.

<sup>28</sup> Paton, *Christian Missions*, pp. 71f.

Neill once said that one of the tragedies of 19th century missions was that unfortunately missionaries gave the impression that they were the evangelists and the nationals were to be pastors of local churches. In so doing nationals lost or never gained a sense of world evangelization.

If every church everywhere is called to be involved in world mission then we have to give up the idea of sending and receiving churches. We need to realize that every church must send and every church must receive. This is the globalization of mission which the new paradigm must possess. Just think of what would happen if every sending church were to become a receiving church, supporting initially an evangelist from another part of the world to help in their local evangelism? This is what is happening in Europe! The largest Baptist churches in Paris, Brussels and London are African churches!

### 3 True partnership, biblical *koinonia* and sharing of resources

Partnership implies equality. It is difficult to have partnership in an endeavour when one person has nothing and the other everything. For too long western missions have been driven by money. Some missionary executives have even admitted, 'More missionaries, more money'. The whole appeal for funding the world mission is the appeal for supporting 'our missionaries'. A new paradigm of mission will require an equal sharing of resources. This will require a whole new orientation and mission education in so-called sending churches. How can sending churches be educated to becoming receiving and

sharing churches?

The African Independent Church movement to a certain extent has been a reaction to missionary control of resources. There are approximately 140,000 Baptists in Angola. Yet, there is a Church of Jesus Christ and Simon Toku His Prophet which has more than two million members. Simon Toku was a Baptist who asked for a ride in a missionary car. The missionary replied, 'This is our car'. Simon replied, 'But, I thought that in the Kingdom of God we were all equals and that we shared our possessions.' Toku left the Baptists and started his own independent movement. The same could be said for the Kimbanga movement in the Congo, numbering millions! The fact is that in many cases, because of mission agency control of finances, our Baptist movement has suffered great loss of leadership and growth.

### 4 Cooperative and united—evangelical and ecumenical

The word 'ecumenical' means simply, 'the whole inhabited world'. However, because of doctrinal concerns, conflict with liberalism, etc., that word has been anathema for many Baptists, and has become associated exclusively with the World Council of Churches. There is, however, an ecumenicity of the right and the left, of liberal and of conservative persuasion. Not only is there a WCC, but there is a World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). Whatever the word, Baptists need to realize that in the coming world mission paradigm we cannot go it alone. We need one another not only as Baptists but as Christians, whatever the denomination!

The evangelism conferences sponsored by Billy Graham, whether in Amsterdam or Lausanne, have been perhaps the most ecumenical of all missionary meetings! All of Dr. Graham's missions have been ecumenical, involving all the churches in a city or country! When we get to heaven the Lord is not going to ask our denomination! An American missionary traveling home from India by way of Japan arrived in Tokyo. The visa control asked him his religion. The missionary replied, 'Christian.' Whereupon the officer said, 'No! What damnation do you belong to?'

I am proud to be a Baptist and am proud of our Baptist heritage, but for sure I believe we all know that heaven will be for all believers of all denominations. The hour is too late for us to separate from one another and only work with those with whom we agree ecclesiologically or otherwise. Christ calls us to unity. The great prayer of Jesus in John 17 is a missiological prayer: 'I pray that they may be one!' Why? 'So that the world may believe!' Our lack of unity is a hindrance to the Spirit and to world evangelization! The ecumenical movement began basically as an evangelical movement, going back to 1845 with the formation of the Evangelical Alliance and then in 1910 at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh.

## 5 The Kingdom of God and social justice

We have seen from the paradigm of the Enlightenment period that too often the kingdom of God was associated with western scientific and technological superiority. While one side emphasized heaven, the other side empha-

sized earth. There needs to be a tension between both of these extremes. The Gospel of Mark makes clear that the message of Jesus was indeed the preaching of the kingdom (Mark 1:15). Recent evangelical New Testament scholarship has helped us understand that the church is not the kingdom, but that the rule of God is also not to be identified with any earthly movement. The rule of God for the Christian is seen in none other than Jesus Christ. Too often the liberal emphasized the kingdom without the King, while the conservative emphasized the King without the kingdom!

The kingdom of Christ must never be identified with any political system. This is the Marxist heresy, as well as Islam's—which identifies the earthly government with Allah's will, particularly in Shiite Islam. The same could be said of Christian fundamentalism which emphasizes a Restoration type of theocracy!

Individuals, redeemed by Christ, must be salt and leaven in the world in which they live. Our political actions must be drawn from Christ and not from a secular agenda. Rather, the Christian draws his inspiration from the crucified Messiah, the Lamb of God. In being faithful to Christ and his cross we do not seek suffering, but in the midst of suffering we experience redemption. Yoder says, 'But the kind of faithfulness that is willing to accept evident defeat rather than complicity with evil is, by virtue of its conformity with what happens to God when he works among us, aligned with the ultimate triumph of the Lamb.'<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> John Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 238.

As a minority in the world, the Christian must work for the kingdom, knowing at the same time that they will not bring it in by political or economic force. Again Yoder:

Perhaps Christians in our age are being made ready for a new awareness of the continuing relevance of the message of the Apocalypse. There is a widespread recognition that Western society is moving toward the collapse of the mentality that has been identified with Christendom. Christians must recognize that they are not only a minority on the globe but also at home in the midst of the followers of non-Christian and post-Christian faiths. Perhaps this will prepare us to see how inappropriate and preposterous was the prevailing assumption, from the time of Constantine until yesterday that the fundamental responsibility of the church for society is to manage it.<sup>30</sup>

Missions and kingdom theology must therefore be seen as under the cross! 'Not by might or by power, but by my Spirit!' (Zech. 4:6). Such is the kingdom theology which will make us effective witnesses to those suffering from lack of human rights, persecution, alienation, hardship, poverty and suffering. The Christ we preach has a word of comfort, but more than that, Christ is indeed a presence among the suffering. Among these he is building his kingdom. And mission that avoids these the least of Christ's people, avoids Christ!

## 6 Servanthood, community and inculturation

Traditionally missiologists have spoken of progress from accommodation to indigenization to contextualization. Accommodation generally referred to making the messenger acceptable to the other culture. For example, Robert de Nobili in India tried to reach Brahmins dressed as a sannyassi. In China, Matteo Ricci dressed as a Confucian scholar. Indigenization went a step farther and primarily refers to the leadership of those who had received the message. National leadership and local seminary education was provided for pastors. William Carey was most progressive in this respect. He worked for the immediate training of converts and their installation as pastors and the translations of scriptures into Bengali. The Church became a Bengali church, not an English church! Contextualization, on the other hand, refers to insuring that the message was proclaimed in the life and world (context) where people were.

The people to whom the missionary hoped to preach the gospel were not only individuals but members of a society and a community. To speak to that person so that he understood the gospel one had to be aware of the language as well as the culture and way of thinking. *The Peace Child*<sup>31</sup> is a good example of evangelical contextualization! Roman Catholic missiology uses more often today the word 'inculturation' to explain this process of communicating the gospel in another culture effectively.

30 Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, p. 240.

31 Don Richardson, *Peace Child* (Glendale: Regal Books, 1974).



Christian mission needs to take culture more seriously as one of the primary hindrances as well as instruments of communicating the gospel. We must allow theologians of every nation to develop their own theology that is appropriate to their culture. John Mbiti said basically that 'you in the West have made a mess of theology for two thousand years, now give us a chance!' Catholicism has been perhaps more successful at enculturation, but also the greatest offender as mentioned earlier with 'Cultopher' Columbus and imposing Christian mission on another culture without respect for that culture, or just allowing the culture to subsume Christ!

All of this has significance for our understanding of the incarnation and an incarnational way of missionary life, which must be servanthood. It will have great effect upon language, art, and written expressions of the Christian faith. I have always been somewhat shocked to worship in the Baptist Church in Abeokuta, Nigeria and to see right at the front of the church a huge picture of Jesus with blond hair and blue eyes!

## 7 Conversations with other religions

This is difficult for many Baptists. In the BWA we have found it difficult at times to propose conversations with other Christian denominations. Brazilian Baptists were very upset with the theological conversations we had sponsored with the Vatican. In fact a memorandum was sent indicating their withdrawal from the BWA if such conversations were held again. Much progress has been made since then. In

fact Dr. Fanini recently preached at the funeral service of one of the archbishops!

But what about conversations with non-Christians? We have indicated from Professor Huntington that we live in a period of 'the clash of civilizations'. Should Christians not engage in some type of conversation with their neighbours? Nigerian Baptists who have experienced tragic destruction of churches and a seminary understand that there needs to be some type of conversation with their Muslim neighbours. Their church members live in daily contact with people of other faiths. Indeed within the same families very often there are Muslims and Christians who have learned to talk with one another.

I do not know the procedure or how the Lord will move amongst us, but it seems that in the 21st century we need to speak with every group of people, not to compromise the Christian message, but to make the message more acceptable and to give it a hearing! Timothy George's recent book, *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Mohammad?*<sup>32</sup> is a good example of written dialogue. Are we now prepared to sit face to face and discuss our common humanity and in this way also to confess our faith in Jesus Christ!?

## 8 Theological education: the cradle, the cross, the crown

In order for Baptists to make signifi-

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<sup>32</sup> Timothy George, *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad? Understanding the differences between Christianity and Islam* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002).

cant progress in the 21st century we will need a new type of leader and new type of missionary. Is our theological education worldwide sufficiently oriented towards the new paradigm that it will open students' hearts, minds and souls to the new realities which demand new solutions for world mission in the 21st century? Or, is the Enlightenment model of rationalism still the basis of our theological endeavours?

One Christmas Billy Graham preached a sermon entitled '*The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*'. This trinitarian sermon emphasizes the incarnation, the cross, and the resurrection—all Christological themes which must be at the heart of any theology of mission. But, how do we make it real for the various cultures in which we must work? A rationalistic understanding of theology, history and Biblical studies without a spiritual dynamic will turn out students incapable of reaching their society.

Is Baptist theological education suffering from the same malaise as Lutheran scholasticism in the 16th century? Spener was appalled at the rationalism of theological education and wrote an essay, *Pia Desiderata*, which led to a reformation of theological education. Having been one of the influential leaders of Pietism, Spener knew that a head knowledge without a heart knowledge led to emptiness, and vice versa. Perhaps we need to begin to recruit students for Christian ministry. We need the best minds and the most committed to consider again the call of Christ to Christian ministry. At the end of the 19th century the best and brightest went out to do mission work. The Student Volunteer Movement for For-

eign Missions included men such as Nathan Soderblom of Sweden, William Temple of Britain, Karl Heim of Germany, Robert E. Speer of the USA, etc.

Theological education and Christian education in the Two-thirds world will be key ingredients in the new paradigm for the 21st century. Unfortunately, theological and Christian education has not been of high value to many mission agencies today. But, who will lead and be pastors in the 21st century? What kind of training will they receive? How will they be able to live and mature in the new paradigm when they have not been taught? The new paradigm requires sound minds and warm hearts!

## 9 The Charismatic movement

There is probably no issue more divisive in Baptist life than that of the charismatic movement. The term 'charismatic' means different things to different people. For example, in most of the former Soviet states the Charismatic Movement is anathema, and usually refers to extreme forms of ecstatic utterance or behaviour imported from Finland or Sweden, such as being slain in the spirit, etc. Baptists generally have not looked upon glossolalia with a positive mind. In other parts of the world, the term 'charismatic movement' refers to church renewal, a rediscovery of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. It is this aspect of the charismatic movement which I would like to emphasize. The fact that by 2025 missiologists are predicting one billion Pentecostals or charismatics should get our attention!

Whatever one's view on the charismatic movement, the fact is the 21st

century will see a paradigm shift in our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in mission. In fact one is already seeing this happen. Perhaps one of the reasons that the charismatic movement has been so successful in Two-thirds world countries is that it mirrors more closely the New Testament understanding of empowerment by the Holy Spirit: 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses...' (Acts 1:8).

Several years ago an editorial of mine entitled, 'Are Baptists Afraid of the Holy Spirit?' caused quite a stir in some places. Just because we fear the excesses of the Pentecostal movement, we should not be prevented from learning from its strength, namely that all our mission work is not successful because of methodology, the homogenous unit principle, or plans, but rather it is the Holy Spirit who leads on in mission! The question therefore becomes, 'Am I prepared to open my life to God's powerful movement of the Spirit available at all times and all places to all peoples?'

## Conclusion

Baptists were leaders in the rediscovery of the New Testament command to evangelize the world. Our basic ecclesiology of a believers' church always left room for the Spirit. Our commitment to the separation of church and state, or separation of religion from the government, is still a prophetic voice in these days of clashes of civilizations. We could be a prophetic voice for peace and justice. Our affirmation of a public witness to Christ through believers' baptism enables us as a counter-culture to confront the powers and principalities. Our emphasis on Scripture alone, faith alone, grace alone in the lives of the laity could enable us to be a mighty force for evangelization.

I believe our Baptist people are ready for new servant leadership, for a new in-breaking of the Holy Spirit, for another opportunity to serve Christ wherever he is leading us! May God grant us the courage to move outside the confining boxes of our comfortable thoughts and cultural prejudices to the new thing that God is doing in the world!

## Baptists and Mission International Studies

Ian M. Randall & Anthony R. Cross (editors)

This book contains papers delivered at the fourth International Conference on Baptist Studies held at Acadia University, Canada. The studies are by authors from several countries and they investigate aspects of Baptists and mission from the seventeenth century to the present. The studies provide fresh insights into how mission has been undertaken across the world.

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