

THEME ONE FOUNDATIONS FOR MISSION

Preface

Study Theme 1 Foundations for Mission brought together in its conveners two research projects: Canon Janice Price of the Church of England led 'Foundations for Mission in the UK and Ireland: A Study of Language, Theology and Praxis', a joint venture of the British and Irish Association for Mission Studies, the (former) Global Mission Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and the Global Connections network of Evangelical mission agencies and churches, which examined the altered state of affairs in foundations for mission in Britain and Ireland in 2010. Revd Dr Deenabandhu Manchala leads the Just and Inclusive Communities section of the World Council of Churches which sponsored 'Mission at and from the Margins', an ethnographic study seeking to understand the mission of the church in the South Indian state of Andhra Pradesh in the light of the experiences of Dalit or 'outcaste' communities. Both these projects brought empirical and experiential concerns to the topic and their work was shared at a meeting at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey on 1-4 May 2009 with a wider group which was brought together by Edinburgh 2010, with the support of the World Council of Churches, expressly to draft this chapter.

In addition to the Conveners, ten others from different continents and churches participated in the meeting which was convened by the Edinburgh 2010 Research Coordinator, Dr Kirsteen Kim. Dr Paul Rolph, Research Supervisor, University of Wales, Bangor, UK attended as a consultant to 'Sinking Foundations'. Revd Dr Peniel Jesudas Rufus Rajkumar, Associate Professor of Systematic and Dalit Theology, United Theological College, Bangalore, India attended as a leader of 'Mission at and from the Margins'. Dr Emma Wild-Wood, Lecturer in Mission Studies, Cambridge Theological Federation, UK had also participated in the Towards 2010 project which looked back at the Commission of Edinburgh 1910. Three people were invited for their expertise in biblical studies: Dr Simanga R. Kumalo, Senior Lecturer in Practical Theology, University of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa, who is heavily involved in the contextual bible study being pioneered there; Rev. Dr Néstor O. Míguez, Professor of New Testament Studies, Instituto Universitario ISEDT, Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Revd Jacques Matthey, Director of the World Council of Churches Programme on Unity, Mission and Spirituality, who had also been deeply involved in 'Mission in the Bible', a project of the Francophone Association for Mission Studies (AFOM). Three others were invited to bring a theological perspective: Dr Edmund Chia, Professor of Doctrinal Theology, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, USA; Dr Christina

Manohar, Professor of Theology, Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, India; and Dr Petros Vassiliadis, Professor of Theology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. Dr Beverly Mitchell, an African American and member of the American Baptist Church who is on the faculty at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC, was unable to attend the meeting but commented on the draft document from her expertise in systematic theology.

Having received input from each participant, the May meeting agreed to divide the chapter into experiential, biblical and theological foundations and produced initial drafts of each section. Following the meeting, Dr Rajkumar and Dr Wild-Wood took the drafting work forward, integrating the sections and completing the final draft in consultation by email with the wider group.

1 Introduction

Witnessing to Christ today, the theme of the project to mark the centenary of the Edinburgh World Mission Conference in 1910, implies that our Christian mission relates to Christ's own mission. Such an assertion would have found favour with those gathered in 1910. During the last one hundred years the same point has been restated in different ways. The International Missionary Council's meeting at Tambaram, India, in 1938, entitled 'The World Mission of the Church' declared, 'the essential task of the Church is to be the ambassador for Christ.'¹ In 1958 the same Council, meeting in Ghana, asserted 'The Christian world mission is Christ's not ours.'² In contrast to 1910, when the emphasis was on the *missions* of the churches, the emphasis in 2010 is on *God's mission (missio Dei)* in which Christians participate.³ This represents a move from 'A Church-centred mission to a mission-centred church,'⁴ and towards an exploration of missionary collaboration beyond the church. In 1910 there was frequent mention of the plurality of 'missions'; in 2010 mission is considered to be singular but, as the plural 'foundations' of this chapter's title suggests, there are many approaches to understanding and participating in mission: 'Mission is complex and multiple: witness, proclamation, catechesis, worship, inculturation, inter-faith dialogue. These activities are carried out...in concrete situations...'⁵ In the course of a century many developments have taken place that influence our practice and understanding of mission, not least is the growth of the world Christianity, which is an unanticipated answer to Edinburgh 1910's prayer for the 'Christianisation' of the world. Christians from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific have since critiqued and enriched the mission tradition of the Western nations represented in 1910. Likewise, Edinburgh 1910 was a largely Protestant affair; the Christian unity that delegates prayed for, whilst still partial, means that Catholics, Orthodox and Pentecostals are part of the Edinburgh 2010 project.

This chapter examines shifts in missiological reflections since 1910 and demonstrates the variety of foundations for mission studies recognised today. It groups the foundations into three categories: experiential, biblical and

theological, and assumes that, for holistic missional practice, attention to each category is required. Since there is little space for historical explanation, recent developments are emphasised. It is impossible to be exhaustive; however, the contributors to this chapter come from four continents and several Christian traditions and we hope we have provided a representative introduction that will stimulate readers to further reflection and action.

We begin with experiential foundations because it is in recognition of these that the greatest development in mission studies has occurred. The last century has seen a growing awareness that our history, culture, politics, environmental and economic status (often termed ‘context’) influence the way in which we read the Bible, theologise and participate in mission. The relationship of these three foundations is, however, reciprocal, and they can be treated in any order.

2 Experiential Foundations for Mission

2.1 Why experience as a foundation for mission?

Mission does not happen in vacuum. It is grounded in and derives from particular contexts. God’s mission, expressed through the life of the Trinity, revealed through Exodus, Incarnation and Pentecost, takes place in and impacts upon the concrete realities of history. As Jesus Christ took human form and shared our experience, ‘Mission in Christ’s way... cannot but be rooted in a certain context concretely addressing the challenges in that specific context’.⁶ Further, if we recognise that *reception* of the gospel is embedded in specific human history and experience, it is logical that experience constitutes a foundation for mission. In accepting experience as one of its foundations, mission has the twin-obligations of *being informed by* experience (both past and present) and *seeking to impact* human experience (spiritual, physical, psychological, social, cultural, political, economic) in creative fidelity to the gospel of Christ.

Mission founded on experience is polyvalent. The practitioners of mission are the ones who make decisions about the shape of their local mission. Recognising experience as a foundation for mission fosters a critical engagement with one not-so-obvious aspect of mission thinking, namely the tendency in mission theology to privilege the so-called theoretical above the empirical. It recognises the need to accord epistemic value to those practitioners of mission who have been denied the privilege of theorizing due to the politics of power, and whose only resources are their experiences. It is upon these resources also that contemporary thinking has to be founded for mission to maintain ethical integrity and accountability. These experiences have to be considered critically and dialectically with theological and biblical sources.

The experiential approach also helps us to discern that the so-called theoretical is located in a particular framework of experience. The granting or denying of epistemic value to a particular experience is related to the question

of power. Therefore experience as the foundation for mission brings not only a methodological critique to mission but also a moral one. It helps to interrogate the exclusionary nature of mission practice which neglects 'experience' in general and certain experiences in particular. Further this shift offers a normative direction to suggest alternative modes of reorganising the boundaries of the foundations for mission so as to make them more inclusive.

In contexts where biblical interpretations and mission theology have borne bad fruits in practice, communities are placed in critical tension with the received biblical and theological resources. However, mission founded on experience has a Spirit-enabled 'orthopathic' dimension 'which infuses in the oppressed the strength to rise above the dehumanization of their daily conditions'.⁷ When this consciousness becomes a hermeneutical premise, people are empowered 'to risk questioning and reinterpreting the Scriptures in the light of their own experiences and insights'.⁸ So experiential foundations for mission also enable a critical retrospection of mission from the perspective of those from the 'underside' of mission history. In discerning its mission the global church has to acknowledge that the history of Christian mission was at one time very much aligned with European colonial expansionism. Attentiveness to the experiences of those affected by this agenda of colonial expansionism has prompted a radical rethinking of mission. It is now being recognised that 'especially where Christianity has been dominant and militant, Christians must now be prepared to listen, to wait and to serve' and that 'Christian stewardship of life through the pursuit of justice, peace and the well-being of creation will win the gospel of Jesus Christ a hearing in ways seldom achieved by sheer proclamation.'⁹

An historical critique of past experience which attempts to discover and understand the events and actors of the past on their own terms is also a valid part of an experiential approach to mission and contributes to healing of memories. For instance, it is frequently acknowledged that the interconnections between the modern missionary movement and colonialism damaged the Christian endeavour by presenting a powerful Christendom model of the religion from a Western world view. In isolation such statements rarely explain the growth of confident and independent Christianities in the global South. To appreciate movements in mission today it is important to hear testimony from Christians in different regions of the world of the experiences of conversion, justification, sanctification and new life, of struggles and persecution, and of the formation of Christian community. These are expressed in the burgeoning Christian literature in many languages and parts of the world today. The foundations for mission are also challenged by exploration of the historical dynamics of power in each situation: the agency of indigenous people in contextualizing Christianity from their earliest engagement with it;¹⁰ the changing relationship between Christianity, culture and politics;¹¹ the different missionary ethos before the age of high imperialism¹² and the entanglements and disentanglements of missions with the colonialist mindset during it,¹³ and

the changing face of Christianity and the rise of new Christian movements.¹⁴ This form of historical study is enriched by the empirical research techniques of the social sciences and the nuanced understanding of human societies that they bring. An understanding of the ‘qualifiers’ of mission experiences throughout history can enable proper participation in God’s mission today.

Therefore experience as a foundation for mission brings with it a constructive-critical dimension to Christian mission, which enables Christian mission to learn from the past while engaging with the present and envisioning the future.

2.2 Whose experience?

Making experience a foundation for mission raises questions concerning the ‘revelatory’ nature of experience that makes it a foundation for mission. Though experience can be understood in a generic sense, not all experience can become a foundation for mission. There is need for ‘qualifying’ experience. It is at this point that differences emerge: Does one set of experiences take priority over all others? Or does the particular context dictate the experiences that influence mission? For example, many Africans look to cultural roots as being the defining set of experiences when arguing for the inseparability of ‘evangelisation and inculturation’.¹⁵ Or cultural, economic and political experiences may be brought together to ‘interpret the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the contemporary African in the light of the African condition’.¹⁶ In Latin America the qualifier of experience may be the ‘just claim’ of those at the margins of the human history, the ‘others’ of the human story of deprivation, exclusion and oppression with whom Jesus Christ, the Crucified God identifies himself (Matt 25:35-46).¹⁷ Ecofeminists understand that ‘the *interdependence of all things* is a constitutive reality of the universe’¹⁸ and develop a creation theology in response to the experience of the degradation of the earth.

This chapter is informed by the results of two main research projects which will briefly be introduced here. The first, ‘Mission at and from the Margins’ was an ethnographic study project sponsored by the World Council of Churches seeking to understand the mission of the church in the South Indian state of Andhra Pradesh in the light of Dalit experiences. (Dalits are ‘outcaste’ communities previously known as ‘untouchables’.) The study was carried out through participant observation and unstructured interviews with individuals and focus groups from Vegeswarapuram, a village in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.

The popular understandings of mission in this context were proclamation (expected to result in numerical church growth) and pastoral care. Simultaneously social justice and resistance to casteism were recognised as God’s mission. However, these two aspects of mission were not fully integrated. This is shown by the fact that the Dalit Christian leaders expressed discomfort in using the premises of the church for discussing social justice,

especially because of the community's preparedness to take up force as a means of self-defence to resist violence against them.

Regarding the agency for mission it became clear that in the past overseas missionaries with their position of power played the role of primary agents of mission. However as time passed, Dalits became the primary agents of mission and used the *conditions* of mission set up by the missionaries like indiscriminate access to schools, hospitals, hostels and 'holy spaces' like the church, which had symbolic value, to navigate their quest for equality, enhanced self-dignity and social status and further the mission of proclamation and pastoral care. These conditions of mission were seen as a liberative-transformative space by Dalit communities for self-assertion and reclamation of their place in society rather than as components of the colonizing process. Therefore, Dalit entanglements with missionaries are much more complex than patron-client or colonizer-colonized relationships. Dalit communities, which had no stake in local power, viewed those in their own country who had power as 'colonizers'. For them, the conversion experience of which they were the primary agents helped in their quest for freedom from oppression. In this the conditions of mission played and continue to play the role of midwife. Hence proclamation, pastoral care and social justice are all recognised as part of the mission of God. The agency for this mission extends beyond the church.

The second project is a piece of empirical research sponsored by the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland Global Mission Network, Global Connections and the British and Irish Association for Mission Studies. Researchers sought to investigate the contemporary theological understanding, motivation and practice of mission in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Through a questionnaire, website analysis and interviews they gained insight into the public portrayal, corporate and individual understanding of mission today among national churches and agencies and among clergy from all denominations in one English region.¹⁹ The focus of the data gathering process was a Ratings Scale Questionnaire that was sent to the major denominations and mission agencies. Effectively it requires them to critique their own understandings and practice and in so doing has resulted in the development of a powerful learning tool. Areas such as the reasons for doing mission, the place of people from other cultures, understandings of the Trinity form the basis for sets of questions.

The theological models at the heart of this research are broadly mission as *Missio Dei*, as Proclamation, and as Justice and Liberation.²⁰ In both the local and national research it was found that attitudes to mission reflected an amalgam of all three approaches but did not place great emphasis on *missio Dei*. This is interesting in view of the prevalence of *missio Dei* in contemporary theological treatments of mission foundations. Privileging the experience of the poor in mission was not a popular stance in the survey results from the questionnaire in the UK and Ireland research, except when the questionnaire was completed by missiologists. The response to the question 'The yardstick of

mission is concern for the poorest?’ resulted in a large number of neutral responses (neither agree nor disagree) and the responses regarding the relationship between mission and justice were the most disagreed with statements. Responses showed some difficulty in thinking about the relationship between mission, justice, development and concern for the poor. It was the responses on proclamation that attracted most agreement, except in perceiving proclamation as acting justly and loving one’s neighbours, even though expressing God’s love to all carried the highest assent.

These results, therefore, from individuals and agencies in the British Isles portray mission primarily as proclamation. The research highlights a disconnection between those who study and those who practice or support mission in the British Isles and between some contemporary models of mission elsewhere in the world church. In this project ‘experience’ was understood in the first instance as the empirical process by which data was collected. The analysis of data now raises questions about the way in which the experience of respondents influences their understanding of mission and how conscious they are of their context. Further questions are posed about the effects of these comprehensions when listening to other voices in the world context.

A debate over what experiences take priority emerged when comparing these two research projects. All contributors to this chapter agree that the mission of God as understood from the biblical witness includes affirming the sanctity of life, particularly whenever it is threatened, abused or destroyed. It is this that makes mission an ally of those who are struggling for life – the poor, the oppressed and the excluded. But research showed that this was not a priority for all people involved in mission. In both cases mission as proclamation was the primary model and its relationship to questions of justice and poverty was not always clearly articulated.

For those whose understanding of mission involves a strong concern for the poor, according preference to the experiences of the oppressed (‘others’) when defining ‘experience’ becomes imperative if mission has to be ‘mission in Christ’s way’ because these experiences constitute important biblical resources for mission theology. This derives from the biblical conviction that ‘God also shares in... the marginalization of non-people, and in the pain of the oppressed’, which is ‘what brings the Third World together as Christian theologians’.²¹ These ‘others’ are often referred to in the Bible as the ‘the poor’. Their experiences can be seen as ‘negative contrast experiences’ which have special revelatory significance when considered in juxtaposition with biblical witness to God’s activity.²² Negative contrast experiences are occasions of God’s revelation, which is not so much in the oppressive situation, but in the resistance which brings it to an end and, in so doing, ushers in God’s kingdom of peace and justice. In Christian perspective, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the ultimate negative contrast experience. It speaks of solidarity with the oppressed as well as the resistance of the oppressed. In the light of the cross, negative experiences are only regarded as contrast experiences if they evoke the

critical protest and resistance to the negative situation which we Christians label as sin. In other words, not all human experience is a valid foundation for mission but only that which resonates with the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

3 Biblical Foundations for Mission

Christian mission is grounded in the Scriptures in their entirety.²³ It is impossible to make a complete theology of mission around one particular passage, because not only do we sometimes find biblical passages pointing in different directions but also because the same narrative can be interpreted differently. The reading of the Bible in different mission contexts has demonstrated, biblical criticism notwithstanding, how the changing contexts of our witness bring about new ways of understanding and engaging in God's mission. We realise that the biblical texts are 'polysemic'²⁴ – that is they contain multiple layers of meaning. The plurality and diversity of our reading of Scriptural texts speak to the plurality and diversity of our human condition, our different histories and cultures, our foreseeable confrontations and the need for wider mutual acceptance and solidarity.²⁵ We will bring some examples of how some key texts for mission have been read at different times before discussing the implications of this for how Christians can read the Bible together in mission today.

3.1 *The Samaritan woman: One story, many readings*

The New Testament presents to us, as part of Jesus' ministry, not only Jesus' invitation to his disciples to follow him but also the narratives of many other men and women, who as they encountered Jesus, felt that they had become witnesses and announcers of his redeeming presence and love. One such story – of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4) – has been interpreted differently by diverse authors in different settings.²⁶

Saint Augustine: Augustine reflects on this story in his *Treatise on the Gospel of John* written in the early fifth century. Using an allegorical approach, Augustine makes this passage a prophetic instance of the gentile mission: 'A woman came. She is a symbol of the Church not yet made righteous. Righteousness follows from the conversation. ...a Samaritan woman came to draw water. The Samaritans did not form part of the Jewish people. The fact that she came from a foreign people is part of the symbolic meaning, for she is a symbol of the Church. The Church was to come from the Gentiles. We must then recognize ourselves in her words and in her person... She found faith in Christ, who was using her as a symbol to teach us what was to come.'²⁷

Jean Calvin: According to Calvin, 'When He acknowledges to the woman that He is the Messiah, He unquestionably presents Himself as her Teacher in correspondence with the hope she had conceived... He wanted such an example of His grace to be visible in the case of this poor woman that He might testify

to all that He never fails in His duty when we want Him to be our Teacher. There is no danger of His disappointing one of these whom He finds ready to be His disciple.²⁸ In these words emphasis is laid on the teaching aspect of Jesus.

Modern interpretations adopt different emphases according to different methodologies and perspectives of the interpreting subjects. Some emphasise ‘reading the text itself’, others reading ‘behind the text’ (its historical context) or ‘in front of’ or ‘before the text’ (reactions provoked by the text).²⁹

A classical doctrinal approach: Many churches use a form of what is presented as a literal approach. Jesus would be seen as the Messiah who comes as a merciful saviour to an adulterous and sinful woman who is unable to understand Jesus’ spiritual mission. De facto, classical doctrinal positions predominate in such cases, stressing the symbol of the living water and emphasising the woman’s ‘conversion’. Most traditional commentaries use this approach.

A reading of the text in its original context attempts to understand the history and religion of Samaritans, the intentions of John’s gospel and other occurrences of witness among or by Samaritans in the biblical and early Christian tradition. It highlights how Jesus overcomes the cultural and religious boundaries between Jerusalem and Samaria and the barriers between men and women. It could lead to reflections on relationships between Christian, Jewish and other religious communities as well as on the role of women in Christian communities.

A narrative approach pays attention to the change in the sequence, represented by Jesus’ request to the woman to go and fetch her husband,³⁰ at which point two parallel monologues become a dialogue. The question which addressed the real issue for the woman broke the barrier that was building up between the two. Not only had gender and ethnic divisions hindered communication, but so had two languages, that of everyday house duties over against that of the wisdom tradition and allegories. In the narrative approach attention is given to communication issues, the world views reflected in the words of the dialoguing partners, and the point of entry that allowed more profound communication to occur. Mission then is the possibility of establishing contact through overcoming different worldviews.

A cultural reading: In South Africa, where political issues have shifted from racism to ethnicity, the text would clearly be understood with regard to the issue of ethnic conflicts and the way Jesus was able to cross such boundaries. Depending on who is in the group and who is facilitating, the text can be used to encourage the crossing of cultural boundaries, overcoming hatred and violence between ethnic groups, such as Zulus and Xhosas. Mission then would be concerned primarily with intercultural reconciliation and healing.

A feminist approach sees the text affirming Jesus’ understanding of the woman’s oppression under patriarchy. It uncovers her unfair treatment under

patriarchal laws. This reading emphasises Jesus' willingness to break down oppression and act as a liberator who empowers oppressed women. While for many readers the Samaritan woman represents the "sinner" *par excellence*, in a feminist hermeneutical approach she is vindicated for a struggle for equity in gender relations. She is freed from being a victim and regains dignity as one of the first missionaries who calls others to experience the same liberation.³¹

In the latter readings, the story appears as but one example in the New Testament where Jesus carries his mission to those marginalized by society, be it culturally, religiously or socially. Through his engagement with them in their contexts, experiences and narratives, they respond by participating in mission shaped by his example.³² All the approaches referred to have an interface with systematic and contextual theological traditions leading to different emphases in mission. These are not mutually exclusive but represent overlapping plurality of Christian faith and experience worldwide.

3.2 The Great Commission: One call in four gospel perspectives

Diversity is not only found among readers and interpreters of biblical texts, but within the biblical tradition itself. In a chapter on foundations for mission, it seems necessary to hint at the significance of some of the texts which in history proved of major motivating importance for mission, including oppressive misinterpretations, such as has been the case with the various versions of the 'Great Commission'. The stories which tell of Christ's resurrection and words of sending show significant differences in emphasis in the final stage in which they have been recorded by the four gospels. For Mark and Matthew, Jesus appeared in Galilee, whereas that event happened in Jerusalem according to Luke and John.³³ Mission is thus described as originating in two different places, a rural one at the periphery of Jewish society, the other at the urban centre.

One can also discern variations in the content of the mandates given by the resurrected to his disciples. In **Matthew**, the commissioning location is a mountain as it is for many major events of Jesus' life, including the temptation story, which presents an alternative vision of mission: that of ruling the world in power, a strategy defended by God's enemy. Authentic mission is, however, a long term formation of disciples, with two main characteristics, an ecclesial one and an ethical one. To be disciples involves baptism with a trinitarian formulation, thus linking to a church community. It also implies living according to the teaching contained in the main speeches of Jesus (Matt 28:20).³⁴ These include the Sermon on the Mount, the chapter on forgiveness (18) and the parables in Matthew 25. Matthew's commission carries the double love commandment ('all I have commanded you'). Finally the text requests the formation of communities across ethnic boundaries ('all nations,' not only the House of Israel). The comparison with Matthew 9:13 indicates that the verb translated by 'go' can imply to live differently where one lives. Matthew shows

how the one who received all power promises his presence as Emmanuel to disciples living the life-style of the beatitudes.

Mark's gospel has been transmitted with an uncertain ending. The shorter ending (16:1-8) is abrupt and difficult to interpret. The key actors are the women who are committed to tell the disciples and lead them to Galilee, but who cannot overcome their fear at the incredible event. The gospel seems to indicate that, after the resurrection, discipleship must start again at the same place where the journey of following Jesus to the cross started. Mission after Easter remains a life of discipleship on the way to the cross. The longer ending summarises various traditions of early Christianity, focusing on the unbelief of the disciples, then leading to a specific commission (16:15-20). It is the only version of the great commission carrying the technical terminology of 'preaching the gospel' (v. 15) to the widest possible horizon, 'all creation' and referring to major classical charisms and the spiritual healing ministry, 'signs' (vv.17,20). Reaction to evangelism leads to salvation or judgment. The mission command is addressed to the Eleven (only); the signs however will accompany all future believers.

In **Luke** 24:48,49 and **Acts** 1:8, the sent ones are qualified as 'witnesses' with the promise to be empowered by the Spirit. In Luke there is particular emphasis on the capacity given to the disciples to interpret the Torah, prophets and psalms as announcing Christ's death and resurrection. It is a text with particular significance for work on mission and the Bible. It will form the basis for materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2010.³⁵ Luke's is the only gospel which includes a strategic formulation as to the successive geographic development of mission from the first centre in Jerusalem to the ends of the world. The plan of the book of Acts is included in the way Christ's speech is edited. To be witnesses means attesting that the Scriptures foresaw preaching of conversion and forgiveness of sins (*aphesis* in v. 47 reiterating 4:18, with qualification) in Christ's name as result of the Easter events. This sending of the disciples as witnesses replaces the establishment of a political entity for Israel, anticipated on the basis of old biblical hermeneutics (Acts 1:7-8).

John's gospel (John 20:21-23) clearly parallels the sending of the Son with the sending of the disciples within a trinitarian movement, involving the Father and the Spirit. Peculiar to John is the simultaneity of Easter and Pentecost: the Spirit is given as a confirmation of the sending word, as power to forgive (or not forgive) sins. The way the commission is formulated identifies the way the church's mission is to be conceived with the trajectory of the mission of the Son. John's gospel has a further specificity insofar as it carries a blessing for Christians of future generations who will not have had the privilege of direct witness of Christ's resurrection. The quality of the life which is promised is not linked to the specific experience of the first apostles.

3.3 The calling of Abraham: One story many New Testament interpretations

The Old Testament is also full of examples of God's calling and sending, of God's blessings through the faith and message, deeds and lives of all the people of Israel and peoples of other nations. Abraham is one of the most prominent witnesses to God's calling and obedient response.

Under the name Abram he receives the calling, the sending, the promise and the blessing (Gen 12:1-4). Using a mission-centred hermeneutic this text becomes a paradigm, for it includes characteristic elements present in many stories of people called to fulfil the different tasks that God's saving love demands. In short, Abram hears God's voice and is sent to the adventure of faith. A promise of abundant life is given; life prolonged through his descendents. There is also a blessing, which reaches to all the families, to all the human family.³⁶ Thus mission is a relational commitment: the engendering of a new family of faith, to be a blessing for all. Yet, when we follow the story of Abraham and his descendents we find diversity and even conflict, confrontation and distress as much as faith and endurance, solidarity and hope. The promise, the blessing and the faith are not free from the shortcomings of human life and circumstances.

This paradigm is variously raised in both Testaments. In the Hebrew Scriptures Isaiah 51:2 recalling Abraham's mission, says, 'Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him.' The New Testament offers several understandings of that promise. In Matthew 1.1 Abraham is mentioned as the forefather of Jesus. The promise of family and blessing is being fulfilled because that lineage allows for the coming of the Messiah into the world. So, Abraham's and Sarah's mission is accomplished, not only in their life-time, but long after death, for they continue to engender children of the promise, and the benediction extends through new generations.

John the Baptist goes one step further: 'And do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father," for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham' (Matt 3:9). In Luke, written for the Gentiles, we find fourteen references to Abraham. Mary's song recalls God's promise to Abraham (Luke 1:55), as does Zachariah's prophetic outburst at the birth of John (Luke 1:75). Another significant example, related to Jesus' ministry, is the description of Zacchaeus' 'conversion' as his re-entering Abraham's family (Luke 19:9-10). Paul's long argument about the mission to the Gentiles in Galatians 3 is based on a new understanding of the promise to Abraham, an argument further expanded in Romans (Rom 4), where the promise and the blessing is the upholding of Abraham's mission through his 'seed', the Christ. Abraham is an example of faith in the letter to the Hebrews (Heb 11:8-12).

Simply by looking at the Abrahamic references we can see how, even within the Scriptures, the mission mandate is reinterpreted in new contexts. The reinterpretation of Abraham's significance for humanity is not limited to the

Bible. Both the Jewish and Islamic hermeneutical traditions provide alternative readings of Abraham's story and of the significance of his descendants, each bearing important impact on mission and interreligious relations in the contemporary world.³⁷

3.4 Mission hermeneutical principles

We have offered examples of how biblical texts concerning mission are given different interpretations in different times and situations. We have also shown how a biblical character or episode is presented in different ways throughout Scripture, giving contrasting understandings. The attempt to reduce the multiple voices in the Bible to the 'only correct one', to judge the differing interpretations with the standards of our own understanding, has proved to be at the origin of innumerable conflicts among Christians. It has brought about mutual accusations and unhealthy competition, and, as such, has hindered common mission, fostering proselytism and sectarianism. A theology committed to the fullness of the biblical message must allow the richness of the Word to come alive in many ways and settings. The Bible allows for a rich variety of ways to witness to Christ in each context. Some conflicts over mission since 1910 might have been softened had this been seriously taken into account.

Yet, this does not mean that there are no limits. The variety of biblical testimonies and possible interpretations speak with one voice in affirming Jesus as the crucified and resurrected Messiah. The faith in a God who discloses Godself in saving love to human beings and the whole of creation, that communicates God's Spirit creating community, is a call to unity in mission, a unity that wholly depends on God's grace. The limits are given, not by culturally-related interpretations or by the imposition of power, but by our humble recognition of God's freedom to manifest the Good News of salvation revealed through Jesus Christ to all the people, in ways proper to every context. There is no limit to God's grace and justice, except our human understanding and desire to control the liberating message. Every proclamation of this gospel is valid, as long as it bears witness to God's unconditional love shown in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This criterion is crucial in a context of competing interpretive claims.

We cannot reduce the biblical canon to our own internal canon. Different trajectories in the Scriptural texts show the multiplicity and even the tensions within God's revelation. Prophetic and priestly traditions both coexist within the same Bible. Together with many others they relate to a complex approach to human life. They challenge and comfort, moving us by the Spirit who makes everything new and assures us of God's presence in our lives and our world. Any attempt to give a partial account of the biblical narrative causes a distortion of mission. The 'plurality of canons' within the canon speaks of the complementarity of the biblical witness, and results in an ecumenical call to mission.³⁸ There are various emphases in mission, originating in different ways

to relate to the biblical text and tradition and to particular situations of the contemporary world. Yet this does not mean that we can avoid taking sides. We cannot be indifferent to the suffering of our world. We need to respond missionally in our contexts.

The Bible inspires us in our response to God's initiative. The inspiration of the Word, notwithstanding the different ways this has been understood in Christian history, is related to the inspiration of the Christian community, receiving from Scriptures guidance and strength for walking the paths of mission. In that sense, the Bible itself is mission, with, besides and beyond the church boundaries. It witnesses to Christ even when we fail to comply with Jesus' invitation to be the continuing presence in his own mission. The Word in the Bible participates in God's redemptive mission.

4 Theological Foundations for Mission

The twentieth century saw the focus of missiology shift from ecclesiology and soteriology (although these remain important) to prioritise trinitarian reflections as being foundational for a proper understanding of and action in mission. Consciously influenced by experience as shaper of theology and aware of the polysemic nature of the theological task, familiar themes in missiology were reworked and we highlight some of them here.

4.1 Trinitarian *missio Dei*

Christ's sending out the apostles to proclaim his gospel is rooted in his being sent by God the Father in the Holy Spirit (John 20:21). This classical formulation of *missio Dei*, affirming that mission is God's sending forth, was expanded in ecumenical discussion in the twentieth century to include the participation of the church in the divine mission.³⁹ This conviction led to a reconsideration of mission as ultimately proceeding from a trinitarian God,⁴⁰ the '...epiphany of God's plan and its fulfilment in the world.'⁴¹ The triune God '...is not a kind of intellectual capstone which can be put on to the top of the arch at the very end; it is... the presupposition without which the preaching of the Gospel... cannot begin'⁴² The way in which the triune God sends forth has been variously understood in recent years. Placed alongside classical hierarchical formulations has been an emphasis on the relational.⁴³ Community has been emphasised: the triune God is a '...dynamic, relational community of persons, whose very nature is to be present and active in the world, calling it and persuading it towards the fullness of relationship that Christian tradition calls salvation'⁴⁴ and equality and justice are modelled on trinitarian relationships.⁴⁵ Other theologians have been wary of comprehending God as simply a model for human relations and demand that Christians *participate* in and practice the relationality of the triune communion.⁴⁶ 'To engage in the relationships in God means that we are brought up against the challenge of the alien, the radically different the unlike; but [we experience] a fellowship more

intimate than anything we can otherwise know.⁴⁷ Whilst there is concern that such close association with the divine is arrogant, many link the participation in God's mission with an active engagement in the sending movement of the threefold Godhead. The language of mutuality and reciprocity that arises from social and participative models demonstrates a 'divine livingness'⁴⁸ that enhances our understanding of mission as God's manifestation – in Christ and the Spirit – of love to whole creation, in which we are called to participate.

Trinitarian reflections have been enriched by different cultural perspectives. For example, Chinese culture provides insights in understanding the dynamic of the Trinity: The Chinese phrase for spirit parallels the Hebrew understanding of spirit, *ruach*, in connecting the outer and inner dimensions of a person together as one. This suggests a narrative theological approach, so that '...the conceptual understanding of revelation and the economic Trinity can be "fleshed out" by concrete tangible narrated events in the life, ministry and death of Jesus Christ. The vividness and the power of the story of Jesus can then complement the more reflective conceptual understanding of revelation and the Trinity.'⁴⁹ Likewise, from an Indian perspective, there are correspondences between *ruach* and the Hindu concept of *atman* that signify the Spirit as enlivening and vivifying breath and vital energy of all that lives, linking the action of the Spirit to that of the life-giving creator and the life-restoring liberator.⁵⁰

4.2 Mission in and through Christ and the Spirit

The focus on the relational and communal Trinity, however, has encouraged a fresh understanding of the mutuality and reciprocity between Christ and Spirit, 'the principal agent of mission'⁵¹. From the early church two types of pneumatology developed: the West usually understood the Holy Spirit as the agent of Christ to fulfil the task of mission; the East emphasised the Holy Spirit as the source of Christ and the Church, gathering the people of God in his kingdom and then going forth in mission. The last century has seen an extraordinary rise in Pentecostalism, with its christo-centric orientation and its Spirit practice,⁵² and an engagement with primal religions and a desire to inculturate Christianity by including the realm of the spirits. These experiences have influenced missiology, encouraging reflection upon the inseparable relationship between Christ and the Spirit expressed in different ways such as the 'anointing of the Spirit' and the 'accompaniment of the Spirit,' suggesting that there is no part in Jesus that is not touched by the Holy Spirit.⁵³ Jesus was conscious of God's Spirit working through him. A pneumatological mission theology was expressed in Jesus' inaugural proclamation at Nazareth (Luke 4:8), in which he began, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me'. Christo-praxis is repeated in the actions of blessing, confronting, challenging, dialoguing, leading and renewing the mission of God in the contemporary contexts of different people groups and races. Linking christology and pneumatology avoids exclusive christo-centrism in our understanding of the person and work

of Christ, neither neglecting the creative activity of the Spirit in creation, mission and redemption, nor emphasising a false autonomy of the Spirit that displaces Christology and the Trinity.⁵⁴

4.3 Mission ecclesiology

The shift towards a Spirit theology has engendered a missiological understanding of the Christian community (church) and its internal work (liturgy). The mission of the church is seen in her search for a spiritual framework that affirms human life, mutual respect and equality by working towards inner and mutual conversion, just community, survival of God's creation, together with church growth. In the symbiosis of Spirit and Christ the institutional element of the church is complemented by the charismatic element; for if Christ *institutes* the church, it is the Holy Spirit that *constitutes* her.⁵⁵ The Spirit reminds people of Christ's way of mission and challenges the church to be a community that seeks new ways of actualizing Christ's mission.

Since 1910 there has been a focus on ecumenical unity as 'common Christian witness': 'The mission of the church in the power of the Spirit is to call people into communion with God, with one another and with creation. In so doing, many Christians believe, that the church has a responsibility to live out the unity for which Jesus prayed for his people: "that they may all be one... so that the world may believe" (John 17:21) and that his conviction must be proclaimed and witnessed to in the community into which people are invited'⁵⁶ Thus some churches have formally united, whilst others maintain a 'reconciled diversity.' The present context 'of the rapid growth of "emerging" churches worldwide' has also led to theological attempts to delineate a 'reconstructive and reformatory ecclesiology that recognizes that followers of the way of Christ are multiple, embedded, particular and hospitable' and seeks to 'mark them as faithfully participating in Jesus' way of knowing, acting and being in the world'.⁵⁷ These local forms of church pose new challenges to unity in mission.

An awareness of the liturgical dimension of our Christian self-understanding has developed in postmodernity as a significant element of the Christian witness, '...for the life of the world' (John 6:51). The emphasis of the old mission paradigm on the rational comprehension of truth, and as a result the prioritizing of verbal proclamation in witnessing to Christ, has widened to a more *holistic* understanding of mission in our days, thus adding a more spiritual element to our mission. Prayer is significant – either as the intercessions of Christians which connect God's will and the accomplishment of God's mission, or as silence, understood as a means of accompaniment or resistance. Christians celebrate the Eucharist, not only as a 'thanksgiving', but also as a divine offering (*anaphora*) for the entire creation. The Eucharist is an affirmation of the Church's identity as 'an icon of the eschaton', a foretaste of the kingdom of God.⁵⁸ The Lord's Supper, as a remembrance of Christ's reconciling work, is only constituted where the congregation shares (1 Cor 11:20-21) and an important condition for participating in the Lord's Table is a conscious act of

reconciliation with one's sisters and brothers through the 'kiss of love' (Matt 5:23-24).

Mission is an authentic witness to the Church's eschatological experience (that is, the inclusive reality of God's kingdom) as the Holy Spirit 'blows wherever s/he wills' (John 3:8). The Holy Spirit's 'sending' force lies in the multiplication of the potential witnesses, because the visions and gifts are shared by people of all genders, ages and social categories (cf. Joel 2); and they are brought together in communion by the Spirit. Thus Christian mission is relational more than rational and is not limited to a proselytizing mission, but has become holistic in character; redemption from sin covers all aspects of social, moral, and ecological concerns.

The gifts of the Spirit, in addition to word and sacrament, qualify the wider missionary task of the church. The church does not itself constitute God's reign but anticipates an eschatological fulfilment of God's purposes. If the church participates in God's mission, this is best done when her mission moves out of the corporate Christian life and worship, in what Orthodox Christians call, 'liturgy after the liturgy'⁵⁹. Thus for many Christians the life of the church, expressed dynamically in the Eucharist, is the springboard of the churches' witness to the world. A recognition within ecclesiology that the church is primarily a community of worship, of sacrament and word challenges a secular hierarchical model of church; it reminds us of the priesthood of all believers, who by their baptism are commissioned 'to proclaim God's marvellous acts' to the world (1 Pet 2:10).

4.4 Kingdom and creation

An understanding of mission as God's activity has led to an expectation of its signs throughout God's creation and an emphasis on the kingdom of God as distinct from but overlapping with the church. Though some highlight authentic witness of the kingdom which extends their missionary task and responsibility to all kinds of social, economic and ecological activities as mission, such a holistic understanding does not undermine those who continue to place emphasis upon evangelization through verbal proclamation as the main task of mission: 'To speak of evangelism means to emphasize the proclamation of God's offer of freedom and reconciliation, together with the invitation to join those who follow Christ and work for the reign of God'⁶⁰. Central to Christ's mission was the idea of '...the coming of a Messiah, who in the 'last days' of history would establish his kingdom (Joel 3:1; Isa 2:2, 59:21; Ezek 36:24, etc.) by calling all the dispersed and afflicted people of God *into one place*, reconciled to God and becoming one body united around him'.⁶¹ Therefore, the apostles, and all believers thereafter, were commissioned to witness to the coming kingdom of God through the proclamation of the good news of the resurrection of the crucified Messiah and his inauguration of a new social, spiritual, and cosmic reality, encouraging loving service, the social struggle for justice, peace and the preservation of God's creation. Mission is thus seen in a

variety of activities: building relationships in participation, seeking unity but not uniformity, breaking human-made barriers that are oppressive and life-negating. Amidst the current socio-economic crisis Christians cannot stay aloof, or worse, support the current world economic system that threatens the human and environmental existence, but must peacefully struggle for an alternative system, based on the biblical model of the ‘economy of the enough’ (2 Cor 8:15; Ex 16:18). This moves us beyond the exclusive church-centred mission (*missio ecclesiae*) and enables us to contextualize theologies and missiologies.

St. Paul expressed the eruption of the kingdom in terms of a *new creation* (2 Cor 5:17). Equally significant, therefore, is another development in contemporary missiology, which sees our mission under a Creator God as safeguarding the integrity of God’s creation. A sense that God’s mission encompasses the whole cosmos suggests that Christian mission includes all of God’s created order.⁶² Indeed, if ‘the heavens declare the glory of God (Ps 19)’ and the created order bears witness to God’s loving kindness then we may participate in God’s mission along with creation as well as to creation. This awareness has stemmed both from a growing awareness of the interconnectedness of all life on planet earth and a trinitarian understanding of God who reconciles all creation and eschatologically brings the new creation into communion (Rom 8:18-25)

5 Conclusion

Recent shifts in missiology, and attention to experience as a foundation for mission, have led to scrutiny of models assumed by missiologists and practitioners.⁶³ To conclude this chapter we present three models of mission that have gained prominence during the last forty years and which draw upon each of the three sets of foundations we have presented. Our explanations are brief; others will point to different models; but we offer them as examples of ways in which the three foundations cohere.

5.1 Mission as liberation

The paradigm of mission as liberation is one of the most dramatic illustrations of the shift in mission thinking and practice. ‘Mission as liberation’, which derives its impetus from Liberation Theology, attempts to ‘reflect on the experience and meaning of the faith based on the commitment to abolish injustice and to build a new society,’⁶⁴ thus enlarging the concept of salvation by understanding Jesus as redeemer from structural evils. Initially arising as a response to systemic inequality in Latin America, it has influenced many across the world to social action and re-reading of Biblical texts for new theological emphases. Christ’s baptism and crucifixion are examples of liberative solidarity. Jesus’ choice to be baptised instead of to baptise shows Jesus’ prophetic identification with the poor. By submitting himself humbly to be baptised, Jesus receives authority and loses identity thus discovering his

authentic selfhood as the lamb of God, God's beloved Son, the Messiah.⁶⁵ Jesus began his prophetic mission, defending the poor and confronting *mammon*.⁶⁶ It was this, especially his challenge of the ruling religious elites and colonial powers, which led to Jesus' death. The journey which began at Jordan in humility was to end on Calvary, in humility and shame: both events described by the same word, 'baptism' (Matt 3:13-15; Mark 10:35-40; Luke 12:50).⁶⁷ This baptism is the basis for the church's mission. In exercising its liberative mission the church is guided by the gospel imperative that all will be judged according to whether they fed the hungry, clothed the naked, cared for the sick, or visited the prisoner (Matt 25:15-16). In short, they who inherit God's kingdom are those who give life to others, especially the poor and marginalized.

5.2 Mission as dialogue

In the last decades more and more churches are engaged in inter-faith dialogue as part of their witness. From the 1970s the Orthodox advanced the 'economy of the Holy Spirit' as the theological foundation of a theology of religions.⁶⁸ From 1984 the Roman Catholic Church reflected specifically on the relationship of dialogue and mission, asserting that mission includes 'the dialogue in which Christians meet the followers of other religious traditions in order to walk together toward truth and to work together in projects of common concern.'⁶⁹ Since the advent of the dialogue approach, it has been common within Christian circles to have either mission *or* dialogue – as if engaging in one excludes, or creates problems for, the other. Yet many Christians living in societies where the majority of the people adhere to religions other than Christianity are daily engaged in dialogical forms of mission.⁷⁰ This dialogue is aimed at showing forth the love of God and bearing witness to the virtues of God's kingdom, rather than growing the institutional church. In Knitter's model of mission-as-dialogue conversion remains a goal but it is primarily (although not exclusively) conversion to the service of God's kingdom.

The work of Indian Christian theologians furnishes a pneumatological basis for dialogue which 'recognises the involvement of God through the Spirit in earthly realities'. Therefore mission theology should recognise that 'its starting point can be none other than a particular experience of the Spirit in the world, and that interacts with other contextual theologies.'⁷¹ The result of this approach is a theology of mission as living in the Holy Spirit, rather than accomplishing tasks. Crucial to this theology is the discernment of the Spirit's presence and activity in creation, in contemporary movements, in spiritualities and in individuals by the criterion of the fully human life of Jesus Christ.⁷² God's saving love is revealed in Christ and is active throughout the world by the Holy Spirit. Thus dialogue involves seeking to recognise and affirm this presence at work through conversation with others.

5.3 Mission as reconciliation

By his cross and resurrection Jesus Christ brought reconciliation with God and with one another. In a world full of conflict and fractured relationships it is all the more important that the practice of Christian mission should demonstrate a commitment to reconciliation.⁷³ An awareness of reconciliation has grown through the movement for Christian unity, through a model of being-with-others-in-loving communion,⁷⁴ and through the practice of mission as healing, in which Christ's suffering and death '...put an end to the association of the divine with ideals of a perfect, sane, beautiful and un-passionate existence.'⁷⁵ The mission of God as reconciliation calls for transformed relationships in all domains: between humans and God; between humans as individuals, communities and cultures; and between humans and the whole of creation. By 2005 the world mission conference in Athens recognised the global interest in reconciliation and healing within churches and societies which prompted a rethinking of what God is calling us to in mission today. Noting that the reconciliation received in Christ is to be shared in the world, the conference acknowledged reconciliation as a key dimension of mission.⁷⁶

Reconciliation is an integrating metaphor which encompasses and draws together a wide range of ideas which are the elements of the one mission of God. The different biblical terms related to reconciliation, such as sacrificial atonement, shalom, justice and peacemaking, suggest five dimensions of Christian mission which illustrate this integrative power of reconciliation: conversion as reconciliation, international peacemaking, reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, reconciliation between Christians and reconciliation with the whole of creation.⁷⁷

These three models of mission demonstrate that, despite their individual distinctiveness, the empirical, biblical and theological foundations for mission are complementary and serve to strengthen and deepen a relevant Christian witness in the twenty-first century.

Endnotes

¹ *The World Mission of the Church: Findings and Recommendations* (London: IMC, 1939), 26-7, quoted in Norman E Thomas, *Classic Texts in Mission & World Christianity*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995), 81.

² Excerpt from minutes quoted in Norman E. Thomas, *Classic Texts in Mission and World Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 88.

³ For example, Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

⁴ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 370.

⁵ Peter C. Phan, *In Our Own Tongues* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003), 3.

⁶ World Council of Churches, Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, 'Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today' (2000), §48. Published in Jacques Matthey (ed.), 'You

Are the Light of the World': Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 59-89. Available at www.oikoumene.org.

⁷ Samuel Solivan, *The Spirit, Pathos and Liberation: Toward an Hispanic Pentecostal Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 62.

⁸ Solivan, *The Spirit, Pathos and Liberation*, 145.

⁹ 'Hope from Old Sources for a New Century', a consensus paper in Walter Brueggemann (ed.), *Hope for the World: Mission in a Global Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 15.

¹⁰ For example, John K Thornton, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), Emma Wild-Wood, 'St Apolo of Europe or What's in a Luganda Name?' *Church History* 77 (2008), 105-127.

¹¹ For example, J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000).

¹² For example, Daniel Jayaraj, 'Mission Reports from South India and Their Impact on the Western Mind: The Tranquebar Mission of the Eighteenth Century', in Dana L. Robert (ed.) *Converting Colonialism* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2008).

¹³ Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

¹⁴ Ogbu Kalu (ed.) *African Christianity: An African Story* (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2005)

¹⁵ Laurenti Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004).

¹⁶ Valentin Dedji, *Reconstruction and Renewal in African Christian Theology* (Nairobi: Acton, 2003), 261.

¹⁷ Consuelo del Prado, 'I Sense God in Another Way', in Elsa Tamez (ed.), *Through Her Eyes: Women's Theology from Latin America* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989), 140.

¹⁸ Mary Judith Ress, *Ecofeminism in Latin America* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006), 1.

¹⁹ John Clark, Martin Lee, Philip Knights, Janice Price, Anne Richards, Paul Rolph, Nigel Rooms (eds), *Foundations for Mission in the UK: A Study of Language, Theology and Praxis* (London: CTBI, 2010).

²⁰ Stephen B. Bevans & Roger P. Schoeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001).

²¹ John Parratt, *An Introduction to Third World Theologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11-12.

²² See Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1974), 65.

²³ There are many valuable general studies on the interface between biblical scholarship and missiology, for example: Donald Senior & Carroll Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983); Lucien Legrand, *Mission in the Bible: Unity and Plurality* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990); David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 15-178; William J. Larkin Jr. & Joel F. Williams (eds) *Mission in the New Testament. An Evangelical Approach* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998); Johannes Nissen, *New Testament and Mission, Historical and Hermeneutical Perspectives* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999); Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006); James Chukwuma Okoye, *Israel and the Nations: A Mission Theology of the Old Testament* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006). The

Association Francophone Oecuménique de Missiologie AFOM is contributing to the Edinburgh transversal 'Bible and Mission' through Marie-Hélène Robert, Jacques Matthey et Catherine Vialle (eds), *Figures bibliques de la Mission. Exégèse et théologie de la mission, approches catholiques et protestantes* (Paris: Le Cerf, 2010).

²⁴ Polysemy, '...the feature by which our words have more than one meaning when considered outside of their use in a determinate context.' 'Beyond the polysemy of words in a conversation is the polysemy of a text which invites multiple readings.' Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences. Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation* (edited and translated by John B. Thompson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1981), 44, 108.

²⁵ A general survey of methods of interpretation (or hermeneutics) can be found in: Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 20-47.

²⁶ For a transcultural evaluation of different readings of this story: H. de Wit, L. Jonker and D. Schipani (eds) *The Eyes of the Other. Intercultural Reading of the Bible* (Amsterdam: Institute of Mennonite Studies, Vrije Universiteit, 2004).

²⁷ Augustine, Treatise on John (*In Johannis Evangelium Tractus*) 15:10, cited in Joel C. Elowsky (ed.), *Ancient Christian Scripture Commentary on the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), IVa, John 1-10, 146.

²⁸ *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries John 1-10* (Translation by Oliver and Boyd Ltd; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans and Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), 102-03.

²⁹ Gerald West, *Contextual Bible Study Methods* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1992), 13. See also Brown, *An Introduction*, 28-29.

³⁰ Néstor Míguez, 'Reading John 4 in the Interface Between Ordinary and Scholarly Interpretation', in de Wit, *The Eyes of the Other*, 334-47.

³¹ Such readings are numerous, for example: Teresa Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4.1-42* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1988); Vandana, *Waters of Fire* (Bangalore: Asia Trading Corporation, 1989), 76-92; Gail R. O'Day, 'John', in Carol A. Newsom & Sharon H. Ringe (eds), *Women's Bible Commentary* (expanded edition; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 383-85; Mukti Barton, *Scripture as Empowerment for Liberation and Justice: The Experience of Christian and Muslim Women in Bangladesh* (Bristol: University of Bristol, 1999), 107-118. There is evident interface between these approaches to John 4 and the Edinburgh study transversal on 'women and mission'.

³² More critical towards the biblical text is Musa W. Dube, 'Reading for Decolonization (John 4.1-42)', in R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed.), *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (3rd edition; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006), 297-318.

³³ John 21 also attests to the Galilean tradition which can be read as emphasising unity in diversity and the importance of Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved.

³⁴ David Bosch, 'The Structure of Mission: An Exposition of Matthew 28:16-20, in Wilbert R. Shenk (ed.), *Exploring Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 218-48; Jacques Matthey, 'The Great Commission According to Matthew', *International Review of Mission* 69/274 (April 1980).

³⁵ The theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2010 is 'You are witnesses of these things' (Luke 24:18), intentionally related to the 2010 Edinburgh celebrations.

³⁶ The translation of the blessing admits more than one interpretation: ‘in you all families will be blessed’, or ‘in you all family will bless themselves’. The second would indicate that blessing reaches other peoples (only) as they relate to the Abrahamic faith.

³⁷ For attempts by Jews, Christians and Muslims to read the Hebrew Bible together, visit www.scripturalreasoning.org.

³⁸ ‘Ecumenical’ is used here as defined by the WCC Central Committee in 1951:

‘...everything that relates to the whole task of the whole Church to bring the Gospel to the whole world.’ World Council of Churches, *Minutes and Reports of the Fourth Meeting of the Central Committee, Rolle (Switzerland), August 4 – 11, 1951* (Geneva: WCC, 1951), 65. A similar expression is found in § 6 of the 1974 Lausanne Covenant to describe world evangelization: ‘World evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world’. The Lausanne Covenant is available at www.lausanne.org

³⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 389-93.

⁴⁰ British Council of Churches, *The Forgotten Trinity* (London: The British Council of Churches, 1981-91).

⁴¹ Vatican II, *Ad Gentes* ‘Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church’ (1965), §9, Available at www.vatican.va.

⁴² Lesslie Newbigin, *The Relevance of Trinitarian Doctrine for Today’s Mission* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1963), 84.

⁴³ Ion Bria, *Go Forth in Peace: Orthodox Perspectives on Mission* (Geneva: WCC 1986), 3.

⁴⁴ Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (2nd edition; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 15.

⁴⁵ Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1988), 236.

⁴⁶ Peniel Jesudason Rufus Rajkumar, ‘Making a Difference Together: Prospects for Ecumenism in the Twenty-first Century’, *The Ecumenical Review*, 60/3 (2008), 239-253.

⁴⁷ Paul Fiddes, *Participation in God* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2000), 55.

⁴⁸ Elizabeth A Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 205.

⁴⁹ Damon So, *Jesus’ Revelation of his Father: A Narrative-Conceptual Study of the Trinity with Special Reference to Karl Barth* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 22.

⁵⁰ Christina Manohar, *Spirit Christology: An Indian Christian Perspective* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2009), 230-32.

⁵¹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* ‘On the Permanent Validity of the Church’s Missionary Mandate’ (1990), §21. Available at www.vatican.va.

⁵² Wonsuk Ma, ‘In Jesus Name... Power Encounter from an Asian Pentecostal Perspective’, in *Principalities and Powers: Biblical Reflections in the Asian Context* (Manila: OMF Lit., 2007).

⁵³ Manohar, *Spirit Christology*, 42-43.

⁵⁴ Manohar, *Spirit Christology*, 29.

⁵⁵ John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985), 140.

⁵⁶ World Council of Churches, ‘Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today’, §66.

⁵⁷ F. Leron Shults, ‘Reforming Ecclesiology in Emerging Churches’, in *Theology Today*, 65, (2009), 425- 438.

⁵⁸ Petros Vassiliadis, *Eucharist and Witness: Orthodox Perspectives on the Unity and Mission of the Church* (Brookline, Ma, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998), 54.

⁵⁹ This term was first coined by former CWME Moderator Archbishop Anastasios Yannoulatos ('Orthodoxy and Mission', *SVSQ* 8 (1964), 139ff), and further developed by Ion Bria in *Liturgy After the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective* (Geneva: WCC, 1996).

⁶⁰ World Council of Churches, 'Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today', §62.

⁶¹ World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, 'Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation' (2005), §28. Published in Jacques Matthey (ed.), *'You Are the Light of the World': Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 90-126. Available at www.oikoumene.org.

⁶² Cf. Ken Gnanakan, *God's World, A Theology of the Environment* (London: SPCK, 1999).

⁶³ See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 181-89; Bevans and Schoeder, *Constants in Context*, 286-347.

⁶⁴ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 174.

⁶⁵ Aloysius Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 46-48.

⁶⁶ Aloysius Pieris, *God's Reign for God's Poor: A Return to the Jesus Formula* (Kelaniya: Tulana Research Centre, 1999), 57.

⁶⁷ Pieris, *An Asian Theology*, 49.

⁶⁸ Georges Khodr, 'Christianity in a Pluralistic World – The Economy of the Holy Spirit', *The Ecumenical Review* 23 (1971), 118-128.

⁶⁹ Secretariat for Non-Christians, 'The Attitude of the Church Towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Missions', *AAS* 75 (1984), 816-828.

⁷⁰ Paul F. Knitter, 'Mission and Dialogue', *Missiology: An International Review*, 33 (2005), 199-210; see also *Jesus and the Other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996).

⁷¹ Kirsteen Kim, *Mission in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Indian Christian Theologies*, (New Delhi: ISPCK 2003), 242-3.

⁷² Kim, *Mission in the Spirit*.

⁷³ Robert Schreiter, 'The Theology of Reconciliation and Peacemaking', in Howard Mellor and Timothy Yates (eds), *Mission, Violence and Reconciliation* (Sheffield: Cliff College, 2004), 11-28.

⁷⁴ See Harry Sawyerr, *Creative Evangelism: Towards a New Christian Encounter with Africa* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1968), 72.

⁷⁵ World Council of Churches, Study group on healing, 'The Healing Mission of the Church' (2005), §25. Published in Jacques Matthey (ed.), *'You Are the Light of the World': Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 127-62. Available at www.oikoumene.org.

⁷⁶ Jacques Matthey (ed.), *'Come, Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile': Report of the World Council of Churches Conference on Mission and Evangelism, Athens, May 2005* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2008).

⁷⁷ Ross Langmead, 'Transformed Relationships: Reconciliation as the Central Model for Mission', *Mission Studies* 25/1 (2008), 5-20.