

Adopt-a-People. It is difficult to sustain a mission focus on the billions of people in the world or even on the multitudes of languages and cultures in a given country. Adopt-a-people is a mission mobilization strategy that helps Christians get connected with a specific group of people who are in spiritual need. It focuses on the goal of discipling a particular people group (see PEOPLES, PEOPLE GROUPS), and sees the sending of missionaries as one of the important means to fulfill that goal.

Adopt-a-people was conceptualized to help congregations focus on a specific aspect of the GREAT COMMISSION. It facilitates the visualization of the real needs of other people groups, enables the realization of tangible accomplishments, develops and sustains involvement, and encourages more meaningful and focused prayer. A people group focus helps Christians to maintain an emphasis on the goal of reaching a people group and then discipling Christians from within that people. Churches in the people group are also helped to evangelize their own people and eventually to send out their own missionaries.

Adopt-a-people does not mean that a church or mission organization is adopting a group into their own organization or that no other churches or groups can work with that particular people. Rather, the goal of adopt-a-people is to be used by God to see a people adopted into his heavenly family. Thus, the implementation of the adopt-a-people concept requires maintaining a commitment until the Great Commission is fulfilled in the targeted group. In pragmatic terms, the minimal involvement for a church (or fellowship) using the adopt-a-people idea is to provide informed, dedicated prayer for the targeted people group. Other levels of involvement range from logistical or research help to financial support to short-term projects among the targeted people group and even the commissioning and support of long-term missionaries from the adopting organization.

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Apostle, Apostles. The numerous appearances of the word *apostle* in the New Testament compared with its relative absence from all other literary sources can be traced in part to its intimate relationship to the mission of the early church. The New Testament writers, especially Luke and Paul, picked up on Jesus' rare usage of the word to give importance to the missionary dynamic of the church. Apostle is almost synonymous with mission. The word is primarily used of the twelve men chosen by Jesus to accompany him and of Paul the missionary to the Gentiles. These, along with a small number of other apostles, were vanguard missionaries as the gospel moved from

Jewish particularism to multicultural universalism.

According to the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles, Jesus specifically designated at least these thirteen people to be his apostles. The Twelve came out of Jesus' own sociocultural context, accompanying him on his mission to the Jews (Matt. 10:1–2; 15:24; John 20:21). One of the Twelve abandoned his apostolic office and was replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:16–26). Jesus chose a thirteenth apostle a few years after his ascension (1 Cor. 15:9). Together, they were specifically chosen to continue Jesus' mission. The Twelve functioned to authenticate Jesus' mission and message of the inclusion of the Gentiles (Gal. 2:1–10; Acts 1:16–26); Paul was chosen especially to implement and clarify the mission to the Gentiles.

Biblical Study of Apostleship. Apostle (*apostolos*) is defined by its use in the New Testament and its relationship to the three words *apostellō*, *pempō*, and the Twelve. *Apostellō* ("to send") is used frequently in the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles when referring to an authoritative commission. John never uses the word in a formal sense; rather, he uses the words *apostellō* and *pempō* as synonymous terms describing Jesus' authoritative mission and commissioning (John 20:21).

Apostolos is used eighty times in the New Testament and rarely used outside the New Testament. Josephus used it only once in any comparative sense. Eighty-six percent of these 80 occurrences are found in the writings of Paul (35x) and Luke (34x). The 11 other uses are found throughout the New Testament.

The word *apostle* is indebted to the Hebrew term *shaliach*. A *shaliach*, as used by the Jews, was someone sent by one party to another to handle negotiations concerning matters secular (such as marriage) or matters religious (such as liturgical decisions between Jerusalem and the diaspora). But the universal mission of Jesus determined the precise New Testament definition and prominence of the term.

The New Testament use of apostle arose out of the need to authenticate a mission that reversed the particularistic nature of salvation history. This definition would stress (1) the relationship to Jesus and his incarnation, and (2) the Christian's participation in extending the mission begun by Jesus.

In its broadest sense the word *apostle* can refer to a church sending members on a mission (1 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:23; Acts 14:4, 14). This mission can include preaching the gospel, raising money, or ministering to another missionary. The number of those included in this broader sense are unknown.

Apostles and Mission in Paul. From a literary and theological standpoint, the first definition of

Apostle, Apostles

apostle can be traced to Paul's writings. He uses the word throughout his writings (35x), with its usage concentrated in 23 references in Romans (3x), 1 Corinthians (10x), 2 Corinthians (7x), and Galatians (3x). Paul's polemical use of this term can be traced to his Gentile mission (Rom. 1:5; 11:13; Gal. 1-2). The radical nature of Paul's preaching elicited opposition from Jews within and outside the church. How was Paul going to legitimate his mission and message? He was compelled to clarify his own special calling and commission. Thus, Paul's use of the term *apostle* was fundamentally missiological.

Paul's nonpolemical and even general use of this term in 1 Thessalonians 2:6, when compared with its use in his other early Epistles, shows the extent to which his use of the term is tied to his need to authenticate his mission. Paul allowed for a general use of the word *apostle* while clearly defending a technical use for an exclusive few. While he calls a number of people apostles, he sees the Twelve (1 Cor. 15:3) and himself (Gal. 1:1) as apostles in a special sense.

Paul's use of apostle in his discussion of his mission to the Gentiles shows the direct relationship between apostle and mission. The Twelve and Paul were responsible for clarifying the nature of the church's mission (Gal. 2:1-10). Jesus specifically chose the Twelve to extend his mission into the Jewish world and authenticate the Gentile mission. Paul's personal mission was to implement, defend, and clarify the mission to the Gentiles. Even when Paul stresses the revelational dimensions of the word *apostle*, the missiological implications remain prominent (Eph. 3:1-13).

Apostles and Mission in Luke. Luke uniformly uses the word *apostles* (pl.) in Luke-Acts (34x). He never specifically calls any one person an apostle. In all but three occurrences (Luke 11:49; Acts 14:4, 14) it is used of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus. He uses the word six times in his Gospel and twenty-eight times in Acts. Whereas in his Gospel Luke calls the apostles disciples, in Acts he only calls them apostles. Luke alone specifically says that Jesus called the Twelve apostles (Luke 6:13).

Luke's view of apostleship as seen in Acts is rooted primarily in his missiology and only secondarily in his ecclesiology. The decision of the 120 in choosing an apostolic replacement for Judas is the central event between the ascension and Pentecost (1:12-26). Why does this decision on an apostolic replacement occupy such a prominent place in Luke's narrative? Luke accents its importance by giving the qualification and the definition of an apostle and by recording *only* this event between the ascension and Pentecost (1:21-25). An apostle is defined as someone who has followed Jesus from the time of John the Baptist until the resurrection. Second, his

function is to bear witness to the resurrection (cf. Acts 1:15-26 with 1 Cor. 9:1ff.; 15:7-11).

The following conclusions can be drawn from Acts 1:15-26. The apostles are twelve in number; they must have accompanied Jesus since the time of his baptism; and their basic function is witnessing about the resurrection. Judas' betrayal of Christ and abandonment of his office were prophesied in the Old Testament. Second, God directed the entire electoral process, even in the casting of lots (24-26). Third, Matthias is "chosen" just as the eleven were (Acts 1:2, 13). These twelve Spirit-filled apostles chosen by Jesus will extend the mission begun by Jesus.

But why is it so important that Luke establish the apostolic Twelve as a unique group and what relationship does this have to the mission to the Gentiles? Luke's definition of apostleship is found in the context of his overall purpose in writing a two-volume narrative of early Christianity. For Luke, the inclusion of the Gentiles takes place, not as an aberration involving some marginal Christians, but through an unbroken procession that begins with Jesus and continues through the Hellenists and Paul. Luke wants to establish these twelve apostles chosen by Jesus as successors of Jesus, thus legitimizing the Gentile mission.

These twelve lay the foundation of the mission in their ministry in Jerusalem. They, then, confirm the strategic ministry of the Hellenists (Acts 6:1-7; 8:14-14). Peter's paradigmatic mission to the Gentiles reflects the nature of the church (Acts 10:1-11:18; 15:1-35; 16:4). All other witnesses who come after them are part of this chain of events that results in the inclusion of the Gentiles. The apostles' strategic role in salvation history is both missiological and ecclesiological. Out of their missionary ministry arises a church whose fundamental calling is to constantly push forward into those areas where the gospel has yet to be heard.

Luke's use of the word *apostle* for Paul (14:4, 14) merits a brief comment. In both of these instances Barnabas is equally linked with Paul, and in one instance (v. 14) the order of their names is reversed. Luke, like Paul, uses apostles in a secondary sense, that is, Barnabas and Paul are apostles of the Antiochene church. Does Luke's failure to call Paul an apostle in the primary sense indicate some tension between Paul's definition and Luke's? For Luke the Twelve are unique (with this Paul agrees, 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 2:1-10), but Paul receives even greater prominence in Acts than do they. Paul's authority, mission, and effectiveness are, if anything, superior to those of the Twelve. But for Luke each has a special role to play in world evangelization.

Summary and Conclusion. The early church found in the word *apostle* a key concept for describing the unique nature of its mission. But it

was Paul and Luke in particular who unpacked this term and left us with a rich theology of apostleship. An apostle is a person who was with Jesus during his incarnation (a Lukan concept), witnessed his resurrection, and participated in authenticating and engaging in worldwide missions.

While Paul and Luke have unique developments of apostleship, both agree that the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus became missionaries to the Jews and laid the foundation for a mission to the nations. Both Luke and Paul agree that Paul had a unique role in this mission. Paul's preference would be to use the term *apostle* to describe his authority and mission. Although Luke uses this for Paul only in a secondary sense, he would readily agree with Paul that his mission and calling are unique. The word *apostle* may be used in this secondary sense today, yet not without clarifying its meaning.

There is, then, a fundamental relationship between the concept of apostleship and the mission to the world. Any definition of the term *apostle* that neglects its missiological dimensions has missed a central ingredient, without which the term loses some of its dynamic.

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Atonement. The biblical concept of atonement refers to a God-provided and -approved means of paying the penalty for human violations of God's law; a means which alleviates individuals from assuming that responsibility themselves. The need for atonement arises as a result of human sinfulness. Scripture teaches that all have sinned (Rom. 3:23). For that reason, human culpability is universal (Rom. 2:1). No one can claim exemption, regardless of culture, tradition, previous religious activities, or commitments. As a result, every individual ought to be made to pay the full price of her or his own sin, which is death and eternal separation from God (Rom. 6:23). However, Scripture also teaches that God has provided a way to fulfill the demands of divine justice which is reasonable and effective, but does not demand that the penalty be exacted from the individual.

The way in which God has chosen to resolve the problem of sin is by providing an alternative means of payment. In the Old Testament this was achieved primarily by means of animal sacrifice. The substitutes which will be accepted include the burnt offering (Lev. 1:4), the sin offering (Lev. 4:20; 7:7), and the offerings made on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:1–34). The clear

teaching of the Old Testament is that unless some God-approved means of atonement is provided, individual sinners will themselves be required to pay the penalty.

In the New Testament the idea of atonement is focused on the person of Christ (Rom. 5:10). Reconciliation between God and humans is no longer achieved by animal sacrifice (Heb. 9:26; 10:4), but by the death of Christ (2 Cor. 5:19). The death of Christ was a reasonable and effective solution to the problem of human guilt because Christ was fully human and fully divine (Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21). Because Christ was fully human he was able to fully identify with the human state, was tested in every way as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:14–16). Because he was fully God, he was able to provide a payment (Rom. 3:25–26) of sufficient value to cover the transgression of all humanity (Heb. 10:5–10). The two poles of God's salvific method are most evident on the cross. There he suffered death as any of us would have suffered it, and at the same time experienced a suffering of immeasurable intensity, since he, the Son of God, had never sinned, but was separated from the Father by voluntarily taking upon himself the sins of the many and turning away the wrath of God (Rom. 3:25).

There is relatively little disagreement concerning the basic principles outlined above. Any individual who expresses faith in Christ is covered by this payment. However, since Scripture does not clearly specify the scope or extent of the atonement, this issue has precipitated considerable debate. The basic question is whether the atonement should be viewed as limited to a certain subset of the human race, the elect, or whether it should be viewed as a provision intended for all of humankind.

Those who suggest that the atonement is limited do so on the basis of a combination of biblical passages and the use of logical arguments. They point out that there are some passages which do define a limited group of recipients. Christ died for his own people (Matt. 1:21), his sheep (John 10:11), the church bought with his own blood (Acts 20:28), and those whom God predestined and called (Rom. 8:28–35). Further, they argue that since God's will can never be countermanded, if he had intended for all to be saved, all would be saved. In addition, they point out that Christ did not die simply to make salvation possible, but to actually save certain individuals (Eph. 1:7; 2:8). They also fear that any other understanding of the atonement necessitates UNIVERSALISM.

The case for general atonement is made by appealing to Scripture passages and the history of doctrine. Scripture clearly states that Christ died for all and for the whole world (Isa. 53:6; 1 John 1:29; 2:2; 1 Tim. 2:1–6; 4:10, Heb. 2:4). There are

Bible

no exegetical reasons for ascribing to these passages meanings other than the plain and inclusive sense they communicate. Proponents of general atonement also seek to demonstrate that it is the traditional position of the church. From the early church until today most of the fathers, reformers, exegetes, and theologians believed that Christ died for all. As for the danger of universalism, since salvation is only effective for those who express faith, suggesting that Christ made salvation possible for all in no way implies that all will be saved (John 3:16).

Whichever position is taken on the extent of the atonement, the evangelical understanding of the general principles of atonement have two significant implications for missions. First, if the problem of sin is universal then the message of atonement should be addressed to all. This presents no problem to the defenders of general atonement, but some have suggested that one of the consequences of a limited atonement would be to discourage the universal, urgent proclamation of the gospel. However, since there is no way for us to identify the elect ahead of time, the gospel message should still be addressed to all. If that is the case, we are under obligation to proclaim the message of Christ's atoning work without reservation. It is to be proclaimed to all, in all places, and at all times.

Second, the method God chose to provide atonement will cause some to stumble. The message of the cross will lead to opposition, cause offense, and even be ridiculed (1 Cor. 1:18–29). The messengers will, of course, experience resistance. Blinded by sin, many will find the notion of a substitutionary death on the cross either offensive or foolish. That cannot be avoided. No manner of CONTEXTUALIZATION, effective communication, or marketing techniques can remove the offense of the cross. However, care should be given so that any offense occasioned by the person or the work of the messenger be kept to a minimum.

EDWARD ROMMEN

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Bible. The ultimate task of all forms of Christian missions is to tell of the Judeo-Christian God (Yahweh-Jehovah) and to report the salvation made available by his grace through the life and mission of Jesus Christ. This includes the proclamation of the call to repentance, faith for the forgiveness of sin, and life in fellowship with

him. Christ's representatives also provide guidance for believers who seek to live worthy of and pleasing to him. All this information comes, not through human search or invention, but from God himself. The word "revelation," from the verb "to reveal" or "make known," names the doctrine that deals with God's showing or disclosing himself, his works, expectations, and provisions.

Theologians speak of both "general" and "special" revelation. The former refers to that knowledge of God available to all people, in all places, at all times. The latter is the knowledge of God available to only some people, in some times, and in some places.

GENERAL REVELATION consists of that which can be known about God in creation, nature, and the affairs of humans as a whole. Psalm 19:1–4 speaks eloquently of the evidence of God in nature. Romans 1:20–25 asserts that the created order demonstrates the fact of God's existence, power, and goodness. Humans, however, refused to pay heed to this evidence and did not honor him as God; they worshiped that which was created rather than the Creator. Consequently, "God gave them up to degrading passions" (1:26) and almost unspeakable degrading acts. Paul, before Athenian officials, says that God made all nations from a single ancestor; gives life, breath, and all things; allots the time and boundaries of human habitation "so that they should seek God; . . . he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). Indeed, observation of humanity itself, people created in the IMAGE OF GOD, should be a persuasive argument for the existence and power of God. Hebrews 11:6 affirms that to please God one must accept his existence and knowability; this, by implication, is available through general revelation. Those who fail to acknowledge this message are, says Paul, without excuse (Rom. 1:26).

Special Revelation consists first of all in God's work through the nation Israel, her history and prophets. Micah calls to remembrance events of the nation's past "that you may know the saving acts of the LORD" (6:5). It should, however, be noted that God's special revelation to and work through Israel had a missionary purpose. It is through her that "all the nations of the world shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3); as a "priestly kingdom" (Exod. 19:6) she is to mediate between God and others. In Exodus 34:10 God says, "I will do marvels, . . . and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD." Isaiah affirms that God's servant will be "a light to the nations" (49:6; cf. Acts 13:46–47). The supreme act of God's special revelation came in Jesus Christ through whom the Word "became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (John 1:14). In Jesus we be-

come aware of the person, nature, and character of God, see him at work, learn that God loved the world so much that he gave his Son that believers might have life (John 3:16). In Christ we hear his invitation “come to me” (Matt. 11:28). God, in Jesus, shows himself as the holy and just judge of sin, the loving God, the dying-rising Savior, the King whose kingdom will never end and who one day will reign supreme over all. God’s revelation in Israel and in Jesus also involves the work of God’s close human associates, specially called, Spirit-filled persons, designated as “prophets” in the Old Testament and as “apostles” in the New. These were sent, commissioned, and authorized to speak for him. Their task was to report the facts of God’s revelation and also to explain and show how to apply God’s message in the affairs of daily life.

The doctrine of revelation must also include discussion of the Bible. The word “Bible” means “books”; it is a book composed of a collection of books. Together these comprise a religious book. Although it contains information on a number of topics and issues, its primary purpose, like that of many religious books, is to relate facts about God, the universe, and especially human beings in it, and their relationships. Christians believe that this is the only true religious book. All others speak of nonexistent deities and provide incorrect and even dangerous information.

The Bible is, above all, the record of the various forms of special revelation just described. Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles wrote down virtually all we know of God’s revealing work. This was not by human investigation. From Exodus 17:14 on we are told of God’s command to “write.” Because it is the usual source of information about God, this record is also revelation itself; it is the word of God. As the word and Spirit work together, God’s revelation of himself in the past is his contemporary self-disclosure and message. It is just because of its inclusion within God’s revelation that missionaries have given much time and effort to make the Bible available in the languages of the peoples with whom they work.

There are a number of terms used to describe some important facts about the origin, nature, and character of the Bible. “Inspiration” or the phrase “inspired by God” occurs in 2 Timothy 3:16. Literally it means “God-breathed,” hence, it came out of God. Second Peter 1:21 describes the communication and process of recording Scripture even more explicitly by stating that “holy men” were “moved,” literally “borne” or “carried” along by the Holy Spirit. “Inspiration,” then, affirms that Scripture originated with God, it was given to specially chosen individuals, and God, through his Spirit, remained active in the writing process.

“Canon,” meaning literally “measuring rod,” refers to an authoritative standard against which other things are measured. When referring to the Bible, canon designates those individual documents or books that are rightfully a part of Scripture, written authority. Protestant Christians traditionally acknowledge a total of sixty-six books—thirty-nine in the Old Testament, twenty-seven in the New. Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and Anglican Christians also include additional books, the Apocrypha or Deutero-canonical books. These writings seem to have come largely from the Intertestamental period (c. 400 B.C.–A.D. 70) and were included in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, but apparently were not in the Hebrew Bible used in Palestine and Hebrew-speaking synagogues. The exact number of apocryphal books acknowledged varies among Christian groups who include them in their canon.

It is much easier to relate what the church did with regard to the canon than the basis upon which it acted. The Old Testament was taken over from Judaism. The three divisions of the Hebrew canon (Law, Prophets, and the Writings [in which division Psalms always stood first]) is implied in the words of Jesus in Luke 24:44. Early Hebrew-speaking Christians seemed to have used the shorter canon while those who read their Old Testament in Greek used the longer. Early Christian writers refer to three divisions of books which were put forward for inclusion in the New Testament: those acknowledged by all, those rejected by all, and those which were disputed. There seems to have been no question about twenty-two New Testament books. Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, James, Jude, and possibly Revelation were among the books of the present New Testament canon about which questions seem to have been asked by one or another group; the noncanonical books of Barnabas, Hermas, Didache, Gospel of the Hebrews, and the Revelation of Peter were regarded highly, if not actually regarded as canonical, by some.

Evidence for the basis of canonicity is inconclusive. Traditionally much emphasis has been put upon the assumed author of a book. The word of an authentic spokesman for God, prophet or apostle, or someone closely associated with such a person (Baruch in the Old Testament, Mark and Luke in the New) is assumed to have been regarded as inspired whether it was issued orally or in writing. Additional criteria have been set forth on the basis of later examinations of what the early church did rather than its own statement of them. Evangelical Christians assume, primarily by faith, that the same God who inspired Scripture remained as superintendent to assure the reliability of the recognition of the canon.

Biblical Theology of Mission

An important controversy centers upon the role of the church in the canonical process. It asks whether the church *authorized*, gave authority to the New Testament canon, or *recognized* the authority that is inherent within these writings because of their divine inspiration. The answer to this question must come from historical research. The practical implication is whether the church sits in judgment upon the Scriptures or the Scriptures upon the church.

The issue of canon is particularly important for missions, not only because of the claim that Scripture is the word of God, but because several groups advocate that additional material must be added to it. Islam, for example, makes this claim for the QUR'AN and Mormonism for the Book of Mormon. Christians insist that in showing himself personally in human form and by actually providing for the greatest need of humans in the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, special revelation reached its climax and conclusion; nothing more can be added.

Two additional words often used in discussions of the Bible are "infallible" and "inerrant." The former designates the teachings of the Bible as absolutely authoritative and true. Inerrant means "without error," but those who use the term often disagree on whether they mean without error of any kind or in accomplishing God's purpose (see INERRANCY).

One final comment must be made regarding the Bible. Of almost equal importance with what one affirms about its nature is the question of how it is to be interpreted. Christendom, including its missionary endeavors, has all too often denied in practice the authority claims for Scripture by interpreting it in ways which fail to seek to grasp what the original writers (divine and human) intended and what the original readers understood. This must be a guide as one seeks to apply Scripture to the different geographical, cultural, and temporal settings of the contemporary world. Those concerned with HERMENEUTICS seek those principles involved in the art and science of making meaningful and relevant in one time and place that which was originally communicated in another time and place. This definition of hermeneutics is also a brief description of another term much used by missiologists, CONTEXTUALIZATION.

Modern missionaries, following the apostle Paul, may properly begin with general revelation and then move to special revelation. It is through these that God has made available the message, the only legitimate message, about himself, the universe, and their relationship which is at the heart of the missionary endeavor.

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ris, *I Believe in Revelation*; J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*; B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*.

Biblical Theology of Mission. The only rule of faith and practice that God has given is the Bible. It has the force of law. Because mission embraces "the totality of the task he sent his church to do in the world" (Bosch, 1978), we must select a theme that is prominent in both Testaments.

That theme is the KINGDOM OF GOD. It dominated the ministry of Jesus and provides linkage to all "the many and various ways" by which God had earlier spoken to his people by the prophets (Heb. 1:1). "Missiology is more and more coming to see the Kingdom of God as the hub around which all of mission work revolves; one can almost speak of a consensus developing on this point" (Verkuyl, 1978). In our day evangelicals are finding that the biblical base for mission is far more complex than previous generations envisioned. Gone is the single focus of an overwhelming concern for the spiritual condition of "the HEATHEN." Nor can credibility be gained by supplementing this concern with appeals to the GREAT COMMISSION (e.g., Matt. 28:18-20; etc.), or by prooftexts supporting such related themes as the sending character of God, the compassionate compulsion of the Spirit, the example of the apostolic church, and the relation between missionary obedience and the second coming of Christ. These themes are important, but one cannot build a comprehensive biblical theology of mission on them. The kingdom or "rule" of God must be the dominant motif since by it God touches every aspect of the human condition: past, present, and future (see KINGDOM OF GOD).

When we explore the relationship of the kingdom of God to world mission, we begin with the reminder that God's kingship is both universal and covenantal. When God created the heavens and the earth by his Word and created the first human couple in his own image and likeness, it was inevitable that he would exercise a loving and preserving control over his creation and particularly over the human race. This can be described as his universal kingship. Both Old and New Testaments teach this universal kingship, but in the Old Testament we also find God's kingly rule identified with Israel, a people with whom he established a covenant relationship.

The Old Testament Contribution (see also OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY OF MISSION). In the opening chapters of the Old Testament we find the first reference to mission as defined above. God said to the first man and woman: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:26-30; 2:15, 18-25; Ps. 8:5, 6). This command is frequently termed "the CULTURAL MANDATE." By it God called Adam and Eve

to accept responsibility for this world as his vice-regents, to serve and control it under his direction and for his glory. Its details pertained to their social existence, and mark the beginning of a stream of obligation—a mandate for family and community, culture and civilization—that widens and deepens as it courses throughout Scripture. We are not surprised to find that in the messianic age that Christ will later inaugurate, these many obligations will be made even more explicit as part of his missionary mandate that the church proclaim and demonstrate “the good news of the Kingdom” to the nations (Matt. 24:14). And such has proved to be the case. We might regard the cultural mandate as the prelude to the “Great Commission.”

At the outset the expectation was that because God is sovereign, he will be obeyed. But this was not to be. Early on God imposed a moral test on Adam and Eve (the “trees”—2:16, 17). In granting them freedom of choice, God was running a great risk. Would they freely choose to remain under God’s control or would they seek an existence separate from God? Sadly, they chose the latter and their fall (3:1–7) brought them under the dominance of “the tempter” and forged linkage with his hostile spirit-power and open opposition to the rule of God (*see also* FALL OF HUMAN-KIND). More was involved. Although they continued to carry out the cultural mandate, their obedience was now shaped by selfish impulses arising from their abdication of responsibility for the world and their surrender to the one who had now gained control of the world (“the god of this world”—John 12:21 and 2 Cor. 4:4; *see also* SATAN). Subsequent chapters (Gen. 4–11) record the effects of the Fall, ranging from fratricidal murder to worldwide violence; from God’s judgment of all antediluvians to the tragedy that came to the one family that was delivered (Noah’s); and from human arrogance attempting to establish a universal kingdom with its defiant tower to further judgment, the linguistic confusion and scattering of the people (BABEL).

Since the cultural mandate was no longer being carried out under God’s direction, God then began via DIVINE ELECTION and covenant to unfold a redemptive purpose that would deal with the problem of human rebellion and alienation from his fellowship. He called a man named Abram out of Ur within the complex of Babel, and began to train him to live by faith that through his seed (Israel), “all peoples on earth” would “be blessed” (Gen. 12:1–3; *see also* ABRAHAMIC COVENANT). His gracious desire was via Israel to bring fallen people “by repentance and faith” to break with Satan’s control (1 John 5:19; Acts 26:18, etc.) as co-laborers with their Messiah, to regain control of the world and those within it who would respond to his love.

But Old Testament history records repeated failure on Israel’s part. Actually, over the years only a remnant within Israel believed and obeyed God. At the same time, however, their prophets predicted that God would ultimately realize the covenant goal he had set for a believing remnant in the nation: “to restore the tribes of Jacob” and to become “a light for the gentiles” so that his “salvation” might be taken “to the ends of the earth” (Isa. 49:5, 6). The key to this total restoration will be “the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel”—strangely, the One “who was despised and abhorred by the nation” (49:7). Despite this, Israel went ever deeper into spiritual infidelity, open rebellion, and prolonged captivity, with only infrequent periods when through national repentance the blessing of God became partly evident in the life and worship of his people. The tragedy is that in the end the various contending parties within Judaism, though often at loggerheads with one another, united to participate in the final tragedy of standing against the One who came as the self-confessed “Son of Man” of Daniel, the “Suffering Servant” of Isaiah, and the “Smitten Shepherd-King” of Zechariah.

Old Testament Axioms of Mission. Five major axioms in the Old Testament are inherent in the New Testament unfolding of the kingdom of God in relation to the church’s mission to the nations. They can be traced within this tragic history of Israel’s experience with God.

1. God is sovereign in his kingship. His rule over individuals and nations is always righteous and just. He is the moral Governor of the universe (Ps. 22:27, 28; Dan. 4:34, 35; *see also* SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD).
2. God seeks the personal commitment of his people. God’s HOLINESS demands righteousness on the part of all Israelites who would be in covenantal relationship with him (Isa. 55:6, 7).
3. God’s people are to constitute a “serving” community among the nations by example and through personal outreach. They are to oppose “by word and deed” all that demeans people (Mic. 6:8).
4. God’s purpose through his people is relentlessly opposed by the inveteracy of human evil and the implacable hostility of Satan and his hosts (Job 1, 2; 2 Chron. 36:15, 16).
5. God’s purpose for Israel and the nations always moves beyond present matters, and is invariably directed toward his future and ultimate triumph in history (Isa. 2:2–4; Zech. 14).

Specific Old Testament Contributions. Within the record of Israel’s long history the Old Testa-

Biblical Theology of Mission

ment touches on themes that are relevant to mission outreach today: the issue of slavery and political liberation (Exodus and Ezra); the relation of God's people to secular power and secular events (Genesis and the Prophets); the mystery of suffering and redemption (Genesis, Exodus, and the Servant Songs of Isaiah); the lifestyle of God's people (Leviticus); the perils of religious pluralism (Hosea); the issue of racism and the disease of anti-Semitism (Esther); the basic problems encountered in serving God (Haggai and Zechariah); religious encounter and the non-negotiability of truth (Jeremiah); the pursuit of personal and national spiritual renewal (Nehemiah and Malachi); the role of the believing remnant within Israel (Amos and Isaiah); the possibility of becoming useless to God through ethnocentrism (Jonah); the function of wisdom literature as a bridge to the nations that know not God (Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes); and the missiological implications of Israel as a diasporal people.

Although the Old Testament is replete with insightful material related to issues inherent in mission, on the one crucial issue it is silent. In the Old Testament God has not revealed "the mystery hidden for ages and generations" whereby Gentiles through the gospel would become fellow heirs with the people of God. Biblically informed Jewish people know that their future Golden Age will not take place without a massive ingathering of the nations to the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But how this would come about remained a mystery until Jesus Christ inaugurated the messianic age (Eph. 3:3–9).

The New Testament Contribution (*see also* NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY OF MISSION). The unity of the Bible is nowhere more clearly seen than in the way in which the Old Testament kingdom axioms mentioned above were amplified and increased in the New Testament. With the advent of Jesus Christ these axioms are directly related to world mission.

First, God's sovereignty focuses on Christ's lordship. "We preach Jesus Christ as Lord" (2 Cor. 4:5). This is the heart of the good news of the kingdom (Rom. 10:9, 10). Through the cross he conquered all his foes and obtained salvation for his people. His present rule over the redeemed adumbrates his coming rule when "every knee" bows to him and "every tongue" confesses his lordship (Phil. 2:6–11). The worship of other gods is utterly abhorrent to him.

Second, Christ's lordship demands personal commitment. The New Testament stresses the necessity of faith, the new birth, the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, and its outward expression in love and kingdom service. Only "new creatures in Christ" shall enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Those who possess his lordship but whose lives do not reflect his values and perspectives are

challenged to examine themselves to determine whether they are truly his (2 Cor. 13:5).

Third, the community of the King is the Body of Christ. Kingdom people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are custodians of the kingdom and share oneness in the church. Their common life is expressed through corporate WORSHIP, mutual sharing, united confession, and outgoing service. They live by PRAYER and the CONFESSION of sin. Although the CHURCH as Christ's body is of divine creation, its visible, structured presence is a flawed mixture of God's grace, human fallenness, and demonic penetration. Its only glory is the presence of Christ in its midst, realized by faith.

Fourth, the church is called to mission. Only after Christ had completed his redemptive work did he issue the call to world mission: to proclaim and demonstrate "by word and deed" the "good news of the kingdom of God." Its details strikingly endorse but significantly supplement the Old Testament injunction to "do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with God" (Mic. 6:8). After he sent the Holy Spirit upon his disciples, they consciously began to sense that they possessed a universal faith for all nations and began to go beyond the bounds of Israel to Gentile peoples to proclaim this gospel. Mission's central and irreplaceable task is persuading people to become Christ's disciples and gathering them into local congregations (*see also* MISSIONARY TASK).

Fifth, obedience to mission involves SUFFERING. The New Testament is replete with the record of conflict and suffering precipitated by the advent and proclamation of gospel of the kingdom. Jesus himself experienced the world's rejection and the devil's fury, and learned obedience through what he suffered (Heb. 5:8). In much the same way the church, claiming the victory of Christ over the powers (Col. 2:15), will experience the sifting of Satan (Luke 22:31) and fiery trials (1 Peter 1:6–8) that it too might be perfected, the better to perform its mission. This process will continue and even intensify as the age draws to an end.

Sixth, the future remains bright with hope. God's redemptive purpose will be fulfilled (Acts 1:8). What he initiated will be consummated. Through the missionary obedience of his disciples God will call out a completed people from the nations. Then he will "judge the world in righteousness by a Man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (cf. Acts 17:30, 31 with Matt. 25:31, 32). The climax of Christ's redemptive purpose will take place at his second coming "when all things are subjected to God. Then the Son will also be subjected to God who put all things under him that God may be everything to everyone" (1 Cor. 15:28; *see also* PAROUSIA).

Israel Confronts Her Messiah. In the Old Testament God frequently sent prophets to Israel to remind the people of their covenantal relationship to him and the service he expected of them (Jer. 7:25). And yet, God's sending of Jesus was unique. The fallen condition of humanity was so acute and the need for redemption so great that only the INCARNATION of God the Son and the ATONEMENT of the cross could avail to provide for the redemption of God's people. Previous "sendings" set the stage for this final "sending" of the Messiah to Israel. This event marks the great hinge of salvation history: the end of "the old" and the beginning of "the new."

When Jesus came to Israel he almost immediately began to question the traditional piety of the Pharisees. He also turned to the outcasts of society and set before them a quality of life dominated by the love of God. In this connection Bosch states: "It is remarkable to note how these people to whom Jesus turned are referred to in the Gospels. They are called the poor, the blind, the lame, the lepers, the hungry, sinners, those who weep, the sick, the little ones, the widows, the captives, the persecuted, the downtrodden, the least, the last, those who are weary and heavily burdened, the lost sheep" (1978). In other words he embodied the kingdom of God as a countercultural presence in society and offended the Pharisees who could only sneer and scornfully comment: "This mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them" (John 7:49). They did not sense the significance of his redemptive purpose despite their study of the Scriptures (John 5:39). The Sadducees also opposed him because they knew neither the Scriptures nor the power of God (Mark 12:24).

This redemptive purpose began with John the Baptist, the Messiah's herald ("Elijah has come!"; Mal. 4:5; Matt. 17:12) and Jesus' incarnation, baptism, and divine attestation by God as to his true identity (Matt. 1:23; 3:7). Then followed his confrontation and triumph over satanic temptation. With the execution of John, their joint ministry of renewal came to an end. From that point onward Jesus began to confront the Jewish people as their Messiah (Luke 4:16–30), gathered a community of disciples around himself (9:23), and inaugurated the kingdom of God in its initial hiddenness. He explained: "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the Kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it" (16:16).

Jesus' miracles should not be simply regarded as humanitarian acts of compassion. Actually, they were messianic "signs" which Isaiah had predicted (chs. 35, 61) would precede the decisive act of God in redeeming his people. They pointed to the reality of the kingdom of God as "already" in the midst of Israel by virtue of who

he was and what he did. On one occasion he said, "If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come to you" (Luke 11:20). At first the crowds were drawn by the expectations he kindled and by his messianic signs. When he fed the multitudes they wanted to make him their king (John 6:15). But when it became apparent that his kingdom demanded moral transformation, the crowds melted and opposition grew.

After a brief ministry of three years devoted to preaching the kingdom by using parables loaded with mission insights, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and liberating the demonized, Jesus was seized by the religious establishment, subjected to an unjust trial, condemned to death for blasphemy, and then turned over to the Roman authorities to be crucified. He died as a Redeemer "taking away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) and rose from the dead the third day as Victor over sin and death, as the Old Testament had predicted (Luke 24:44–49). In his post-resurrection ministry Christ stressed four realities: (1) his bodily resurrection (Acts 1:3); (2) himself as the key to understanding the Old Testament (Luke 24:25–27, 32); (3) his missionary mandate (lit. "when you go"—of course, you will go) "make disciples of all nations," incorporating converts into local congregations via baptism; and training them in discipleship, as he had trained them (Matt. 28:18–20); and (4) his order to remain in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, without whose power their missionary task would prove impossible to achieve (Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8). He then ascended into heaven. This act was the final witness to his divine Sonship (Acts 1:9–11).

Mission Begins: Proclaiming the Kingdom. The Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost transformed mission from preoccupation with a particular people (the Jews, Matt. 10:5, 6; 15:24) to all peoples (Acts 2:17, 21, 39). But it took time for the early disciples to sense the full implications of Jesus' messianic Jewish movement being transformed into a universal faith—the beginning of a new era under the NEW COVENANT. At first, believers in Jesus were largely regarded as a messianic sect within Judaism. Their evangelistic method was deeply rooted in the Old Testament (13:14–43). But when Gentiles began to come to faith, the apostles did not feel that they should be transformed into Jews by circumcision and Law observance, according to the older pattern of Jewish proselytism. This produced a crisis that was partially resolved at a special council of "apostles and leaders" (ch. 15). This also influenced their evangelistic approach to non-Jewish people (17:16–34; 26:18). This provoked a growing consciousness, particularly among Jewish believers, that a "parting of the way" was taking place within Jewry between rab-

Disciple, Discipleship

binic Jews and those Jews who upon believing in Jesus were increasingly finding spiritual oneness with the growing number of Gentile believers.

This massive shift precipitated much theological debate. Fortunately, God's gift to the early church was his provision of a "task" theologian, through the conversion of the Apostle Paul (Acts 9; 22; 26, esp. 9:15). From that time onward Paul's missionary activities and the problem-solving letters they provoked greatly enlarged the movement's awareness of the complexity of the task of worldwide mission (*see also* PAUL AND MISSION). Notable is his letter to the vigorous, largely Gentile church in Rome that he sought to transform into a missionary base for operations in Spain, and throughout the western Mediterranean world. He began with an appalling portrayal of the abounding sinfulness of all people, whether Jews or Gentiles (1:18–3:20). He followed this with a comprehensive presentation of the abounding grace of God to all sinners through "the righteousness of God, the Lord Jesus Christ" (3:21–5:21). Justification is by grace through faith. But Paul could not stop. He had to delineate the amazing grace of God to all who had believed. Victorious living for Christians is gloriously possible through the Cross and the Holy Spirit. These resources are such that although sin is always possible, it is not necessary (6:1–8:39)! Then, Paul reviewed the tragic record of Israel's national experience. The nation was never intended by God to be an end in itself. Rather, Israel was chosen for worldwide ministry, but through its failure had to be set aside—neither totally nor permanently—for Israel shall yet enter its Golden Age through repentance and faith in her Messiah at his second coming (9:1–11:36). The final sections of this letter focused on practical matters related to Paul's concern that the church at Rome be transformed into a missionary-sending community eager to participate in mission outreach, particularly in the evangelization of Spain (12–16).

The Kingdom of God: A Sign of God's Tomorrow. The New Testament deals with many important mission matters such as insight into the validity of mobile mission teams as well as fixed church structures; the essentiality, diversity, and exercise of GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT; the issue of the POWERS in relation to spiritual conflict; the phenomena of ethnic religion and spiritual conversion; the eternal separation between the saved and the lost (*see* HELL); and the end of the age: the ultimate triumph of God.

But what should concern us particularly is to see the full significance of making the kingdom of God the dominant hub about which all mission activities are related. Ours is an age in which people all over the world are losing all sense of hope touching the future. But the reality of the kingdom means that God has a glorious

future for Israel and all the nations. There is going to be God's tomorrow. And every Christian is called to be a "sign" of God's tomorrow in the world of today.

It follows then that the Christian community is to be countercultural, not captured by the status quo, by the privileged, the exploiters, the powerful. Its members march to the beat of a different drum, for they seek to embody all of the elements of the kingdom of God in their lives. Like Christ, their concern is the poor, the blind, the disadvantaged, the despised, the captives, the persecuted, the imprisoned, the downtrodden, the bearers of heavy burdens, indeed, all those unaware of God's love. They proclaim Jesus Christ as Liberator, Savior, Friend, and the One who grants forgiveness, newness of life, unspeakable joy, and hope. Their God is the One who makes "all things new." Their yearning for his "new heavens and new earth" constrains them to love and serve others on Christ's behalf. Their concept of the gospel is not confined to proclamation, for it involves both word and deed. Their struggle is to make sure that the good news of Jesus is not denied to any human. This is what mission is all about!

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Disciple, Discipleship. During Jesus' earthly ministry, and during the days of the early church, the term most frequently used to designate one of Jesus' followers was "disciple." A central theme of Jesus' earthly ministry, discipleship likewise is a central theme that is to occupy the mission of the church throughout the ages as they make disciples of all the nations (Matt. 28:18–20) and then help new disciples advance in their discipleship in following Jesus.

Disciple. In the ancient world the term "disciple" was used generally to designate a *follower* who was committed to a recognized leader or teacher. In Jesus' day several other types of individuals were called "disciples." These disciples were similar to, yet quite different from, Jesus' disciples.

The "Jews" who questioned the parents of the man born blind (John 9:18ff.) attempted to scorn the blind man by saying that, although he was a disciple of Jesus, they were "disciples of Moses" (John 9:28). They focused on their privilege to have been born Jews who had a special relation to God through Moses (cf. John 9:29). The "disciples of the Pharisees" (Mark 2:18; Matt. 22:15–16) were adherents of the Pharisaic party, possi-

bly belonging to one of the academic institutions. The Pharisees centered their activities on study and strict application of the Old Testament, developing a complex system of oral interpretations of the Law. The “disciples of John the Baptist” (John 1:35; Mark 2:18) were courageous men and women who had left the status-quo of institutional Judaism to follow the prophet.

What then is different about Jesus’ disciples? Jesus’ disciples were those who heard his invitation to begin a new kind of life, accepted his call to the new life, and became obedient to it. The center of this new life was Jesus himself, because his disciples gained new life through him (John 10:7–10), they followed him (Mark 1:16–20), they were to hear and obey his teachings (Matt. 5:1–2), and they were to share in Jesus’ mission by going into all of the world, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and calling all people to become Jesus’ disciples (Luke 24:47; Matt. 28:19–20). In the Gospels the disciples are with Jesus, the religious leaders are those who are against Jesus, and the crowds or multitudes are those who are curious, but have not yet made a commitment to Jesus. The word “disciple” when referring to Jesus’ followers is equivalent to “believer” (cf. Acts 4:32; 6:2) and “Christian” (Acts 11:26).

We should distinguish between the disciples in a narrow and broad sense. In the narrow sense we recognize especially those twelve who literally followed Jesus around and later became the apostles. We also recognize a broader group of Jesus’ disciples which was composed, among others, of the large group of people who had become Jesus’ followers (Luke 6:13), a variety of individual men and women (Luke 8:2–3; 23:49, 55; 24:13, 18, 33), tax-collectors (Luke 19:1–10), scribes (Matt. 8:18–21), and religious leaders (John 19:38–42; Matt. 27:57). The term “disciple” designates one as a believer in Jesus; all true believers are disciples (cf. Acts 4:32 with 6:2). The Twelve were distinguished from the larger group by a calling to become “apostles” (Luke 6:13). The Twelve were both disciples (i.e., believers) and apostles (i.e., commissioned leaders) (Matt. 10:1–2).

Discipleship. The initiative of discipleship with Jesus lies with his call (Mark 1:17; 2:14; Matt. 4:19; 9:9; cf. Luke 5:10–11, 27–28) and his choice (John 15:16) of those who would be his disciples. The response to the call involves recognition and belief in Jesus’ identity (John 2:11; 6:68–69), obedience to his summons (Mark 1:18, 20), counting the cost of full allegiance to him (Luke 14:25–28; Matt. 19:23–30), and participating in his mission of being a “light to the Gentiles” (Acts 13). His call is the beginning of something new; it means leaving behind one’s old life (Matt. 8:34–37; Luke 9:23–25), finding new life in the family of God through obeying the will of the Father (Matt. 12:46–50), and being sent by him to

the world as the Father had sent Jesus (John 20:21).

When Jesus called men and women to follow him, he offered a personal relationship with himself, not simply an alternative lifestyle or different religious practices or a new social organization. While some of the sectarians within Judaism created separations between the “righteous” and the “unrighteous” by their regulations and traditions, Jesus broke through those barriers by calling to himself those who, in the eyes of sectarians, did not seem to enjoy the necessary qualifications for fellowship with him (Matt. 9:9–13; Mark 2:13–17). Discipleship means the beginning of a new life in intimate fellowship with a living Master and Savior. Thus discipleship also involves a commitment to call others to such a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus’ gracious call to discipleship was accompanied by an intense demand to count the cost of discipleship (cf. Luke 9:57–62; 14:25–33). The demand to count the cost of discipleship meant exchanging the securities of this world for salvation and security in him. For some this meant sacrificing riches (Matt. 19:16–26), for others it meant sacrificing attachment to family (Matt. 8:18–22; Luke 14:25–27), for still others it meant abandoning nationalistic feelings of superiority (Luke 10:25–37). For all disciples it means giving of one’s life for gospel proclamation in the world.

Jesus declared that to be a disciple is to become like the master (Matt. 10:24–25; Luke 6:40). Becoming like Jesus includes going out with the same message, ministry, and compassion (Matt. 10:5ff.), practicing the same religious and social traditions (Mark 2:18–22; Matt. 12:1–8), belonging to the same family of obedience (Matt. 12:46–49), exercising the same servanthood (Mark 10:42–45; Matt. 20:26–28; John 13:12–17), experiencing the same suffering (Matt. 10:16–25; Mark 10:38–39), and being sent in the same way to the same world (John 20:21). The true disciple was to know Jesus so well, was to have followed him so closely, that he or she would become like him. The ultimate goal was to be conformed to Jesus’ image (cf. Luke 6:40; Rom. 8:28–29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19) and then live out a life of witness in word and deed to the world that Jesus is Lord.

John’s Gospel carries three challenges of Jesus to his disciples. These challenges offer the means by which a disciple grows in discipleship to become like Jesus. First, true discipleship means abiding in Jesus’ words as the truth for every area of life (cf. John 8:31–32). Abiding in Jesus’ words means to know and to live in what Jesus says about life. Instead of listening to the world’s values, disciples must listen to what Jesus says. This begins with salvation (cf. Peter’s example in John 6:66–69), but involves every other area of life as well (Matt. 28:19–20). Second, true disci-

Disciple, Discipleship

pleiship also means loving one another as Jesus loved his disciples (John 13:34–35). Love is a distinguishing mark of all disciples of Jesus, made possible because of regeneration—where a change has been made in the heart of the believer by God’s love—and because of an endless supply of love from God, who is love (cf. 1 John 4:12–21). Third, Jesus also said that the true disciple will bear fruit: the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–26), new converts (John 4:3–38; 15:16), righteousness and good works (Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:10), and proclamation witness to the world (John 20:21).

No matter how advanced Jesus’ disciples would become, they would always be disciples of Jesus. In other master-disciple relationships in Judaism the goal of discipleship was one day to become the master. But disciples of Jesus are not simply involved in an education or vocational form of discipleship. Disciples of Jesus have entered into a relationship with the Son of God, which means that Jesus is always Master and Lord (Matt. 23:8–12). Therefore, this relationship with Jesus is a wholistic process—involving every area of life as the disciple grows to become like Jesus—and it lasts throughout the disciple’s life.

The church therefore is a community of disciples, the family of God (cf. Matt. 12:46–50), composed of all those who have believed on Jesus for salvation. In our day we have lost that perspective. Often people of the church feel as though discipleship is optional, that perhaps it is only for those who are extremely committed, or else it is for those who have been called to leadership or ministry. We must regain the biblical perspective: to believe on Jesus draws a person into community, a community which defines its expectations, responsibilities, and privileges in terms of discipleship.

Mission and Discipleship. We have seen above that a primary goal of discipleship is becoming like Jesus (Luke 6:40). This is also understood by Paul to be the final goal of eternal election (Rom. 8:29). The process of becoming like Jesus brings the disciple into intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as such, is the goal of individual discipleship. But discipleship is not simply self-centered. In a classic interaction with two of his disciples who were seeking positions of prominence, Jesus declares that servanthood is to be the goal of disciples in relationship to one another (Mark 10:35–45). The reason that this kind of servanthood is possible is because of Jesus’ work of servanthood in ransoming disciples. He paid the price of release from the penalty for sin (cf. Rom. 6:23), and from the power of sin over pride and self-centered motivation. The motivation of self-serving greatness is broken through redemption, and disciples are thus enabled to focus upon others

in servanthood both in the church and, with other Christians, servanthood in the world. This is very similar to Paul’s emphasis when he points to Jesus’ emptying himself to become a servant: Jesus provides the example of the way the Philippian believers are to act toward one another (Phil. 2:1–8).

Through his final GREAT COMMISSION Jesus focuses his followers on the ongoing importance of discipleship through the ages, and declares the responsibility of disciples toward the world: they are to make disciples of all peoples (Matt. 28:16–20). To “make disciples” is to proclaim the gospel message among those who have not yet heard the gospel of forgiveness of sins (cf. Luke 24:46–47; John 20:21). The command finds verbal fulfillment in the activities of the early church (e.g. Acts 14:21), where they went from Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria, to the ends of the earth proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and calling the peoples of the world to become disciples of Jesus Christ. In the early church, to believe in the gospel message was to become a disciple (cf. Acts 4:32 with 6:2). To “make disciples of all the nations” is to make more of what Jesus made of them.

A person becomes a disciple of Jesus when he or she confesses Jesus as Savior and God and is regenerated by the Holy Spirit (cf. John 3:3–8; Titus 3:5). The participles “baptizing” and “teaching” in Matthew 28:18 describe activities through which the new disciple grows in discipleship. Growth includes both identification with Jesus’ death and resurrection (baptism) and obedience to all that Jesus had commanded the disciples in his earthly ministry (teaching). Baptism immerses and surrounds the new believers with the reality and presence of the Triune God as they dwell within the church. Obedience to Jesus’ teaching brings about full Christian formation for disciples.

Jesus concludes the Commission with the crucial element of discipleship: the presence of the Master—“I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Both those obeying the command and those responding are comforted by the awareness that the risen Jesus will continue to form all his disciples. The Master is always present for his disciples to follow in their mission to the world throughout the ages.

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Mathetes; idem, Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship; idem, Reflecting Jesus.

Divine Initiative. The Scriptures present God as the one ultimate and Supreme Being in the universe. Before anything else existed, God eternally “was.” It was within the depths of his Being that the idea of what would exist arose and when it pleased him those ideas took concrete external shape at the word of his command. God created the supernatural world and the physical world in which the human race would be placed. This is the import of Genesis 1:1, which says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” and all of this speaks to the question of God’s initiative. If God had not taken the initiative there would have been no reality external to himself. He conceived, developed, and executed the plan that gave reality to what we now experience as our universe and our place in it.

The initiative of God did not end when he had accomplished the initial creation of all things. By a continuous act of his power God sustains everything in existence. Created, contingent being has no power to keep itself in existence; were it not for the sustaining word and will of God, all that is would lapse back into its primal nonexistence and be no more. In addition to this God has retained his right to intervene creatively in his universe for the governance and good of his creation. He does this by sometimes working through the orderly structures he has established and sometimes by contravening them for a higher good (*see* MIRACLES). After all, the orderly structures (the so-called natural laws) are all part of a larger moral order and subserve those higher purposes. So God’s intervention in his own universe is not a violation of independently functioning laws but rather a rearranging of those orderly structures to serve a higher end. The Deists of the eighteenth century down to and including the liberal theologians of our own day deny that God (if there is a personal God) would do this sort of thing. They assert that after the world was established, God left it to work out its own purposes, especially the purposes of human beings, who now have the ultimate initiative. Scripture does not teach this. It allows that human beings do exercise initiative and may genuinely act as responsible beings, but it is all within the matrix of God’s overall sustenance and management (providence). We may exercise initiative, but not ultimately.

Scripture is replete with examples of God’s taking the initiative. God made the world; God said “Let the land produce vegetation” (Gen. 1:11) and it obeyed him. God created the human pair and established his relationship with them, setting limits upon them. God judged them when they failed. The overwhelming number of times God’s initiative is spoken of in Scripture has

caused some modern theologians actually to *define* God as a “God who acts” (as opposed to the pagan gods who could do nothing) and the Bible as the “Book of the Acts of God” (G. Ernest Wright; R. H. Fuller).

From a missiological point of view, the concept of the divine initiative most directly relates to God’s self-disclosure with a view to bringing fallen humans into a redemptive relation with himself. God has called his people to share this good news of redemption with every living soul. God took the initiative in seeking out the lost progenitors of our race and all of their descendants. He established a plan of salvation that we may enter into, he commissions people to proclaim this message, he works on the hearts of the unredeemed to awaken a sense of need, and he regenerates those who believe. The apostle Paul worked out an entire philosophy of history based on this conception of God, as he explained to the Athenian philosophers in Acts 17. God made the world and everything in it (17:24); he needs nothing, “because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else” (17:25); he made all nations from one person “and determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live” (17:26); and he “did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us” (17:27). Paul sees the redemptive purposes of God at work everywhere and himself as an AMBASSADOR OF GOD calling everyone, everywhere to repentance and conscious faith in Jesus Christ. He also sees it as the task of the church to share in this ministry and proclaim the saving message of the gospel to those who are lost (*see* MISSIONARY TASK).

Those who proclaim the gospel may be sure that God has gone before them. He who made and sustains this universe and who initiated the plan of salvation for lost humanity did not suddenly stop working and leave it all up to human efforts. He certainly includes those efforts, but, thankfully, they are within the context of his own creative involvement and activity. In the end, it is not “he who plants nor he who waters [who] is anything, but only God who made it grow” (1 Cor. 3:7). We are fellow-workers with God (1 Cor. 3:9).

God has gone before us in at least four ways and those who go out to labor in God’s field may be certain that God has been there first—and is still there at work (1 Cor. 3:9; Matt. 9:38). First, God has preceded us by making a knowledge of himself available to everyone (Pss. 19:1–4; 22:27, 28; 48:10; John 1:1–5, 9; Rom. 1:18, 19, 28). Second, God has revealed significant aspects of his nature through GENERAL REVELATION, such as his righteousness (Rom. 1:32), his kindness (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17), his power (Ps. 29:3–10; Rom. 1:20), his majesty and glory (Ps. 8:1–4; 19:1), and

End Times

his truth (Rom. 1:21, 25). Third, God has written his moral requirements into the human heart and no matter how badly they may be distorted by sin, they are still there and may be appealed to. C. S. Lewis called these “the Tao” in *The Abolition of Man* and finds the basis for all natural forms of religion in them. These moral requirements include the need to worship (Acts 17:22, 23), the need to seek God (Acts 17:27), fundamental moral principles (Matt. 5:47; Rom. 2:13–16), and a sense of impending judgment upon wrongdoing (Rom. 1:21–25, 32). Finally, God’s will to save is also made known, although, rather obviously, the *facts of salvation* are not. They may only be known through special revelation (Acts 17:27; Rom. 2:5–11; Titus 2:11; 2 Peter 3:3; 5:4, 8, 9).

The command to proclaim the gospel is a universal one (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8) and we may confidently build upon what we know God has been doing before our arrival. Sometimes it is just a general work that God has been doing and we must labor hard in the face of ridicule and rejection, as Paul did in Athens (Acts 17:32, 33). Sometimes God has been preparing the ground very specifically and our call may be to a specific area (Macedonia, Acts 16:10) or a specific individual (Cornelius, Acts 19:19–22). Either way the divine initiative precedes ours and assures us that our labors will not be in vain.

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End Times. A primary scriptural impetus for the global missionary enterprise is the GREAT COMMISSION statement crowning the First Gospel: “go and make disciples of all nations. . . . I am with you to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:19–20). Jesus makes it clear that the urgent emphasis of mission must not be simply to “disciple” the world, but to continue to do so until the culmination of the end times events.

Relatedly, the Savior had already spoken to the heart of the issue in the Olivet Discourse, Jesus’ sermon on the end of the age. Assurance that the global evangelistic task will be completed can be drawn from Matthew 24:14: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” Unfortunately, this passage does not elaborate on how this climactic proclamation will come about or who will accomplish it, nor does it address other questions that divide evangelical Bible scholars and missiologists.

Nor are these the only key passages that relate mission to the end times. For example, in Acts

2:17 the apostle Peter relates the phenomena going on around him on the Day of Pentecost to “the last days,” citing Joel 2:28–32, which is there linked to the “day of the Lord” (Acts 2:20), a great theme of Old Testament eschatology. These references added urgency to Peter’s appeal to his hearers: Call on the name of the Lord and be saved (v. 21) before it is too late for you to do so (v. 20)!

This passage also reveals the balancing perspective that “the last days” actually began in earnest with the inbreaking of the new age of the Spirit at Pentecost. This understanding is shared by the description of Christ being revealed in “these last days” in Hebrews 1:2. Relatedly, Paul speaks of ungodly behavior characterizing “later times,” which seems to include his own day (1 Tim. 4:1).

On the other hand, Paul also looks ahead to absolutely “terrible times in the last days” (2 Tim. 3:1), though still times in which the God-breathed Scriptures will bring hearers to salvation (3:15–4:5). Of that latter-day period, Peter reminds his readers that the Lord wants “everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9), urging a blameless lifestyle that will be a crucial aspect of attracting unbelievers to salvation (vv. 14–15).

Unfortunately, to this point, evangelicals have not sufficiently probed the Book of Revelation for specifics with regard to the completion of the Great Commission. Recently, however, R. Bauckham’s programmatic discussion of the “conversion of the nations” in regard to the Apocalypse has served to stimulate fresh discussion in this area.

For example, it is quite likely that “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language” (Rev. 7:9) standing before the heavenly throne is to be linked to the Matthean Commission. This vast throng from “all the nations” (Matt. 28:19), whether martyrs or not, are the end times fruit of the Great Commission.

Also, the references to “the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth, to every nation, tribe, language and people” (Rev. 14:6–7) and the group of martyrs standing on the glassy sea (15:2) apparently are the fulfillment of the promise of the age-concluding preaching of the gospel described in Matthew 24:14. That understanding becomes even more likely when one sees that this use of “gospel” in 14:6 is its lone inclusion in the Book of Revelation.

Further, the two-sided harvest of Revelation 14:14–19 reflects strikingly similar imagery and terminology to Christ’s parable of the wheat and the weeds (Matt. 13:24–30, 36–43). Since it speaks of the judgment at the “end of the age” (vv. 39–40), in which the children of the kingdom and the children of the evil one are separated to their ultimate destinies, there are important missiological implications.

So, if nothing else, recent study of the Book of Revelation has located several passages that seem to detail the completion of the Great Commission in the end times. It remains for further exegetical and theological study to clarify important details that will inform the theory and practice of the evangelical missionary enterprise in the crucial time ahead.

With the new millennium, there is great curiosity about the possible arrival of the “end times.” From the standpoint of mission, there has been much creative strategizing and sending, including hundreds of strategies aimed toward the goal of completing the global imperative by the turn of the century.

Since there is still much uncertainty attached to the specific impact of these efforts with respect to God’s plan and timing, encouragement should be drawn from joyfully remembering the promise of the risen Lord, in the context of the carrying out of the Great Commission: “I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

On the other hand, God’s sovereignty must never be an excuse for irresponsibility or complacency. Employing imagery with overtones of the end times, the apostle Paul laid out the practical urgency of “understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here” (Rom. 13:11–12).

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Bibliography. R. Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy, The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, BEB, II:1310–11; A. Johnson and R. Webber, *What Christians Believe: A Biblical and Historical Summary*; A. B. Luter and K. McReynolds, *Disciplined Living: What the New Testament Teaches about Recovery and Discipleship*.

Gospel, The. The gospel (*euangelion*) or “good news” has been entrusted to the church to proclaim to all peoples. It is variously described as an “eternal gospel” (Rev. 14:6), “the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15), “the gospel of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:12), “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24), and “the gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 24:14). These different designations do not mean different gospels, for there is only one gospel (Gal. 1:8). This word is also associated with the synonym *kerygma*, a noun used eight times in the New Testament to focus particular attention on the proclamation of the precise content of the gospel. These two words are identical in their definition of the gospel and both stress the fact that in essence the gospel concerns an event of surpassing uniqueness. Prior to the consummation of human history, when God shall “bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ,” it is his will that this gos-

pel “must first be preached to all nations” (Eph. 1:10; Mark 13:10).

Although the uniqueness of this gospel event is clearly and frequently referred to in the New Testament as the sum total of the redemptive work of Christ, its full meaning is beyond human comprehension. When he embraced the cross this involved not only taking to his innocence the totality of human SIN and SHAME in order to make it his own responsibility, but also included the curse of sin as well, which is death (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13). He had to invalidate the claim and power of sin by entering into the death that is its ultimate penalty. His object thereby was to destroy it, for death is Satan’s greatest weapon (Heb. 2:9, 14, 15). In so doing he “disarmed the powers and authorities” under Satan’s dominion in order that he might send sin back to its demonic author. He thereby broke its tyranny and destroyed its power, and by this means removed its curse (Col. 2:15). Hence, the gospel is equated with this unique once-for-all-time event: the death, burial, and RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, followed by his subsequent exaltation to the right hand of God, where he was gloriously acclaimed and “made both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” (1 John 3:8).

On this basis the people of God, in response to their Lord’s GREAT COMMISSION to “make disciples of all nations,” have but one way to demonstrate their obedience to him. They are to confront the human race with the divine command: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (2:38, 39). From this it follows that the call to REPENTANCE and FAITH, with its promise of divine intervention, is of the very essence of God’s plan for the redemption of his people from the nations of the earth.

When one examines the total usage of the word “gospel” in the Scriptures the impression quickly grows that “preaching the gospel” cannot be confined to the mere recitation of the actual facts of Christ’s atoning and saving work. To the apostles all that he did was “in accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3, 4). This meant nothing less to them than that the coming of Christ into the world (“when the time had fully come” Gal. 4:4) represented the central event in “salvation history.” It was almost of the order of an eschatological event at a critical juncture in the biblical record of Israel’s long and troubled history. Indeed, it also marked a distinctly new era in the fortunes of the nations, for by the gospel nothing less than “the KINGDOM OF GOD is being preached” (Luke 16:16). Since this would involve the reclamation of this fallen world from Satan’s

Great Commandment

control, the proclamation of the gospel from then on attained the order of something special in God's dealings with not only Israel but with the Gentile world as well. This brought a sense of uniqueness to the calling of those who would go forth to the nations with this gospel. Indeed, Paul would speak of Christ having given to him "the ministry of reconciliation," a ministry so sublime in his eyes that it was nothing less than "God making his appeal through us" (2 Cor. 5:18–20). All those who proclaim this gospel can truthfully though humbly state that they are "God's fellow workers" (6:1). In their preaching of the gospel, what they share is "not the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13). As a result their preaching was making actual and available to their hearers the very reality of God's salvation.

This brings up another point of far-reaching significance. The apostles unitedly and fiercely opposed any thought that the achievement of the world's reconciliation by Christ alone through his solitary cross was somehow incomplete. How could it be otherwise when at its heart was nothing less than God himself in his Son "reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). As a result only human arrogance would dare to challenge its perfection by claiming that any human activity was needed to bring it to completion. The Christians at Ephesus were pointedly told: "It is by GRACE you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). Indeed, no person can make himself or herself fit for God's Presence, much less enter into personal relationship with him. The preaching of the gospel has solely to do with the person of Christ and must be kept free from all reference to legalistic Judaism or any other form of what has been popularly termed "works-righteousness." The followers of Christ in Crete were told: "When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy" (Titus 3:4, 5).

When Saul the Pharisee was confronted by the Lord on the road to Damascus, he not only had a vision of the risen, glorified Christ. Through repentance and faith the persecutor of the people of God found himself graciously called to the fellowship and service of the One whom he had so persistently and hatefully opposed (Acts 26:12–18). As the apostle to the Gentiles he was given a fivefold task (v. 18, *see also* PAUL AND MISSION). He was "to open their eyes," for people by nature and satanic influence "cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4). Paul was then to "turn them from darkness to light," for people in their fallenness are not facing this Christ, the Light of the World, who alone can meet their

need. But before they can effectually reach out to the Savior, they must turn "from the power of Satan to God." This is absolutely crucial, for it involves the conscious repudiation of all that has previously controlled their lives. The early church encouraged would-be followers of Jesus to renounce by solemn oath "the devil and all his works." It was felt that only then would they be able to commit their lives to the control of the Lord. And once this change of allegiance takes place they will be able by faith to "receive the forgiveness of sins" and subsequently "a place among those who are sanctified in Christ" (i.e., gain incorporation into a local congregation of fellow believers through baptism). Central in this evangelistic sequence is the fact that the gospel is a Person. To receive him (John 1:11, 12) involves consciously submitting to a new authority over one's life, even to Christ the Lord.

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Great Commandment. When considering missions, it is usually not the "Great Commandment" (Mark 12:28–34 par. Matt. 22:34–40; cf. Luke 10:25–28) but the "GREAT COMMISSION" (Matt. 28:16–20; Luke 24:46–49) that takes center stage. Arguably, however, the Great Commandment provides a crucial foundation for the Great Commission, and a unilateral emphasis on the latter creates an imbalance that may render the church's mission ineffective. We will first discuss the scriptural foundation for the Great Commandment and subsequently deal with its contemporary relevance for mission.

Scriptural Foundation. The Great Commandment, according to Jesus, is the Old Testament command to love God with all of one's heart, soul, mind, and strength (Deut. 6:4–5), together with the injunction to love one's neighbor as oneself (cf. Lev. 19:18b; on the question of who is one's "neighbor," cf. Lev. 19:34; Luke 10:25–27; and Matt. 5:43–48). To call this commandment the *Great* Commandment is to follow Matthew's terminology (Matt. 22:36: "great"; 22:38: "great and first"), where "great" is probably used with relative force to denote what is "greatest" or "most important." Mark simply numbers the commandments as "first" and "second" (Mark 12:38, 41; cf. Matt. 22:38). In Luke, the lawyer's question is, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25), raising the question of whether Luke's account refers to a different event altogether, especially since, in Luke, it is not Jesus who is speaking but the lawyer (Luke 10:27).

The question of what constituted the heart of the Law was an issue widely discussed in rabbinic circles in Jesus' day. Jesus' emphatic state-

ment, only found in Matthew, that the entire Law and the Prophets depend on the Great Commandment, is therefore of utmost significance (Matt. 22:40). Unlike the Decalogue, which is mostly given in the form of prohibitions, Jesus states this injunction in a positive way (cf. Matt. 7:12). By expressing the commandment in an absolute and categorical rather than a relative and limited fashion, Jesus stresses the priority of the inward disposition over the outward action. In keeping with Old Testament prophetic tradition, Jesus requires heart religion, not merely formalistic legalism. At the same time, it is not his desire to use this commandment to relegate every other obligation of the believer to the point of irrelevance.

What is the relationship between the Great Commandment and the Great Commission in Matthew's Gospel? Since Matthew presents discipleship as the way of righteousness (cf. Matt. 5:6, 10, 20; 6:33), and since the Great Commission entails the teaching of converts to obey everything Jesus commanded, it is clear that the keeping of the Great Commandment is a prerequisite for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Moreover, the latter entails, not mere EVANGELISM in modern parlance, where the term usually refers merely to the bringing of a person to the point of conversion, but the grounding of Christian converts in the way of righteousness, including the observance of the Great Commandment (and, ultimately, once again the Great Commission!). Finally, the concept of righteousness in Matthew, while possessing a spiritual core, is not limited to the religious domain but also has social and economic dimensions. In these ways Matthew lays a crucial foundation for the understanding of the relationship between the Great Commandment and the Great Commission in contemporary discussion.

Contemporary Relevance for Mission. Historically, Anglo-Saxon Protestant missionary thought has emphasized the Great Commission, while the latter task never occupied an equally central position among Christians on the European Continent. The issue of the relationship between the Great Commission and the Great Commandment caused considerable discussion at the LAUSANNE CONGRESS ON WORLD EVANGELISM in 1974. While in the final conference document evangelism was named as the primary mission of the church, this drew the criticism of a significant number of participants, including JOHN STOTT, R. Sider, and others. After a reaffirmation of the primacy of evangelism by the Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE) in Pattaya, Thailand, in June 1980, the question was taken up again by the Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in June 1982, an effort co-sponsored by the WORLD EVANGELI-

CAL FELLOWSHIP (WEF) and the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) (see LAUSANNE MOVEMENT). This conference identified three kinds of relationships between EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: (1) social responsibility as a *consequence* of evangelism; (2) social action as a *bridge* to evangelism; and (3) social concern as a *partner* of evangelism. The delegates advocated a holistic approach to mission, since "[s]eldom if ever should we have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger, or between healing bodies or saving souls, since an authentic love for our neighbor will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person" (see HOLISTIC MISSION).

The key questions addressed at the 1982 consultation were the following: What is mission? How broad is salvation in Scripture? What is the relationship between the church and the kingdom? What is the church's mandate for social justice? R. Sider and J. I. Packer, in contrast to the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC) at its BANGKOK CONFERENCE (1973), argued for a narrow use of salvation language, restricting salvation "to the sphere of conscious confession of faith in Christ." A. Johnston, D. McGavran, P. Wagner, P. Beyerhaus, K. Bockmühl, and H. Lindsell joined in affirming this position against those who sought to define salvation more broadly. This latter group contended that salvation has not only personal but also social and cosmic dimensions, so that socioeconomic improvements should be described as an aspect of salvation, pointing also to Luke 4:16–21 (cf. Isa. 61:1–2). It was further argued that the lordship of Christ extends over all demonic powers of evil that "possess persons, pervade structures, societies, and the created order."

How does Scripture adjudicate between these two positions? On the one hand, it cautions against a reductionistic focus on people merely as "souls" that need to be saved, so that the church's task should not be conceived in merely "religious" terms. On the other hand, Scripture does affirm the primacy of a person's spiritual dimension, so that the effort of leading unbelievers to a Christian conversion rightly belongs at the heart of the church's mission. As noted, read in the context of Matthew's entire Gospel, the fulfillment of the Great Commission entails a "commitment to both the King and his kingdom, to both righteousness and justice" (Bosch), while the making of disciples also involves teaching them to obey Jesus' teachings which include loving God and one's neighbor. Hence love for God and others ought to be the driving motivation for mission (see MOTIVE, MOTIVATION), since, in love, God sent his Son; in love, Jesus gave his life for others; and by our love, the world will know that we are his disciples.

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Great Commission

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Great Commission. The term “Great Commission” is commonly assigned to Christ’s command to his disciples as found in Matthew 28:18–20, Mark 16:15–16, Luke 24:46–49, John 20:21, and Acts 1:8. It is sometimes referred to as the “Evangelistic Mandate” and distinguished from the “Cultural” and/or “Social Mandate” found in Genesis 1:28–30 and Genesis 9:1–7 (see CULTURAL MANDATE). The prominence accorded to the Great Commission in the past two hundred years is not apparent in previous church history. The early church made remarkable progress in spreading the faith throughout the Mediterranean world by virtue of the witness of dispersed Christians and the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul and others. However, there is no clear indication in the Book of Acts that this effort was motivated by explicit appeals to the Great Commission. Rather, after Pentecost the Holy Spirit both motivated and orchestrated the missionary effort in accordance with that Commission. Similarly, throughout the early centuries when both the Eastern and especially Western branches of the church were expanding significantly, the Great Commission as such does not appear to have been a decisive motivating or defining factor.

In REFORMATION times concerns and controversies relating to the Great Commission had to do with its applicability. In 1537 Pope Paul III emphasized the importance of the Great Commission and said that all people are “capable of receiving the doctrines of the Faith.” However, sixteenth-century Catholic theology applied the text to the Church with its episcopacy, not to the individual Christians as such. The Reformers generally taught that the Great Commission was entrusted to the apostles and that the apostles fulfilled it by going to the ends of their known world. This is not to say that they had no missionary vision. Hadrian Saravia (1531–1613) and Justinian von Welz (1621–61) found reason enough to write treatises in which they urged Christians to recognize their responsibility to obey the Great Commission and evangelize the world. Nevertheless, it remained for WILLIAM CAREY (1761–1834) to make one of the most compelling cases for the applicability of the Great Commission to all believers. The first section of his treatise *An Inquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (published in 1792) made a concerted argument that individual Christians should join together in an effort to take the gospel to the HEATHEN (at that time the common

designation for the unevangelized) in obedience to the Great Commission. Some historians have concluded that *An Inquiry* rivals Luther’s Ninety-five Theses in terms of its influence on church history.

By the middle of the nineteenth century a consensus on the *applicability* of the Great Commission had emerged but this consensus paved the way for differences as to its *application*, particularly in America. Not everyone agreed with the interpretation and approach of A. T. PIERSON and others who, in the 1880s and 1890s, pressed the completion of world evangelization by the year 1900 “in obedience to the Great Commission.” The organizers of the great Edinburgh Conference of 1910 attempted to avoid controversy concerning the requirements of the Great Commission and the nature of mission by taking the position that the Great Commission is “intrinsic” rather than “extrinsic” (James Scherer’s words) to the church and its missions. In other words, it is not so much an exterior law that sits in judgment upon the missionary activities of the church, but an inner principle of church faith and life allowing for freedom in the way churches and missions interpret and carry it out.

Subsequent history has revealed how diverse and divisive such interpretations can be. The twentieth century gave rise to a number of significant points of departure in understanding. First, upon a review of history and the biblical text, some (e.g., Harry Boer) have concluded that, in the process of convincing Christians that the Great Commission applied to them, proponents unwittingly contributed to the idea that the validity of Christian mission rested primarily upon that command. This led to a corresponding neglect of the missionary role of the Holy Spirit and the missionary thrust of the whole of biblical revelation. Second, perhaps responding to the emphasis on the social task of the church in the WCC and especially at the 1968 General Assembly in Uppsala, some evangelicals (e.g., JOHN STOTT) revised their thinking on the Great Commission and now argue against the generally accepted position that the statement in Matthew 28:16–20, being the most complete, possesses a certain priority. Their revised position is that the statement in John 20:21 (“As the Father has sent me, so send I you”) takes priority and makes the Lord Jesus’ earthly ministry as outlined in Luke 4:18, 19 a model for modern mission. This interpretation opens the way for sociopolitical action as an integral part of biblical mission. Third, many Pentecostals and charismatics have given a certain priority to the Markan version of the Great Commission with its emphasis on the “signs following” conversion and faith—casting out demons, speaking in new tongues, handling snakes, drinking poisonous liquids without hurt, and healing the sick (Mark 16:17–19). This ap-

proach is generally dependent upon a consideration of the manuscript evidence relating to the shorter and longer endings of Mark's Gospel. Fourth, some exegetes (e.g., Robert Culver) point out that the Matthew 28:18–20 text does not support the commonly understood interpretation with its overemphasis on “going” into all the world in obedience to Christ. Rather, the main verb and imperative is “make disciples.” The other verbs (in English translations) are actually participles and take their imperitival force from the main verb. In descending order of importance the verbs are “make disciples,” “teach,” “baptize, and “go.” The text would be better translated “Going . . .” or “As you go . . .” and understanding enhanced by giving more attention to the grammatical construction of the original text. Fifth, DONALD MCGAVRAN held that there is a clear distinction between disciple-making and teaching in fulfilling the Great Commission. The former has to do with people of a culture turning from their old ways, old gods, and old holy books or myths to the missionary's God, the Bible, and a new way of living. The latter has to do with “perfecting” as many as will take instruction and follow the “new way” more closely. In obeying the Great Commission, “discipling” new peoples should never be discontinued in an effort to “perfect” a few. Though comparatively few agreed with McGavran early on, in recent years there has been a somewhat wider acceptance of certain aspects of his thesis. Sixth, Church Growth advocates generally and proponents of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement especially (e.g., RALPH WINTER) have placed great emphasis on the phrase *panta ta ethnē* in Matthew 28:19 and have insisted that this is best understood as having reference to the various “people groups” of the world (see PEOPLES, PEOPLE GROUPS). Originally Donald McGavran identified endogamy as a primary characteristic of a “people group” but subsequently other characteristics such as a common worldview, religion, ethnicity, language, social order, and self-identification have been emphasized. This understanding lends itself to a program of world evangelization whereby people groups are identified and “reached” by planting viable, New Testament churches that become the primary means of evangelizing the group socially to the fringes and temporally into the future. Seventh, in recent years a growing number of missiologists (e.g., Trevor McIlwain) have advocated a missionary approach that gives more serious attention to the Great Commission requirement to teach all that Christ commanded. To many missions people this has seemed altogether too encompassing and demanding. They have preferred to communicate basic truths about human spiritual need and the way in which the Lord Jesus has met that need by means of his death and resurrec-

tion. In a way the tension between these two approaches reflects a classic missions controversy as to whether missionaries should first communicate truths about the nature of God and his requirements as revealed in the whole of Scripture or are better advised to begin with the New Testament account of Jesus' teaching and ministry. What is distinctive about the recent emphasis, however, is that its proponents usually link “all I [Christ] have commanded” in Matthew 28:20 with John 5:39 and a chronological teaching of the Bible as redemptive history.

However one may assess the foregoing (among other) responses to the requirements of the Great Commission, it seems apparent that, unlike the first two hundred years of Protestantism, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the Great Commission came to play an extremely important role in missions and missiology. In fact, the authors of the FRANKFURT DECLARATION of 1970 placed it first in their list of “seven indispensable basic elements of mission.” In a way this growing appreciation for the Great Commission was reflected in the changed thinking of even the early-twentieth-century liberal scholar Adolf von Harnack. At first he concluded that the words of 28:18–20 probably constituted a later addition to the Gospel of Matthew. In later life he found it to be not only a fitting conclusion to that Gospel, but a statement so magnificent that it would be difficult to say anything more meaningful and complete in an equal number of words (see Bosch, 1991, 56–57).

DAVID J. HESSELGRAVE

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Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God appears in Scripture from creation (Gen. 1:2) to re-creation (Rev. 22:17); from the Old Covenant (Exod. 31:3) to the New Covenant (Acts 2:1–4; Titus 3:5); and, wherever he appears he is the creative, dynamic life force of the Triune God. Who he is and how he functions becomes progressively known in the unfolding of salvation history. Throughout salvation history the Spirit empowers the people of God in making God known and experienced. The New Testament makes clear his deity and co-equality with the Father and Son (Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:4–6).

The word *ruah* appears some 377 times in the Old Testament and can refer to breath, wind, or spirit while the word *pneuma* appears some 387 times in the New Testament and can be translated by the same words. Approximately 350 times these words refer to the Holy Spirit with slightly less than 100 of these occurring in the

Holy Spirit

Old Testament. The Holy Spirit is especially prominent at redemptive and revelational moments. He gives skill in building the tabernacle (Exod. 31: 1–5); inspires national and prophetic leaders (Num. 11:24–26; 1 Sam. 16:13; Ezek. 2:2); anoints Jesus for his mission (Luke 4:18); and empowers the apostles in proclamation of the gospel to Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2:14–21; 13:1–4).

The Spirit of God in the Old Testament. The Spirit makes his presence manifest during Israel's movement into nationhood, in clarifying and applying the Law, and as the promised Spirit who will empower God's Messiah and make the New Covenant possible.

God's command that Israel build a tabernacle brings forth the Spirit's creativity and power for skill in workmanship and wisdom in interpreting and applying the Law (Exod. 31:3; Num. 11:16). The Spirit is actively involved as Israel attains nationhood. The Spirit of the Lord *came upon* Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, enabling them to deliver Israel from the oppression of the nations (Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:19). The Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul with power and he prophesied (1 Sam. 10:5–11). The Spirit later humiliates him when Saul strips off his clothes and prophesies (1 Sam. 19:23–24). The Spirit came upon David with power (1 Sam. 16:13). When David sins he pleads: "Do not . . . take your Holy Spirit from me" (Ps. 51:11).

The prophets are keenly aware of the role of the Spirit as they call Israel to holiness. But the prophets are especially sensitive to the Spirit's work during the age to come of which they often prophesy. The Servant of the Lord, who will usher in this age, will be filled with the Spirit to accomplish a worldwide mission (Isa. 11:1: 42:1; 61:1). The Spirit will give God's people a new heart and empower them (Ezek. 18:31; 36:26; Joel 2:28–32).

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament. The sharp sense of discontinuity felt when moving from the Old Testament to the New Testament is alleviated somewhat by the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus. The degree to which the Holy Spirit appears in the life of the early church, in Paul's letters, and in all parts of the New Testament is truly impressive. Jesus made it clear that his departure would be advantageous over his personal presence (Luke 24:49; John 16:5–15; Acts 1:8). The Spirit of God in the Old Testament quickly becomes known as the *Holy Spirit* in the New Testament. He is the gift of the Father, also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus, or the Spirit of the Lord. The New Testament writers can refer to the Holy Spirit on a par with the Father and Son without any need of explaining this as a radical idea. The Holy Spirit is the *sine qua non* of the Good News (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:2).

Jesus and the Spirit. Jesus' mission cannot be explained apart from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit launches Jesus into mission, leads him, fills him, anoints him, and gives him joy (Mark 1:10, 12; Luke 4:1, 18; 10:21). The Spirit's presence in his life cannot be measured (John 3:34). All the Gospel writers stress the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' ministry of preaching, healing the sick, casting out demons, and relieving suffering. The Spirit's presence in the life of Jesus confirms for John the Baptist his messiahship (John 1:33). John, as well as Jesus, stresses the importance of the Holy Spirit in the apostles' mission (Luke 3:16; John 20:22; Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit as the Missionary Spirit. Mission as glorifying God through reconciliation places the Spirit at the center of salvation history. The statement that "the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power" (1 Sam. 16:13) clarifies David's statement to Goliath: "I'll strike you down and cut off your head . . . the *whole world will know that there is a God in Israel*" (1 Sam. 17:46).

The Spirit comes upon, falls on, clothes and enables judges, prophets, and kings to lead, war, prophesy, and make God known to the world. The new age will be characterized by God's empowering presence through the Spirit. The Messiah, the apostles, and all post-Pentecost disciples are people of the Spirit. While the entire New Testament is Spirit-imprinted, John, Paul, and Luke have the most profound pneumatology.

John: The Spirit as Jesus' Presence. Without question John's pneumatology is the most complex, rich, and exact of all the Gospel accounts. In John's theology the Holy Spirit is the "other" Jesus (14:16–17, 26). The Holy Spirit will replace Jesus, giving an even greater sense of God's presence, teaching the disciples and giving them divine illumination (16:4–15).

While John's pneumatology informs mission, three passages in particular provide a clear view of the relationship of the Spirit and mission. John the Baptist sees Jesus anointed for mission during his baptism and God reveals to him that Jesus will be known as "he who baptizes with the Spirit" (1:33). When giving the apostles the GREAT COMMISSION, Jesus "breathed on them, and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (20:22). Just as God breathed into Adam the breath of life, so Jesus breathes on his disciples. The most detailed outline of the Spirit's ministry in the lives of those hearing the gospel is outlined by John in 16:8–11. The Spirit "will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment." These three themes—sin, righteousness, and judgment—find a significant place in John. John's designation of the source of this conviction as the world indicates the mission application of this passage.

Paul: The Spirit as the Eschatological Gift. Paul is the theologian of the Holy Spirit. His letters are saturated with references to the Holy Spirit. Most of Paul's 145 uses of *pneuma* refer to the Holy Spirit. Paul uses the name *Holy Spirit* about sixteen times. His favorite word is Spirit, leading to some doubt on how best to translate some of his references. For example, the NIV translators see the Holy Spirit in Romans 1:4 and 2:29, but the majority of the NRSV translators see spirit here.

For Paul the Spirit is God's eschatological gift, who cannot be understood apart from the Good News. The Spirit initiates a person into Christ through regeneration (Titus 3:5), seals the person until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13), assures the Christian of family life (Rom. 8:14), and enables the Christian to live the Christian life (Gal. 5:16, 22, 25). The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit, receives gifts from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12), and makes Jews and Gentiles one body (Eph. 2:19–22).

But some find Paul's rich theology of the Spirit incomplete or inadequate on mission. Why does Paul say so little about the Spirit's missionary role? Is the Spirit a missionary Spirit for Paul? Paul's call and commission comes from a revelation (Gal. 1:16). Paul's theological center can be found in eschatology. For Paul this new age has dawned through the resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 1:1–5; 4:4–7). Paul's conversion and call to mission, coming apocalyptically through his post-Easter experience with the risen Jesus, cannot be distinguished (Gal. 1:11–17). Paul's personal call to mission cannot be traced to the Spirit, but the Spirit is an eschatological gift, who longs for the conversion of the Gentiles (Rom. 15:8–22). Paul emphasizes the power of the Holy Spirit in his mission (1 Thess. 1:5–6). It is the Holy Spirit's power manifested by signs and wonders that confirms his apostleship and authenticates his mission (2 Cor. 12:12). The Holy Spirit gives gifts to every Christian, enabling each to minister for God (1 Cor. 12:7).

Luke: The Spirit as the Missionary Spirit. Whatever other contributions Luke makes, he is a missionary theologian and the centerpiece of his missionary theology is the Holy Spirit. Luke's focus on the Holy Spirit as the missionary Spirit begins with the announcement of John's birth to Zechariah (1:13–16). While the full manifestation of the Holy Spirit awaits Pentecost, an unprecedented outburst of charismatic activity occurs at the birth and launching of Jesus' mission. Zechariah, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Simeon, and Jesus are all filled with the Holy Spirit (1:41, 67; 2:26–27). Mary, Zechariah, Simeon, and Anna manifest the presence of the Holy Spirit by prophetic activity (1:45, 67; 2:28–32, 38).

In Jesus' life "the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form" as he was praying after his

baptism (3:21–22). He returns from the Jordan "full of the Spirit" and "was led by the Spirit in the desert," (4:1). After defeating the devil and defining the nature of his mission, he "returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit" (4:14). In the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus took the scroll of Isaiah and read these words: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor" (4:18).

Concluding his mission through death and resurrection, Jesus commands his disciples to remain in Jerusalem for the empowering they would need to fulfill his worldwide mission (24:49; Acts 1:4–5, 8). Pentecost comes ten days after Jesus' ascension with mighty signs from heaven, enabling all those present to witness powerfully and persuasively. Peter's words from Joel emphasize the eschatological nature of this outpouring. The Holy Spirit has now been poured out on all of God's people, giving them the ability to prophesy, leading people to "call upon the name of the Lord" (Acts 2:17–18, 21).

The Holy Spirit is the missionary Spirit, sent from the Father by the exalted Jesus, empowering the church in fulfilling God's intention that the gospel become a universal message, with Jews and Gentiles embracing the Good News. The Spirit leads the mission at every point, empowering the witnesses and directing them in preaching the gospel to those who have never heard, enabling them with signs and wonders.

Conclusion. Scripture is clear and emphatic: The Holy Spirit is God the missionary Spirit. He broods over emptiness and formlessness. Whether in the life of Israel, Jesus, or the church, the Spirit empowers the people of God in proclaiming and witnessing to the nations. He is the eschatological gift of God, enabling Christians to experience the "already" of the kingdom of God while living in the present evil age. The Spirit constantly motivates and empowers the church in reaching the unreached.

HAROLD G. DOLLAR

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Hope. The expectation engendered by faith in God's promises of salvation provides part of the theological foundation of mission, and helps define its nature, message, means, goal, and motivation.

Incarnational Mission

In the Old Testament, the hope is in God as Creator, who in the face of human disobedience retains his purpose for creation (Gen. 8:22), makes his promise for all the nations (Gen. 12:3), and chooses Israel to be blessed and to be a blessing, as reflected in the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:19) and Solomon's prayer (1 Kings 8:43, 60). The prophetic outlook (e.g., Isa. 11:10; Zech. 8:22–23) is of a future great ingathering of the Gentiles to join *with* Israel in her promised inheritance.

The New Testament takes up such promises (e.g., Matt. 8:11–12; Luke 2:30–32), which become the foundation of the command to disciple “all the nations” (i.e., Gentiles as well as the Jews, Matt. 28:19–20). This is connected with the rule of God, the complete restoration of all creation.

The coming of the Spirit (Acts 2) is a sign of the last days and of the new messianic people, which includes believing Samaritans (Acts 8:17) and Gentiles (Acts 10:44–46; Gal. 3:2; 4:6), without their having to become Jewish (cf. Acts 15). The hope of Jew and Gentile alike, as forgiven sinners who rejoice in suffering in this age (Rom. 5:1–5), is Christ's coming in glory at the resurrection (Phil. 2:11; 1 Thess. 1:10; etc.). Paul sees himself as called to the realization of this hope for the Gentiles (Rom. 1:5; 15:12; Gal. 2:7); Peter, for the Jews. Peter places the same stress on the hope (Acts 2:34–35; 1 Peter 1:3–5).

The *nature* of mission must therefore include the communication of the *message*, which includes and holds out this hope to all who will turn in faith to the Lord, for his coming will bring in the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:22–24). The immediate *goal* of mission is beseeching all to receive the reconciliation achieved in Christ. By this they become already the “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17), which is also the future hope. The goal also includes their being gathered as the church. Further, the goal is that the glory of God will be revealed in the fulfillment of his promises to all the nations. The *motivation* therefore includes this hope of the glory of God. The *means* of mission will include not only the ministry of the Word, but also the fruit of the Spirit, evident in deeds of compassion and in the life of the church. This, with all that it entails by way of social concern and involvement, is sign and evidence of the full realization to come, if it is clearly associated with the message and the church.

The postmillennial and amillennial hopes have been associated with a comprehensive missionary approach in modern times, for which conversion to Christ has always been the indispensable aim, as also for the premillennial hope. The latter tended to avoid the method of planting Christian institutions in foreign mission fields, without, however, rejecting social concern, until this

century. When the hope stresses the betterment of conditions in this present world only, as in realized or in existentialist eschatology, then the emphasis is on sociopolitical action.

JOHN A. MCINTOSH

Bibliography. R. H. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions*; J. M. Everts, *DPHL*, pp. 415–17; J. Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope*; D. Senior and C. Stuhmüller, *The Biblical Foundations to Mission*.

Incarnational Mission. The dramatic opening of John's Gospel is foundational for understanding the meaning and implications of “incarnational mission.” “In the beginning was the Word,” the apostle wrote, “and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and lived among us . . .” (1:1, 14). The fuller context of the passage suggests that in Jesus, God identified thoroughly with humankind, and that God came in Jesus for the express purpose of disclosing not only God's love but also God's salvific intent for the world (3:16–17).

However the Gospel writer may have understood the nature of Jesus, the church has steadfastly regarded the incarnation to mean that God was “enfleshed” in Jesus. All the Gospels bear witness to the fact that Jesus was born in a specific time and place, into a particular culture, and that he lived, matured, worked, ministered, and died as a human being. In Jesus—who came to be called “the Christ” or the Messiah—God was thereby revealed as love, self-giving love, love vulnerable to the exigencies of human life including the assault of evil and death. Yet evil was not victorious. It was instead inexorably defeated in Christ's death and resurrection. God became a human being to redeem all humankind from the destructive power of sin and to reconcile and transform the whole of creation.

Belief in the incarnation raises profound questions about the nature of God and about the nature of Jesus Christ. Yet, from the earliest attempts to grapple with and understand who Jesus was, the incarnation—God's assuming humanness—has been pivotal in comprehending the Christian faith. The earliest church councils discussed, debated, and concluded that the “God was *in Christ*” affirmation (2 Cor. 5:19) means that Jesus was fully human and fully divine. Explications (or the theology) of the incarnation are found not only in Scripture, but also in a succession of creeds. Three branches of Christianity, especially the Orthodox, as well as Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic, customarily give more attention and emphasis to the doctrine of the incarnation than do Protestants. In fact, some evangelical theologies tend to accentuate the divinity of Christ so disproportionately that the ultimate result is a kind of Christological doctism

in which the human nature of Jesus is virtually eliminated or is little more than a facade for his divinity. Maintaining theological balance has never been easy, as any comprehensive survey of the history of theology reveals. Yet when either the divinity or the humanity of Jesus is over-emphasized, the outcome is a distortion of the nature of Jesus as represented in the New Testament. Mainstream Christianity has been unwilling to relinquish either the divine or the human nature of Jesus, though some theologians have given more attention to the meaning of the incarnation than others. Grassroots believers, meanwhile, appear to be satisfied to confess that in Jesus Christ God was uniquely revealed in history, and that in Jesus Christ the divine intent for humanity was definitively imaged. That there is mystery here no one denies. As Archbishop William Temple put it, anyone who professes to understand the relationship of the divine to the human in Jesus Christ simply demonstrates that he or she has failed to understand the significance of the incarnation (p. 139).

To refer to the incarnation as mystery, however, is not to suggest that it is “beyond us” or a kind of theological icon. Quite the contrary. As Donald Baillie said, the mystery will always be mystery, but the mystery is lessened once we realize that believing in the incarnation means accepting a paradox “which can to some small measure be understood in the light of the ‘paradox of grace’” (p. 131). For the incarnation was not and is not primarily a doctrine. It was and is an event. It was a life lived, and it is a life to be lived. “He was made what we are,” declared Irenaeus, “that He might make us what He is Himself” (*Adv. Haer.*, Bk. v. Pref. cited by Baillie, *ibid.*). Thus Paul could make the staggering claim, “For me to live is Christ” (Phil. 2:21). So committed was the apostle to the Christ who summoned, transformed, and “missioned” him, and so determined was Paul to communicate the same good news Jesus fleshed-out, that he could say, “I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:19–20). In these words believers find the most significant implication of the incarnation, namely, that Jesus Christ can be fleshed out in the lives of those who follow in Jesus’ steps (1 Peter 2:21). In essence, therefore, this is the mission of Jesus’ followers, to walk in Jesus’ steps.

Common in Catholic theological tradition is the idea that the incarnation of Christ is the link between God and the institutional church, or, even more specifically, it is the link between God and the sacraments by which believers become “partakers of Christ.” It is a short step, therefore, from seeing the SACRAMENTS administered by the church as means of grace to regarding the *planatio ecclesiae* as extending the incarnation.

In 1838, with the publication of his *Kingdom of Christ*, British theologian Frederick D. Maurice went beyond the conventional Anglo-Catholic understanding of the incarnation by positing specific social and political implications. In a sense, Maurice anticipated the approach to the life of Jesus developed by many liberation theologians during the last quarter of the twentieth century. For in terms of the social and political significance of the incarnation, it has been the liberation theologians who expounded the relationship of the incarnation in the world today. Jesus, they underscore, was born in a religio-political context of suffering, oppression, and injustice. He was counted not among the rich or the powerful but rather among the common, the nondescript folk from the hill country of Galilee. To inaugurate his mission, nonetheless, Jesus made an astonishing association: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, [and] to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18–19).

His mission, as he described it, was to liberate the impoverished, the imprisoned, the sightless, and the oppressed. As it turned out, it was these kinds of people who became Jesus’ principal followers—the poor, the sick, the disabled, the despised, the marginalized, and the alienated—women, tax collectors, prostitutes, and others whom society scorned. Moreover, it was from these that Jesus chose his disciples whom he declared were “the salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” (Matt. 5:1: 13, 14).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Latin American liberation theologians, following the lead of the SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, began asking what the incarnation of Jesus implied in a world beset with injustice, hatred, poverty, exploitation, premature death, and hopelessness. Though their response to the question incited intense debate—and more resistance than support from “officialdom”—the basic question they asked still begs to be answered. Jesus, liberation theologians said, indisputably sided with the hurting, exploited, and abused of his day. This was his mission, and anyone who presumes to incarnate Christ’s mission today will likewise stand with the suffering peoples of the world whether they are in America, Europe, Asia, or Africa (*see LIBERATION THEOLOGIES*).

Standing with the poor and oppressed does not mean ignoring or neglecting the mission of evangelization, but, as Mortimer Arias notes, evangelization can never be merely “verbal proclamation.” Authentic evangelization will be also “the incarnation of the gospel” in the lives of Christ’s people, Christ’s community (p. 107).

Reflection on the meaning of “incarnational mission” can be found also in the writings of cer-

tain ecumenical and evangelical theologians. For J. R. Chandran of India, an incarnational view of mission means INDIGENIZATION. For Nigerian Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, it means CONTEXTUALIZATION for “God has always been incarnate in human cultures.” For former World Council of Churches general secretary W. Visser ‘t. Hooft, it meant a holistic ministry. Other more recent examples are John S. Pobee’s insightful *Mission in Christ’s Way* and Jonathan J. Bonk’s disturbing *Missions and Money*. Pobee, an African on loan to the World Council of Churches, spells out in detail the dimensions of an incarnational mission, while Bonk, a former Mennonite missionary and now associate director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut, addresses the crucial issue of missionary prosperity, saying that economically affluent missionaries can never engage in incarnational mission for what they model is an “inversion of the Incarnation.” Their prosperity makes it impossible for them to “identify with the life situations of the poor” to whom the gospel is addressed (p. 61).

Nearly a half-century ago one of the most respected and effective mission leaders among Southern Baptists, M. Theron Rankin, then the executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, envisioned a model of incarnational mission. “If God could have saved the world by remoteness,” and achieved the divine purpose while remaining detached from humanity, Rankin asked, would there have been the incarnation? Then he added, the most effective witness the church makes will always be in the lives of those who in Christ’s name bury themselves in the lives and struggles of another people, missionaries who serve the people, learn to speak their language, develop the capacity to feel their hurt and hunger, and “who learn to love them personally and individually.”

ALAN NEELY

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Jesus and Mission. The concept of mission is central to an understanding of Jesus because Jesus and his mission are virtually synonymous. So identified was Jesus with his mission that it became his very life. “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:24).

Jesus’ Sense of Calling to Mission. Any discussion of Jesus’ understanding of mission must begin with Jesus’ own profound sense of calling.

There is no indication in Scripture that Jesus ever struggled with what he should do with his life or that he tried various options before settling on his chosen path. From the very beginning, he was committed to the will of God as revealed directly to him and mediated through his reading of the Old Testament. Matthew sees this as operative even before Jesus’ birth in the words of the angel to Joseph, “You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). The only episode recorded in our Gospels from Jesus’ first thirty years shows his early sense of calling. Just before he entered into adult life, Jesus knew what he was to do: “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49). At his baptism, Jesus told John it was necessary in order to fulfill all righteousness. That act of acceptance by Jesus of God’s will was ratified by the voice from on High, “This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased,” accompanied by the descent of the Spirit of God (Matt. 3:13–17). After calling four fishermen to ministry, he began his next day in a solitary place, while it was still dark, in prayer. His disciples wondered why he was there and said everyone was looking for him. His reply was, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come” (Mark 1:35–39). Later he would say, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45) and “the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10). This sense of calling finds expression in the graphic words of Luke, “as the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out [literally, set his face] for Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). And what sustained Jesus in those last terrible hours on earth was his determination that the will of God be done (Matt. 26:39–44). Jesus’ realization that he was to be the Savior of the world and his sense of calling to that task as the will of God for him is what gave shape to his life and ministry up to the very end.

Elements Shaping Jesus’ Concept of Mission. There is no reasonable way that we can probe the mind of Jesus to determine exactly how this realization took precise shape, but we can look at three elements that went into the idea itself. The first of these is Jesus’ understanding of the nature of God. For Jesus, God is compassionate, merciful, and loving. God is repeatedly called “Heavenly Father” and all that is best in fatherhood is to be found in God. Our Heavenly Father knows our deepest needs and is seeking to meet them (Matt. 6:25–32). And if human fathers, evil as they are, know how to give good gifts to their children, “how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (Matt. 7:11). The parable of the prodigal son, in which the father is really the key figure, pictures

him as never giving up on the lost son and seeing him while still far off and lovingly welcoming him home. This love of God prompted him to send his own Son into the world so that the world might be saved (John 3:16, 17). The theme that God sent the Son is repeatedly emphasized by Jesus in the Gospel of John (5:36; 6:57; 7:29; 8:42; 11:42; 17:3, 8, 21, 23). The very essence of love is to give. God, as love, sent his Son as a gift to the world to provide the gift of salvation to those who would believe. Because Jesus understood God as love and himself as the expression of that love, he saw his mission as being sent by God to be the Savior of the world. So the nature of God as love shaped Jesus' understanding of his mission as the embodiment of God's loving purpose on earth.

The second idea that shaped Jesus' understanding of mission was his identification with the people of Israel. One aspect of God's original covenant with Israel was that Israel should be a blessing and that all the peoples of the earth should be blessed through her (Gen. 12:2, 3). Although this was interpreted by Israel essentially to mean that Gentiles who desired salvation could attain it by becoming a part of her, there were glimmers of a concept that Israel should go to the other nations taking the message to them. Jonah is an example of that, as is the message of Amos to the surrounding nations (Amos 1:9, 11, 13; 2:1). In large part, however, universal salvation was seen as eschatological, when Israel's God would be properly acknowledged as supreme over all the earth. It was this point Jesus picked up on in his correlation of eschatology and mission by postulating both a present and a future dimension to the kingdom. Inasmuch as the eschatological reality was present in and through his own earthly ministry, future reality was being brought to bear on the present. The knowledge of God which, in the future, will cover the earth like the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14) is now beginning its coverage in the mission of Jesus and will continue in the extension of that mission through his followers. Hence, the task of the church is to reach the ends of the earth and then the end will come when God draws history to a close in his own predetermined way (Matt. 24:14).

An aspect of Jesus' identification with Israel that is often overemphasized and sometimes misunderstood is his apparent confinement of his earthly mission to Israel alone (Matt. 10:6; 15:24). But this must be seen in the light of his prophetic mission of judgment to Israel. He was offering them their final call that in the mystery of God was to be rejected and from which would come the salvation of the world (Rom. 11:7–10, 25–36). This is seen most clearly in Jesus' explanation of his parables. Drawing upon Isaiah's call to make the heart of Israel calloused and their ears dull (Isa. 6:9, 10), Jesus said his teach-

ing was to have this effect also (Matt. 13:10–15). What he was doing fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy, but its ultimate fulfillment was to be that blessedness had arrived which the prophets foresaw as eschatological salvation, including the Gentiles (Matt. 13:16, 17). Hence, Jesus could also minister to the Gentiles as well, without any contradiction of his being sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 15:24).

The third idea that specifically influenced Jesus' concept of mission was that of the Suffering Servant as found in the Book of Isaiah. There is a collection of prophetic psalms in Isaiah (42:1–7; 49:1–7; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12; 61:1–3; see also Mark 10:45; Luke 24:26) that speaks of God's righteous Servant who would bring redemption to the world. These prophecies were partially fulfilled by Israel, who was also God's servant, but ultimately by Jesus who was to the highest degree both Israel and Servant. The Servant as portrayed by Isaiah was to suffer for the sins of the world, establish justice, provide salvation for the nations, be a light to the Gentiles, give sight to the blind, proclaim the truth, be a covenant to the world, dispense God's Spirit, make intercession for sinners, and make peace for all people. Here in prophetic word is the mission of Jesus made plain, as he himself knew. When he began his ministry in Galilee, in his hometown of Nazareth, he selected Isaiah 61:1–2 to read in the synagogue. After reading the passage he said, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:20, 21). The whole of Jesus' life was lived out in fulfillment of the prophesied mission of God's Suffering Servant.

Jesus' fundamental mission on earth was redemptive and revelatory of God's saving will for the world. He embodied and revealed the loving nature of God that graciously gives. He also took up into himself the covenant made with Israel, fulfilling Israel's task of mediating God's salvation to the world and came as God's specially anointed Servant, the sin-bearer for all.

Jesus' Mission and His Followers. Jesus knew that the task of mission was not his alone, but was to be transmitted to his followers. In fact, he says it was necessary for him to depart so that they, through the Holy Spirit, could reach their own full potential (John 14:12; 16:7). This inclusion of his followers may be seen in Jesus' ministry from the very beginning. Jesus' first formal calling of the future leaders of his movement (Peter, Andrew, James, and John) was specifically to mission—"I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). When he finally settled on twelve to represent and lead the group that followed him, he named them "apostles"—those who are sent (Mark 3:14)—emphasizing the nature of their calling. Their ultimate mission was not to stay indefinitely with him, but to go and proclaim the Good News of the kingdom (Luke 9:2). Indeed, the choice of twelve to lead was in

Justice of God

itself a statement regarding mission. Jesus was establishing a New Israel and with that a renewed focus on Israel's place in the history of salvation, the historical mediator of God's salvation to the world. When the training of the twelve was sufficient, Jesus sent them in his own name (and power) on missions of their own, duplicating his own work (Matt. 10:1–7, 8). That was in Galilee. Later, in Judea, seventy-two were sent out in similar fashion (Luke 10:1). After Jesus' resurrection, the apostle John epitomizes this concept of mission in Jesus' own words, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21), where a double sense of mission is emphasized. Jesus had been sent by the Father and he sends out his followers to fulfill the mission the Father had given to him. The Gospel story ends in the words of the so-called GREAT COMMISSION, "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19).

It would be fair to say that the major focus of Jesus, in his relation to his disciples, was to prepare them for mission. This idea was enunciated over one hundred years ago by A. B. Bruce in *The Training of the Twelve*, where he saw the whole of Jesus' life as being directed to that end and more recently by Rainer Riesner in *Jesus als Lehrer*. The disciples sought to follow Jesus as far as was humanly possible and he set the example for them.

Conclusion. Jesus' sense of urgent divine mission penetrates the New Testament from beginning to end and ultimately goes back to Jesus himself. He was imbued with a sense of divine calling, he gathered his followers to support him in that mission, he commissioned them to proclaim the good news that he was bringing, he sent them out on preaching missions in his name, he accomplished the task given to him by his Father and left the fledgling church with the formidable task of going into all the world with the gospel, promising to be with them to the end of the age.

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Justice of God. The evangelistic commitment of evangelical missions has continuously stressed the centrality of the cross of Jesus Christ as payment for the penalty for sin. This atoning work satisfies the requirements of the justice of God for eternal life. The Bible reveals, however, that the justice of God encompasses more than the spiritual dimension. His demands extend into the concrete realities of human social existence. For the last several decades this aspect of the justice of God and the relevance of this justice to the

worldwide mission of the Christian church has generated vigorous debate within evangelical circles.

Opinions differ over whether social justice issues should be strictly distinguished from the mandate to evangelize the lost and instead be considered by individual Christians subsequent to conversion; whether social action should be understood as providing a bridge to evangelism by presenting opportunities for the verbal proclamation of the gospel of eternal salvation; or lastly, should the concern for social justice be seen as an integral part of the broader mission of the church in the world. In other words, is social justice the *by-product* of the mission of evangelism, the *means* toward accomplishing that foremost task of evangelism, or a *legitimate goal* of mission?

Background to the Debate. Evangelical missions historically have demonstrated an interest in matters of social import. Mission activity, at least to some degree, has been directed at the eradication of personal vices, the establishment of hospitals and orphanages, the promotion of literacy, and the provision of emergency relief from natural disasters. Critics, however, would suggest that these laudable efforts are but gestures of charity, which focus on the individual and ignore the systemic realities that perpetuate social ills. They posit that such endeavors also are limited by a missiological perspective that is condemnatory of society and wary of close contact with a fallen world. Many locate the seedbed of this reticence to engage the larger context in the fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the early part of the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, in some evangelical circles there has been a broadening of the theology of mission over the last fifty years to embrace a more holistic framework (Van Engen; see HOLISTIC MISSION). This development represents a recuperation of evangelical roots in, for example, the influence of JOHN WESLEY (1703–91) and Methodism on English society, the successful efforts by William Wilberforce (1759–1833) and others to abolish the slave trade in the British Empire, and the two GREAT AWAKENINGS in the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which were concerned with improving the moral life of believers and fomenting Christian education and anti-slavery sentiments (see ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT).

This debate concerning the relationship of justice issues to mission can also be placed within a wider global discussion. In the first place, reflection on the topic can be set against the backdrop of the history of missions around the globe. Some missiologists denounce what they consider to be the complicity of mission agencies with the European colonization of the TWO-THIRDS WORLD and the surfacing of contemporary North Atlan-

tic economic neo-colonial attitudes in mission structures and operation (Costas). More nuanced approaches would suggest a chronological convergence and some ideological affinities of early missions with that colonizing activity and do recognize certain theological limitations. These responses offer a more positive evaluation of pioneer and modern missionary efforts (Escobar and Driver; Scott; Sanneh; Núñez and Taylor).

Second, the relationship between justice and mission has received attention at several international evangelical congresses. An increasing awareness of Christian social responsibility has been encouraged by these gatherings, beginning with Wheaton and Berlin in 1966, through Lausanne (1974) to Manila (1989). The WORLD EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP has sponsored various consultations and regional congresses to wrestle with justice. These meetings have witnessed the growing input of theologians from developing countries, who daily face the harsh realities of poverty and war, and of those whom some label "radical" evangelicals (e.g., Ron Sider and Jim Wallis). Several recently published missiology texts underscore the centrality of the justice of God for mission (Scott; Dyrness; Bosch). For certain missiologists this trend is cause for alarm, because the primacy of evangelism is perceived to be under threat. They liken this direction in missiological reflection to some of the theological options taken by the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES since its watershed assembly at Uppsala of 1968 (Beyerhaus).

Foundational Biblical and Theological Themes. The following brief survey establishes that the demand for justice, both spiritual and social, is dear to the heart of God. This all-encompassing justice should be central to the mission of the people of God in the world and incarnated within the community of faith. Different missiological positions, of course, will appreciate this mandate in their own particular ways.

The Fall and spread of sin. God announces in the garden that to eat the forbidden fruit will bring death (Gen. 2:16–17). Later revelation indicates that transgression brought spiritual death (Rom. 5:12–21), and the provision of covering through the death of an animal (Gen. 3:21) foreshadows the Law's sacrifices for sin and ultimately the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ (e.g., Isa. 53:7–13; John 2:9; Heb. 9–10; Rev. 5:6–14). The first human death recorded after the Fall in Genesis 3 is fratricide. Cain kills Abel. Later, Lamech boasts of his intention of uncontrolled revenge (Gen. 4:2–9, 23–24). Cain is judged by God, and the impetuosity of Lamech is contrasted with calling on the name of the Lord (Gen. 4:10–16, 26; cf. 5:24). The Lord condemns the pervasive violence with a universal Flood (Gen. 6:11) but afterward delegates the authority

to maintain justice to human agents and structures (Gen. 9:5–6; Rom. 12:17–13:5). These early chapters of the first book of the Bible disclose that, even as sin has both vertical and horizontal dimensions, the justice of God involves every dimension of human existence.

The call of Abram. The divine commitment to the various spheres of justice reflected in Genesis 1–11 serves as the framework for the call of Abram. Part of this charge is that he be a channel of blessing to the world (Gen. 12:3). This blessing involves worship and confession of the true God, as well as trusting obedience (e.g., Gen. 12:7–8, 14:18–24, 15:6, 18:17–19; see ABRAHAMIC COVENANT). The patriarchal accounts in Genesis demonstrate that the notion of blessing has a social dimension grounded in the character of God. For instance, Abraham intercedes for Sodom on the basis of divine justice (Gen. 18:22–32), a justice which demands chastisement, but that is tempered by mercy.

The exodus and Sinai. God responds to the cry of the Israelites in Egypt because of God's covenant, but action on their behalf also is motivated by compassion for their suffering of cruel infanticide and oppressive labor (Exod. 2:23–25). While they are miraculously delivered in part to be free to worship the Lord (Exod. 5:3), they are called as well to create a new type of society in the Promised Land. The Law given at Sinai (Exod. 20–40) and presented in the rest of the Pentateuch reveals that God is founding an alternative community with a different kind of spiritual ethos and social ethic. The Lord desires justice among his own people, and their laws are to be a model and testimony to the surrounding nations (Deut. 4:5–8).

The Servant Songs of Isaiah. The themes of salvation and justice are repeated throughout these messianic passages (Isa. 42:1–9; 49:1–13; 50:4–11; 52:13–53:12). The ministry of the Servant will be to establish a reign of righteousness and peace in faithfulness to the God of Israel, a striking antithesis to the idolatry, war, and oppression that serve as the backdrop to this portion of Isaiah. This hope embraces all the nations of the earth and is secured by the voluntary self-sacrifice of the Servant.

Luke 4:16–20. This inaugural sermon of Jesus' ministry is based on Isaiah 61:1–2a (and 58:6b). That Isaianic passage, which describes a messianic jubilee for the nation of Israel, is now given a richer significance, even as Jesus declares its fulfillment. On the one hand, the mention of the poor, prisoners, the sick, and the oppressed anticipates the special targets of his ministry. A closer look at Lucan theology indicates that these terms have spiritual implications, too. His deeds and words are good news to those who are open to God and his Christ (6:20–26), whose bondage can be demonic (4:33–35; 9:1, 37–43;

Kingdom of God

11:14–28) and their blindness spiritual (1:79; 7:47; 24:47). His person and work exemplify the grace and exigencies of divine justice, and in his death it finds propitiation (Rom. 3:25–26; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2, 4:10).

John 20:21. Some propose that the words of Jesus in John 20:21 (cf. John 17:18; Mark 12:28–31 and parallels) should be taken as the commission which defines Christian mission: the life and ministry of Jesus are a paradigm to be imitated (Stott). This perspective does not devalue evangelistic proclamation, which others consider the defining prescription in the other GREAT COMMISSION passages (Matt. 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–18; Luke 24:45–49), but argues rather for a more comprehensive understanding of mission—a holistic vision which would incorporate both the spiritual and social spheres of God’s justice.

Finally, mention should be made of the theme of the KINGDOM OF GOD. The dynamic rule of God is inseparable from the justice of his character. Throughout history he expresses the demand for justice and intervenes to effect it in the various spheres suggested in the preceding survey. The future establishment of a kingdom of justice, in all of its breadth, is an integral part of the biblical hope.

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Kingdom of God. Terminology. No explicit use of the precise phrase “kingdom of God” occurs in the Old Testament, but if one looks at the Old Testament prophets through the teaching of Jesus and the totality of New Testament faith, one finds it is predicted as a future reality (the messianic age) in the ongoing redemptive purpose of God. In contrast, the New Testament uses this term or its equivalent (kingdom of heaven) more than a hundred times. This was the dominant theme in the ministry of Jesus and his use of the term seems to have oscillated between the primary concept of the rule or reign of God and the secondary sense of the realm over which he will exercise this rule (Luke 17:21 and Mark 14:25). Jesus on no occasion intimated that the kingdom actually existed prior to the begin-

ning of his ministry (Luke 16:16). God’s kingship is not unlike his providential care of his total creation: “Dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations” (Ps. 22:28). But his kingship is also eschatological: “In the time of those kings” (i.e., at a certain juncture in history) “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed . . . it will itself endure forever” (Dan. 2:44).

Old Testament History and Eschatology. God’s kingship is identified with Israel, a people with whom he established a covenantal relationship that also involved a redemptive purpose: “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you [Jacob] and your offspring” (Gen. 28:14). Israel is to be “a light to the nations” within the sequence of history, extending the knowledge of God’s salvation “to the ends of the earth” (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). In order that God might accomplish this he promised a NEW COVENANT that guaranteed Israel an imperishable communal existence (Jer. 31:31–37) and a messianic hope that would make possible the realization of her redemptive mission (33:14–22; Isa. 42:1–9). Israel’s obedience in history will be related to the establishment of an eschatological order beyond history—“the age to come”—in which God’s kingly rule will be fully manifested (Hab. 2:14) and in which his new order will bring perfection to all creation.

Messianic Hope. This involves three separate and specific strands of prophetic expectation, and all three are related to God’s redemptive purpose for the nations. First, a distinctly earthly kingdom shall arise within history through a “Messiah”—a physical descendant of David who will bring renewal to Israel and to all the world (Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1–12:7). Second, this kingdom will also come as an abrupt intrusion into history, not unlike an apocalyptic visitation accompanied with cosmic upheaval. The key personage is likewise a “Messiah” and is described as “one like a Son of Man” possessing “authority, glory, and sovereign power.” His kingdom “will never be destroyed.” He will be worshiped by “all peoples, nations, and men of every language,” and will bestow on “the saints of the Most High” this “everlasting kingdom” to be theirs “forever and forever” (Dan. 7:13, 14, 18, 22). The third strand focuses on a Servant of the Lord, neither openly messianic nor evidently supernatural, but one who is an innocent, willing person who vicariously suffers without protest and dies in order to make his people righteous. The Old Testament does not conflate these strands of prophetic revelation, hence an aura of incompleteness characterizes the Old Testament and inevitably arouses anticipation of more to follow (Luke 2:25, 38). But it must never be forgotten that in essence God will visit his people, and his kingdom will

not be the result of historical forces, such as human achievement.

New Testament: The Gospels. The ministry of Jesus in the New Testament began in the context of John the Baptist's renewal movement in Israel. Expectations were aroused by his announcement of the coming of the kingdom and of One who would baptize "with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt. 3:1–12). Then Jesus came forward and publicly identified with Israel through submitting to John's baptism. During this act of obedience he was both approved by his Father and anointed for ministry by the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:9–11). Almost immediately thereafter the Holy Spirit "sent him out into the desert" to confront and demonstrate his superiority over the devil (1:12, 13). In the months that followed his ministry was virtually identical with that of John; both spoke of the coming kingdom. The Baptist's imprisonment brought this renewal ministry to an abrupt end. From that time on Jesus went to Galilee and preached: "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:14). By this he was announcing the glorious fact that the kingdom of God was now accessible to all those who would submit themselves to his rule. And since Jesus immediately thereafter began to call people to discipleship and his service ("I will make you fishers of men"), it follows that involvement in the kingdom of God (living under his rule) includes public proclamation and evangelism (Mark 1:16–20).

When Jesus returned to Galilee "news about him spread throughout the whole countryside" (Luke 4:14). His earlier renewal ministry in Judea had opened synagogues to him. "Everyone praised him" (v. 15). But when he began to identify himself with the Servant role prophesied by Isaiah and intimated that the gospel of the kingdom was also for non-Israelites, he encountered violent opposition (vv. 16–30). From this time on, whereas the "common people heard him gladly," the religious leaders became increasingly hostile, a hostility that culminated in his being turned over to the Romans for crucifixion.

The good news of the kingdom that Jesus preached and expounded is admittedly complex, since it represented movement toward the fulfillment of the Old Testament redemptive purpose in "the present age" as well as a radical reinterpretation of that hope with reference to "the age to come." In the present age, despite their rebellion against God, sinful human beings through repentance to God and surrender to Jesus' rule, can experience the new birth and enjoy a foretaste of the liberating kingdom. This included the forgiveness of sin, peace and acceptance with God, vital linkage with the Holy Spirit, valid insight into the Word of God, and joyous anticipa-

tion of "the powers of the coming age" (1 Cor. 2:12–15; Rom. 5:1, 2; 8:1–5, 35–39; Heb. 6:4, 5).

Even so, it is significant that Jesus never defined explicitly the term "kingdom of God." When he spoke of the kingdom as having "drawn near," he was affirming that it was an earthly rule in the world and its ongoing history. But when he stated that the kingdom is dynamically moving through human history and sweeping over people violently, he seemed to imply that it is something more than God's personal reign over individuals (Matt. 12:28; 11:12). He appeared to be referring to a new world, a new state of affairs, a new community that finds concrete expression in the world, even though it is both transcendent and spiritual. It is also political in that its full realization puts it on a collision course with all human rule and authority.

This note of spiritual conflict must not be regarded lightly. Satan is determined to thwart the progress of the kingdom. Jesus calmly asserts, however, that divine authority and rule have been given him by the Father (Luke 10:32; Matt. 11:27; 28:18). Furthermore, he will exercise this rule until Satan, sin, and death are brought to a complete end (Mark 9:1; 13:26; 14:62 with Luke 11:20–22).

The mystery of Jesus' person and the spiritual nature of his kingdom were so new and revolutionary that he could only disclose these realities gradually. To most Jews the kingdom of God would come as a stone that would shatter all godless nations (Dan. 2:44). But Jesus did not preach judgment and separation; these were eschatological realities. He came as a sower scattering the "good news of the kingdom" and looking for receptive people. He spoke in parables. These tantalized his hearers and compelled them to come to a full stop, then reflect and ask questions. The more his disciples began to discern who he was, the more they began to understand his teaching. Conversely, the more people resisted him, the more his teaching reduced itself in their minds to "hard sayings" devoid of significance (John 6:60). All they heard were stories, riddles, and paradoxes (Mark 4:11, 12).

The parables speak of the nature, growth, and value of the kingdom, largely under the theme of mission. There are the "growth" parables in which the parable of the sower is so central that Jesus pointed out that failure to understand this parable would render a person unable to understand any parable (Mark 4:13). Then follows a parable of the growth process in the hearts of those who respond to the message of the kingdom (4:26–30). This process eludes understanding and external control. When spiritual maturity begins to manifest itself the parable of the wheat and the weeds brings to the fore a "second sowing" (Matt. 13:36–43) so important that the Lord himself is the only "Sower." This follows

Liberation

because “the field is the world” and the distribution of his servants in it is a responsibility he grants to no other. This implies a deliberate surrender of oneself to him, a willingness to be sent into the locale and ministry that he has appointed.

The kingdom is like a buried treasure and its acquisition merits any cost or sacrifice (Matt. 13:44–46). Its form is hidden, representing the hiddenness of God, working in the hearts of his people scattered throughout the world. Although insignificant in its beginnings (a mustard seed or bit of leaven), on the day of history’s consummation it will be like a great tree or a bowl of dough fully leavened. The kingdom represents Jesus’ present invasion of Satan’s kingdom to release people from bondage (Luke 11:14–22). He desires that they enjoy in part a foretaste of the age to come, as they enter into the life he imparts to them (John 3:3). This includes the forgiveness of their sins (Mark 2:5) and the gift of God’s righteousness (Matt. 5:20). The only acceptable response that a person can make is to put oneself deliberately under Christ’s rule by repentance, faith, and submission.

Jesus also intimated that the kingdom would be consummated in power and glory, and instructed his disciples to pray for that Day when the will of God would be carried out on earth even as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). Because the kingdom had already truly come, Jesus’ disciples should manifest the “signs” that confirmed its presence. This is as urgent as the final apocalyptic display of power that will compel “every knee” to bow and “every tongue” to confess that Jesus is Lord (Phil. 2:10, 11).

Although the kingdom is wholly of God, he is pleased to share “the keys of the kingdom” with his people that under his direction their preaching of its “good news” might be determinative of those who participate in his eschatological harvest (Matt. 16:19). Because the kingdom tends through its proclamation to draw into its midst both the good and the bad, the eschatological judgment will separate the wicked from the righteous (the parable of the net; Matt. 13:47–52). On this basis the Lord distinguished the church from the kingdom (Matt. 16:18).

At the Last Supper when Jesus instituted the Eucharist, he gave his disciples a cup he identified as “my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many” (Mark 14:24), thereby establishing linkage between that supper, the new covenant, and the coming kingdom. In this fashion he established the necessity of his death “as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). It was his death that made the coming apocalyptic kingdom dependent upon what would take place in history. “God did not abandon history; the eschatological kingdom invaded history in Jesus’ life-death-resurrection and continues to work in history

through the people of the kingdom” (Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10; Ladd).

Acts. The resurrection of Jesus gave to his disciples—the believing remnant in Israel—a new sense of their oneness as they received further instruction in the kingdom and awaited its coming (Acts 1:3, 6). Peter’s Pentecost sermon reinterpreted the Old Testament hope by speaking of Jesus’ exaltation, confirming him as “Lord and Messiah” (2:30–36). In the Book of Acts the “signs” of the kingdom are everywhere present: Jesus by his Spirit is in the midst of his people, the gospel is proclaimed, signs and wonders accompany the witness, evil spirits are exorcised, conversions are frequent, and much suffering is experienced as a result of efforts to do God’s will in a world that rebels against him (Matt. 5:10).

Pauline Epistles. Paul builds on Peter’s reinterpretation of Jesus’ messianic reign and describes it as a present relationship (Col. 1:13) and a spiritual experience (Rom. 14:17), as well as an eschatological inheritance (1 Cor. 6:9–11; Eph. 5:5). Jesus “must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet” and destroy death, “the last enemy” (1 Cor. 15:25, 26). The end will only come “when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power” (v. 24). His ultimate goal is that “God may be all in all” (v. 28).

Revelation. The final revelation of God concerning his kingdom is of its eschatological consummation with the devil finally consigned to the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). Just prior to this we find reference to the second coming of Christ with its rapid sequence of his total triumph over all his foes, his binding of Satan, the resurrection of his saints, his millennial reign, and the final consummation of human history (19:11–20:15). Rather than detail the elements of this controversial section, the Spirit presses on to the portrayal of God’s ultimate goal: the age to come with its new heaven and new earth, and his redeemed people from all the families, tribes, languages, and peoples at long last seeing his face (21:1–4; 22:1–5).

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Liberation. Originating in Latin American Roman Catholic circles, discussion on the meaning of liberation after Vatican II shifted from the eternal destiny of a person to the sociopolitical context. The exodus event in which God freed Israel from slavery is seen as the archetype event governing the Old Testament. In it God liberated Israel and showed himself to be a liberating God.

The announcement of Jesus that he has come to preach to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners, and to free the oppressed (Luke 4:18–20) is seen as the corresponding New Testament archetype. Liberation in this context has taken on a specific orientation: it is the struggle on the part of the oppressed or marginalized for their own freedom once they have become aware of their bondage and the role the oppressors play in the maintenance of that bondage. The forms of bondage may be political, economic, social, racial, or gender related, and a host of liberation theologies call those who are oppressed to rise up and engage in the process of attaining their own freedom and dignity. It is maintained that while the oppression may be personal, it will always require redressing structural issues, since the very fabric of human societies tends to engender inequities and injustices. A significant driving biblical metaphor energizing the socio-political liberation motif is the establishment of the KINGDOM OF GOD as a liberating force in oppressive societies and situations; the resulting focus is often on the horizontal level (among people) rather than the vertical one (people with God). In this struggle it is assumed that God is on the side of the oppressed.

As developed over the decades since the SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL (1962–65) in Roman Catholic and ecumenical Protestant circles, most of the reflections on and praxis toward liberation were reactions to understandings of DEVELOPMENT, political environments, and the theological ideologies of the past. Often, though not always, oriented in Marxist thought, the tools for understanding liberation are not limited to theology but include ANTHROPOLOGY, ECONOMICS, and SOCIOLOGY. *Development*, it is noted, maintains or even exaggerates the gap between the rich and the poor. Further, it is typically the “developed” who set the agenda rather than those who are marginalized. This, it is maintained, is not genuine liberation but only a continuing form of oppression. *Political struggles* against Western hegemony in COLONIALISM were perceived to be struggles for liberation, but all too often the new regimes which arose in Third World settings after independence simply kept the old inequities intact. Liberation struggles that began initially against colonial rulers have slowly begun to turn against the new oppressive regimes that are often backed by one or the other competing global powers, unconcerned with the masses. Even so, new forms of economic colonialism in which the West economically dominates other countries still require liberation efforts, such as the call for forgiving all Third World international debt. *Theologically* it was noted that any system which did not attack the oppressive status quo was ideologically suspect in and of itself, as it did not embody the aim of true liberation,

which is a holistic release of people from all oppression and injustice.

This orientation toward liberation was built in several new theological directions. First, the development of an OPTION FOR THE POOR was a conscious decision to see the poor as the favored of God who are to be the architects of their own liberation and who enjoy a privileged position in part because their WORLDVIEW is not tainted by the desire to remain in power. Second, the socio-political liberation of Israel through exodus was a paradigm of God’s liberating desire for humankind (though consideration of Israel’s conquering actions in entering Canaan are rarely entertained in the discussions). Third, SIN was defined in social terms and not limited to personal, individual rebellion toward God. In parallel fashion, SALVATION was defined as redemption of the whole person rather than some isolated interior “soulish” element of the person, and human beings are to take responsibility for their own liberation. Additionally, because of the violence waged against the poor by oppressors, it was asserted we cannot automatically rule out violence in overcoming them in the struggle for liberation. Finally, true Christian praxis was defined in terms of a lifestyle of moving peoples and societies toward justice for all members, and mission was recast as committed solidarity with the oppressed in their struggle.

Evaluation. The very fact that evangelical missiology has moved in a more holistic direction in recent years is evidence that some of the critique brought by liberation theologies and the paradigm of liberation has forced evangelicals to turn to the Scriptures for deeper examination and recognition of their own ideological biases in approaching the Bible (*see also* HOLISTIC MISSION). In this sense evangelicals have gained significant insights on liberation from its advocates.

In spite of this, important considerations weigh against taking the contemporary liberation paradigm wholesale. Many who chose to focus on the socioeconomic and political arenas did so because of an incipient or even an outright UNIVERSALISM in regard to salvation. Those who advocated radical VIOLENCE in the struggle for liberation tended to downplay the reality that violence often leads only to more violence rather than genuine liberation. The collapse of Marxism as a political ideology in Europe demonstrated that despite the rhetoric, under Marxist regimes the general population was often worse off than under free market economies. Liberationists also tended to place sole responsibility on the efforts of people in the struggle for dignity and freedom in part because they disregarded the continuing and pervasive effects on sin both in the individual and in cultures and political systems. Political structures established and carried out by fallen humans will always move in the direction

Miracles in Mission

of dehumanization, and thus God's desire to create new people, new heavens, and a new earth as part of his redemptive program. Human work toward liberation, while laudable and potentially serving as a type of firstfruits of which God will ultimately accomplish, will always fall short of God's ultimate goal of SHALOM, which will only be established when God finalizes his kingdom.

Paul's picture in Romans 6 is that we are slaves who can choose to serve sin or God. The picture is a dichotomistic one in which economic or political liberation is not our ultimate goal. Instead, our ultimate goal is freedom from sin because of our choice to become slaves to the Master of the universe. Jesus said that those he set free were truly free. This freedom is not a type of antinomian libertarianism, but freedom gained through holding to his teaching and knowing the truth as a result (John 8:31–36). Liberation in this sense is not an abandonment of obligations to serve our Creator, but freedom from the oppression and degradation of sin in our lives and freedom to proclaim that release to others as well.

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Miracles in Mission. Contemporary mission endeavor cannot and should not seek to avoid the subject of supernatural power and the miraculous. Neither, on the other hand, should missions today become obsessed with or distressed over the power and activity of evil beings under Satan's control, nor over those who teach about them. The Bible teaches Christ's victory over all the POWERS (authorities), PRINCIPALITIES (rulers), dominions, and demons (1 Cor. 2:6; 15:24; Eph. 1:15–23; Col. 1:15–20, 2:15; 2 Thess. 2:8; Heb. 2:14). Mission today needs to rest assured that God still can and does work miracles.

Areas of Interface between the Miraculous and Mission. Missions interface with the miraculous in evangelism, healing, deliverance, and other areas.

The Miraculous and Evangelism. All evangelism is miraculous but in missions today individuals and groups are opened to the gospel in ways that can only be miraculous. The history of Christianity is replete with accounts of people movements that obviously were instigated and promoted by the Holy Spirit.

Some contemporary missionaries consider warfare prayer and the "binding" of territorial spirits as a major method in evangelistic activities. C. PETER WAGNER defines TERRITORIAL SPIRITS as members of the hierarchy of evil spirits who, delegated by Satan, control regions, cities,

tribes, people groups, neighborhoods, and other social networks and inhibit evangelistic breakthrough. John Duncan and Edgardo Silvosio recount how, in Argentina, after prayer, fasting, confession, and confronting territorial spirits, the Lord granted a marvelous gospel breakthrough. John Wimber, who believes in "power evangelism" and miracles in evangelism, does not hold miracles necessary for evangelism. He sees proclamation of the gospel as the "heart and soul" of evangelism.

The Miraculous and Healing. God has used healing to reveal the truth of his message throughout history. The Lord has healed through the prophets (2 Kings 5:1–16), Jesus (Mark 1:40–41; John 4:46–54), the apostles (Acts 3:1–10), New Testament believers (Acts 14:3), and Christian missionaries today. God continues to perform miracles of healing, both to meet the physical needs of suffering people and to reveal the truth of his message.

Belief in divine healing in no way prohibits using modern medicine and using modern medicine does not indicate a lack of faith in God's power to heal. Missions today should allow God to speak both through modern medicine and God's direct healing action.

The Miraculous and Deliverance. Demons (evil spirits, powers) exist and harm, but do not possess in the sense of owning, human beings, whether believers or unbelievers. Jesus and New Testament Christians expelled demons from persons (Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20; Acts 5:16; 16:16–18). Contemporary missionaries face expanding needs and opportunities to oppose evil spirits who demonize persons. Deliverance from evil spirits has become a growing phenomenon among evangelical missionaries. Demons who attack people can be expelled and rendered powerless through God's power (*see also* DEMONS, DEMONIZATION; EXORCISM; and SPIRITUAL WARFARE).

The Miraculous and Other Manifestations. Miracles today are evidenced in tongues, knowledge, visions, and other areas (1 Cor. 12–14). These manifestations, questioned by some, indicate to others the direct action of God. Missionaries must deal honestly and directly with these manifestations.

Principles Relating to Missions and the Miraculous. Several principles relate to miracles and missionary work. First, missionaries should welcome the aid of miracles and other manifestations of SIGNS AND WONDERS in missionary ministry. In regard to supernatural power and the miraculous, missionaries must be careful never to be materialists, disbelieving in supernatural powers, nor magicians, thinking supernatural powers can be controlled by ritual (*see* MAGIC).

Second, missionaries must affirm that miracles, signs, and wonders are not necessary for

evangelism or other missionary work. The Holy Spirit continues to grant evangelistic fruit where there are no outward signs of miracles. Signs and wonders can, however, be instrumental in helping people become more willing to hear the gospel.

Third, missionaries must accept that healing is not always God's plan for every person. God speaks through suffering as well as through healing. Missionaries should not, therefore, promise healing as God remains sovereign in granting healing.

Fourth, missionaries must also remember that power resides in the gospel itself, not in miracles (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18). Missionaries must be certain never to make miracles seem imperative for missionary effectiveness. They must remember that miracles, like all other Christian deeds, must glorify God rather than calling attention to humans. When miracles are used to bring fame and notoriety to humans, these "signs" are not of God. Christians may be seen doing miracles but never be doing miracles to be seen.

Finally, missionaries should remember that miraculous events are not always of God. Pharaoh's magicians did signs (Exod. 7:10–22) as did Satan (2 Thess. 2:9). Jesus declared that false prophets would perform miracle (Matt. 24:24). Missionaries must beware of counterfeit miracles. Missionaries must remember that signs and wonders function to convey truth, especially divine compassion. The purpose of signs is that people apprehend the message the signs bring rather than dwell on the signs themselves.

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Missio Dei. Latin for "the sending of God," in the sense of "being sent," a phrase used in Protestant missiological discussion especially since the 1950s, often in the English form "the mission of God." Originally it was used (from Augustine on) in Western discussion of the Trinity for the "sent-ness of God (the Son)" by the Father (John 3:17; 5:30; 11:42; 17:18). Georg F. Vicedom popularized the concept for missiology at the CWME meeting in MEXICO CITY in 1963, publishing a book by this title: *The Mission of God: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*.

Ecumenicals claim a comprehensive definition of *missio Dei*: everything God does for the communication of salvation and, in a narrower sense, everything the church itself is sent to do.

Historically, most evangelicals focused on the more immediate purpose of the Triune God in the sending of the Son: the task of world evangelization, the planting of the church among non-Christians, and the nurture of such churches. More recently, many have acknowledged the holistic nature of the task, though few give it an eschatological reference (see HOLISTIC MISSION).

The difference between the two approaches hinges on how the primary and fundamental human problem is defined—whether as a broken relationship with a transcendent God, or as suffering, oppression, and broken human relationships. Views of how the KINGDOM OF GOD is to be fulfilled now or eschatologically, how wide the scope of human salvation will prove to be, and basic assumptions about the authority and interpretation of Scripture are also critical (see BIBLE and HERMENEUTICS).

Missio Dei was first used in a missionary sense by the German missiologist Karl Hartenstein in 1934. He was motivated by Karl Barth's emphasis on the *actio Dei* ("the action of God"), over against the human-centered focus of liberal theology at that time; he was also inspired by Barth's 1928 lecture on mission, which related it to the Trinity. Hartenstein used the term again in his "Theological Reflection" on the IMC's WILLINGEN CONFERENCE (1952), published in the German report. Though the documents of the meeting itself grounded mission in the Trinity, it did not use the term *missio Dei*. Nevertheless, in its new, trinitarian-mission(ary) sense the phrase has been widely used since Georg F. Vicedom's book.

Missio Dei came to encapsulate an important change in IMC and WCC thinking, from the TAM-BARAM CONFERENCE (1938) emphasis on the mission of the church to the Willingen stress on the mission of God. The latter meeting quite properly recognized that the true source of the church's missionary task lay "in the Triune God Himself."

The roots of the later, social gospel usage of the term lay in two things: first of all, Willingen's "A Statement on the Missionary Calling of the Church," which exhibited a common theological mistake. It properly defined the church's missionary obligation as "beseeching all men to be reconciled to God," and its concluding section rightly stressed God's sovereign rule even in the "war and tumult" of history, the growth of human knowledge, and in political and social movements. However, it failed to distinguish this preserving, common-grace exercise of God's power from his reconciling, special, redemptive-grace exercise in the history of salvation. Nor did it state the relationship either between preserving and redemptive grace, or between this present age and the age to come (see HOPE).

New Testament Theology of Mission

The second and not unrelated factor was the presence of the Dutch missiologist, JOHANNES C. HOEKENDIJK. Hoekendijk was zealous to have the true arena of God's saving action be recognized as the world of human affairs and the human condition, instead of the church. The mission of God (what he sent Christ into the world to do) was to establish SHALOM—"peace, integrity, community, harmony and justice"—or humanization in this world. In other words, the goal was the realization of the kingdom of God on earth. He insisted on redefining the church as a function of the "apostolate," that is, the church as an instrument, of God's action in this world, a means in his hands, by which he will establish *shalom*. This was the basic concept with which the phrase *missio Dei* came to be identified in WCC circles.

At the world conference of the World Student Christian Federation in Strasbourg (1960), Hoekendijk urged that Christians identify with "man in the modern world," that the church become "open, mobile groups" (Bassham) to join the *missio Dei* and push for the realization of *shalom*.

These ideas dominated subsequent WCC reports: *Witness in Six Continents* (Mexico City, 1963), *World Conference on Church and Society* (Geneva, 1966), and especially the Studies in Evangelism report, *The Church for Others* (1967). These included the radical assertion of the thought-pattern expressed in "God-world-church." The latter formula meant that the church should act in partnership with the sending God, not by world evangelization and church planting, but by directly promoting political and economic human good. Since *shalom* is the goal of God's action in the world, and "the world sets the agenda," the church must therefore forsake its existing "heretical structures" and join in God's action. Traditional Christian missions were therefore merely "transitory forms of obedience to the *missio Dei*," and no longer appropriate.

The climax of the impact of Hoekendijk's version of God's mission was to be seen at the Uppsala Assembly, in 1968, which fiercely resisted the admission of words on the need to evangelize the non-Christian world.

Christians certainly ought to join with others in the common grace promotion of social justice, though not as the church, and not exclusively as Christians, but with others (Clowney). Evangelicals have been remiss in not acting strongly or broadly enough for social justice in this century. But the WCC adopted an almost purely sociopolitical concept of the *missio Dei*. It did so on the basis of broad, modern theological assumptions: universal salvation, through the "cosmic Christ"; the church's election being only for the purpose of serving what God was already doing in the world; the ideas of process theology, Til-

lich's "new being," and Bultmann's demythologizing of the New Testament. Taken together, these meant that the WCC could not affirm that indeed history must come to an end, with Christ's coming, in order to realize the kingdom/*shalom* in its fullness. It lacked (and still lacks) commitment to other vital teachings of the historic Christian faith: the transcendence of God (his distinctness from creation); the reality of an objective, substitutionary atonement to deal with the fundamental human problem, sin, and its forgiveness; and the necessity of proclaiming Christ as the only one to whom one must turn for true *shalom* in this world and the world to come.

In WCC circles today some are questioning the very usefulness of the term *missio Dei*, and are seeking a "new link" between mission and church (Hoedemaker). Evangelicals, on the other hand, have struggled so far to match the theological depth and sophistication of the WCC. They need to show that the church is called not merely to expansion, not to become a mere "collection of converts" (Hoedemaker). It is "sent" for a faithful ministry of witness summoning the disobedient to turn to God, looking for success only to the Spirit of God. It must do this from the context of its life, where God is truly worshiped, the faithful built up, and compassion demonstrated. This whole is the true *missio Dei*, and foreshadows the true *shalom* to be realized in full at the Lord's return.

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New Testament Theology of Mission. The New Testament is first and foremost a missionary document in the sense that it details the carrying out of God's plan of salvation for the world. Perhaps the best single portrayal of this is the "chain of revelation" in the Gospel of John, in which God reaches the world first through Jesus as the Sent One. Then the Father and Son "send" the Holy Spirit and finally the Godhead "sends" the disciples to encounter the world with the demands of God and thereby to force decision. The means by which this is accomplished is called "mission," which technically, in John, means the process of sending chosen heralds with the gospel message of salvation.

Theology of Mission in the Gospels and Acts. One positive result of redaction criticism is the realization that each Gospel contains its own

portrayal of Jesus and its own theological emphasis (*see also* JESUS AND MISSION). We will begin with Mark because of the likelihood that Mark was the first Gospel. The centrality of mission in Mark can be seen in the framing of Mark's prologue with "gospel" (1:1, 15). Jesus comes as one proclaiming the "good news" about the "KINGDOM OF GOD," calling for "repentance" and "faith-decision" (1:14, 15). The kingdom refers to the inbreaking of God's rule into history. Jesus taught it as both present (Mark 3:27; cf. Matt. 12:28; Luke 17:20–21) and future (Mark 1:15; cf. Luke 21:31). The disciples are thus heralds of the kingdom message, calling the lost to God. In this sense there is a progression of agents, from the prophets (12:2–5) to John the Baptist (1:2–3; 11:32) to the disciples, who from the start are "apostles" or "sent ones" (3:13–15), to the Son himself (1:38; 9:37). The disciples are called from the start to be "fishers of men" and to leave everything to do so (1:16–20; 10:28). Jesus warns them to expect terrible opposition (13:9–13) in their mission to the nations (13:10) but tells them that their task is worldwide proclamation (3:14; 14:9). Jesus' way is one of suffering (8:31; 9:30–31; 10:33–34), and the disciples are called to imitate Christ by "bearing their cross" with Jesus (8:34). One of Mark's major themes is discipleship failure (6:52; 8:14–21; 9:14–32; 14:27, 32–41, 50–52; 16:8) but Jesus provides the answer when he promises to meet them as Risen Lord and overcome their weaknesses (14:28; 16:7). In the midst of failure to understand and remain faithful, the disciple in mission is promised the presence of the Risen Lord.

Matthew's mission theme is built upon Mark's but expands several emphases. At the outset, there is an antinomy. Matthew has the greatest emphasis on particularism, that the mission is only for the Jews (10:5, 6; 15:24). At the same time, the Gentile mission is given an important place from the start, as the Gentile Magi are the first to come (drawn by a divinely sent star) to worship the newborn Messiah (2:1f.). In short, Matthew is a salvation-historical chronicle of the movement of God's plan of salvation in three stages: from the mission of the prophets (23:37; cf. 21:34–36; 22:3–6) and John the Baptist (3:1–12; 11:7–14) to the mission of Jesus that is the core of the first Gospel to the mission of the disciples to the nations that concludes the Gospel (28:18–20). Each stage prepares for the following step. The Jewish mission is the core of the first two stages, and the universal mission is the goal of the third. In this sense "the gospel of the kingdom" called both Jews (4:23; 9:35) and "all nations" (24:14) to repentance. In fact, the mission to the Jews was in reality the first stage of the universal mission, which in Matthew is linked to the eschaton (13:24–30; 24:14). A major theme in mission is rejection, as the disciples

must expect the same hatred and persecution as Jesus suffered (10:17–36; *see* vv. 24–26 on sharing Jesus' suffering). But the goal of it all is to bring the Jewish people and the nations to faith (a key element in the miracle stories) and obedience. (The ethical requirements of the kingdom are central to the Sermon on the Mount.)

Mission in Luke–Acts is at the heart of the New Testament emphasis. The two should be considered together, for they form two volumes of a single story, detailing the divine plan of salvation as it moves from Jesus to the early church. In fact, one of the major themes of Acts is that the church relives and carries on the life and ministry of Jesus, seen in parallels between Luke and Acts in miracle stories, the road to Jerusalem/Rome, and the trials of Jesus and Paul. The two points of continuity between the life of Jesus and the church's mission are the temple (inaugurating both volumes) and the Holy Spirit (central to both). Soteriology is the primary theme, with the three major aspects coming together in Luke 24:47—REPENTANCE (25 times in Luke–Acts vs. 10 total in the other Gospels), FORGIVENESS OF SINS (9 in Luke–Acts vs. 3 total in the rest of the New Testament), and proclamation of the gospel (the heart of Acts; *see* PROCLAMATION EVANGELISM). In Luke we have salvation procured for the world, and in Acts we have salvation proclaimed to the world. In preparation for Acts, the universal mission is even more emphasized in Luke than in the other Synoptic Gospels, as in: (1) Simeon calling Jesus "a light of revelation for the Gentiles" (2:32); (2) 3:4–6, Luke adds to the Isaianic "voice in the wilderness" (Isa. 40:3–4) the statement in 40:5, "And all mankind will see God's salvation"; (3) Jesus' inaugural address of 4:18–27, which concludes with a turn from the Jews to the Gentiles (vv. 25–27); (3) Jesus' deliberate ministry to Gentiles (7:1f.; 8:26f.; 17:11f.); (4) Jesus stressing Gentile openness (7:9; 11:30–32; 13:29).

All this comes to fruition in Acts, as the mission is launched in two stages, Jesus' resurrection command (1:8) and the coming of the Spirit to launch the mission (2:1–12). Yet it takes time for the church to understand God's will. They apparently understood Jesus in terms of the Old Testament centripetal approach (*see* OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY OF MISSION), for they remained in Jerusalem, seemingly waiting for the Gentiles to come to them. The Spirit had to force them out in a series of steps to the Gentile mission, first in the PERSECUTION following STEPHEN'S manifesto (8:1–3), then Samaria (8:4–25) and the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40), followed by the conversion of Paul, the missionary to the Gentiles (ch. 9), and finally the conversion of Gentile Cornelius (ch. 10). At each stage, supernatural leading was evident. The missionary journeys demonstrated several themes: evangelism and follow-up; flexible methods demonstrating sensi-

tivity to culture; home-based church planting methods; the CONTEXTUALIZATION of the gospel for both urban and rural settings; and primarily the centrality of the empowering presence of the HOLY SPIRIT. Acts might better be entitled "The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles." It is the work of the Spirit that is carried out by the church, and the Spirit sends, guides, and empowers the human agents in carrying out God's mission.

An important subsidiary element in Luke-Acts is the ministry of Jesus and the church to the outcasts. Luke wants to show that the kingdom completely reverses all earthly mores, and so shows that Jesus and the disciples are especially oriented to the poor and the oppressed, as in the quotation from Isaiah 61:1-2 in the inaugural address of Luke 4:18-19, "The Spirit of the Lord . . . has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. . . ." This continues throughout Luke's Gospel (1:51-53; 3:11-14; 6:20-26; 12:13-33; 16:8b-13, etc.) and Acts (2:44-45; 4:32-35, etc.). The debate between EVANGELISM and SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY in modern missions would be a false one for Luke. For him, to have one without the other produces a truncated gospel.

Mission in John has often been overlooked. Several recent studies have shown that mission is at the heart of John's purpose, which was twofold—to bring unconverted Jews to Christ, and to involve the church in God's mission. Let us begin with the "chain of revelation" introduced above. (1) In the prologue Jesus is called the "Word" (1:1, 2, 14), which means he is the "living revealer" of the Father; to meet Jesus is to encounter the presence of God. As such he is also the "sent one" (stressed over thirty times in the Gospel), which means he is the *shaliach* or "envoy" of God to the "world" (105 of the New Testament's 185 occurrences are in John). His task is to call the world to faith-decision, stressed in three word groups—"believe" (98 times), "know" (two words used 141 times), and "see" (five verbs used 114 times). God's universal salvific love (1:4, 7, 9; 3:16) has brought salvation to the world and called it to respond to the new "life" (66 times in John) in Jesus. (2) In the farewell discourse, the Holy Spirit as the *paraclete* (the best translation is probably "Advocate") is also a "sent one," being given or sent twice by the Father (14:16, 25) and twice by the Son (15:26; 16:7). He will carry the "witness" of the Father and the Son (15:26) into the new age begun by Christ. (3) The followers of Jesus become "sent ones" (17:18; 20:21) and continue the mission to the world. In the resurrection commission of 20:21-23, they are sent by the entire Godhead and filled with the divine presence. Furthermore, they continue Jesus' function as judge (5:22, 30; 8:15-16; 9:39) in verse 23, for as the world responds to their mission, "whatsoever sins you

forgive are forgiven, and whatsoever sins you retain are retained."

Mission Theology in Paul (see also PAUL AND MISSION). It is difficult to capture the message of so voluminous and deep a thinker as Paul. Virtually everything in his ministry and writings touches on the concept of mission, so all we can do is highlight key aspects. Before the Damascus road experience, Paul was a committed Jewish particularist, and so his conversion completely reversed his direction in life and all that he stood for. Paul's commission to mission came in three stages—the voice of Christ (Acts 26:16-18; cf. Gal. 1:15-16), the confirmation of Ananias (9:15), and a later vision in the temple (22:21). From that time Paul viewed himself as a pioneer missionary with a global rather than local vision (2 Cor. 10:15-16) who sought to bring the gospel to "those who have not heard" (Rom. 10:14). Those brought to Christ were his "joy and crown" (1 Thess. 2:19) and "the seal of my apostleship in the Lord" (1 Cor. 9:2). Yet evangelism was not his sole purpose; he strongly felt the responsibility to disciple those converted (following the GREAT COMMISSION), so he followed up on his churches by visit and letter (in this sense all his epistles are "follow-up"!) and continually dealt with problems in his churches.

Paul's mission strategy begins with his concept of revelation. God has revealed his plan of salvation and enacted it in the sacrificial death of his Son. This message must now be proclaimed (Rom. 10:14-15). The gospel is not just a message to be preached; it is the light of God shining in a world of darkness (2 Cor. 4:3-6), an eschatological revelation of that "mystery" hidden from the foundation of the world (Rom. 11:25; 16:25-26; Eph. 3:2-6). Mission is thereby an eschatological unfolding, a culmination of the divine intent from eternity past. In its united mission the church manifests the "manifold wisdom of God" to the cosmic powers, telling them in effect that they have lost. This victory is based upon the sovereignty of God and upon the cosmic reconciliation of "all things in heaven and earth" achieved by Christ (Col. 1:19-20). According to Colossians 2:15 Christ achieved this victory after the cross when he "disarmed," "triumphed over," and "made public display" (imagery of the Roman triumph) of the evil POWERS. The church participates in this reconciling and triumphant work by "proclaiming" the "hope of the Gospel" to "every creature under heaven" (Col. 1:23). The universal mission is the great mystery of God, and it needs the focus and priority of the people of God.

For Paul eschatology, Christology, and soteriology intertwine. The redemptive-historical act of God in Jesus is the basis of mission. All of history points to the life and sacrificial death of Christ on the cross as its mid-point. The sin and

guilt brought about by Adam have now been expiated by the gracious gift of Christ (Rom. 5:12–21), leading to the justification of the sinner (Rom. 3:21–26). The creeds and hymns of the early church reflect upon the humiliation/exaltation of Christ (Rom. 1:3–4; Eph. 1:3–14; Phil. 2:6–11; Col. 1:15–20; 1 Tim. 3:16), and the unbeliever participates in this via faith-decision and confession (Rom. 10:9–10). This gracious and merciful act of God provides the content of mission. Paul believed strongly in a contextualized message and strategy in which the missionary became “all things to all people” in any area not contrary to the gospel “in order to win some” (1 Cor. 9:19–23). He adapted his message to reach the people where they were, centering on fulfillment of Scripture for Jews (Acts 13:16–43) and upon natural revelation for Gentiles (see Acts 14:14–18; 17:22–31).

Mission Theology in the General Epistles. The General Epistles do not all center upon mission. Some are primarily pastoral, like James, 2 Peter–Jude, or the Johannine epistles. The two that contain mission principles are Hebrews and 1 Peter. Hebrews defines itself as a “word of exhortation” (13:22), a pastoral homily addressing a church tempted to return to Judaism due to persecution. There are two primary themes, christology (the superiority of Christ) and soteriology (the pilgrimage theme). God is the one who completes his revelatory acts by speaking through his Son, the culmination of his plan (1:1–3). Indeed, all of Scripture points to fulfillment in him. Thereby he is superior to the angels (1:4–2:18), to Moses and Joshua (chs. 3–4), to the priesthood (chs. 5–7), and to the covenant, sanctuary, and sacrifices (ch. 8–10). Christ is not only the Son exalted to the right hand of God (1:2–3; 8:1; 10:12) but also has authority over this creation (1:2, 8, 10) and the angelic orders (1:9). Christ alone has made salvation possible by his once for all sacrifice (9:12, 26–28; 10:10–14). Hebrews does not discuss a mission to the Gentiles, but there is a witness theme. Like the heroes of the faith in chapter 11, who witness with their sacrificial lives (12:1), and like Jesus, who is the final model of those who are willing to “resist to the point of shedding blood” (12:2–4), believers are called to a life of pilgrimage. They must run the “race” (12:1–2) and consider themselves “strangers” in this world (11:9, 13), oriented not to the present but to a future reality, “a better country—a heavenly one” (11:10, 16). This means a willingness to “bear the disgrace (Christ) bore” (13:13). The contribution of Hebrews to a mission theology deals with the negative side, rejection and persecution, as the people of God witness through suffering.

First Peter is also written to a suffering church, and like Hebrews it calls for believers to consider themselves called by God to be tempo-

rary visitors and resident aliens on this earth (1:1, 17; 2:11). The message of this book is that the mission, when conducted in the midst of terrible hostility, calls upon the believers to witness via exemplary lives of goodness. The theme is given in 2:12: when the pagans slander you as being evildoers, let your conduct so shine that they observe your goodness, are convicted by it, and “glorify God in the day of visitation” (see also 2:15). “Glorify God” means they are converted and then glorify God at the last judgment. Peter then shows how this works out in the three primary relationships Christians have—to government (2:13–17), to master-slave (2:18–25) and then wife-husband (3:1–7) relationships. Christ is the model for a proper reaction to hostility, for he refused to retaliate and instead entrusted himself to God (2:21–24). So his followers must also become models of faith and goodness when the world turns against them (4:19). That is their mission. For Peter mission is an eschatological journey, done in light of the blessings of salvation (1:3–12; 2:4–10) and at all times looking forward to the culmination of mission in eternity (1:4; 3:22; 4:7). With this in mind, in spite of persecution the people of God are always ready to respond to queries with gentleness and a life that proves the validity of the gospel (3:15–16).

Mission Theology in Revelation. Many have said that there is no mission in this book, since it deals with cosmic war and the end of human history. However, a close study shows a distinct and profound message. The major theme of the book is the SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, and in the cosmic war the sub-theme is the futility of SATAN. Divine control is subsumed in the verb “was given” which occurs often in two key passages, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse (6:2, 4, 8) and the coming of the Beast (13:5, 7). This verb tells us that God (the giver) is in control of the forces of evil. They can do nothing without his permission. Moreover, everything Satan does is merely a parody or great imitation of what God has already done perfectly, such as the mortal wound healed (= resurrection), the mark of the beast (= God sealing the saints), the false trinity of 16:13. Armageddon is not the great defeat of Satan. It is actually his final act of defiance, for the war was won by the “slain Lamb” on the cross (the predominant title of Christ in the book).

Mission is the outgrowth of the activity of the slain Lamb, and it is far more predominant than has often been thought. In fact, Richard Bauckham (1993; 238–337) has noted that “the conversion of the nations” is a major theme of the book. The “nations” are not just predestined to judgment but are called to repentance. In fact, 14:6–7 shows that one of the purposes of the seals, trumpets, and bowls is not just to pour out JUDGMENT but to prove God’s sovereignty over the earthly gods (the trumpets and bowls are built

Option for the Poor

upon the Egyptian plagues of Exodus) and thus to proclaim “the eternal gospel” and call the nations to “fear God and give him glory.” The earth-dwellers reject that offer and refuse to repent (9:20, 21; 16:9, 11, though the refusal shows the call to repentance was real), but apparently some do repent and give “glory to the God of heaven” in 11:13. Moreover, the nations produce those “purchased” by the blood of Christ (5:9), worshipers before God (15:4), the “multitude” standing before the throne in 7:9, and the saints who bring their glory and honor into the New Jerusalem (21:24–26).

The saints are militant during the Great Tribulation not by fighting back (13:10) but by witnessing through their perseverance and their proclamation of the one true God. The use of lampstands for the church (1:12, 20) may well symbolize its witnessing activity, and the WITNESS theme is central to the book. Jesus as the “faithful witness” (1:5; 3:14) is the model, and the saints are called to the interdependent perseverance and witness. As seen often above, witness leads to PERSECUTION, and the mission of the church via *martyria* (“witness”) ends in MARTYRDOM, as in 12:11 where the believers “conquer” the dragon by “the word of their testimony” in that “they did not love their lives so as to shrink from death” (see also 6:9). It is clear that the people of God are pictured as engaged in missionary activity even as they are hunted down by the forces of the Beast, and that some respond to their witness and have their place in the eternal city.

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Option for the Poor. There has long been a recognition that the poor (economically, politically, and socially marginalized people) hold special attention and affection in God’s eyes. The phrase “option for the poor” or “preferential option for the poor” is of relatively recent coinage. Roman Catholics began wrestling with issues related to poverty in the SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL (1962–65). Catholics in Latin America, who felt that the work at Vatican II did not go far enough, convened in Medellín, where the emphasis was changed from seeing the poor as the objects of the mercy of the church to seeing them as the subjects of their own history (González, 19). The actual phrase “prefer-

ential option of the poor” did not appear until the 1970s, reportedly used by Gustavo Gutiérrez in a lecture given in Spain in 1972 (*ibid.*). Since then the term has been used primarily in liberation and conciliar theological circles but also increasingly in evangelical missiology.

The concept behind the term is one that demands a radical paradigm shift. The poor are not to be seen as objects of mercy, but as people who are particularly gifted by God to represent his justice to the rest of the world. The “option” for the poor is not optional, but required by the very nature of God’s compassion and incarnation in Jesus. Because Jesus came to preach liberty to the poor, they have an advantage in reading the Scriptures. They are not weighted down with the presuppositions and agendas of the rich and are freer to read and interpret the text as its primary audience. Such reading requires the recognition of structural issues that create and perpetuate poverty and new tools of analysis to understand and change those structures.

Evangelical use of the term traces its roots to the LAUSANNE CONGRESS ON WORLD EVANGELISM (1974) and the eventual wrestling of evangelicals over EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (see Walker). A shift toward holism within the evangelical movement (see HOLISTIC MISSION), prompted in part by reflections from both non-Western evangelical theologians (e.g., Vinay Samuel, Rene Padilla, and Samuel Escobar) and Western evangelicals (e.g., Ron Sider and Jim Wallis), has resulted in greater empathy for the option for the poor (see also LIBERATION THEOLOGIES MISSIOLOGY). It is now not uncommon to see the phrase “option for the poor” across the spectrum of missiology. Evangelicals who have committed themselves to this agenda have in the past been referred to as radical evangelicals, though the language of opting for the poor has been gaining momentum in mainstream evangelical missiological circles in recent years.

What is God’s view of the poor? They are people and part of his creation. They have oppressors who keep them poor. While they are sinners, they are also in significant ways sinned against by those who oppress and subvert justice against them. God does “opt” for them in the sense of siding with them in demanding impartiality and justice. He cares for their spiritual and material needs. The same attitude should be found in the church (e.g., James 2:2–6). That the poor teach us about God or enjoy special spiritual status is true in the sense that their humble circumstances force them to see more realistically their broken condition before God. That they are somehow automatically saved or members of God’s church simply by virtue of their socioeconomic status, however, cannot be sustained in light of the overall biblical evidence. The poor are in need of having the Good News preached to

them and thus the thrust of Jesus' statements about his mission in Luke 4:18–20.

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Peoples, People Groups. Way of perceiving humanity as being composed of identifiable cultural and/or sociological grouping. Mission is then seen as directed to such groups. Our Lord's mandate as recorded in Acts 1:8 made an early related strategic distinction: "You will be my witnesses, in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Later the Constantinian church, challenged from the north, sent missionaries to "barbarians." They in turn carried the gospel into pagan northern Europe and transformed other barbarian peoples into the entity that left its stamp on the definition of missions: Christendom. En route, mission was defined as directed toward the "heath men" or "HEATHEN."

When the modern missionary movement took shape, Europeans became aware, through travel and trade, of the vast reaches of whole "dark continents" without the gospel. There were the civilized inhabitants of Christendom, and there was the non-Christian world of the colonies. No further definition seemed necessary. Later, the historic flow of colonial contacts caused mission agencies and denominations to shift focus from the coastal port cities to the interior areas of these continents. Hence names like Africa *Inland Mission*, Sudan *Interior Mission*, China *Inland Mission*. "Interiors" now defined mission.

The surge of missionary effort subsequent to World War II took place in the context of newly independent nation-states, fifty-seven formed in Africa in a single decade. Mission agencies responded by focusing strategy on "national" boundaries and church bodies within them. Once a group, recognizable by denominational distinctives, was in existence, many agencies and strategists declared "mission" to be complete within the entire boundaries of these nation-states. Blindness to the possibility of mission on the part of the "Younger" churches took the next step of excluding from view countries from which Westerners were restricted. For a significant segment of mission sending, the day of mission was declared over. Supposed national churches existed, while whole segments of nations had no church or witness. A new definition was needed.

The often artificial nature of nation-state boundaries was missed. The consistent national

experience, especially in Africa, was of near civil war, as truer identities surfaced and civil wars or unifying border strikes sought to reunite peoples through stronger tribal or ethnolinguistic identities. These natural units intruded themselves on the attention of mission strategists. Awareness of their reality forced, yet again, a redefinition of mission if the church was to express her universal, catholic nature. The simplest and most evident basis was ethnolinguistic.

Leslie G. Brierley of WEC began listing Remaining Unevangelized Peoples (RUPs) after 1941. CAMERON TOWNSEND led the identification of first *Two Thousand Tongues to Go* and later, through the *Ethnologue* (Grimes, 1988) which now describes about seven thousand language groups. DONALD MCGAVRAN, beginning in 1955, called attention in his writings to PEOPLE MOVEMENTS. R. PIERCE BEAVER chaired a 1972 conference on "The Gospel and Frontier Peoples." MARC listed certain people groups at the WORLD CONGRESS ON EVANGELISM (BERLIN CONGRESS 1966), and came to advocate the term "Unreached" People Groups, first using the term for the LAUSANNE CONGRESS ON WORLD EVANGELISM (1974). These were popularized and defined in the *Unreached Peoples* MARC series from 1979 to 1987. The series included the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization Strategy Working Group (SWG) definition of a people group as "a significantly large sociological grouping of people who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another. . . . From the viewpoint of evangelization, this is the largest possible group within which the Gospel can spread without encountering barriers to understanding or acceptance." Although Dayton and Wagner experimented with a definition of unreached as less than 20 percent Christian, the SWG moved to define unreached as the absence of a viable church capable of carrying on the group's evangelization. RALPH WINTER espoused the term "Hidden" or "Frontier" following his definitive paper presented at the 1974 Lausanne Conference. These semantic differences were resolved at a Chicago airport conference, when the SWG called together a set of missions leaders who agreed on a definition that would make "frontier" and "hidden" synonyms of the now prevailing "unreached," by which was meant any group that did not contain a contextualized church demonstrably capable of completing the evangelization of the group. Both are to be distinguished from the less precise "homogeneous unit" popularized by the CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT.

In practice, several definitional difficulties remained. 1. Was exhaustive and exclusive categorizing possible or necessary? 2. Most of the definitions remain to this day more serviceable for nonurban, traditional peoples. The intersective groups so common in sociological and urban

Persecution

analysis are confusing if shoe-horned into a classification that seeks to sort each and every inhabitant of earth into one and only one group. 3. The difference between evangelized peoples and unreached people groups seems to be that evangelization focuses on individuals and on external efforts made by others, while unreached deals with groups and with outcomes in church planting. The terms are unfortunately not used carefully. 4. Macro distinctions are used in attempts to simplify and communicate, but nomenclature remains a problem. Various authors have suggested solutions, including Wilson and Schreck: *Peoples vs. People Groups* (Schreck, 1987); Winter: *Macro-, Mega-, and Micro-spheres*; Johnstone: *Affinity Blocs and Gateway People Clusters* (Johnstone, 1996).

The basics of the definition for those who use the concept are these: 1. Strategic decision focuses on groups, not individuals. Strictly speaking, individuals are not unreached, but unevangelized. 2. The group must be real, not just a conceptual category. 3. Not all groups are of strategic interest. A group may be too small, that is, not large enough to require that a contextualized church become the vehicle of living out Christianity in sociocultural ways. The group must not be so large as to contain within itself segments that constitute barriers to evangelization. 4. The group is no longer unreached when a viable, contextualized church exists capable of carrying on effective witness. Thus, boundary-crossing mission is defined, and not merely the boundary between faith and unbelief. Evangelism is needed after mission is theoretically fulfilled.

Missiologists, particularly from South Africa, have objected to the use of the concepts on the grounds that it promotes racist church bodies. While this danger does exist, partisans respond that social divisions will and do already characterize branches of the church, and it is better to recognize and work against them, much as one would not reject the concept of caste or class, while still opposing their prejudicial effects (see also HOMOGENOUS UNIT PRINCIPLE).

The church of Jesus Christ is always missionary. The ways of defining missions sending in terms of units that are the focus of evangelism will continue to evolve. For the moment, real, intermediate groups without a contextualized church constitute our best working definition.

Recently, at least 1,746 large, ethnolinguistic groups have been identified which are verified as having no church among them capable of announcing Christ's Good News. Many have not a single believer. Such groups are truly aliens to grace. This eternal tragedy is a current and compelling call for continuing mission. The groups listed do not include intersective urban groups. The gospel has not been and does not go where a meaningful invitation to follow Christ is not

given. Missionaries from both the north and south are necessary in order to bring a community of faith into existence which can speak the language and live the Christian life in every group. The integrity of each group's identity requires this of us. While "they" are unreached (i.e., no such church exists) the nature of our obedience calls us to obedient going. Until then, "they" are and will remain "unreached people groups."

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Persecution. Suffering experienced by those whose opinion or belief is being attacked by another group. For the first Christians who came from a Jewish heritage, SUFFERING and persecution were both part of their lot. Jews living under Roman rule could expect to be persecuted if they chose to follow Jesus (e.g., Matt. 5:10–12; 10:23; Luke 21:12; John 15:20).

The Jews as a people had been persecuted for centuries prior to Christ's birth. Christians who came out of Judaism still faced hostility from Rome. In addition, at least until A.D. 70, they faced persecution from the Jewish leaders. Such persecutions often had the opposite of the intended effect. The persecution of the church after Stephen's MARTYRDOM did not stop Christianity but spread the gospel beyond the confines of Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Paul's conversion resulted from the Damascus road encounter with Jesus while he was traveling under Jewish authority to persecute the church in Damascus (Acts 9:1–31). In testimony and correspondence Paul frequently referred to his persecuting work (Acts 22:4; 26:11; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13). James was martyred by Herod, and when the populace approved he had Peter arrested for the same purpose (Acts 12:1–11). Through God's intervention, the tables were turned and Herod lost his life, while Peter escaped and was able to continue sharing his faith. Jewish persecution of Paul for his evangelistic work led to his arrest and eventual transport to Rome under guard. In this, however, the Jews living in Rome as well as Paul's escorts and his guard detail all had the chance to hear the gospel (Acts 28:17–30; Phil. 1:12–14). Persecution, though violent and intended to shut down the church, often had the opposite effect.

The Roman rulers initially tolerated Christians as a subject within Judaism, but Nero's scapegoating of them after the A.D. 64 fire in Rome started a pattern of persecution which continued for almost 250 years. With varying intensity, Christians were perceived as a threat to the state.

Though not consistently applied throughout the Roman Empire, and with periods of hostility followed by temporary reprieves, the reality of Christianity's illegality as a religion remained part of the Christian experience until the Edict of Milan (A.D. 313) officially legalized Christianity in the empire. Though two relatively brief periods of persecution followed (under Licinius in 322–23 and Julian in 361–63), official toleration of Christianity across the Roman Empire was assured.

Contemporary Situation. While it is true that Christians have over the course of history persecuted others (e.g., Muslims during the CRUSADES; Jews during the Middle Ages and the modern era), including other Christians (e.g., the Donatists, Anabaptists, Puritans, and Huguenots), by and large it is accurate to say that Christians have been the recipients of hostility. Far from being only a thing of the past, persecution today continues to be a reality faced by many Christians, particularly those in militant religious states. It is estimated that more Christians have lost their lives through persecution in this century than all other centuries combined, though generally there has been little publicity of this in the secular press of free countries. David Barrett estimates that some 160,000 Christians were martyred in 1996 simply because they were Christians. Contemporary researchers have begun to speak out on behalf of the persecuted (e.g., Shea and Marshall), noting that the Western church and Western governments have been largely silent in the face of an increasingly well-documented reality.

A number of mission organizations have also been founded to investigate, publicize, and advocate on behalf of those at risk, including Brother's Keeper, Christian Solidarity International, International Christian Concern, and Voice of the Martyrs. Additionally, existing agencies are incorporating departments which emphasize the persecuted church, including Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Open Doors, and World Evangelical Fellowship Religious Liberty Commission. The National Association of Evangelicals (U.S.) published a statement of conscience in 1996 reflecting "deep concern for the religious freedom of fellow believers, as well as people of every faith" and many agencies and churches have joined the WEF-sponsored International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

Missionary Implications. With the recent increase in interest in reaching the unreached, persecution of missionaries will likely grow rather than shrink in the coming decades, simply because so many of the unreached live under religious or political ideologies that suppress the spread of the Christian message. Additionally, Christians are often perceived as part of the West

in general, and the official anti-Western tenor in these countries will exacerbate the potential problems.

Almost no missiological training in the West offered today will help future missionaries training face persecution, though it appears that house seminaries in China prepare their future pastors for interrogation. Missionaries, especially those going into at-risk situations, would benefit from realistic preparation for the possibilities they may face. In addition, having been trained, they may also be more able to offer both preparation and aid to indigenous Christians who suffer because of a choice to follow Christ in a hostile environment.

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Repentance. Repentance is the central message that the church is to bring to the world (Luke 24:47). It is a characteristic of the life of the church, and is one of the primary goals of the church's mission.

The key terms in the Old Testament are *nâham* and *shûbh*. The former word carries the root idea of "to pant, sigh, or groan." It speaks of lamenting and grieving and when it is aimed at one's own character it has the idea of repenting. The latter word speaks of turning from sin to righteousness (2 Chron. 7:14). Through Israel, God calls all nations to repent.

The key New Testament terms are *metamelomai*, *metanoëō*, and *epistrephō*. *Metamelomai* stresses the emotional aspect of care, concern, and regret. It can refer to genuine repentance (Matt. 21:29, 32) and may also refer to a regret and remorse that is not accompanied by an abandonment of sin (Matt. 27:3). *Metanoëō* is used to note the need to "have another mind" by changing one's opinion and purposes (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38). The dominant idea of *epistrephō* is a change of mind that may result in accompanying emotions and consequent reformation.

Elements of Repentance. True repentance has intellectual, emotional, and volitional elements. Intellectually it involves a change of mind about God, sin, Christ, and oneself. The resultant change of mind views God as good and holy; sin as evil and injurious before God and people; Christ as perfect, necessary, and sufficient for salvation; and oneself as guilty and in need of salvation. Such repentance is an essential element of missionary proclamation.

Repentance involves a change of view, a change of feelings and a change of purpose. The

Resurrection of Christ

emotional aspect may be seen in the passionate pleas found in David's repentance (Ps. 51:1, 2, 10, 14), and in Jesus' testimony of the tax-gatherer's feeling of remorse that led to faith (Matt. 21:32). However, when the emotional element stands by itself it is not true repentance (Matt. 27:3; Luke 18:23, cf. 2 Cor. 7:9–10). The sorrow that leads to repentance is a sorrow for *sin*, not only for its consequences. The volitional aspect of repentance is seen in the turning to God in faith (1 Thess. 1:9), and is an anticipated outcome of the church's mission among the nations.

Elaboration of Meaning. Repentance may be defined as a change of mind that is produced by the Holy Spirit leading to trust in God. Repentance is a part of true faith (Acts 20:21). It is not meritorious in itself, for Christ's death fully satisfies God's righteousness (Rom. 3:25). While repentance may lead to such outward acts as confession of sin and restitution, these are evidences of repentance and not the repentance itself. Repentance is an inward act that results in outward manifestations. Psalm 51 is an illustration of true repentance. The resulting attitude of repentance is reflected in Jesus' call to become like a child (Matt. 18:2–4) as well as in the first four Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3–6).

Subjects and Objects of Repentance. God has commanded the world to repent in order to avoid his judgment (Acts 17:30). His patience and kindness move him to be slow to wrath (Rom. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). God does not repent in the sense of changing his immutable perfection (1 Sam. 15:29), but his roused emotion may prompt him to a different course of action in carrying out his sovereign plan (Exod. 32:14; Jonah 3:10). It may imply God's sorrow or grief over humanity's sin (Jer. 6:6).

Unbelievers and believers may be appropriate subjects of repentance. The mission of the church is to carry out God's declaration to the world to repent and trust in Christ. The church is to exemplify a repentant lifestyle (Ps. 119:128). Jesus' command to take up one's cross is another way of describing this attitude, elaborated in Romans 6:11–13.

Repentance may have a variety of objects. Scripture speaks of repenting from trusting in money (Acts 8:22) as well as from a lack of trust in God's Word (Zech. 1:6). It also speaks of repentance from dead works (Heb. 6:1), idols (Ezek. 14:6), and leaving one's first love (Rev. 2:4–5). Repentance involves dealing with anything that hinders one from living under the authority of God (James 4:1–10) and being reconciled to other believers (Luke 17:3–4). Biblically, missionary proclamation must include a call to unbelievers to "repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 26:20).

Preaching of Repentance. Repentance is a key theme in the proclamation of the church to a lost

world that stands in need of the Savior. It was characteristic of the prophetic preaching (Jer. 8:6; Ezek. 14:6), John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2), Jesus (Matt. 4:17), the Twelve (Mark 6:12), Peter (Acts 2:38), and Paul (Acts 20:21). It is a message that is to be proclaimed to all peoples (Luke 24:47).

Reformed theology stresses the fact that repentance is a gift of God and a result of regeneration (Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:22). Arminian theology stresses the human element in repentance and regeneration. God is recognized in the latter as the primary cause and the person as the less principal cause. In both theologies the human responsibility of declaring God's Word is embraced as the means that God's Spirit uses to work repentance (Luke 10:30).

Results of Repentance. Christ's commission to the church to declare the message of repentance is motivated by God's kindness as God yearns for all peoples to taste the benefits that result from repentance. The Scriptures give the sad examples of the impenitent who refuse to live in agreement with God. Those who do repent become special objects of God's compassion. Repentance leads one to the experience of life (Acts 11:18), joy (2 Cor. 7:9), truth (2 Tim. 2:25), forgiveness (Acts 2:38), and the rule of God (Matt. 4:17). Repentance averts the wrath of God (Jonah 3:4–10) and leads to rejoicing in heaven (Luke 15:7, 10). An unrepentant church will no longer reflect the light of Christ (Rev. 2:5) that alone can lead the world to repentance.

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Resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ from the dead determines the nature of Christianity and defines its uniqueness. Of all religious systems, Christianity alone has made the bodily resurrection of an historical person the centerpiece of its message and faith. Mission as a centrifugal activity traces its dynamic directly from the resurrection. Resurrection and mission cannot be separated.

Resurrection and Scripture. The resurrection finds its origins deep in salvation history, even if there are very few verbal references to it in the Old Testament outside Daniel 12:2. Paul, as a Jewish scholar, was the first Christian to write about the resurrection. Paul's salvation experience, the mission to Jews and Gentiles, and discipling have their origins in his belief in and experience of the resurrection.

If the truth of the resurrection finds few verbal references in the Old Testament, how can Paul say that his preaching of the resurrection is "ac-

ording to scripture" (1 Cor. 15:4)? For Paul and the early church the gospel is a salvation-history story, that is, the theme of resurrection is implicit in Israel's story of promise and fulfillment. The resurrection is at the heart of this story and gives the story significance and meaning.

Paul preached the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The longest chapter in all of Paul's epistles is on the resurrection (1 Cor. 15). His confidence in the resurrection was grounded in the testimony of numerous witnesses. Paul mentions witnesses such as Peter, the Twelve, James, the apostles, and more than five hundred, most of whom were still alive when he wrote. Finally, he was convinced of the resurrection because of having personally seen the risen Jesus (cf. 15:8 with 15:5-7). For Paul, an historical bodily resurrection was the bedrock of Good News. "If only for this life we have hope in Christ we are to be pitied more than all men" (1 Cor. 15:19).

All the New Testament writers agree with this emphasis on the resurrection. All of the Gospel writers conclude their accounts of the life and ministry of Christ with accounts of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21). Luke takes the story one step further and recounts how the resurrection message was preached. For instance, Luke's summary of Peter's first sermon on the day of Pentecost gives more space to the resurrection than to any other subject (Acts 2:22-36).

The theme of resurrection is a dominant theme in Acts, finding its way into all parts of Luke's narrative (1:2, 25; 2:22-36; 3:15; 4:10, 33; 5:30; 7:56; 9:4; 10:40; 13:30-37; 17:3, 31-32; 22:7ff., 26:14ff., 23). Along with these explicit references to the resurrection are many other references where Luke ties the resurrection of Christ to hope as the center of the law and prophets and to Israel's general hope in the resurrection (23:6; 24:15; 21b; 26:22; and 28:20b).

Mission and Resurrection. For many the best proof of the historical resurrection is the existence of the Christian church. Within three centuries of the resurrection Christianity had become the dominant religion within the Roman Empire. This growth has continued unabated and today the Christian church numbers almost 2 billion, larger than Islam and Hinduism combined.

The biblical records intertwine resurrection and mission. The resurrection is both the green light for centrifugal missions and the impetus to carry out mission. Paul ties his apostolic commission as an apostle to the Gentiles with his experience with the resurrection of Christ (Gal. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:8). John, Luke, and Matthew make it clear that mission was Jesus' central concern after his resurrection. Matthew shows the resurrected Jesus royally enthroned as the Lord

of the nations, commissioning the apostles in Galilee with authority to engage in discipling the nations (Matt. 28:16-20). John reveals Jesus almost breathlessly rushing back to the upper room, and, after a hurried shalom says, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21).

Luke relates resurrection and mission in a number of ways. First, he shows its relationship to all of Scripture and to Jesus' incarnation (Luke 24:19-27, 37-44). Second, the resurrected Jesus blesses the commissioned apostles as he ascends to heaven (Luke 24:45-51). Third, Jesus appears to the apostles over a period of forty days, thereby confirming his resurrection as he expounds on their future mission. He concludes this period of time by giving as the fundamental consequence of the resurrection, not the founding of a kingdom with Israel as its center, but the founding of a worldwide mission with Spirit-empowered believers at the center (Acts 1:1-11). Finally, Luke concludes by showing that apostleship included preaching the resurrection and fulfilling the call of worldwide mission (Acts 1:12-26).

Scripture places the greatest importance on the relationship of resurrection and mission. Without the resurrection there is no gospel. Without mission the resurrection remains useless. The resurrection of Jesus makes mission and message possible.

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Sin. There is perhaps no concept more central and strategic to the Christian message than that of sin. The concept of sin is central to the biblical narrative of salvation history. It is central to the Christian explanation of suffering and death and is a crucial component of the meaning of the cross. It is key in any evangelistic presentation of the gospel and essential to the call for repentance and faith, in salvation, in sanctification, and in biblical eschatology. And it is foundational to the missionary mandate. It is because of sin and the eschatological consequences of sin, that missionaries go forth preaching a message of judgment and hope.

Missionaries cannot afford simply to take for granted their use of the concept of sin, for at least two reasons. On the one hand missionaries often go to societies in which a sense of sin, and a language for speaking of sin, seem to be markedly absent. On the other hand, many missionaries come from increasingly post-Christian societ-

ies where the concept of sin and judgment has come under attack and strong disapproval. Missionaries themselves are increasingly disapproved of as supposed purveyors of an unhealthy sense of sin and guilt. It is important, then, for missionaries to carefully reconsider their understanding and use of the concept of sin.

One might suppose that the concept of sin is simple, not complex, easy to translate and explain in other languages. Such is not the case. When accurately understood, sin carries a heavy load of meaning. Built into the meaning of that one word are ethical/moral, theological, anthropological, and eschatological implications.

Ethical/Moral. The language of sin presupposes a vigorous notion of good and evil, right and wrong, true moral obligations, normative ideals, and absolute standards. To violate what is ethical and good, to transgress against another person, to fail to exemplify the oral character traits one should, is to sin. Theft, murder, adultery, incest, slander, drunkenness, envy, and witchcraft are spoken of as sins.

At one level this is not a particular problem for missionaries, since all cultures have discourses of moral condemnation—discourses which presuppose notions of good and evil, right and wrong. At another level, missionaries face two distinct problems. First, cultures differ in terms of the ethical and moral norms and ideals which are recognized or stressed. Missionary messages about sin may thus presuppose notions of good and evil, right and wrong which contradict the consciences of those to whom they speak. This has many practical and profound implications for missionaries who hope to make the conscience of their listeners an ally rather than a foe (for a full treatment of such implications, see Priest, 1994).

Second, the biblical themes of God as the source of moral standards and of moral evil as disobedience to God, are implied by the biblical language of sin—but are not necessarily shared by the cultures of the world.

Theological. Dictionaries stress that “sin” is a religious term. “Sin” differs from “immorality,” “evil,” or “crime” in that it implies a vertical Godward dimension—a theological orientation. Sin is “against God.” The Genesis 3 narrative of original sin focuses not on a horizontal relationship (theft, adultery, murder), but on the vertical one, relationship to God. The prohibition, “Don’t eat the fruit!” was of a nature to factor out all other issues except the simple issue of relationship to God. The narrative is one a child can grasp. But the vertical and horizontal are linked. After God is rejected, then Cain kills Abel.

In Psalm 51 David cries out to God, “Against you, you only have I sinned. . . .” David has committed adultery, lied, and murdered faithful Uriah. He has sinned against many, but it is the

horror of his failure toward God which grips him. In the Bible God is the central equation, the fundamental fact, the integrating factor of the universe. The ten commandments begin with God, and on that foundation move to the horizontal. ETHICS and morality are grounded in theology. Whatever else sin entails, it is rebellion against God.

Missionaries often discover that the society to which they go is more likely to link morality to the ancestors than to God. While many societies will have a vague notion of a high god, such a god is distant and not intimately concerned with people’s ethical behavior. Instead of assuming a strong sense of God and a linkage between God and morality, missionaries must help to construct and re-articulate who God is, as well as the linkage of God and morality. The sense of sin is greatest where the sense of God is greatest (cf. Isa. 6). But the willingness to face God with our own sin will come only where a powerful message of love and grace makes such possible.

Missionaries in secular societies face their own difficulties. Here several centuries of effort have gone into denying that God is necessary to ethics and morality. As a result, the term “sin” has been moved to the margins of moral discourse. Nonetheless, as many philosophers have recognized, the effort to provide foundations for morality and ethics apart from a transcendent source, has utterly failed. The astute apologist will find it possible to present a persuasive witness that God is essential as the foundation of morality, and move from there to the gospel—including discussion of sin.

Anthropological. The concept of sin, as used in Scripture, implies truths about people. It implies, first of all, a high view of human personhood. It would not be meaningful to apply the word “sin” to a tornado, a snake, or a dog. People are active moral agents with free will. Sin is presented in Scripture as evil which is actively chosen by culpable human agents. Such agents are not simply products of heredity or environment. They are active in choosing between good and evil.

The concept of sin also implies a terrible truth about the human condition. Subsequent to the first primordial sin, all humans enter the world as sinners. “Sinful” is an adjective which applies not just to acts, but to people. It is not just that people occasionally commit sinful acts. They are themselves sinful. Sin is not simply episodic (like crime), but a pervasive on-going condition. People are sinful at the deepest levels. Repeatedly the Bible stresses that the outward acts simply reveal something about the inner state: the dispositions of the heart, such as lust, covetousness, and pride.

The concept of sin points to both freedom and captivity. People who actively and freely choose that which is wrong find themselves also to be

“slaves” to sin. These twin themes are both important to any presentation of the biblical view of the human condition. Again, such a presentation must take into account what the relevant culture says about human nature, in order to more effectively articulate and communicate the biblical view. For example, one may have to counter the claim of human determinism—that humans are therefore not accountable—or the claim that humans are by nature good, and not sinful.

Eschatological. The word “sin” carries with it the idea of culpability and deserved punishment. “In the day that you eat of it, you shall die.” “The wages of sin is death.” The very language of sin carries with it the idea of deserved and future judgment. While the wicked may flourish in this life, the implication is that there is moral harmony and justice in this world, and the wicked will be punished. The concept of sin carries with it implicitly the notion of deserved and coming punishment. Sin points to the coming judgment. Sin points to HELL.

Missionaries often express frustration when they cannot find a word for “sin” in the language of the people with whom they work—little realizing the heavy load of meaning carried by that one word, and the unlikelihood of finding a single word with the same load of meaning in any culture except one heavily influenced by Christianity. Indeed there was no Hebrew or Greek word which carried the same range of meaning as our English word “sin.” Instead there were many words drawn from everyday moral discourse with which to speak of sin. Dynamically equivalent vocabulary exists in every culture. Instead of looking for a single word and expecting that word to carry the full load of meaning, the missionary will need to pay attention to the meaning itself, and communicate that meaning into the language and culture. A deep knowledge of language and culture will discover fully adequate lexical and symbolic resources for communicating biblical truths concerning sin.

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Suffering. The universal symbol of Christianity is the cross, a symbol of suffering, specifically, the suffering of Jesus. To reflect upon the life of Jesus is to remember his suffering. As the Servant Songs of Isaiah anticipated, Jesus “was despised and rejected, . . . a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity” (53:3 NRSV, see also 50:6 and 53:4–5, 7–12). Likewise, it has been the

fortune of those who follow Jesus to experience suffering. “Remember the word I said to you,” Jesus reminded his disciples, “‘Servants are not greater than their master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you” (John 15:20). No sooner did the church begin to flourish than the apostles were arrested and threatened. They and others were imprisoned and murdered (Acts 4:1–22; 5:17–33; 7:54–60). But their suffering was seen not as an affliction; it was rather a means of witness. “They rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name” (Acts 5:41). Though the words of the writer of 1 Peter were addressed to first-century Christian slaves, they have been regarded, and rightly so, as applicable to all of Jesus’ disciples: “For to this you have been called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

The Christian mission—if it is Christian, that is, Christ-like—is a replication of the mission of Jesus, and in due time will involve suffering. In his second letter to the church at Corinth, Paul recounts his own suffering in the spreading of the gospel (11:23–28), and he reminds his readers that though suffering is a part of being a disciple, it also is a form of witness. “We are afflicted in every way,” he writes, “but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies” (4:8–10).

It is important to remember, as Douglas Webster observes, that the Greek word for WITNESS, *martus*, soon acquired a new meaning, *one who died for the faith*, and it has been transliterated as *martyr*, thus “combining the ideas of mission and suffering” (1966, 104). To be a witness will therefore result in suffering, sometimes in death. This has been particularly true for missionaries. For some, mission has meant violent death, for example, JOHN WILLIAMS, ELEANOR CHESTNUT, and Archbishop Oscar Romero. For others it has meant harassment, arrest, and months or years in prison, for example, ADONIRAM JUDSON and WILLIAM WADE HARRIS. How many have suffered the loss of spouses and/or children, for example, GEORGE SCHMIDT, E. R. Beckman, and Carie Sydenstricker? Who knows the number who have experienced terribly unhappy marriages because of abusive or mentally ill spouses, for example, WILLIAM CAREY, ROBERT MORRISON, and Martha Crawford? Abandonment by colleagues or supporters has pushed some to the brink of despair, for example, ROWLAND BINGHAM and C. T. STUDD. Oppression of the poor and the defenseless invariably weighs heavily on compassionate missionaries and missionary bishops, for example, BARTHOLOMEW DE LAS CASAS and FESTO KIVENGERE. Significant, therefore, is the apostle

Theology of Mission

Paul's conclusion following his recitation of personal suffering. He says, "And besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). Many of the sufferings experienced in mission stem from apprehension and pain for Christ's people.

To be involved in the mission of Jesus Christ, therefore, is to experience suffering, and one of the most vivid reminders of this fact is when we as Jesus' followers gather for the celebration of the Eucharist, a reenactment of the sufferings of our Lord. Whether we hold to the real or symbolic presence in the elements, we should always remember that "the breaking of the bread" and the "drinking of the cup" happens repeatedly outside as well as inside the walls of the church.

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Theology of Mission. A discipline that reflects on the presuppositions, assumptions, and concepts undergirding mission theory. Prior to the 1960s, a number of important people like GIBBERTUS VOETIUS, JOSEF SCHMIDLIN, GUSTAF WARNECK, Karl Barth, Karl Hartenstein, Martin Kähler, WALTER FREYTAG, ROLAND ALLEN, HENDRIK KRAEMER, J. H. BAVINCK, W. A. Visser t'Hooft, MAX WARREN, Olav Myklebust, BENGT SUNDKLER, Carl F. H. Henry, and Harold Lindsell reflected theologically on mission. As a separate discipline with its own parameters, methodology, scholars, and focuses, theology of mission really began in the early 1960s with the work of GERALD ANDERSON. In 1961, Anderson edited what many consider to be the first text of the discipline, a collection of essays entitled *The Theology of Christian Mission*.

Ten years later, in *The Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission*, theology of mission was defined as "concerned with the basic presuppositions and underlying principles which determine, from the standpoint of Christian faith, the motives, message, methods, strategy and goals of the Christian world mission."

Theology of mission is multidisciplinary. Missiology is a multidisciplinary discipline that draws from many cognate disciplines. Within missiology, theology of mission examines the various cognate disciplines and clarifies their proximity to or distance from the center, Jesus Christ, asking whether there is a point beyond which the cognate disciplines may no longer be helpful or biblical. Theology of mission integrates who we are, what we know, and how we act in mission. It brings together our faith relationship with Jesus Christ, our spirituality, God's presence, the church's theological reflection throughout the centuries, a constantly new re-

reading of Scripture, our hermeneutic of God's world, our sense of participation in God's mission, and the ultimate purpose and meaning of the church and relates all these to the cognate disciplines of missiology. Theology of mission serves to question, clarify, integrate, and expand the presuppositions of the various cognate disciplines of missiology. As such, mission theology is a discipline in its own right, yet is not one of the related disciplines alongside the others, for it fulfills its function only as it interacts with all of them.

Theology of mission is integrative. When mission happens, all the various cognate disciplines occur simultaneously. So missiology must study mission not from the point of view of abstracted and separated parts, but from an integrative perspective that attempts to see the whole together. Theology of mission has to do with three arenas: (1) biblical and theological presuppositions and values are applied to (2) the ministries and mission activities of the church, set in (3) specific contexts in particular times and places.

First, theology of mission is *theology* because fundamentally it involves reflection about God. It seeks to understand God's mission, his intentions and purposes, his use of human instruments in his mission, and his working through his people in his world. Thus theology of mission deals with all the traditional theological themes of SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, but it does so in a way that differs from how systematic theologians have worked. The differences arise from the multidisciplinary missiological orientation of its theologizing.

In addition, because of its commitment to remain faithful to God's intentions, perspectives, and purposes, theology of mission shows a profound concern about the relation of the Bible to mission, attempting to allow Scripture not only to provide the foundational motivations for mission, but also to question, shape, guide, and evaluate the missionary enterprise itself (*see also* BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MISSION).

Second, theology of mission is *theology of*. In contrast to much systematic theology, here we are dealing with an applied science. At times it looks like what some would call pastoral or practical theology, due to this applicational nature. This type of theological reflection focuses specifically on a set of particular issues—those having to do with the mission of the church in its context. Theology of mission draws its incarnational nature from the ministry of Jesus, and always happens in a specific time and place.

Such contextual analysis facilitates a better understanding of the concrete situation, an understanding that helps the church hear the cries, see the faces, understand the stories, and respond to the living needs and hopes of the per-

sons who are an integral part of that context. Part of this theological analysis today includes the history of the way the church's missions interfaced with that context down through history. The attitudes, actions, and events of the church's missional actions in a context will influence subsequent mission endeavors there.

Thus some scholars who deal with the history of theology of mission may not be especially interested in the theological issues as such, but may be concerned about the effects of that mission theology on mission activity in a context. They will often examine the various pronouncements made by church and mission gatherings (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Ecumenical, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic) and question the impact of these on missional action. The documents resulting from these discussions become part of the discipline of theology of mission.

Third, theology of mission is specially oriented toward and for *mission*. Reflection in this arena is found in books, journals, and other publications dealing with the theory of missiology itself. However, neither missiology nor the theology of mission can be allowed to restrict itself to reflection only. As JOHANNES VERKUYL stated,

Missiology may never become a substitute for action and participation. God calls for participants and volunteers in his mission. In part, missiology's goal is to become a "service station" along the way. If study does not lead to participation, whether at home or abroad, missiology has lost her humble calling. . . . Any good missiology is also a *missiologia viatorum*—"pilgrim missiology" (1978, 6, 18).

Theology of mission is praxeological. Theology of mission, then, must eventually emanate in biblically informed and contextually appropriate missional action. The intimate connection of reflection with action is through a process known as PRAXIS. Although there have been a number of different meanings given to this idea, ORLANDO COSTAS's formulation is one of the most constructive.

"Missiology," Costas says, "is fundamentally a praxeological phenomenon. It is a critical reflection that takes place in the praxis of mission. . . . (it occurs) in the concrete missionary situation, as part of the church's missionary obedience to and participation in God's mission, and is itself actualized in that situation. . . . In reference to this witnessing action saturated and led by the sovereign, redemptive action of the Holy Spirit, . . . the concept of missionary praxis is used. Missiology arises as part of a witnessing engagement to the gospel in the multiple situations of life" (1976, 8).

The concept of praxis helps us understand that not only the reflection, but profoundly the *action*

as well is part of a "theology-on-the-way" that seeks to discover how the church may participate in God's mission in the world. The action is itself theological, and serves to inform the reflection, which in turn interprets, evaluates, critiques, and projects new understanding in transformed action in a constantly spiraling pilgrimage of missiological engagement in a context.

Because of the complexity of the inter- and multidisciplinary task that is theology of mission, mission theologians have found it helpful to focus on a specific integrating idea that serves as a hub through which to approach a rereading of Scripture. This "integrating theme" is selected on the basis of being contextually appropriate and significant, biblically relevant and fruitful, and missionally active and transformational.

Clearly we are trying to avoid bringing our own agendas to the Scripture and superimposing them on it. Rather, what is being sought is a way to bring a new set of questions to the text, questions that might help us see in the Scriptures what we had missed before. This new approach to Scripture is what DAVID BOSCH called "critical hermeneutics."

In 1987, the ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSORS OF MISSION said,

The mission theologian does biblical and systematic theology differently from the biblical scholar or dogmatician in that the mission theologian is in search of the "habitus," the way of perceiving, the intellectual understanding coupled with spiritual insight and wisdom, which leads to seeing the signs of the presence and movement of God in history, and through his church in such a way as to be affected spiritually and motivationally and thus be committed to personal participation in that movement. . . . The center, therefore, serves as both theological content and theological process as a disciplined reflection of God's mission in human contexts. The role of the theologian of mission is therefore to articulate and "guard" the center, while at the same time to spell out integratively the implications of the center for all the other cognate disciplines (Van Engen, 1987, 524-25).

Thus we find that theology of mission is a process of reflection and action involving a movement from the biblical text to the faith community in mission in its context.

Theology of mission is definitional. One of the most interesting, significant, yet frustrating tasks of mission theology is to assist missiology in defining the terms it uses, including a definition of "mission" itself. By the way of illustration, the following may be offered as a preliminary definition of mission

Mission is the People of God intentionally crossing barriers

Wealth and Poverty

from Church to non-church, faith to non-faith to proclaim by word and deed the coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ, through the Church's participation in God's mission of reconciling people to God, to themselves, to each other, and to the world, and gathering them into the Church through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit with a view to the transformation of the world as a sign of the coming of the Kingdom in Jesus Christ.

Theology of mission is analytical. Theology of mission examines the theological and theoretical assumptions, meanings, and relations that permeate mission. To do this, mission theologians have found it helpful to partition the task into smaller segments. We noticed earlier that Gerald Anderson used the terms "faith, motives, message, methods, strategy, and goals." Jim Stamoilis studied *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today* by analyzing "the historical background, the aim, the method, the motives, and the liturgy" of mission as that took place among and through the Eastern Orthodox.

Following this method, some mission theologians organize their questions around the fact that mission is *MISSIO DEI*, it is God's mission. So one finds a number of mission theologians asking about "God's mission" (*missio Dei*), mission as it occurs among humans and utilizes human instrumentality (*missio hominum*), missions as they take many forms through the endeavors of the churches (*missiones ecclesiae*), and mission as it draws from and impacts global human civilization (*missio politica oecumenica*).

So theology of mission is prescriptive as well as descriptive. It is synthetic (bringing about synthesis) and integrational. It searches for trustworthy and true perceptions concerning the church's mission based on biblical and theological reflection, seeks to interface with the appropriate missional action, and creates a new set of values and priorities that reflect as clearly as possible the ways in which the church may participate in God's mission in a specific context at a particular time.

When theology of mission is abstracted from mission practice it seems strange and can be too far removed from the concrete places and specific people that are at the heart of God's mission. Theology of mission is at its best when it is intimately involved in the heart, head, and hand (being, knowing, and doing) of the church's mission. Theology of mission is a personal, corporate, committed, profoundly transformational search for a trinitarian understanding of the ways in which the people of God may participate

in the power of the Holy Spirit in God's mission in God's world for whom Jesus Christ died.

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Wealth and Poverty. One of the great social problems that faces those who would bear witness to the Christian faith in a global manner is that of distributive justice. There is an extreme divergence between the rich and poor of today's world, a contrast often described in terms of the North–South divide. Experts in demographics estimate that early in the third millennium, the world's population will be 6.3 billion, and by 2025 it may reach 8.5 billion. Moreover, 95 percent of the global population growth over this period will be in the developing countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. By 2025, Mexico will have replaced Japan as one of the ten most populous countries on the earth, and Nigeria's population will exceed that of the United States.

Despite progress made in economic growth, public health, and literacy in the third world, at least 800 million live in "absolute poverty." This is defined as a condition of life where malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalid housing, high infant mortality, and low life expectancy are beyond any reasonable definition of human decency. The stark reality is that the North (including Eastern Europe) has a quarter of the world's population and 80 percent of its income, while in the South (including China) three-quarters of the world's people live on one-fifth of its income. Also, approximately 90 percent of the global manufacturing industry is in the North. While the quality of life in the North rises steadily, in the South every two seconds a child dies of hunger and disease.

Still the contrast between wealth and poverty does not correspond exactly with the North–South division. Many OPEC countries are rich, while poverty is found in North America and Eu-

rope. In the United States 14 percent of people and 30 percent of children are beneath the poverty line. In Britain over 10 percent live below the legal definition of poverty, and another 10 percent to 15 percent are close to this point. A great disparity between wealth and poverty is found not only between nations but also within them.

On the other hand, one-fifth of the world's population lives in relative affluence and consumes approximately four-fifths of the world's income. Moreover, according to a recent World Bank report, the "total disbursements" from the wealthy nations to the THIRD WORLD amounted to \$92 billion, a figure less than 10% of the worldwide expenditures on armaments; but this was more than offset by the "total debt service" of \$142 billion. The result was a negative transfer of some \$50 billion from the third world to the developed countries. This disparity between wealth and poverty is a social injustice so grievous that Christians dare not ignore it.

God has provided enough resources in the earth to meet the needs of all. Usually it is not the fault of the poor themselves, since for the most part they were born into poverty. Christians use the complexities of economics as an excuse to do nothing. However, God's people need to dedicate themselves not only to verbal evangelism but also to relieving human need as part of sharing the good news (Luke 4:18–21), both at home and to the ends of the earth.

This explains why Christians in the two-thirds world place issues of poverty and economic development at the top of their theological agendas. Some Christians in the North have difficulty understanding why "liberation" is so central to the thinking of their counterparts in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, but they have never faced the stark, dehumanizing reality of grinding poverty (see also LIBERATION THEOLOGIES).

The Western missionary movement reflects an affluence that has developed as a result of the threefold revolution that has given Europe and North America a standard of living that is the envy of the world (see also MISSIONARY AFFLUENCE). Since the sixteenth-century the scientific, industrial, and political revolution has unleashed an avalanche of material goods that has raised the West from poverty. Most of the world has not shared in this achievement. When missionaries from the West went to preach and minister in other lands during the nineteenth century, they often believed that God favored them materially and scientifically so that they could overawe the heathen. As recently as the 1970s a missionary could observe that "Economic power is still the most crucial power factor in the western missionary movement. It is still the most important way that the Western missionary expresses his concept of what it means to preach the gospel" (Bernard Quick). The fact that most Protestant

missionaries serve in some part of Africa, Latin America, or Oceania, those parts of the world where most of the poor reside, indicates that missionaries are economically superior in the social contexts of their ministry.

There have always been a few individuals who have pointed out that Western missionaries can take for granted a level of material security, lifestyle, and future options that are beyond the wildest dreams of the people among whom they work. As the twentieth century progressed others joined in calling attention to the unforeseen and unwelcome effects of this economic disparity. At the TAMBARAM CONFERENCE (1938) a report was presented that clearly showed the dilemma between the comparatively "wealthy" missionaries and the "poor" people to whom they ministered. By the very nature of the situation missionaries were looked upon as the representatives of a wealthy and powerful civilization who introduced a new standard of economic values. The people that they served looked upon them not as proclaimers of a new faith, but as sources of potential economic gain. The problem of the personal affluence of Western missionaries when compared to the indigenous peoples was spelled out more explicitly in books such as *Ventures in Simple Living* (1933) and *Living as Comrades* (1950) written by Daniel Johnson Fleming, professor of missions at Union Theological Seminary (N.Y.). Writers like Fleming pointed out that the wealth of the West obscured the message of Christ, and led to feelings of helplessness and inferiority on the part of those to whom the missionaries ministered.

However, the problem of global economic disparity was once again obscured in the post-World War II period, when the North American missionary rank increased from less than 19,000 in 1953 to over 39,000 in 1985. These new missionaries were mostly from evangelical missionary groups who tended to neglect the work of the denominational agencies and focused on personal conversion, often ignoring economic and material problems.

Yet the work of authors such as Viv Grigg and Jonathan Bonk as well as a number of contributors to the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* and *Missiology* focused attention on the obstacle to Christian witness inherent in the issues of wealth and poverty. Many of these writers counsel Christians in the more developed lands to share their material means with others. This can be done by supporting public and private efforts to aid the poor, by scaling down their standard of living, and by working for the empowerment of those who do not have the ability to represent themselves.

Witness

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Witness. A witness is one who bears testimony about a person, place, or event. While the modern term frequently is associated with seeing (e.g., an eyewitness), the underlying Hebrew and Greek terms focus more on testifying than on observing. Throughout the Bible the term is used in forensic contexts to indicate one who is able to explain what has happened due to personal experience of an event or issues related to the event being investigated. The purpose of such testimony is to establish truth so that appropriate judgment may be determined. To do so, however, two or more independent witnesses were necessary to establish accusations against the accused (Deut. 19:15). Bearing false witness against someone was forbidden (Exod. 20:16), and punishable by giving the false witness the punishment due the accused (Deut. 19:16–21).

In addition to the legal concept, a witness may authenticate accounts of an event or meaning outside of legal proceedings. Paul, for example, calls God himself as a witness of Paul's commitment to pray for the Christians in Rome (Rom. 1:9). The Spirit also bears witness with our spirit that we belong to God (Rom. 8:16).

The term also develops a nonlegal but technical sense of bearing testimony about Christ. John the Baptist bore such a testimony (John 1:7, 15). The word signifies lifestyle and verbal testimony about Christ before non-Christians in the hope of persuading them to respond to the gospel. (Acts 1:8). Jesus promised the power of the Spirit for such witness and in Acts 4:33 the apostles showed the fulfillment of Jesus' promise. In Paul's vision, Jesus encouraged Paul that he would bear witness of Christ in Rome just as he already had in Jerusalem (Acts 23:11).

Contemporary Issues. In many evangelical circles, *witnessing* refers to the act of evangelism. Typically it is used of verbal proclamation of the gospel and may be divorced from lifestyle.

Lifestyle witness (see also LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM) refers more specifically to our testimony to the truth through the concrete way we live. If detached from some type of truth proclamation (verbal, written, etc.), however, lifestyle witness will inevitably be read through the WORLDVIEW of the observer (see also PRESENCE EVANGELISM). In cross-cultural settings, the observers' worldviews may have little or no Christian orientation, and the lifestyle they see will be interpreted in categories that make sense to the observers rather than to the witness. While it is true that our lives

bear witness for good or ill, lifestyles without corresponding sensitive and appropriate explanation to the receptor will always be read in light of the receptor's categories.

In ecumenical circles, witness refers to "the total evangelizing presence and manifestation of the church" (Bria, 1067), and is all that the church is and does. *Common witness* was popularized in ecumenical circles from the 1970s, and refers to the joint witness of the universal church in all of its efforts. It was built on the theological reflection that no single church fully manifests Christ to the world; it takes a universal effort to achieve such global witness. Particular attention in this understanding is given to cooperative efforts which display UNITY in mission, however imperfect they may be. Such efforts stand as a witness before the world of our unity in Christ and God's love for humankind. Common witness is broader than just cooperative efforts, however. It is also reflected when we live lives which honor our Christian commitments and display an accepting, ecumenical attitude toward Christians who are from different ecclesiological backgrounds.

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Worship. Today as throughout history, worship and mission are linked inextricably together, for God propels his mission through the drawing of worshipers to himself. God's call to worship him empowers us to respond with his passion to do mission. Thus, worship ignites mission; it is God's divine call-and-response strategy.

Indeed, the Scriptures resound with his global call to worship via mission. The prophet Isaiah, for example, responding in the midst of worship, takes up the call to go (Isa. 6:1–8). Likewise, the Samaritan woman encounters Jesus Christ, the incarnate God. He discloses that the Father is seeking authentic worshipers, people in relationship with him. The woman responds by immediately calling others to come see the man who told her everything she had done (John 4:26). Finally, the greatest call-and-response pattern surfaces when the disciples meet with the resurrected Jesus just before his ascension (Matt. 28:16ff.). Finally recognizing Jesus' true identity, they fall down and worship him. In the context of worship, Jesus gives his crowning imperative, the GREAT COMMISSION (Matt. 28:17–20). The missionary mandate flows out of an intimate relationship with God generated in worship. God's propelling call to go into all the world becomes our response of commitment and allegiance to

him. We join him in his passion to call worshippers to himself.

Wherever we have seen meaningful, authentic worship, the church has experienced a new missions thrust. Yet, a radical separation of worship from mission has dominated mission methodologies. DONALD MACGAVRAN once claimed, "Worship . . . is good; but worship is worship. It is not evangelism" (1965, 455). The typical practice has been to call people to a saving faith in Jesus Christ with worship being a resultant by-product. While ignoring God's primary call to worship, missiologists have, however, recognized the need for relevant Christian worship to nurture a Christian movement. Thus, the model of "evangelism-before-worship" has dominated evangelical mission strategies.

Yet God's call to worship him is currently sweeping around the world in great, new revolutionary ways. Along with new openness to new forms and patterns of worship, there is greater recognition of the intimate relationship between worship and mission. Such winds of worship empowering mission have been building over the past few decades in relation to renewal movements. In 1939, for example, the Methodist Episcopal Church published a small manual, *A Book of Worship for Village Churches*, for the "great army of Christian pastors, teachers, and laymen who are leading the toiling villagers of India through worship to the feet of Christ" (Ziegler, 1939, 7). The manual resulted from a desire to see the church in India take root in its own soil in tandem with the vast treasures of two thousand years of Christian heritage. Research revealed that where dynamic worship was practiced, changed lives and growing churches resulted. On the other hand, weak, stagnant and ineffective churches existed where worship of God in Christ was neglected (*ibid.*, 5).

More recently, as renewal movements grow in their experience with God, God calls them into mission. The common strategic link of each of these groups is their focus on worship with evangelism as the inclusive by-product: the "worship-propels-mission" model. French Benedictine monks, for example, have entered Senegal with the goal of creating a model of contextualized worship drawn from cultural musical traditions. They have adapted African drums and the twenty-one-string Kora harp to attract Muslims to Christ. Likewise, the Taizé Movement from France is growing through the development of contemplative, worship forms. Facilitated by the burgeoning impact of electronic media and new musical forms worldwide, the growth of a Worship and Praise Movement, originating from such streams as the Jesus People Movement through Marantha! Music and the Vineyard Movement, is forging an openness to new, global worship forms.

Among the most exciting developments are the new mission forces from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Their distinctive approaches commonly revolve around worship. In Kenya, one of the most dynamic examples of church growth is found at the Nairobi Chapel. The Chapel bases much of its strategy on the development of meaningful worship (especially music) for effectively communicating the gospel to a predominantly university-student based church (Long). The vision does not stop with Kenya; they are reaching out to neighboring Tanzania. In West Africa, Senufo Christians of Cote d'Ivoire are reaching out to their neighbors through their distinctive worship form—song, dance, and drama (King). Christian Inca Indians from Peru are reaching out to Native Americans of North America. Through their deeper understanding of more culturally relevant worship forms, Inca Christians are preaching through the use of Indian storytelling styles. Asians are going to other Asians; Koreans to the Philippines and American Filipinos to Japan. In one case, Taiwans' Hosanna Ministries partnered with the Korean Tyrannus Team in initiating a series of Worship and Praise activities in 1989. This partnership brought forth a movement of renewal in Taiwan where unbelievers came to Christ and believers dedicated themselves to missions (Wong). They discovered "an intimate relationship between worship and mission" (1993, 3). Worship propelled both evangelism and commitment to do more mission.

With the growing surge of worship empowering mission, we must keep five factors in mind in order to achieve a lasting impact for the kingdom. First, worship must remain worship: we must, above all, seek encounter with God. Worship services should not serve as functional substitutes for evangelism. Rather, we must seek authenticity of interaction with God and developing relationship with him. Genuine worship of the Creator will attract and confront those who long to enter into the kingdom. Likewise, evangelistic programs must pursue evangelism. The two, worship and mission, must remain distinct, yet work hand-in-hand.

Second, we must allow God to transform and make anew his original creation. Contextualization of the gospel is not an option, but an imperative. Throughout the Scriptures and history, we see people worshiping God in ways that were formerly heathen but then transformed with radically new meaning. Service order, length, language, symbolism, prayer forms, songs, dance, bowing, speeches, Scripture reading, and artifacts must be captured to nurture believers and bring the peoples of the world into relationship with the living God.

Third, we are to pursue diversity within the unity of the body of Christ (Eph. 2; 1 Cor. 12):

Worship

“Diversity (of worship forms) seems to coincide with the periods of effective mission efforts” (Muench, 1981, 104). Foundational mission goals must seek to make Christ understood and known within their own context. The Celtic church, for example, known as a strong mission church, encouraged each tribal group to develop its own worship service pattern. Likewise, worship patterns and forms must vary according to the cultural contexts—including multicultural settings. In order to know God intimately, peoples from differing contexts require the freedom to interact with him through relevant worship forms.

Fourth, there is a great need for research toward developing appropriate worship. We must allow dynamic worship to grow and change as relationship with God deepens. Worship forms are shaped by and reflect our relationship with God via appropriate, expressive cultural forms. There is great need for openness in pursuing, experimenting, exchanging, and documenting experiences in worship. Needed topics of research should include biblical models of worship that seek precedents for adapting cultural forms, comparative philosophical thought forms, historical models of worship from the Christian movement, uses and meaning of ritual (anthropology), verbal and non-verbal symbols (communication), and comparative cultural worship patterns.

Finally, we must train for worship and worship leading. In keeping with “spirit and truth” wor-

ship (John 4:23), missionaries must first of all be worshipers of the living God. Then they are empowered to take up God’s passionate call to bring all peoples to worship him. Besides studying the nature of worship and the numerous patterns and forms that worship can embody, we must train people to lead worship and stimulate meaningful worship cross-culturally. Training for worship must become a major component in the formation of missionaries.

Authentic Christian worship brings people to encounter Jesus Christ. As one looks to God, God reveals his vision to us. We respond to his call. Thus, worship propels and empowers mission. Ultimately, God calls us to participate in achieving God’s vision as entoned by the Psalmist: “All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name” (Ps. 86:9).

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