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The Bible is not to be treated as a storehouse of truths on which we can draw at random. There are no immutable and objectively correct "laws of mission" to which exegesis of Scripture gives us access and which provide us with blueprints we can apply in every situation. Our missionary practice is not performed in unbroken continuity with the biblical witness; it is an altogether ambivalent enterprise executed in the context of tension between divine providence and human confusion (cf Gensichen 1971:16). The church's involvement in mission remains an act of faith without earthly guarantees. 9

It is important to note that the New Testament authors also differed from one another, not least in their understanding of mission - as the ensuing three chapters will illustrate. We should, however, not be surprised if the New Testament does not reflect a uniform view of mission but, rather, a variety of "theologies of mission" (ref). As a matter of fact, no single overarching term for mission can as such be uncovered in the New Testament (Frankemoille 1982:94f). Tesch lists no less than ninety-five Greek expressions which relate to essential but frequently different aspects of the New Testament perspective on mission. 16

If we take the incarnation seriously, the Word has to become flesh in every new context. 21

Rather, reality is intersubjective (:153f); it is always interpreted reality and this interpretation is profoundly affected by our self-definitions(:209). It follows from this that reality changes if one's self-definition changes. This is precisely what happened with early Christians and, in a variety of comparable ways, with later generations of Christians. 24

There may be, rather, a range of alternative moves which remain in deep tension with each other but may nevertheless all be valid (Brueggemann 1982:397, 408). As the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (1986:48) says,

The Holy Spirit who guides into all truth, may be present not so much exclusively on one side of a theological dispute as in the very encounter of diverse visions held by persons . . . who share a faithfulness and commitment to Christ and to each other. 24

What amazes one again and again is the inclusiveness of Jesus' mission. It embraces both the poor and the rich, both the oppressed and the oppressor, both the sinners and the devout. His mission is one of dissolving alienation and breaking down walls of hostility, of crossing boundaries between individuals and groups. 28

There remains, however, an unresolved tension between the present and the future dimensions of God's reign. It has arrived, and yet is still to come. . . Such apparently conflicting sayings are an embarrassment to us. Small wonder that, throughout the history of the church, Christians have attempted to resolve the tension. 32

One of those words is "to save" (Greek:sozein), which for us has become an exclusively religious term. However, in at least eighteen cases the evangelists use it with reference to Jesus' healing of the sick. Thus there is, in Jesus' ministry, no tension between saving from sin and saving from physical ailment, between the spiritual and the social. 33

For the disciple of Jesus, however, the stage of discipleship is not the first step toward a promising career. It is in itself the fulfillment of his destiny. 37

Following Jesus or being with him, and sharing in his mission thus belong together (ref). The call to discipleship is not for its own sake; it enlists the disciples in the service of God's reign. 38

They (the Hebrews) believed that their mission was limited to the house of Israel and that the salvation of the Gentiles would take place by means of the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations to Jerusalem, as depicted in the Old Testament. Their self-definition made it impossible for them to embark on a mission to the world outside Israel. 42

The missionary practice of Jesus and the Early Church

1. First and foremost, the early Christian mission involved the person of Jesus himself.
2. The early Christian mission was political, indeed revolutionary.
3. The revolutionary nature of the early Christian mission manifested itself, inter alia, in the new relationships that came into being in the community.
4. In their mission the early Christians did not usher in utopia, nor did they attempt to do so.
5. When the infant Jesus was presented to God in the Jerusalem temple, so Luke tells us, (2:34) . He ministered in weakness, under a shadow, as it were. This is, how authentic mission always presents itself - in weakness.

Where the early church failed

I have suggested that Jesus had no intention of founding a new religion.

Intimately linked to this first failure of the early church is a second; it ceased to be a movement and turned into an institution. There are essential differences between an institution and a movement. Says H. R. Hiebuhr (following Bergson): the one is conservative, the other is progressive; the one is more or less passive, yielding to influences from outside, the other is active, influencing rather than being influenced; the one looks to the past, the other to the future (Hiebuhr 1959:11f) In addition, we might add, the one is anxious, the other is prepared to take risks; the one guards boundaries, the other crosses them. 50

At an early stage there were indications of two separate types of ministry developing: the settled ministry of bishops (or elders) and deacons, and the mobile ministry of apostles, prophets, and evangelists. The first tended to push early Christianity toward an institution, the second retained the dynamic of a movement. 51

We cannot have it both ways, then: purely and exclusively a religious movement, yet at the same time something that will survive the centuries and continue to exercise a dynamic influence. Our main point of censure should therefore not be that the movement became an institution but that, when this happened, it also lost much of its nerve. Its white-hot convictions, poured into the hearts of the first adherents, cooled down and became crystallized codes, solidified institutions, and petrified dogmas. . . Institution and movement may never be mutually exclusive categories; neither may church and mission. 53

Matthew's tendency to opt for creative tension, of combining the pastoral and the prophetic, is also evidenced by the way in which he portrays the call to a mission to both Jews and Gentiles. I have referred to the many and serious sayings such as 10:5f and 15:24 on the one hand and 28:18-20 on the other. Matthew keeps both sets of sayings, probably because he wishes to hold on to the tension. Nothing is sorted out neatly. It is, as yet, uncertain which way things will go. 82

To interpret the work of the church as the "winning of souls" is to make conversion into a final product, which flatly contradicts Luke's understanding of the purpose of mission.

With Scheffler (1988:57-108), one could say that, for Luke, salvation actually had six dimensions: economic, social, political, physical, psychological, and spiritual. 117

Paul is, however, not interested in unity for its own sake, or in unity at all costs. He does not hesitate to "oppose Peter to his face" (Gal 2:11) or to pronounce a curse on Judaizers in Galatia (Gal 1:7-9) and on the "different gospel" in Corinth (2 Cor 11:4), even if such action may, in the eyes of some, jeopardize the unity of the church. 128

He (Paul) concentrates on the district or provincial capitals, each of which stands for a whole region . . . These "metropolises" are the main centers as far as communication, culture, commerce, politics, and religion are concerned. . . Paul thinks regionally, not ethnically; he chooses cities that have a representative character. 130

Malherbe writes, "Paul's method of shaping a community was to gather converts around himself and by his own behavior to demonstrate what he taught" (1987:52). He adds that, in doing so, Paul follows a method widely practiced at the time, particularly by moral philosophers. As with serious philosophers, Paul's life cannot be distinguished from what he preaches; his life authenticates his gospel. 132

Michael Green has suggested that three main missionary motives were operative in the early church, all of which are particularly clearly identifiable in Paul: a sense of gratitude, a sense of responsibility, and a sense of concern. 133

God himself accepts people unconditionally. This is the cornerstone of Paul's mission theology. 158

These numerically small communities assumed the name ekklesia, commonly used in the Septuagint as translation for the Hebrew kahal. In contemporary Greek, ekklesia normally referred to the town meeting of free male citizens of a city of Greek constitution. The Hellenistic-Jewish Christian communities (beginning, perhaps, with the community in Antioch; cf Beker 1980:306) were the first to apply this term to themselves. Paul takes it with him on his missionary travels. 165

In Paul's thinking, the "righteousness of God" is to be interpreted as a gift to the community, not to the individual, for the individual believer does not exist in isolation. . . When any individual experiences "justification by faith", he or she is moved into the community of believers. 166

Baptism thus consciously brings about a change in social relationships and in self-understanding. Faith in Christ makes fellowship possible. Because believers are one in Christ, they belong to one another. . . The unity of the church - no, the church itself - is called in question when groups of Christians segregate themselves on the basis of such dubious distinctives as race, ethnicity, sex, or social status. God in Christ has accepted us unconditionally; we have to do likewise with regard to one another. 167

And Christ's work of reconciliation does not just bring two parties into the same room that they may settle their differences; it leads to a new kind of body in which human relations are being transformed. In a very real sense mission, in Paul's understanding, is saying to people from all backgrounds, "Welcome to the new community, in which all are members of one family and bound together by love". 168

In spite of its theological importance, however, the church is always and only a preliminary community, en route to its self-surrender unto the kingdom of God. 169

Out unity is, indeed, non-negotiable. The church is the vanguard of the new creation and has, of necessity, to reflect the values of God's coming world. 172

Hans Kung submits that the entire history of Christianity can be subdivided into six major "paradigms". These are:

1. The apocalyptic paradigm of primitive Christianity
2. The Hellenistic paradigm for the patristic period.
3. The medieval Roman Catholic paradigm.
4. The Protestant (Reformation) paradigm.
5. The modern Enlightenment paradigm.
6. The emerging ecumenical paradigm.

Each of these six periods, Kung suggests, reveals a peculiar understanding of the Christian faith. To this I would add that each also offers a distinctive understanding of Christian mission. . .

Our views are always only interpretations of what we consider to be divine revelation, not divine revelation itself (and these interpretations are profoundly shaped by our self-understanding). . . It is an illusion to believe that we can penetrate to a pure gospel unaffected by any cultural and other human accretions. . . Nobody receives the gospel passively; each one as a matter of course reinterprets it. There is, truly, no knowledge in which the subjective dimension does not enter in some way or other (Hiebert 1985a:7). Moreover, as will hopefully become clear in the course of my argument, this circumstance is not something we should lament; it is an inherent feature of the Christian faith, since it concerns the Word made flesh. 182

There is yet another important - and related - factor which affects the ways people interpret and experience the Christian faith: the general "frame of reference" with which they happen to have grown up, their overall experience and understanding of reality and their place within the universe, the historical epoch in which they happen to live and which to a very large extent has molded their faith, experiences, and thought processes. 183

In a nutshell, Kuhn's suggestion is that science does not really grow cumulatively (as if more and more knowledge and research bring us ever closer to final solutions to problems), but rather by way of "revolutions". 184

Since the seventeenth century the Enlightenment paradigm has reigned supreme in all disciplines, including theology. Today there is a growing sense of disaffection with the Enlightenment and a quest for a new approach to and understanding of reality. 185

For the Greeks the key concept was knowledge (gnosis or sophia). In much of Christian theology this notion gradually replaced that of event. The theme, "salvation is to be found in knowledge", was presented in a great variety of ways, in which the original idea of knowledge through experience was increasingly replaced by that of rational knowledge. The Holy Spirit became the "spirit of truth" or the "spirit of wisdom", where one's primary interest was in the Spirit's original being rather than activity in history. **God's revelation was no longer understood as God's self-communication in events, but as the communication of truths about the being of God in three hypostases and the one person of Christ in two natures. The various church councils were intent on producing definitive references to the ineffable. The unity of the church was regulated by scrutinizing people according to whether or not they subscribed to these formulas. Those who did not were excluded by means of anathemas.** A comparison between the Sermon on the Mount

and the Nicene Creed confirms the point. The former outlines a mode of conduct without any specific appeal to a set of precepts. The entire tenor of the Sermon is ethical; it is devoid of metaphysical speculation. The latter, in contrast, is structured within a metaphysical framework, makes a number of doctrinal statements, and says nothing about the believer's conduct. Van der Aalst very appropriately summarizes the outcome of this entire development, "The message became doctrine, the doctrine dogma, and this dogma was expounded in precepts which were expertly strung together". 195

Some years back it was popular to construct absolute contrasts between Hebrew and Greek world views. Today it is widely agreed that the difference was over-emphasized. Many notions regarded as typically Hebrew have been shown to exist in Greek thinking as well, and vice versa. It is too easy to blame all aberrations on the Greeks (ref). Still, an important difference in perspective does exist. I have already referred to the characteristic Greek emphasis on knowledge or gnosis. To this we have to add the difference between an auditive and a visual approach to reality. Even if the difference is far from absolute, one could say that we can observe a visual rather than an auditive perspective among Greeks and, by the same token, a more auditive than visual approach among Semites. For Jews, "faith comes from what is heard", and dabar (Hebrew for "word") refers particularly to the spoken word. Logos (Greek for "word"), by contrast, primarily alludes to knowledge-through seeing. Whereas Semites displayed an aversion to plastic art, the Greeks excelled in this art form. 195

On closer inspection one might even say that colonization was the "modern continuation of the Crusades". 226

Colonialism and mission, as a matter of course, were interdependent; the right to have colonies carried with it the duty to Christianize the colonized. 227

The entire missionary enterprise was defined in terms of what Rutti calls a "dogmatic-institutional arrangement" (1974:228). Rutti continues:

Generally speaking, we have here the principle of sacred-hierarchical mediation. Mission is understood as the mediation of faith (or rather credal truths) and grace. The church as sacral-hierarchical institution is the real bearer and agent of this mediation. Mission is therefore performed by means of a system of authorization and delegation. Juridical authority is the constitutive element of the legitimacy and missionary quality of words and deeds. All other forms of Christian missionary activity are reduced or subordinated to this pattern of authoritative commissioning . . . The mediatory structures of mission are therefore in essence structures of reproduction and expansion; consequently mission manifests itself as the "self-realization of the church". . . The absence of the church or, alternatively, the various degrees of its presence, determines the primary criteria for the missionary evaluation of a given historical situation. 230

Only monasticism, says Niebuhr saved the medieval church from acquiescence, petrification, and the loss of its vision and truly revolutionary character. 230

It would be erroneous to argue that the Reformation broke with the medieval Catholic paradigm in every respect. Some elements of Protestantism were in fact a continuation, even if in a new form, of what typified the Catholic model also. For one thing Protestantism, like Catholicism (if not more so), insisted on correct formulation of doctrine. It became important, particularly for subsequent generations, to uphold the Reformation creeds in an absolutely unaltered and unalterable form, ascribing to them comprehensive validity for all times and settings, and using them as much to exclude certain groups as to include those considered to be orthodox in faith, while dismissing the possibility of any future doctrinal development. 240

Even so, Pietism had an abiding significance for the development of the Protestant missionary idea. 255

In Pietism the formally correct, cold, and cerebral faith of orthodoxy gave way to a warm and devout union with Christ. Concepts such as repentance, conversion, the new birth, and sanctification received new meaning. A disciplined life rather than sound doctrine, subjective experience of the individual rather than ecclesiastical authority, practice rather than theory - these were the hallmarks of the new movements. 252

Medieval cosmology had been structured more or less along the following lines:

God
Church
King and Nobles
People
Animals, Plants and Objects

One was not to tamper with this structure. Within the divinely constituted order of things, individual human beings as well as communities had to keep their proper places in relation to God, the church, and royalty. . .

After the Enlightenment, Humanity derived its existence and validity from "below" and no longer from "above". 262-3

The Enlightenment was, preeminently, the Age of Reason.

The Enlightenment, secondly, operated with a subject-object scheme. This means that it separated humans from their environment and enabled them to examine the animal and mineral world from the vantage-point of scientific objectivity. 264

Linked with the above is a third characteristic of the Enlightenment: the elimination of purpose from science and the introduction of direct causality as the clue to the understanding of reality. Ancient Greek and medieval scientific reflection believed in an animated causality and took purpose as a category of explanation of physics. . . It cannot answer the question by whom and for what purpose the universe came into being; it is not even interested in the question. Instead, it operates on the assumption of simple, mechanistic, billiard-ball-type causality. The cause determines the effect. The effect thus becomes explicable, if not predictable. Modern science tends to be completely deterministic, since unchanging and mathematically stable laws guarantee the desired outcome. All that is needed, is complete knowledge of these laws of cause and effect. The human mind becomes the master and initiator which meticulously plans ahead for every eventuality and all processes can be fully comprehended and controlled. Conception, birth, illness, and death lost their quality of mystery; they turned into mere biological-sociological processes.

This manifests itself especially in a fourth element of the Enlightenment: its belief in progress. . . The idea of progress expressed itself, preeminently, in the "development programs" Western nations were undertaking in the countries of the so-called Third world. . . The model was based, in addition, on the ideal of modernization. 265

All along, however - and this is the fifth characteristic of the Enlightenment - it was contented that scientific knowledge was factual, value-free and neutral.

Sixth, in the Enlightenment paradigm all problems were in principle solvable. 266

Lastly, the Enlightenment regarded people as emancipated, autonomous individuals. In the Middle Ages community took priority over the individual, although, as I have argued earlier, the emphasis on the individual was discernible in Western theology at least since the time of Augustine. . .

The insatiable appetite for freedom to live as one pleases developed into a virtually inviolable right in the Western "democracies". The self-sufficiency of the individual over social responsibilities was exalted to a sacred creed. . .

The dominant characteristic of the modern era is its radical anthropocentrism. 267

The Christian faith is fundamentally interested in teleology, in the wherefore? question. It is the ultimate aim of our activities and the purpose of our existence that assign meaning to our lives. In the Newtonian paradigm, however, the world was increasingly governed not by purpose but by the closed cycle of cause and effect. Human planning took the place of trust in God. Little room was left for the element of surprise, for the humanly unpredictable. 271

One of the most significant products of the Evangelical Awakening, in both Britain and North America was the founding of societies specifically devoted to foreign mission. . . The constitutive word was "voluntarism". 280

It is important to note that evangelicals - were nonconformists in the true sense of the word. 281

Having originated in Puritanism and having come to full bloom in postmillennial evangelicalism, North American Protestantism split. The one wing opted for premillennialism, which developed into fundamentalism; it had learnt to tolerate corruption and injustice, to expect and even welcome them as signs of Christ's immanent return. The other wing formally remained postmillennial, but their millennium gradually became almost completely this-worldly; it consisted, to a large extent, in an uncritical affirmation of American values and blessings, and the conviction that these had to be exported to and shared with people worldwide. 284

The major compromises of the Christian mission across the centuries, says Eugene L. Smith (1968:72f), "have occurred in four relationships: with the state, with culture, with disunity in the church, with money". 291

First, the gospel always comes to people in cultural robes. There is no such thing as a "pure" gospel, isolated from culture. 297

Modern missions originated in the context of modern Western colonialism. 303

Morehead suggests the following minimum definition: millennialism, he says, refers to "the biblical vision of a final golden age within history". This is the definition I shall also use. 313

The premillennialist movement sprang from "complex and tangled roots in the nineteenth-century traditions of revivalism, evangelicalism, pietism, Americanism, and variant orthodoxies" (Marsden). It spawned a variety of subspecies: adventism, the holiness movement, pentecostalism, fundamentalism, and conservative evangelicalism. 315

Some ingredients that may be found in these subspecies:

The right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of Holy Scriptures. This principle was an expression of the "modern" desire not to be told by ecclesial bodies what to believe, but for each believer to come to a personal understanding of faith and a personal commitment.

Also ... a strong emphasis on the return of Christ, particularly as a motive for mission. . . the goal of biblical evangelicalism is to bring back the King. 316

Premillennialists tended to have an even more melancholy view of non-Christians than had prevailed among their predecessors; sometimes this view was applied even to those who

professed to be Christians but clearly had a different understanding of the gospel. All reality was, in essentially Manichean categories, divided into neat antitheses: good and evil, the saved and the lost, the true and the false. (Marsden) "In this dichotomized world view, ambiguity was rare" Conversion was a crisis experience, a transfer from absolute darkness to absolute light."

In this whole approach it was the individual's choices that were decisive. 317

One of the most remarkable phenomena of the Enlightenment era is the emergence of missionary societies. . . The end of the Second World War saw yet another wave of missionary enthusiasm and the formation of new societies. Prior to the year 1900, a total of eighty-one mission agencies were founded in North America. During the subsequent four decades, 1900-1939, another 147 were formed. The next decade, 1949-1949, recorded the creation of eighty-three societies, followed by no fewer than 113 new agencies during the decade 1950-1959, 132 in the period 1960-1969 and another 150 in the next ten years (Wilson and Siewert).

It is not easy to explain this astonishing phenomenon in Protestantism. Most certainly a variety of factors would have to be taken into consideration here, but it can hardly be denied that the spirit of enterprise and initiative spawned by the Enlightenment played an important role first in the genesis of the idea of missionary societies and then in their amazing proliferation. The fact is that, for more than a century after the Reformation, the mere idea of forming such "voluntary societies" next to the church was anathema in Protestantism. 327-8

The weaknesses of the faith mission movement are obvious: the romantic notion of the freedom of the individual to make his or her own choices, an almost convulsive preoccupation with saving people's souls before Judgment Day, a limited knowledge of the cultures and religions of the people to whom the missionaries went, virtually no interest in the societal dimension of the Christian gospel, almost exclusive dependence on the charismatic personality of the founder, a very low view of the church, etc. The movement also had its strengths, however, particularly in the pristine form it took in Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission. The "home base" of the mission agency would no longer be in London, Berlin, Basel, or New York, but in China, India, or Thailand. The missionaries were not to live on "mission stations", isolated from the population, but in the very midst of the people they were trying to reach, eating the food they ate and wearing the clothes they wore. The emphasis was not on doctrinal distinctives and confessional divisions but on the simple gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. 333

Pierson is also the person credited with formulating the watch, "The evangelization of the world in this generation" adopted by the Student Volunteer Movement in 1889 . . . More than anything else, it epitomized the Protestant missionary mood of the period: pragmatic, purposeful, activist, impatient, self-confident, single-minded, triumphant. 336

The belief in progress and success that transpired from all these missions and visions, from the seventeenth century to the twentieth, were made possible by the advent of the Enlightenment, but also involved a subtle shift of emphasis from grace to works. 339

The objectivist framework imposed on rationality has had a crippling effect on human inquiry; it has led to disastrous reductionism and hence to stunted human growth.

Rationality has to be expanded. One way of expanding it is to recognize that language cannot be absolutely accurate, that it is impossible finally to "define" either scientific laws or theological truths. To speak with Gregory Bateson, neither science nor theology "proves"; rather, they "probe". This recognition has led to a reevaluation of the role of metaphor, myth, analogy, and the like, and to rediscovery of the sense of mystery and enchantment. . .

The central doctrines of traditional Christianity, Frye says, can be expressed only in the form of metaphor: every attempt to go beyond that and "explain" doctrines has about it "a strong smell of intellectual mortality" (1983:55). . .

Metaphor, symbol, ritual, sign, and myth, long maligned by those interested only in "exact" expressions of rationality, are today being rehabilitated; they create forms that "synthesize and evoke the integration of mind and will"; they "not only touch the mind and its conceptions, and evoke action with a purpose, but compel the heart" (Stackhouse 1988:104) . . .

The problem with scientism is that it fetters human thought as cruelly as any authoritarian belief system has ever done, that it "offers no scope for our most vital beliefs and . . . forces us to disguise them in farcically inadequate terms (Polanyi 1958:265). The best theologian, according to Gregory of Nazianzus, is not the one who can give a complete logical account of his subject, but the one who "Assembles more of Truth's image and shadow" and thus moves beyond the confines of "pure" rationality (cf Young 1988:308). True rationality thus also includes experience. This is where the significance of Schleiermacher's theological approach lies, as well as the validity of the Pentecostal movement, the Charismatic Renewal (cf Lederle 1988), and many other manifestations of "experiential" religion. 353

Postmodern developments have shown that science is not inherently inimical to the Christian faith. This observation should not, however, lead us to postulate that there is no longer any tension between faith and reason, between religion and the world of science. This is what Fritjof Capra does, from a New Age perspective, particularly in *The Turning Point* and *The Tao of Physics*. In Capra's thinking, religion and science have embraced each other and are in perfect tensionless harmony. . . . Small wonder, then, that in those societies where structural injustice prevails and various theologies of protest are developing, there appears to be little enthusiasm for Capra's integrationalism and avoidance of conflict. 354

One should think holistically, rather than analytically, emphasize togetherness rather than distance, break through the dualism of mind and body, subject and object, and emphasize "symbiosis". 355

The notions of repentance and conversion, of vision, of responsibility, of revision of earlier realities and positions, long submerged by the suffocating logic of rigid cause and effect thinking, have surfaced again and are inspiring people who have long lost all hope. 356

Thus a new model was propounded. The problem was not the relationship between backwardness and modernity, as those steeped in the thinking of the Enlightenment had thought, but the relationship between dependency and liberation. 358

We now know, then, that there are no "brute facts" but only interpreted facts and that interpretation is conditioned by the scientist's plausibility structure, which is largely socially and culturally produced. 359

All these - physics since Einstein, the discovery of the ambiguity of power, the relentless critique of the Third World on traditionally sacrosanct assumptions of science, the way in which ideologies have usurped the place traditionally occupied by religion - underline the crises in which the Enlightenment got itself. Objectivity, as usually attributed to the "exact" sciences, has proved to be a delusion and, in fact, a false ideal (Polanyi 1958:18) The objectivist framework has imposed crippling mutilations on the human mind (:381) So Polanyi (:266) advocates the view that we should once again recognize belief as the source of all knowledge and consciously embrace a "fiduciary framework". 359

Rather, the authentic Christian position in this respect is one of humility and self-criticism. After the Enlightenment it would be irresponsible not to subject our "fiduciary framework" to severe criticism, or not to continue pondering the possibility that Truth may indeed differ from what we have thought it to be. 360

First, we must reaffirm the indispensableness of conviction and commitment. In the long term nobody can really survive without them. What is called for is the willingness to take a stand, even if it is unpopular - or even dangerous. Tolerance is not an unambiguous virtue, especially the "I'm ok, you're ok" kind which leaves no room for challenging one another. Secondly, we need to retrieve togetherness, interdependence, "symbiosis". The individual is not a monad, but part of an organism. 362

It is becoming increasingly evident that the modern gods of the West - science, technology, and industrialization - have lost their magic. 363

Repentance has to begin with a bold recognition of the fact that the church-in-mission is today facing a world fundamentally different from anything it faced before. This in itself calls for a new understanding of mission. We live in a period of transition, on the borderline between a paradigm that no longer satisfies and one that is, to a large extent, still amorphous and opaque. 366

This means that both the centrifugal and the centripetal forces in the emerging paradigm - diversity versus unity, divergence versus integration, pluralism versus holism - will have to be taken into account throughout. A crucial notion in this regard will be that of *creative tension*: it is only within the force field of apparent opposites that we shall begin to approximate a way of theologizing for our own time in a meaningful way. 367

The elements discussed below should by no means be seen as so many distinct and isolated components of a news model; they are all intimately interrelated. This means that in discussing a specific element each other element is always somewhere in the background. The emphasis throughout should therefore be on the wholeness and indivisibility of the paradigm, rather than on its separated ingredients.

Mission as the Church-with-others

In a perceptive study Avery Dulles (1976) has identified five major ecclesial types. The church, he suggests, can be viewed as an institution, as mystical Body of Christ, as sacrament, as herald, or as servant. Each of these implies a different interpretation of the relationship between church and mission. 368

Michiels (1989:89) suggest that modern ecclesiologies (Catholic and Protestant) employ seven main metaphorical expressions for the church, each of them implying a peculiar perspective on the understanding of mission. These are: the church as "sacrament of salvation", "assembly of God", "people of God", "kingdom of God", "Body of Christ", "temple of the Holy Spirit", and "community of the faithful". 372 (He then explains these and it is good overview of them)

Mission As Missio Dei

God's mission 389

Mission as Mediating Salvation 393

In a world in which people are dependent on each other and every individual exists within a web of inter-human relationships, it is totally untenable to limit salvation to the individual and his or her personal relationship with God. Hatred, injustice, oppression, war, and

other forms of violence are manifestations of evil; concern for humanness, for the conquering of famine, illness, and meaninglessness is part of the salvation for which we hope and labor. 397

Mission As The Quest for Justice

In our next section (on evangelism) it will be argued that although evangelism may never simply be equated with labor for justice, it may also never be divorced from it. 400

The moment one regards mission as consisting of two separate components one has, in principle, conceded that each of the two has a life of its own. One is then by implication saying that it is possible to have evangelism without a social dimension and Christian social involvement without an evangelistic dimension. 405

Evil is not only in the human heart but also in social structures. . . 407

Mission As Evangelism 409

I perceive mission to be wider than evangelism 411

Evangelism should therefore not be equated with mission.

Evangelism may be viewed as an essential "dimension of the total activity of the Church".

Evangelism involves witnessing to what God has done, is doing, and will do.

Even so, evangelism does aim at a response.

Evangelism is always invitation

The one who evangelizes is a witness not a judge.

Even though we ought to be modest about the character and effectiveness of our witness, evangelism remains an indispensable ministry.

Evangelism is only possible when the community that evangelizes - the church - is a radiant manifestation of the Christian faith and exhibits an attractive lifestyle.

Evangelism offers people salvation as a present gift and with it assurance of eternal bliss.

Evangelism is not proselytism. 414

Evangelism is not the same as church extension.

To distinguish between evangelism and membership recruitment is not to suggest, though, that they are disconnected.

In evangelism, "only people can be addressed and only people can respond".

Authentic evangelism is always contextual.

Because of this, evangelism cannot be divorced from the preaching and practicing of justice.

Evangelism is not a mechanism to hasten the return of Christ, as some suggest. 418

Barrett and Reapsome (1988) calculate that there have, in fact been 788 "global plans" to evangelize the world since the beginning of the Christian era, and that most of these were intimately linked to eschatological expectations. . . Of the almost 800 plans identified by Barrett and Reapsome, only some 250 were still alive as of 1988. But as the third millennium draws nearer, more and more new plans are being launched, and virtually all of them link evangelism with the parousia. 419

Mission as Contextualization 420 (There is a lot of good stuff left in the chapter)

The Christian church is always in the process of becoming; the church of the present is both the product of the past and the seed of the future. 422

Some duality between God and the world remains. Precisely this creates the "identity-involvement dilemma" to which Moltmann refers; it is of the essence of the Christian faith that, from its birth, it again and again had to seek, on the one hand, how to be relevant to and involved in the world and, on the other, how to maintain its identity in Christ. These two are never unrelated; neither are they the same. Christians find their identity in the cross of Christ, which separates them from superstition and unbelief but also from every other religion and ideology;

they find their relevance in the hope for the reign of the Crucified One by taking their stand resolutely with those who suffer and are oppressed and by mediating hope for liberation and salvation to them. . .

There are faith traditions which all Christians share and which should be respected and preserved. We therefore-along with affirming the essentially contextual nature of all theology-also have to affirm the universal and context-transcending dimensions of theology. 427

We are given some crucial guidelines, some lodestars which indicate God's will and presence in the context. Where people are experiencing and working for justice, freedom, community, reconciliation, unity, and truth, in a spirit of love and selflessness, we may dare to see God at work. 431

The best models of contextual theology succeed in holding together in creative tension, theoria, praxis and poiesis- or, if one wishes, faith, hope, and love. 431

Mission as Liberation 432

Poverty would not be uprooted by pouring technological know-how into the poor countries but by removing the root causes of injustice; and since the West was reluctant to endorse such a project, Third World peoples had to take their destiny into their own hands and liberate themselves through a revolution. 434

Gutierrez even defines liberation theology as "an expression of the right of the poor to think out their own faith". 436

Mission As Inculturation

The Christian faith never exists except as "translated" into a culture. 446

Missionaries no longer go with a kind of Peach Corps mentality for the purpose of "doing good", however. They no longer participate as the ones who have all the answers but are learners like everybody else. The padre becomes a compadre. Inculturation only becomes possible if all practice convivencia, "life together". (Sundermeier 1986) 453

In this paradigm, it is not so much a case of the church being expanded, but of the church being born anew in each new context and culture... Inculturation suggest a double movement: there is at once inculturation of Christianity and Christianization of culture. 454

One may never use the term "inculturated". Inculturation remains a tentative and continuing process, not only because culture are not static but also because the church may be led to discover previously unknown mysteries of the faith. The relationship between the Christian message and culture is a creative and dynamic one, and full of surprises. 455

Mission As A Common Witness 457

I have called the emerging theological paradigm "ecumenical".

First, the mutual coordination of mission and unity is non-negotiable.

Second, holding onto both mission and unity and to both truth and unity presupposes tension. It does not presume uniformity. The aim is not a leveling out of differences, a shallow reductionism, a kind of ecumenical broth. Our differences are genuine and have to be treated as such. 464

Our goal is not a fellowship exempt from conflict, but one which is characterized by unity in reconciled diversity.

In the midst of all the diversity, however, there is a center: Jesus Christ.

Third, a united church-in-mission is essential in light of the fact that the church's mission will never come to an end.

Fourth, mission in unity means an end to the distinction between "sending" and "receiving" churches. 465

Fifth, If we accept the validity of mission-in-unity we cannot but take a stand against the proliferation of new churches, which are often formed on the basis of extremely questionable distinctions.

Sixth, ultimately in mission and mission in unity do not merely serve the church but, through the church, stand in service of humankind and seek to manifest the cosmic rule of Christ.

Lastly, we have to confess that the loss of ecclesial unity is not just a vexation but a sin.
467

Mission As Ministry By The Whole People of God 467

The church as offices - if we wish to call them that - particularly those of episkopos, presbyteros, and diakonos (all of them secular terms). But, first, these offices are always understood as existing within the community of faith, as never being prior to, independent of, or above the local church, and second, it would be grossly inaccurate simply to plug these terms into a later sacral-juridical understanding of ecclesiastical office. 468

Mission as Witness to People of Other Living Faiths 474

What is really called for, however, is not just inculturation but "inreligionization". Song, using the example of the spread of Buddhism in Asia, says essentially the same. No sooner did Buddhism leave the land of its birth than it became Chinese Buddhism, Thai Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism, intrinsic to the soil and the people of each of these countries. This, Song claims, was truly a mission of enfleshment. Christian mission, by contrast, was a mission of disembodiment. We should never have transplanted Christianity to Asia without breaking the pot in which the plant came, Says Pieris. 477

Christian theology is a theology of dialogue. It needs dialogue, also for its own sake. 483

True dialogue presupposes commitment. It does not imply sacrificing one's own position - it would be superfluous. An "unprejudiced" approach is not merely impossible but would actually subvert dialogue. . . both dialogue and mission can be conducted only in an attitude of humility. 484

Moritzen puts it as follows:

Nobody denies that Jesus did much good, but that in no way saved him from being crucified. It belongs to the essence (of the Christian faith) that it needs the weak witness, the powerless representative of the message. The people who are to be won and save should, as it were, always have the possibility of crucifying the witness of the gospel. 485

Such language boils down to an admission that we do not have all the answers and are prepared to live within the framework of penultimate knowledge, that we regard our involvement in dialogue and mission as an adventure, are prepared to take risks, and are anticipating surprises as the Spirit guides us into fuller understanding. This is not opting for agnosticism, but for humility. It is, however, a bold humility - or a humble boldness. We know only part, but we do know. And we believe that the faith we profess is both true and just, and should be proclaimed. We do this, however, not as judges or layers, but as witnesses; not as soldiers, but as envoys of peace; not as high-pressure sales persons, but as ambassadors of the Servant Lord. 489

Mission as Theology 489

Mission as Action in Hope 498

Rather, revelation is the word for God making himself known in historical acts.

Our mission has to be multidimensional in order to be credible and faithful to its origins and character. . . I therefore suggest that one way of giving a profile to what mission is and entails might be to look at it in terms of six major "salvific events" portrayed in the New Testament: the

incarnation of Christ, his death on the cross, his resurrection on the third day, his ascension, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the parousia. 512

Each of these events impinges on all the others. Unless we hold on to this, we will communicate to the world a truncated gospel. The shadow of the man of Nazareth, crucified under Pontius Pilate, falls on the glory of his resurrection and ascension, the coming of his Spirit, and his parousia. It is the Jesus who walked with his own disciples who lives as Spirit in his church; it is the Crucified One who rose from the dead; it is the One who had been lifted up on the cross who has been lifted up to heaven; it is the Lamb slaughtered yet living who will consummate history. 518