THEME FIVE

FORMS OF MISSIONARY ENGAGEMENT

Preface

The core group for the theme 'Forms of Missionary Engagement' began work electronically through the Faith2Share website (www.faith2share.net), identifying and discussing key themes before meeting face-to-face in Oxford, UK on 12-13 January 2009 and again on 15-17 June. The group's conveners were Mark Oxbrow (Anglican, British) of the Church Mission Society (CMS) and Faith2Share, Oxford, UK and Genevieve James (Pentecostal, South African) of the University of South Africa (UNISA). Knud Jorgensen (Lutheran, Denmark/Norway) of Areopagos, Denmark acted as secretary to the group. The core group also included: Olga Oleinik (Orthodox, Belarus), Bambang Budijanto (Lutheran, Indonesia/USA), Hun Kim (Presbyterian, South Korea/UK), Monica Melanchthon (Lutheran, India), Jan Lenssen (Catholic, Belgium and Kenya), Joy Mindo (African Initiated Churches, Kenya) and Lazarus Phiri (Evangelical, Zambia). Members of the group contributed papers, solicited other articles, and also received some un-solicited articles, which are posted on the Edinburgh 2010 website. These include papers from Solomon Christian, Joon-Sik Park, Peter Fischer-Neilsen, Jacob S. Dharmaraj, Mary Lederleitner, Jean-Paul A. Heldt. Many of these are referenced in this chapter.

   This article is the result of a study process among several contributors across the world. The authors not only hail from different countries but also come from differing ethnic groups, generations and faith traditions. This being the case, there has been a unanimous understanding that 'Forms of Missionary Engagement' is simply too vast a research area to adequately explore in one article. The study group has therefore decided on producing further material in multiple formats in the near future.

1 Introduction

This article explores the varieties, manifestations and strategies of missionary engagement in our world today. We begin by studying the theological underpinnings regarding the role of the local church in mission and move on to examine and describe specific areas of strategy that are salient to the mission endeavour in the twenty-first century. These forms of missionary engagement include mission with the vulnerable, partnership, mission with children, 'receiving' mission, and the mission of the media. These specific themes are emphasised since they bear significant consequences for missionary engagement in our time. This article will conclude with urgent areas for strategic consideration in our mission engagement.

The present context of mission engagement takes places amidst globalization, neo-liberalism, multiculturalism, unprecedented urbanization, religious fundamentalism, widespread poverty and injustice, a growing yearning for new forms of spirituality and the 'shift of the centre of gravity' of Christianity from global North to global South. In some respects this contextual plethora does mirror the scenario of Edinburgh 1910 yet in other respects, today, the world is essentially a different place. The infinite diversities of contexts yield a multitude of focused and creative mission strategies

The Roots of Mission Strategy

As indicated above mission strategy is rooted in a specific spirituality and historical expression of faith. It is formulated in response to a specific social context and carried out with the available resources. The exploration of mission engagement typologies is an unending endeavour as change banishes the conventional and is the only constant.

2 The Primary Role of the Local Church in Mission:
The Local Church in Many Forms

Since God is a missionary God (*missio Dei*), God's people are a missionary people (John 17:18-21) and they await 'the life of the age to come'. Edinburgh 1910 talked about 'church *and* mission'; today we must talk about 'the church *of* the mission' and 'the mission *of* the church'[1].

2.1 The local church as the church-in-mission

The local church is the people of God in the local context. This context and church are part of the Church universal; we may therefore use the term *glocal*

(the local and global). In each local context the people of God are the footprint of the Church universal. It seems the early churches had no authority over one another, from the very beginning each was a *complete* church. Roland Allen suggests that their success was due to the fact that they trusted both the Lord and the people to whom they had gone.[2] It took decades before mission took the views and advice of Allen to heart but slowly the Edinburgh 1910 concept of 'older' and 'younger' churches has been replaced and the church-for-others has become the church-with-others.[3] This applies to both Protestants and Catholics. The Roman Catholic Church has affirmed that the universal church finds its true existence in each local church and that the universal church only exists where there are local churches.[4]

In the past, local churches often had a parish structure. In many places this remains an appropriate structure, especially in countries with so called 'majority' (state or 'established') churches. The parish structure, however, grew alongside the notion of *Corpus Christianum* where the church was wedded to the holders of power. The church became a pastoral institution adopting the shape of society's structure with parochial churches and a division between *clerici* (priest) and *idiotes* (lay people).[5] Even whilst the parish structure remained dominant, there have always been alternate models with greater focus on the small community (*ecclesiola* within the *ecclesia*), the monastic community, the fellowship of believers, and on being *missionary bands*.

Today the people of God creates and experiments with new forms and structures. One such model is *the house church* which exemplifies the characteristics of the early church; that is: it has no church building, often no professional form of leadership, and is sometimes considered an illegal religion. Using the images of *clan, synagogue and temple*,[6] the house church is the clan living together in a small 'hamlet'; the synagogue is a community where the smaller groups gather regularly; and the temple is the site of larger scale celebration – where the many come together.

Other models are called *emerging churches*[7] – new forms that try to bind together the original apostolic core with new imaginative, less structured forms, gathering in cafes, dance clubs, on riverbanks, etc. These emerging churches live as communities that transform secular space and live out a spirituality similar to that of the desert fathers.

We may also consider what are called *independent* churches (or African indigenous or initiated churches) encompassing a total of 400 million people worldwide – churches that reject historical denominationalism and seek a more effective and contextual missionary lifestyle.

All these new forms signal more *fluid* communities, providing multiple strategic options depending on context and target group. Despite these new models emerging, with growing dissatisfaction with traditional forms of church, more Christians, primarily in the West, live without a local church, alienated from current expressions of church. It is worth noting, however, that fluidity of form can weaken the sense of belonging and responsibility within community

(Heb 10:25; 13:1), particularly when churches mirror the consumer society (e.g. market driven churches). Membership in such a community may not lead to any lasting changes in the life of a person; thus people could miss such essential things in Christian life as accountability, sacrifice, and ministry.

The twentieth century has seen the rise and growth of various spiritual/ecclesial movements and non-monastic religious communities, such as the Focolare and St. Egidio communities in the Roman Catholic Church; Vineyard and the Alpha course in Protestant/non-denominational churches; the Lord's Army (Romania) and the Transfiguration Fellowship (Russia) within the Orthodox Church. Such communities came into being as a reaction to the institutionalization of churches. Being movements of ecclesial renewal they also have a strong mission impetus.

2.2 Mission, revival and renewal

Renewal of the local church begins when the Holy Spirit calls a congregation or group back to their true identity and source (Luke 15:17). This identity is found in God, God's coming kingdom, in the Word made flesh, the Bible and the Tradition of the Church universal. Local church renewal occurs when the Holy Spirit transforms the people and the community into the likeness of Christ through repentance (*metanoia*) and openness of hearts to God. This renewal of spiritual power comes often as the community creates space for prayer and when it worships in 'spirit and truth' (John 4:23). *Worship, community and mission* signify the three-dimensional life of the local church.[8]

2.3 The witnessing church

The primary task of local Christians is to be witnesses. The church's call, according to the New Testament, is to witness. *Mission is witness*. *Martyria* is the sum of *kerygma, koinonia* and *diaconia* – all three of which constitute important dimensions of the witness for which the church is called and sent. We read the New Testament as the testimony (witness) of witnesses, equipping other witnesses for the common mission of the church.[9] *Testimony* in this way becomes a demonstration, through the lives and actions of God's people, to the fact that the kingdom of God is present in the disciples of Jesus Christ. This understanding of mission as the witnessing life of the body of Christ is crucial today when in many cases mission has become a private affair with little or no accountability to the local church.

In some new models of local church *witness* is viewed as a missional vocation and as part and parcel of being incarnational and relational. Is not one of the most important explanations of growth among churches in the South that they are witnessing churches, not only in a theoretical and theological sense, but also in practice? Do they not, more than the churches in the North, *do and practise* what they *are* ecclesiologically, that is: God's witnessing people in mission? Is not this in turn a major reason both for their own growth and for the growing missionary activity that emerges from these churches? And if so, *what*

may the churches in the North learn from the churches in the South with regard to mission?

Witness and disciple-making go hand in hand.[10] Discipleship and disciple-making are the critical point in the life and being of the local church. If discipleship fails at this point, it will fail at all others. The basis for the founding of a movement that has extended itself into the twenty-first century was Jesus' investing his life and embedding his teachings in his followers and developing them into authentic disciples. Do local churches today need to find their way back to the *catechisms* of the early church and to a vigorous discipleship that in some parts of the church today has drowned in consumerism and in making discipleship too easy? We mention in this context *consumerism* because in various parts of the world this has become a driving ideology of the ministry of the local church.

Witness and discipleship will break down the traditional division between priest and lay people. One result of this is a dramatic change in the role and work of the priest/pastor. The people of God are the true priesthood (1 Pet 2:9), and therefore, all who confess Christ are 'priests'. We still need priests and pastors, as we need other leadership functions (teacher, evangelist, apostle, prophet – Eph 4:11), but the basic structure of the local church and for mission is the priesthood of all believers. The church must again become a community in which all members, equally, encourage each other to discover and develop their gifts and ministries in the countless areas of human existence where transformation and renewal are needed.

2.4 A missional church

The word *missionary* refers to the specific mission activities of the church, whereas the word *missional* is related to the nature of the church, as being sent by God to the world. A focus on the local church in mission reflects a desire to see congregations in both the North and the South become missional. Impacting the world begins with local congregations giving up Christendom assumptions and adopting a missionary stance both within their own culture and cross-culturally. Missional congregations pray for renewal both within their community and in the market place. In local congregations, missional structures are created that go beyond the hierarchies of the past and provide a balance between worship, community and mission at all levels of church life – in cells, local and trans-local expressions of church. Every member is motivated and equipped to take his/her role in inspiring, encouraging and equipping local leaders. Missional leaders fan into flame a vision that both builds on and sparks excitement and directs the church toward imaginative *diakonia*. Missional congregations partner with other communities, both congregational and those specifically ministry-focused. Activities and strategies are created that embody the way of Christ on the way to new people.[11]

2.5 The two structures of the church

It was in Antioch that the first missionary band came into being after the resurrection (Acts 13:1-3). The local church was growing among different people groups. When this local church wanted to move beyond its own borders, they prayed and the Holy Spirit told them to send out a *missionary team* of Paul and Barnabas. This model is paradigmatic for the relationship between 'come' and 'go' structures. Both are needed, both together constitute *ecclesia*. In the history of the church we find illustrations of this paradigm in the itinerant evangelists from Ireland and Scotland (*perigrini*), the monastic movement, the Nestorian church moving east, the Jesuits in India, Japan and China, the Moravian brethren, and eventually from 1792 in what we have called 'mission societies'.

This basic go-structure is needed when the local church wants to go beyond its own borders; and accountability and participation of all the community are essential here. The problem arises when the two structures are separated. The reasons for such a separation vary:

- When the church has no structure for going beyond; for example, the Reformation churches, which lacked the missionary orders of the Roman Catholic Church.
- When the church does not take up the call to go; for example, so-called 'state churches', which are defined by national boundaries.
- When individuals or small groups of Christians, fuelled by revival, search for new, more 'effective' ways; for example, the voluntary movements in the wake of the Great Awakenings.
- When mission is split into 'foreign' and 'home' missions, as at Edinburgh 1910 where the main players were 'foreign' mission societies.

The result is the emergence of so-called 'para-church' organisations, separated from the parish structure. (As both together constitute 'church', the word 'para-church' is a misnomer.)

Today the two structures are searching for ways of joining hands. Mission societies link up with the local church in new concrete ways, and local churches see themselves as 'missional' in their own context. The missionary band remains an integral part of being church, but must always find new expressions in new contexts. To better understand the nature of this shared mission, it is necessary to turn our attention to the area of vulnerability in mission.

3 Vulnerability in Mission – Mission without Power

Meet Mwizero,[12] an elderly Batwa woman from Burundi in eastern Africa. She lives with a group of widows in a makeshift grass hut. She represents the poorest people living in one of the poorest regions of the world. She has no food, no home and cannot read or write. She has no country; she is a pygmy and her neighbours do not consider her a human being. If she falls sick she

cannot visit a hospital nor can she register a marriage. If someone would kill her, it would not be murder; she is, after all, not a human being. She has no church though she knows and believes that there is a God who will remember her.

Nirma Rani, a Dalit girl student from India was slapped for saying *Namaste* to a Brahmin teacher and her father was beaten up later for questioning such an act. Caste is practiced in schools where Dalit children occupy separate seats given to them. Dhanam lost her eye when she was beaten up by her teacher for helping herself to drinking water from a pot without waiting to be served by a caste person. She had polluted the water by her touch.[13] These stories of abject poverty represent many poor people. These stories must be shared.[14] The world must listen to them and allow their voices to be heard.

3.1 Human and divine vulnerability

The concept of 'vulnerable missions' is used to refer both to mission in contexts of poverty and mission by the powerless. 'Mission is an exercise in vulnerability as we share in God's reconciling purpose which was achieved by God becoming weak and helpless, particularly in the sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth. Mission is the place of identification with the marginalized'.[15]

In an age when the majority of Christians live in more vulnerable life situations, we ask ourselves whether vulnerability contains the potential, the capacity and power that can be employed for the purposes of mission. How might a posture or position of vulnerability on the part of the church equip it for effective mission? Should vulnerability be recognised as an enabling condition for mission?

At one level mission is about communicating the faith in order that the reign of God may become a reality, making possible liberation and life in all its fullness for all vulnerable peoples, for all children of God irrespective of caste, race, religion or gender. The Bible shows special concern for the poor, the vulnerable, the forgotten and the oppressed. The heritage of the Christian faith, although filled with a myriad of injustices from colonialism, slavery, apartheid, environmental irresponsibility and mistreatment of women, also bears witness to communities who have been at the forefront in looking for ways to alleviate poverty through simple acts of kindness.

Vulnerability is also a condition of divine mission. The Christian scriptures are replete with images of the vulnerable mission of God (Isa 53: 4-5,12); of the God who identifies with the most vulnerable in society, thereby setting this God apart from all other Gods. Hence Israel asks, 'Who is like you among the gods?' (Ex 15: 11). This God is both transcendent and immanent, enmeshed in God's creation, open to being hurt and bruised by God's own creation, who suffers insults and humiliation, rejection and derision, and endures suffering in love. This vulnerability of God is driven to the limit: when in Christ God makes Godself vulnerable. The patriarchal ideal of invulnerability is opposed, in fact distorted by the Crucified, who was and is experienced by his friends as the Son

of God. Jesus Christ is God's wound in the world.[16] In the suffering Jesus, God embraces the suffering of the world for the sake of humanity. Christ suffers when we suffer. The pain people suffer is the pain of Christ himself.[17] We need to be vulnerable if we want to live in an intimate relationship with one another, with God and Jesus Christ.

3.2 Vulnerability as an enabling condition for mission

We have been called to be wounded for the sake of the world. We are marked with the sign of the cross which identifies us as having been placed in the world to be wounded. Where are the wounds of the church? What type or kinds of wounds are we willing to bear and endure in and through our participation in God's mission of liberation?

There are agencies that admit to being engaged in 'vulnerable mission'. The *Alliance for Vulnerable Mission*, for example, understands vulnerable mission as 'the use of local languages in ministry combined with "missionary poverty"' as the tools required for vulnerable mission since they enforce 'humility and operation on a "level playing field" with local people'.[18] Yet, one needs to be cognisant of the difference between choosing to be vulnerable, which allows you to find ways to exploit your vulnerability, and the vulnerability of those without the choice to exploit it.[19] If we not among the vulnerable, we have the option to choose vulnerability out of love and solidarity with those who are vulnerable without the choice to exploit it.

Our vulnerable God also calls us—the church in mission—to liberate the vulnerable and heal the pain in and of the world. Our identity as church and our existence as church, finds meaning in the prolongation of God's vulnerability in service to all women and men, particularly to the despised, the humiliated, the discriminated against, and the rejected of our history. The vulnerability of the church that is engaged in mission is a sign of relationship, receptivity, and communication.

In a 1994 article, David Bosch discusses this vulnerable nature of mission by recalling the history of the many missionaries who became martyrs for the sake of their faith in mission fields far from home. With their deaths these missionaries entered a communication process not as 'models' but as 'victims', says Bosch. Their total identification with their mission resulted in martyrdom, which became 'the seed of the church'.[20] This is vulnerable mission; mission that involves being victimized, the laying down of life for the sake of the gospel. Such a missionary model that embraces sacrifice for the sake of others leads people to freedom and community and is sustained by the belief that God suffers along with the suffering peoples of this world. 'It is this dimension, more than any other that distinguishes the Christian faith from other faiths.' The distinctiveness of Christianity is to 'be looked for in its weakness, in its inability to prove itself or to force its way'.[21]

Those who are vulnerable have little to lose and are therefore prone to take more risks and be more open to others and other conditions. There is therefore a

certain potential in vulnerability. By keeping windows of vulnerability we might experience new things, gain new insights for our lives and our understanding of God, the world and humanity. When someone who has no need to be vulnerable becomes vulnerable in order to identify with those who are, and together with them struggles to be resilient against all death-dealing forces, structures and systems, and thus together with them moves towards a society transformed—of justice and communion, then he or she participates in the vulnerable mission of God. The kind of mission that is required here is not of contemplative theologizing but of liberative action in solidarity with the oppressed. It is a solidarity that is built on a relationship of complete vulnerability and identification with the oppressed community; sustained by a process of mutual giving and receiving, and nurtured by seeing in the other the ethical demand of responsibility.

Mwizero and Dhanam are not just a statistic; they want to hear of the kingdom of God which will transform their world and ours. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in his last book, *The Trumpet of Conscience*, that the rich cannot remain secure in the midst of seething poverty set beside the glaring contrast of the wealthy.[22] Brain McLaren suggests we should confront poverty by changing the dominant suicidal systems that propagate poverty in the economic sphere through stark economic injustices (prosperity), the increasing gap between the rich and the poor (equity) and a lack of peaceful coexistence (security). He says that we cannot give a little to the poor without asking the question of why they are poor. He mentions seven categories in which the church must be engaged including trade, aid, debt, limits, wages, justice and community.[23] John Stott advises the church to approach poverty in our times in three main ways: rationally, as we understand the realities given to us by statisticians; emotionally, as we see, hear, and feel the poor all around us; and biblically, in order to know the mind of God concerning poverty.[24]

Vulnerable mission begins from below, amongst downtrodden people. Samuel Escobar writes about 'mission from below' in reference to the heart-beat and the thrust of missions today. He states that 'there is an element of mystery when the dynamism of mission does not come from the people in positions of power or privilege… but from below, from the little ones, those who have few material financial or technical resources'.[25] Philip Jenkins reminds us that 'Christianity is flourishing wonderfully among the poor and the persecuted while it atrophies among the rich and secure'.[26] Perhaps the future of mission lies with the vulnerable, the powerless, and the 'small people' of our world.

4 Children: The 'New' Energy for Twenty-first Century Mission

The past decade has seen a significant awakening among some Christians to the biblical and strategic importance and potential of children and youth as both objects of and agents for world transformation. Churches are being challenged

to engage with children both inside and outside the walls of the church, especially those who live in poverty, oppression, abuse and exploitation. Increasing numbers of books and other resources offer new insights into the theme of children and childhood in the Bible, child theology, children and mission, and children and leadership.[27]

The last part of the 1990s and early 2000s witnessed the birth of several major initiatives, commitments and movements for and on behalf of children, especially those who are at high risk. Among them were Viva Networks for Children at Risk and their Cutting Edges Conferences, the Oxford Statement of Children at Risk in 1997, the Godly Play Initiative (1997), the Holistic Child Development Program in Penang, Malaysia begun in 2001, the Child Theology Movement, the Children's Church Movement, Children's Prayer Movements, the Children's Spirituality Conference in 2009, the Transform World 4/14 window initiative, the Council for World Mission's Welcome Children – Welcome Jesus project and more.

Of course, there is nothing new about Christians caring for children in poverty and orphans. The Roman Catholic Church, Salvation Army and organisations such Compassion International and World Vision have been caring for children for a long time. What is new though is a clearer understanding of the biblical significance of children and of God's heart for children, including their role as 'signs' of the kingdom. There is also a much greater awareness of the receptivity of children and youth, and of their potential as a force for mission and transformation.

4.1 Children welcomed and deployed for service

Reading Scripture with the child in focus shows vividly that God values children, accepts their worship, and does not hesitate to deploy them to stimulate faith and obedience in children and adults alike. For example:

- The story of Samuel gives a picture of God speaking directly to a child (1 Sam 3).
- Jesus' own spiritual growth as a boy of twelve years involved participation including interacting, listening and asking questions among the teachers in the temple courts in Jerusalem.
- Jesus rebuked the chief priests and teachers of the law for questioning children's participation in worship and their perceptive recognition of Jesus as they sang 'Hosanna to the Son of David', quoting from Psalm 8, 'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise' (Matt 21:16, cf. Ps 8:2).

Children are prominent throughout Scripture as a part of God's redeeming plan. While many people view children from a future perspective as if they are persons in the making, the Bible sees them as full and complete persons both now and in the future. God relates, engages and uses children in many of the same ways as God uses adults. It may be argued that children have even better

capacity than adults to relate to and engage with God. Indeed, Jesus asked the disciples to learn from children on how to relate to the truth (Luke 18:17).

4.2 Children as agents of transformation

Throughout Christian history God has used children as his willing instruments. In the great historical revivals of John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, D.L. Moody, the French Huguenots and others, children played significant roles as active participants. The role and form of their engagement varies over time but, even today, God continues to use children in significant ways. The following stories illustrate the significant roles children and youth play today in mission and transformation.

Patricia of Santa Mesa (12 years): making disciples[28]

Patricia is a twelve-year-old girl living in the slum community of Santa Mesa in the Philippines. This community is known as a breeding ground for thieves, criminals, and sex workers. Patricia saw how the children of her neighbourhood were dishevelled, and deprived, so she started teaching five- to ten-year-olds the Bible. She gathers them together once a week, tells them about Jesus, and says she does not want them to grow up to be criminals, but to know about Jesus.

Moko and Selfin of Poso (8 years): preaching reconciliation[29]

Terrorist bombings, beheadings, and raids on villages by Islamic jihadists have plagued the people of central Sulawesi, Indonesia in recent years. After winning a preaching contest last December, eight-year-old Moko travelled to nearby towns to preach God's word to the people. While the people worship, Moko's friend Selfin prays for a touch from God. Aside from physical healing, Moko also preaches about the healing of his homeland, and his hometown of Poso. In his sermons Moko speaks of peace, reconciliation and forgiveness based on Jesus' command that people should love one another.

Pronchai, the Hmong (15 years): environmental ambassador[30]

Pronchai is a fifteen-year-old boy from an isolated minority tribal group in Thailand. For schooling, he moved to the city, where drugs are far too familiar to children and around which bad environmental practices are used, such as forest-burning. Pronchai has shown himself to be a leader, and became the initiator of several community activities, such as environmental care and drug prevention initiatives. As a result, his school received the 'clean school without drugs' award from the Princess of Thailand.

4.3 Children: The untapped force for mission

Both the biblical and contemporary case studies illustrate the timeless principle of biblical wisdom: 'Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it' (Prov 22:6). The human mind, personality, and identity

are mostly formed during early childhood so that faith formation and faith decisions are also most often made in early years.[31] In the mid-nineties, Bryant L. Myers published research which reveals that nearly eighty-five percent of people who make a decision for Christ do so between the age of four and fourteen.[32] Dan Brewster and others began in 1996 referring to that 'window of receptivity' as the '4/14 Window'.[33] During the twentieth century, children and early teenagers in this age bracket represented the single largest source of new believers for the American church.[34]

The journal *Ministry Today* (January-February 2008) extensively reported a new movement of church engagement with children in the US and abroad. Globally an increasing number of local churches are recognising that children have far more spiritual potential than church leaders had realised. This new awareness is igniting a spiritual revolution in these churches. Many children and young people are no longer coming to church only to be entertained. Rather, given an opportunity and a challenge, they come to worship, contribute and become equipped for the ministry. Children are no longer seen as primarily the 'mission field' but as effective agents of mission.[35]

In the Roman Catholic mission tradition children are invited into a real involvement in mission by the *Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood*.[36] Every year children are integrated into the mission awareness and activity of local communities. Children are invited to become locally the bearers of mission, and to collaborate in prayer and collecting funds for mission. In some countries they organise, what they call 'star-singing': on the feast of Epiphany, when clothed as the Magi, they sing and witness and encourage local communities and families to participate in their mission.

Research shows that seventy percent of young people from non-Christian backgrounds who made decisions to be Christ's followers acknowledge that Christian friend(s) were the most significant factor in that process.[37] As mission is for the whole church and the significant majority of the church are children and young people, the greatest asset and the best chance the church has to fulfil its mission is through children. Children and young people are in the best position to relate positively to non-Christians, as well as to people of all ages, race and social status, and thus, they have the greatest opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people and community. Sadly, the church has not seriously considered children as co-bearers and partners for mission and has not adequately equipped them for the work of service. In the context of mission and transformation, children and young people have either been invisible or made to stand on the sideline. Now Christians worldwide must place children where they belong, namely 'in the midst' of the church and its mission (Matt 18:2).[38] Children are the bearers, participants and partners in twenty-first century mission.

5 Better Together: Partnership and Collaboration in Mission

Christian missions do not have a good track record in cooperation. In the earliest days in Uganda, Cedric Pulford records that, 'The Catholics felt it their duty to counter the heretics. The Protestants felt a parallel duty to correct the errors of the Church of Rome',[39] and a few years later bitter rivalry broke out between competing missions in Zanzibar, rivalry which played into the hands of local Muslim rulers.[40] In the nineteenth century the best that could be achieved were a series of 'comity agreements'[41] which at least preserved the peace between rival bands of missionaries. The negative effects, however, of these agreements on Christian unity sadly continue to this day with a high degree of territorialism still evident in inter- and indeed intra-denominational relations in many parts of the world. The World Missionary Conference of 1910 in Edinburgh can be seen as a significant milestone in missionary cooperation, providing the opportunity and impetus for subsequent ecumenical, as well as missionary, developments. In preparation for the 1910 conference the Commission on Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity wrote, 'Without hearty alliance among the many Missionary Societies employed in carrying the Gospel to non-Christian peoples, and without the recognition of co-operative effort as the normal condition of missionary work, the most copious supply of workers and of means that could be hoped for, would still be ineffectual'.[42] This same report ends with the optimistic words, 'the Divine guidance that has led us already… in the direction of co-operation and the promotion of unity, will lead us further still'.[43] A century later we can look back on much progress but with an acute awareness also of our continued short comings in 'common mission'.[44]

5.1 Theological principles for partnership

The implications of trinitarian theology for collaborative discipleship and mission have not always been readily understood, but in recent decades Jürgen Moltmann,[45] Leonardo Boff,[46] Miroslav Volf,[47] and others have reminded us of the corporate, collaborative nature of the being and life of God in Trinity and its implications for those who find themselves created in God's image. The *missio Dei* is by definition a collaborative action by Father, Son and Holy Spirit (John 14:26) and also a divine action which invites human participation, if not collaboration: 'As the Father sent me so I send you.' (John 20:21). God has no necessity to engage humanity as agents of God's own mission but chooses the risky course of partnership. This point is further underlined by Jesus' own calling of disciples as co-workers to whom he eventually entrusts the task of global mission (Matt 28:18-20). It is perhaps also significant that Jesus seems to have chosen as his co-workers a group of disciples with quite different theological and social outlooks.

Paul is often portrayed as the great pioneer of mission, which he was, but he was not a 'David Livingstone, go-it-alone' pioneer. Careful examination of the

text shows that he was in fact an accomplished collaborator, building networks of shared ministry.[48] He counted among his co-workers[49] local ministers such as Aquila and Priscilla (1 Cor 16:19), fellow itinerant preachers such as Barnabas (Acts 13:2) and Silas (Acts 15:40), young recruits like Timothy (Acts 16:3), and many more (see, for example, Rom 16:21-24), and took to task churches who sought to create division within the growing missional network (1 Cor 1:12-17), the church of Christ.

5.2 Partnership in historical perspective

In the post-apostolic period and through to the twentieth century we have very little evidence of Christians from different traditions or locations partnering together in mission. Stephen Neill and others cited several examples of inter-agency cooperation and boldly claimed, 'Co-operation marks Protestant missions from the beginning',[50] but the picture has actually been much more one of fragmentation. David Barrett, in his statistical overview shows 'foreign mission sending agencies' rising from 200 globally in 1800, to 600 by 1900, and 4,000 by 2000,[51] a significant part of this 'growth' resulting from fragmentation and failure to collaborate rather than completely new work.

Real partnership and collaborative ministry have however taken place in recent years, often in adverse contexts. Four examples will suffice. In 1949 Dr. Bob Fleming gained permission to enter the closed kingdom of Nepal with two colleagues. Struck by the medical needs of the people they determined to meet these needs in the name of Christ. When, in 1953, permission was eventually granted to open a hospital in Tansen, Fleming, a Methodist, extended an invitation to all who would, to join him in this challenging country where conversion was illegal. So the United Mission to Nepal was born in 1954.[52] The International Assistance Mission began is a similar way in Afghanistan in 1966, with a focus on eye care, and has remained in the war-torn country ever since, currently bringing together workers from around forty different agencies.[53] In Europe, when Albania first became accessible to Christian mission in 1991, a group of Evangelicals formed the Albanian Encouragement Project which now brings together over seventy mission agencies for collaborative work within that country.[54] Also in 1991 a number of workers associated with Interdev[55] began the Central Asian Consultation which today continues to foster collaboration in mission in that region and has spawned numerous regional partnerships.[56]

5.3 Mission in a network age

Mission always has its context and so does partnership. The context of the 1820s, when the Church Mission Society (CMS), London gave birth to an autonomous CMS in Australia, provided very little opportunity for these two agencies to collaborate in mission. Partnership in those days was limited to very local forms of collaboration. Today our global context is very different.

In Figure 2, Lipnack and Stamps[57] divide human history into four 'ages of organisation' as follows:

Small Groups	Hierarchy	Bureaucracy	Networks
Nomadic cultures	Agrarian cultures	Industrial cultures	Information cultures
to 10,000 BC	*10,000BC to 18th C*	*18th – 20th C*	*1945 onwards*
Members	Levels	Purpose	Links

Figure 2

This persuasive analysis forces us to ask whether models for mission devised in the seventeenth century (in an agrarian culture) or in the nineteenth century (in an industrial culture) will serve us at all well in the information age of the twenty-first century when what is valued is not our membership of the group, our place in the hierarchy, or whether our skill set fits the purpose of the bureaucracy, but what links we have, how connected we are. It is not only Western young people who come alive in the virtual space of *Facebook* and *Bebo*; across the world a new generation, sometimes with little access to technology, are learning that if you are not connected you are ignored.

In the academic world studies of cybernetics, systemics[58] and chaos theory, and their philosophical implications, multiply year on year and many large companies are adopting approaches to management which play to the strengths of 'whole system' thinking and network dynamics. The popularized classic in this sphere has become Bradman and Beckstrom's *The Starfish and the Spider*,[59] in which the authors argue that in a networked world maximum participation leads to the maximum and most creative output. They cite not just virtual community projects such as *Wikipedia* and open source software such as *Open Office* but also movements like *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Al Qaeda*, and companies like *Amazon, Napster* and *eBay*.

All of this talk of connecting, maximum participation, and systemic development should be very welcome to a mission community seeking disciples, who discover renewed relationship with God through Christ and envision the day when 'a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, stands before the throne and in front of the Lamb' (Rev 7:9). In many ways the *missio Dei* seems to accord much more readily with the network culture we inhabit today than with the earlier group, hierarchical and bureaucratic cultures. We could point to many biblical images of the missional *ecclesia* which are of a networking nature, such as the Body (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4:12; etc)[60] and the vine (John 15), but each of these also brings new challenges to our understanding of mission and church.

At the close of the last millennium, in 1996 a consultation of missiologists was held in Brazil at the invitation of the World Evangelical Fellowship Missions Commission. Amongst the papers emerging from this Iguassu Consultation was one by Robert Brynjolfson in which he writes, 'Organisational and denominational language continues to detract from the greater realities of unity in mission'.[61] He then goes on to offer eighteen principles for national mission movements which will build consensus and collaboration in mission. Since that date considerable progress has been made in building networks and real collaboration in mission which to a greater or lesser degree reflect these principles. Examples of such new trans-denominational networks for collaborative mission would be, in Africa, *MANI* (The Movement of African National Initiatives),[62] in Latin America, *COMIBAM* (Cooperación Missionera Iberoamericana),[63] in Asia, the Philippine Missions Association,[64] and across continents the Faith2Share network.[65]

Phil Butler, one of the leading thinkers in missional collaboration, writes,

Effective partnerships and networks … are crucial to this new world order – to identifying the assets and effectively allocating them. Committed to Christ and the holistic proclamation of his love and power, these new, inclusive forms of kingdom collaboration provide options for effective connection that are simply impossible with the old organisational paradigms.[66]

5.4 Building effective partnerships

As our churches engage in mission locally and around the world we can be well networked, enthusiastic about partnership, looking for collaboration and yet still struggle to get going. Partnerships, like all relationships, are fraught with difficulties, and the temptation is still to 'go it alone'. In *Body Matters*, Ernie Addicott records the fifteen principles for effective partnership in mission developed by *Interdev* in the 1990s.[67] In a clearer way than the Iguassu principles (see above), these point to the key role played by vision, clear purpose, high levels of participation and ownership, trust, openness and mutual concern.

'People work together because they trust one another', say Lipnack and Stamps. 'They make deals, undertake projects, set goals, and lend one another resources. Teams with trust converge more easily, organise their work more quickly, and manage themselves better.'[68] Daniel Rickett, author of several books on missional partnerships adds, 'Communication is only as rich as trust is deep. Close contact and high levels of interaction are important ingredients for building understanding and trust.'[69] While trust is recognised as a primary ingredient for effective collaboration within missional networks, this can be difficult to establish when cross-cultural miscommunication threatens to undermine good intentions. Lianne Roembke[70] has undertaken considerable study in the building of trusting relationships within multi-cultural teams and Duane Elmer[71] brings needed wisdom to the challenges of leadership within

multi-cultural networks. At an international level the *World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission* meeting in Pattaya in 2008 initiated a Global Dialogue Task Group to address many of the continuing tensions, misunderstandings and complex partnership issues between churches and missions in different continents.

5.5 Money, power and neo-colonialism

Just as financial tensions rank high amongst precipitating causes for marriage breakdown so does the power exerted by money in international mission partnerships. Mary Lederleitner writes,

> A concern in missiology is how there can be effective cross-cultural partnerships, with vast sums of wealth coming from affluent donors and nations, without fostering a new form of colonialism now known as 'neo-colonialism'. Neo-colonialism implies that although there is no physical occupation by a foreign power, wealth and resources are given in ways that still dominate others. Some on the receiving end of mission funding feel demeaned and controlled by the process. For these partners there is a sense that they are losing their right to make their own decisions and they are losing their voice. Because of this there is a concern whether true partnership, the kind that models genuine mutuality, can ever take place given such a vast disparity of wealth.[72]

Her paper argues that if we can listen cross-culturally, contextualize processes and apply biblical standards and values, then we might begin to address some of these complex issues. Two other missiologists who have worked on these same issues are Jonathan Bonk who speaks of Western missionary affluence as the primary problem,[73] and John Rowell, whose approach is more practical than missiological, addressing the challenge of dependency and suggesting that sustainability might be a more useful concept that the well worn 'three-selfs' principle which puts too much emphasis on independence and looses sight of the biblical pattern of interdependence.[74]

We live in a network world, our God exists in trinitarian partnership, and God's mission into which we are drawn is inevitably characterized by collaboration and partnership, as Christ 'reconciles to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven' (Col 1:20).

5.6 North-South mission cooperation

> Through all the ages to come, the Indian Church will rise up in gratitude to attest the heroism and self-denying labours of the missionary body. You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for love. Give us FRIENDS![75]

These words, from one of the very few global South participants at Edinburgh 1910, have become one of its most memorable statements. One

hundred years later we continue to struggle with friendships strained by postcolonialism, dependency, paternalism and poverty.[76]

The shifting centre of gravity for Christian witness sees Christians in the South achieving rising demographic advantage marked by spiritual zeal and commitment to the unfinished missionary task, whilst in the North a context of consumerism and pluralism brings a depletion of missionary efforts, yet Northern churches and mission agencies retain hegemony in mission leadership. The shift of the centre of growth for Christian witness has resulted in evident changes in the global mission landscape and must shape mission strategy for the twenty-first century. These changing realities have led to a careful reflection on past realities, present dynamics and future aspirations and paradigms through formal and informal consultation within regional and international mission bodies.

The maturing church of the South has begun to reproduce itself in a variety of ways including the sending of mission workers locally and globally. As the field is shared by mission movements from South and North, they are compelled to seek for space and hegemony in leadership. The inevitable question of mutual partnership rears its troublesome head, seeking honest and sincere responses. Mission agencies from the North are discovering how to move from being lead players to becoming team players. This process can be painful for both partners. Northern movements face the temptation to hand pick, groom and 'direct at a distance' their Southern successors, whilst Southern leaders too easily succumb to a craving for power and an unhealthy adoption of Northern values, strategies and relationships.

The demographically advantaged missioners of the South, despite economic challenges evidenced by their exclusion from 'financial clubs' such as the 'G8', agitate for space to still be counted for the cause of God's mission. They desire more palatable and respectable financial support structures. If there is one single dynamic that splits the mission agencies into opposing camps, it is the question of finances. New, less financially dependent, strategies in mission are, however, emerging as witnessed by migration mission movements such as the 'Filipino phenomenon' and the mission of the 'African diaspora'.

5.7 Global collaboration in mission

In recent decades a number of mission agencies or movements have, to a degree successfully, created global structures that enable more effective South-North collaboration. World Vision and Food for the Hungry have both adopted federal structures whilst others have developed a network approach to global cooperation.[77] Within such structures both Northern and Southern agencies can then explore what particular gifts they can bring to the joint mission enterprise. The careful management of organisational culture and leadership succession in such federations and networks is crucial. It is these new structures for mission that are beginning to shape the multi-centred future for mission in the twenty-first century.

6 Receiving Mission: Mission by Migrant Workers from South to North

There has been some controversy over the terminology used to describe 'receiving' or 'reverse' mission but its reality cannot be denied. As we study this growing phenomenon, we become aware of God's plan to shift what we have taken for granted, in our traditional 'sending' view of mission, through a 'radical dislocation' of his people and bringing them together as his 'new work' as a consequence.

6.1 Historical review

In contemporary mission the role of 'diaspora' has been a critical factor. According to Jehu Hanciles,[78] 'since the 1960s in the post-colonial era, migrant movement has been predominantly from areas with weak economic and political systems to the centres of global dominance and advanced industrial growth'. Christians and Christian workers have constituted a significant part of the migration. Afe Adogame[79] notes that 'the reverse-mission agenda is becoming a very popular feature among African churches'. He illustrates this by reference to Tanzanian pastors commissioned in Lutheran parishes in Germany in the early 1980s. Since the Korean War, Korean Christians have migrated to North America and Europe with various motivations, spontaneous, by invitation or under pressure. They settled among other ethnic communities and began to thrive and impact local churches in their regions. There are estimated to be more than 4,500 Korean churches in North America and Europe at present.[80]

'Reverse mission' (from what were traditionally called 'mission fields' into former 'Christian heartlands') positions the 'West as a site of new religious interactions which portend long-term transformations of Western societies'.[81] Some affirmative movements related to 'reverse mission' have been launched in Western churches. The Mission in Western Culture Project (MiWCP) reflected on Western society that has become a mission field[82] and in 1996 the United Evangelical Mission (UEM)[83] conducted a programme for cooperation between German and immigrant congregations in order to 'help German churches to understand and appreciate the movement of reverse mission'.[84] Recently many traditional churches in Europe have made great efforts to establish a relevant policy for 'reverse mission' in partnership with their counterparts in the non-Western world.

6.2 Defining reverse mission

'Receiving mission' is, in a sense, Northern rhetoric as they conceive the idea that they 'foster the welcome of non-European mission workers into Europe to join with us in our mandate to evangelistic vision'.[85] However, the term is now interchangeable with 'reverse mission' which has become more 'multi-lateral rather than unilateral',[86] as non-Western churches return with the gospel to the societies to which they have been greatly indebted for the purpose of building

capacity for world mission together. However, these two terms can be seen to imply a deeper divergence of perception as Northern 'receiving mission' anticipates efficiency through partnership in mission, while Southern 'reverse mission' is more focused on the intrinsic mission mandate for the whole world, including Western society. Grace Davie reflects on 'how "mission in reverse" would turn the traditional relationship between Africa and Europe on its head', commenting that 'this has not happened yet'.[87] C. Barbour views 'mission-in-reverse' differently as a way of ministry which does not teach but learns from people ministered to.[88] This view is endorsed by those engaged in the area of international social work, for whom a reverse mission approach, instead of teaching, preaching, and trying to convert others, emphasises 'learning, consciousness-raising, and advocating for changes'.[89]

6.3 Implications of 'reverse mission'

The reverse wave of migration and waning Christianity in Western society have far-reaching social, political and human implications, particularly for Christian history. God's radical dislocation of his people always brought missional implications throughout the Bible. The following are some of the missionary implications of the influx of Christian migrants into Western society.[90]

- New Christian immigrants come from centres of vibrant Christian growth and embody a brand of Christianity that is strongly evangelistic or conversionist. Many of them naturally come to see themselves as 'missionaries'.
- Immigrant congregations are more attuned to religious plurality than Western Christians are and so are able to maintain effective Christian witness in the face of religious pluralism.
- The secularized societies of Europe and North America are redefined as 'mission fields' requiring re-evangelization.
- Migrations provide an impetus for missionary mobilization.
- There is a call for a structural reform of the church to grapple with the challenges of migration.
- There is a major shift in mission understanding with a greater understanding and appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of Christianity in the twenty-first century.

6.4 Western churches receiving non-Western missional Christians

There are two opposite attitudes to migrant churches exhibited by local churches in Europe: the colonial attitude and the cooperative attitude. In many cases, a healthy relationship has not been established between local churches and migrant churches because the local church authorities have not developed policy on relationships with migrant churches. However, the European Evangelical Missionary Alliance (EEMA) have introduced guide-lines, *Receiving Mission Workers to Europe: What Every Church Should Know* for

improving the current situation through a proactive response to migrant Christian workers in Europe.[91] Their suggestions include:

- Collecting background information on the sending country
- Being aware of who in your church has cross-cultural experience and an understanding of culture shock
- Supporting the mission workers in transition with cultural mentors, family support, fellowship, links to home church, partnership in ministry
- Preparing the mission worker for re-entry

   With these measures proposed by EEMA, the European Evangelical Alliance formulated a call for awareness of cultural diversity and of the poor welcome often offered to 'the foreigner in our midst'.[92]

6.5 Case study: Impact of Korean-European church partnerships

Korean churches have been planted in Germany and in the UK since the early 1970s, with about two hundred churches now ministering in major cities in Germany, the UK, and France. Historically migrant churches grow from mono-ethnic congregations, becoming bicultural, and finally multi-ethnic or locally mono-cultural churches. Following this pattern many Korean migrant churches have grown and now contribute to mission in Europe in partnership with local churches. In this way Koreans have not only planted ethnic churches but have also contributed to the renewal of indigenous European churches.

   An outstanding example is the Korean church partnership with the International Presbyterian church (IPC) in the UK since the 1980s. This consists of two presbyteries (groups of churches): the IPC First European Presbytery and the Korean Presbytery. The Korean Presbytery is made up of six Korean speaking churches. Each June the European and Korean Presbyteries meet together for synod. Another example is the partnership programme for cooperation between German and immigrant congregations run by the United Evangelical Mission (UEM) in Germany since 1998. Through this partnership relationship, Korean churches are making many positive contributions to local partner churches, both financial and spiritual. The Korean church in Germany is a typical example of how an ethnic/migrant church progresses from being a locally dependent community to a self-sufficient and self-generative Christian body characterized by fervent worship, prayer, fellowship and theological education.[93]

6.6 Migrant and local churches partner in diaspora ministry

Migrant churches can evolve into multi-ethnic churches that become a platform for incubating other ethnic churches within the diaspora environment. For example, one of the largest Korean churches in London is facilitating the birth of other Asian ethnic churches as they believe God has given them a heart for church planting, fervent intercession and financial resources for mission. Korean churches and a local Baptist church in London also supported the

translation of the New Testament into Iranian Azeri, while working with Azeri diaspora Christians in Europe.[94]

If similar partnerships could be encouraged, with a mutual understanding of the significance of migration,[95] there would be many opportunities for European churches and mission organisations to be involved in cross-cultural mission in their own 'backyard'. Rebecca Catto writes, 'So, even though I do not see mission as having been reversed as yet, …the notion of "reverse mission" is not completely invalidated: it captures an observable and growing trend'.[96]

7 Mission and the Challenge of the Media

The media is often treated in a mission perspective merely as a question of tools. Media enthusiasts tend to see the different media as nothing more than neutral communication channels, which can be controlled by the church and used to serve its purposes. Media sceptics, on the other hand, see the media primarily as channels of sin and immorality, or as a threat to the genuine community of the church. Both groups seem, however, to have too narrow an understanding of the media and to be underestimating its power.

7.1 The power of the media

In seeking to engage with the media in mission, the first task on our agenda is to realise the power of the media today. In the West secularization has led to a significant drop in church affiliation and attendance, particularly in Europe. At the same time people spend still more hours in front of televisions or computer screens, and their understanding of religion is therefore increasingly being shaped by the media rather than by the church.[97] In the non-Western world, media products such as satellite television and the internet become still more available, though access is much more limited than in the West. It has been argued that the entry of modern media to these places has led to a kind of cultural imperialism, where Western values are being forced on the local populations. This has been modified by recent studies, showing that the mediated foreign cultures do not replace the local culture but are critically received and evaluated within the framework of a dynamic local context.[98] For the church this means that it is not possible – even if some would like it so – to inject the Christianity of the West into non-Western populations through the media. The context of the local people is important to bear in mind and the best result is therefore reached when the local church is included in the process of media production.[99] This is, for instance, reflected in 'the ethos' of the television company Sat-7, where the value of local culture and language, among many other elements, are mentioned as important when producing Christian programmes for the Arab world.[100]

7.2 The blessing of the media

The second task is to acknowledge the blessings of the media. From the very beginning the church has used various media such as letters, liturgy and art to spread its message. The advantage of the new media is that they enable the church to do the same faster, across larger distances, and to a potentially much bigger audience. Especially in places where the church is small and the entry of foreign missionaries is difficult, the media have offered a new way to reach non-believers and given local Christians a chance to grow in their understanding of the Christian faith. Also in a Western secularized context, where people can be hard to reach with traditional mission initiatives, the anonymous and home-based reception of media products offers the church new entries to people it has lost. With the appearance of the internet this contact is increasingly interactive, and more dialogical ways of media mission are now possible. One such example is the Danish website www.religion.dk, which attracts more than fifty thousand unique visitors each month for dialogue on religion.

7.3 The media and mission

The third task is to face the fact that, despite the many advantages of the media, it also has consequences for the church which uses it. When the printing press was introduced by Gutenberg in the fifteenth century, the church first encouraged its use but later changed its position as it became clear that the printing industry could not be controlled.[101] Today, the church must live with the fact that no media can be controlled. When the church enters into the media world, it is just one participant among many others, and in order to be heard or seen it must adapt to the rules of the media.[102] Different studies have shown that at least in the Western world mission initiatives by means of the media have had limited effect. Few people watch the Christian television channels, and those who do are often already churchgoers.[103] The poor results can partly be explained with reference to the overall secularization of society, but a lack of competitive resources and willingness to let go and adapt to the media logic are other possible explanatory factors. In the non-Western world there seem to be more stories of success with media mission. For instance Knud Jørgensen reports from West Africa how the use of radio, audio cassettes and literature have resulted in an openness towards the gospel among the Fulani people of West Africa.[104] On the internet, which must be characterized as the most global mission field, there also seem to be stories of effective mission. On the website www.godrev.com/joy-in-heaven, a map shows where people have 'made a decision for Christ' and counts around 1,500 decisions a day. Although from a missional perspective this may seem positive, critical questions must also be raised: What does it mean to accept Jesus in cyberspace? Is it a long term commitment or just a momentary impulse soon to be forgotten? And are there local congregations for these new Christians to join?

7.4 Theological reflection on the media

This leads to the fourth task, which is conscious theological reflection on the media. If it is true that the media play a central role in modern society and therefore are unavoidable for a church in mission, and if it is impossible to use the media without to some degree subordinating to their logic, then what should the church do? The media seem to go against firm dogma as well as institutional authority and celebrate individual choice, experience and the mix of traditions. How can mission with integrity be carried out under those circumstances in such a way that the church does not lose itself, yet can still appeal to the modern world? This includes a discussion of institution, dogma and authority versus individual freedom, experience and personal responsibility, as well as the physical aspects of congregation and mission versus the virtual character of the media world. Working with these and other questions will pave the way for a more pro-active media approach where the church neither excludes the use of media in mission on the basis of traditionalism or fear, nor just follows the media unconsciously and lets them set the agenda for the mission of the church.

The final task is to act. Depending on the result of the theological reflections, the strategically best way ahead must be sought. Some have the technical and financial resources to create and distribute professional and appealing media products to audiences in traditional mission fields or in the Western world. Others will prefer seeking influence on the secular media, trying to introduce the voice of the church as one among many other voices presented there. There are different paths for the church to follow, and since the media world is constantly changing, the church must also once in a while consider its steps. A continual reflection, experimentation and evaluation of the specific actions is therefore needed.

To engage with it effectively in mission, the media, rather than being treated as a specialist matter or a question of tools, should be fruitfully integrated into the overall missiological thinking; not least because the media are responsible for many of those trends and tendencies which occupy the work of the modern missionary.

8 Strategic Priorities for the Twenty-first Century

To conclude this article it is necessary to consider a few areas of urgent attention in mission strategy for our time.

8.1 Urban mission: The city of God or the city of goods

The turn of the century has brought with it a global population explosion that has never before been experienced by any other generation. In addition to this, for the first time the world is now more urban than rural. Over half of the world's six billion people now live in cities. We must acknowledge the urban realities of our world. Our cities have become home to individualism,

consumerism[105] and unbridled greed. In the recent financial crises that have crippled national economies, our cities and their seats of economic power, have shown their vulnerability and fragility. We need to pursue strategies that embody an *oikos*-theology[106] that seeks to establish an urban environment of justice and shalom[107].

8.2 Youth agency in mission engagement: The silence of the lambs?

Young people are still inadequately represented in the decision-making bodies of mission organisations and in missiology at large. The fact that young people have to be featured through quotas at major mission events shows the marginality of the youth voice. This is a tragic and disturbing oversight of mission strategy. The fact that young people are the overwhelming majority in many contexts of the world should show the clear need for the consideration of the youth voice. The custodians of mission are not the founding fathers, the grand dames of the world mission movement, or the platinum-haired missiologists. It is perplexing to see the number of obituaries and 'in memoriam' articles published in mission journals; the intentional mentorship of the young is a strategic imperative. The custodians of mission are the young practitioners, lay people and mission scholars who, in dialogue with God and the generations before, engage the challenges of the world and live out the call of God. The urgent tasks below would facilitate the agency of the youth voice:

- Create space for young people to discuss and dialogue on contemporary mission issues.
- Support and facilitate youth dialogue, theological and missiological study through interdenominational encounters and ecumenical partnerships.
- Encourage young leaders to develop their own contextual theologies and strategies to deal with the challenges in their own communities.
- Amplify and disseminate mission knowledge from among the ranks of young people.
- Encourage North-South exchanges where young leaders learn from, and analyze, mission strategies in both the new and old centres of Christianity.
- Call for seasoned missiologists and mission practitioners to seriously and intentionally mentor younger mission scholars and practitioners.

8.3 Mission methods: Aggressive or defensive?

In this century it is crucial to redeem mission from its contentious and often distasteful past. While the offensive mission position is hardly an option given the unrestrained excesses of the past, the defensive posture of mission appears to be a default position. Mission organisations find themselves treading on thin ice as secular governments and interfaith organisations demand more

accountability and justification of a faith orientation. The apprehensive and reticent bearing of mission is in stark contrast to the authority and supremacy strategy. It would appear that mission in the world today is bipolar; aggressive, triumphal and arrogant, or, defensive, deflated and apologetic. More exploration and discussion needs to take place with regard to the twenty-first century attitude and posture of mission and its agents.

8.4 Conservative ecumenism versus true ecumenism

'Ecumenical' can no longer be a term that describes a group of mainline affiliated churches, but must reflect the household of God and the wealth of its range. Current mission strategies still lack ecumenical integrity. The reinvention of the mission strategy wheel continues unabated, as there is still a failure to recognise and appreciate talents and resources across the boundaries of denomination, context, gender and age. The true merit of mission strategy must be found in the willingness of the strategists to be ecumenical, that is, truly ecumenical.[108]

9 Conclusion

In this article we have journeyed through time and place to explore forms of mission engagement. We discovered that the God of the Mission calls us to vulnerability, creativity, pliability and integrity in our engagement. As an ensemble study group from differing contexts we marvelled at the dazzling array of the forms of mission engagement, we stood amazed at the diverse agents of mission strategy, and we were in awe that the Mission continues despite the challenges and changes that face our enterprise. The twenty-first century has only just begun, and so, the story of the forms of mission engagement will continue to be told.

10 Questions

1. The main difference between 1910 and 2010 as regards forms of missionary engagement is the change in focus from 'mission societies' to 'local churches'. What are the implications for mission endeavours in the twenty-first century?
2. In what sense do you understand vulnerability to be powerful? What is the difference between enforced and elected vulnerability? How could the mission of my church or community be more effective if it was less powerful and embraced vulnerability?
3. What place do children and young people have in the mission of your church – as agents as well as recipients of mission? How do you respond to the '4/14 window' as a focus for global mission?

4. Is the mission of your church or community collaborative? If not what are the primary barriers to effective collaboration with other Christians (locally and globally) and how will you overcome these?

5. Do you know what migrant Christians have moved into your district in recent years? Do you see them as competitors, a threat, irrelevant or a resource for your own mission? How would you build partnerships for mission (local and global) with Christians arriving from a different country?

6. What is your church or community's mission to the media? What would a 'kingdom of God' approach to the media in your region look like? Who in your community has a missional vocation to work within the media with the support of the church?

Endnotes

[1] See for example, 'Just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and persecution, so the Church is called to follow the same route that it might communicate the fruits of salvation to men', Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 'Dogmatic Constitution on the Church' (1963), §8 – a theme which is taken up much more strongly in the later documents: Vatican II, *Ad Gentes* 'Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church' (1965) and John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 'On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate' (1990). All documents available at www.vatican.va.
[2] Roland Allen, Missionary *Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (London: World Dominion Press, 1956 [1912], 183-190.
[3] David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 379.
[4] See *inter alia* Robrecht Michiels, 'The Self-understanding of the Church after Vatican II', *Louvain Studies* 14 (1989), 83-107.
[5] See *inter alia* Darrell L. Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 113ff, 140.
[6] Ryan Bolger *et al.* (eds), 'The Local Church in Mission: Becoming a Missional Congregation in the Twenty-first Century Global Context' (Lausanne Occasional Paper 40), in David Claydon (ed.), *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call*, Volume I (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2004), 565-606. Also available at www.lausanne.org.
[7] Eddie Gibbs & Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches. Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006).
[8] Ryan Bolger *et al.* (eds), 'The Local Church in Mission'.
[9] Guder, *The Continuing Conversion*, 53-55.
[10] For the concept of the local church and disciple making, see Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing House, 2006).
[11] Ryan Bolger *et al.* (eds), 'The Local Church in Mission'.
[12] I met an elderly lady at a makeshift internally displaced persons camp for the Batwa people 30 km ride to the east of Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi on 29 April 2009. I have used a common Burundi name for a woman that means 'hope' to represent her. I asked her if I could share her story and she accepted.

[13] Tamil Nadu Women's Forum, *Unheard Voices: Dalit Women*—An Alternative Report for the 15th-19th Periodic Report on India submitted by the Government of Republic of India for the 70th Session of Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Geneva, Switzerland (January 2007), 4 . Cf. www.Imadr.org/en/pdf/CERD-India.pdf (accessed February 2008).

[14] See B.J. de Klerk, 'Worship, Prayers and Poverty', *Ecumenical Review* 57/3 (July 2005), 342-357, which offers strategic 'guidelines for worship-service prayers focusing on poverty'.

[15] Graham A. Duncan, 'Towards Partnership in Mission: The Church of Scotland's World Mission Council Policy, 1929–2006', *Missionalia* 35/1 (April 2007), 54-79, at 55.

[16] D. Soelle, *The Window of Vulnerability* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), xi.

[17] D.J. Bosch, 'The Vulnerability of Mission', in J.A. Scherer & S.B. Bevans (eds), *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 2: Theological Foundations* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 73-86, at 79.

[18] See www.vulnerablemission.com:80.

[19] R. Reim, *Power and Vulnerability: Reflections on Mark 9* (Nottingham, Grove Books, 1994), 8.

[20] Bosch, 'The Vulnerability of Mission', 75.

[21] Bosch, 'The Vulnerability of Mission', 77.

[22] Quoted in Brian McLaren, *Everything Must Change* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 254.

[23] McLaren, *Everything Must Change*, 254.

[24] John Stott, *Authentic Christianity* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 363-364.

[25] Samuel Escobar, *A Time for Mission* (Leicester: IVP, 2003), 17.

[26] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of the Global Christianity* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 220.

[27] David Sims produced an extensive 67-page bibliography on 'The Child and American Evangelicalism' for the Houston Child Theology Consultation in 2004, see http://childfaith.net/theology/simsbibliography.pdf. Also, Don Ratcliff of Wheaton College, USA, has a very impressive and rich database on 'Children's Religion and Spirituality Research' (www.childfaith.net/books.htm). Jennifer Orona of Fuller Theological Seminary, USA expanded this significant database with a newer collection (www.childfaith.net/newbooks.htm).

[28] Edwin Estioko, Compassion Philippines staff, captured this story in March 2009.

[29] The story is extracted from Lucille Talusan, 'Childlike Faith Transforms Indonesian Village', *Christian World News*, 11 Dec 2007, www.cbn.com/CBNnews/214912.aspx.

[30] Arada Polawat, Compassion Thailand staff, captured this story in March 2009.

[31] Among others, Paul D. Meier, *Christian Child Rearing and Personality Development,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1995); Susan Greener, *Celebrating Children* (Kingstown Broadway, Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2003); George Barna, *Transforming Your Children into Spiritual Champions* (Ventura, CA: Regal Publications, 2003).

[32] Bryant L. Myers, 'State of the World's Children: Critical Challenge to Christian Mission', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 18/3 (1994), 98-102.

[33] Dan Brewster, 'The 4/14 Window: Child Ministries and Mission Strategies', in Phyllis Kilbourn (ed.), *Children in Crisis: A New Commitment* (Monrovia, CA: MARC 1996), 125-139, at 126.

[34] Myers, 'State of the World's Children'.

[35] www.ministrytodaymag.com

[36] For further information see www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ cevang/p_missionary_works/infantia/documents/rc_ic_infantia_pro_20011106_gen-index-profile_en.html.

[37] L. Singlehurst, *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* (Leicester: Crossway Books, 1995), 36.

[38] Keith White proposed the 'child in the midst' theme as the foundation for the Child Theology Movement. For more information, see www.childtheology.org.

[39] Cedric Pulford, *Eating Uganda: From Christianity to Conquest* (Woodford Halse, Northants, UK: Ituri Publications, 1999), 44.

[40] See P.V. Kollman, *The Evangelisation of Slaves: And Catholic Origins in Eastern Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 84-138.

[41] See A.D. Falconer, 'The Future of Protestantism: Ecumenism and the Mainline Denominations', in A.E. McGrath & D.C. Marks (eds), *The Blackwell Companion to Protestantism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 405-420.

[42] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Report of Commission VIII, Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), 5.

[43] World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Report of Commission VIII*, 148.

[44] 'Common mission' is a phrase used aspirationally in many ecumenical documents over the past 30 years. See for example the *Porvoo Common Statement* 1992, Section 1C (available at www.porvoochurches.org/statements/en.htm) and *Called to Common Mission* 1998 (a statement of the Lutherans and Episcopalians in the USA available at www.elca.org). See also, 'common witness': WCC Central Committee, 'Towards Common Witness: A Call to Adopt Responsible Relationships in Mission and to Renounce Proselytism' (1997)*, §2, par.3. Published in Jacques Matthey (ed.), *'You Are the Light of the World' Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 39-58. Available at www.oikoumene.org

[45] J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM Press, 1969).

[46] L. Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Tunbridge Wells: Burnes & Oates, 1988).

[47] M. Volf, 'Being as God Is: Trinity and Generosity', in M. Volf & M. Welker, *God's Life in Trinity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press 2006), 3-12.

[48] See E.J. Schabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2008).

[49] See Schabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 249-255.

[50] S. Neill, G. Anderson, J. Goodwin (eds), *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1970), 149.

[51] D. Barrett, 'Christian World Communions: Five Overviews of Global Christianity, AD 1800-2025', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 33/1 (January 2009), 25-32, at 32.

[52] United Mission to Nepal, *Fifty Years in God's Hand* (Kathmandu: UMN, 2003), 13-14.

[53] www.iam-afghanistan.org/our-history, accessed 22 May 2009.

[54] www.aepfoundation.org/aboutus.php, accessed 22 May 2009.

[55] www.interdev.org/ZWP10D5.htm, accessed 22 May 2009.

[56] See R. Wood, 'What Is it like to be a Partnership Facilitator?' in *Mission Frontiers: Bulletin of the US Center for World Missions* (Sept-Dec 1999), which edition also contains much other useful material on partnership in mission.
[57] J. Lipnack & J. Stamps, *Virtual Teams: People Working across Boundaries with Technology* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000), 35-6.
[58] For a historical understanding of the rise of cybernetics and systemics, see C. Francois, 'Systemics and Cybernetics in a Historical Perspective' in *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 16 (1999), 203-219.
[59] O. Bradman, & R.A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider* (London: Penguin Group, 2006).
[60] See also the classic study by J.A.T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (London: SCM, 1952).
[61] R. Brynjolfson, 'From Synthesis to Synergy: The Iguassu Think Tanks', in W.D. Taylor (ed.), *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), 477-88.
[62] www.maniafrica.com.
[63] www.comibam.org.
[64] http://philippinemissions.net.
[65] www.faith2share.net.
[66] P. Butler, *Well Connected: Releasing Power, Restoring Hope through Kingdom Partnerships* (Milton Keynes, UK: Authentic Media, 2005), 303.
[67] E. Addicott, *Body Matters: A Guide to Partnership in Christian Mission* (Edmonds, WA: Interdev Partnership Associates, 2005), 169-173.
[68] Lipnack & J. Stamps, *Virtual Teams*, 69-70.
[69] D. Rickett, *Building Strategic Relationships* (Minneapolis, MN: Stem Press, 2008), 17.
[70] L. Roembke, *Building Credible Multicultural Teams* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000).
[71] D. Elmer, *Cross-cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006).
[72] M. Lederleitner, 'Is it possible to adhere to Western ethical and cultural standards regarding financial accountability without fostering neo-colonialism in this next era of global mission partnerships? Thoughts and reflections for broader dialogue', paper submitted to Edinburgh 2010 study group 5, 2009. See J. Rieger, 'Theology and Mission between Neo-colonialism and Postcolonialism', *Mission Studies* 21/2 (2004), 201-227; M.T. Cooper, 'Colonialism, Neo-colonialism and Forgotten Missiological Lessons', *Global Missiology*, no. 1 (2005), 1-14; G. Schwartz, *When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2006). It was partly these concerns which led to the WCC inspited 'moratorium' on the sending of western missionaries in the late twentieth century. See for example G.H. Anderson, 'A Moratorium on Missionaries?', *Christian Century* 16 (January 1974).
[73] Jonathan J. Bonk, *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Missionary Problem … Revisited* (Revised and expanded edition; New York: Orbis Books, 2006).
[74] J. Rowell, *To Give or Not to Give? Rethinking Dependency, Restoring Generosity, and Redefining Sustainability* (Milton Keynes, UK: Authentic Media, 2006).
[75] World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910, *Volume IX: The History and Records of the Conference* (Edinburgh & London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1910), 315.

[76] See J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, 'Listening with African Ears – Reflections on the 2005 World Mission Conference in Athens', *International Review of Mission* 94/374 (July 2005), 343-353, for an interesting perspective on the African presence from Edinburgh 1910 to Athens 2005.

[77] See for example, www.faith2share.net.

[78] J. Hanciles, 'Migration and Mission: The Religious Significance of the North-South Divide', in A.F. Walls A. and C. Ross (eds), *Mission in the Twenty-first Century* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2008), 118-29, at 123.

[79] A. Adogame, 'The Rhetoric of Reverse Mission: African Christianity and the Changing Dynamics of Religious Expansion in Europe', outline of a lecture presented at the conference, 'South Moving North: Revised Mission and its Implications', Protestant Landelijk Dienstencentrum, Utrecht, 26 September 2007.

[80] Refer to www.koreanchurchyp.com. Total numbers of Korean churches worldwide (outside Korea) are estimated at 5174 in 2009.

[81] Hanciles, 'Migration and Mission', 127.

[82] The Mission in Western Culture Project 'is designed as a global initiative to address the question of a missional engagement in Western culture from the perspective of the local church in order to understand the critical issues facing leadership development, discipleship, formation and witness in modern Western culture'. See http://allelon.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=95&Itemid=94.

[83] UEM, which was formerly the joint mission board of six German mainline churches (Landeskirchen) and the von Bodelschwingh Institutions Bethel, restructured to become a communion of 33 churches in three continents engaged in a common mission. See www.vemission.org/en/.

[84] C. Währisch-Oblau, 'From reverse mission to common mission … we hope', *International Review of Mission* 89/353 (July 2000), 467.

[85] European Evangelical Missionary Alliance, 'Receiving Mission Workers to Europe: What Every Church Should Know', available at www.europeanema.org/.

[86] Adogame, 'The Rhetoric of Reverse Mission'.

[87] G. Davie, *Europe: The Exceptional Case. Parameters for Faith in the Modern World* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2002), 110, quoted in R. Catto, 'Non-Western Christian Missionaries in England: Has Mission Been Reversed?', in S. Spencer (ed.), *Mission and Migration* (Sheffield: Cliff College Publishing, 2008), 109-118.

[88] C.M. Barbour, 'Seeking Justice and Shalom in the City', *International Review of Mission* 73/291 (1984), 303-309.

[89] Hun Kim, 'Receiving Mission: Reflection on Reversed Phenomena in Mission by Migrant Workers from Global Churches to the Western Society', paper submitted to Edinburgh 2010, study group 5, 2009.

[90] For more information, refer to Hanciles, 'Migration and Mission' and Adogame, 'The Rhetoric of Reverse Mission'.

[91] See www.europeanema.org/.

[92] The article was excerpted from EEA, 'The Foreigner in Our Midst'. Available at www.europeanea.org/documents/Foreignersinourmidst.pdf.

[93] Kim, 'Receiving Mission'

[94] The Bible translation for Southern Azerbaijani in Iran started in 1991 and was completed in 2003. The New Testament was published in June 2009. Now a translation of the Old Testament is in progress in partnership with many constituents in London.

[95] On issues of partnership between South and North, particularly in the context of

Europe, see the Kang-San Tan, 'Who Is in the Driver's Seat? A Critique of Mission Partnership Models between Western Missions and East Asian Mission Movements', *Encounters Mission Ezine*, 24, article 3, www.redcliffe.org/uploads/documents/ Who_is_in_the_Driver's_Seat_24.pdf.

[96] Catto, 'Non-Western Christian Missionaries in England', 117.

[97] Stig Hjarvard, 'The Mediatization of Religion: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Religious Change', *Northern Lights* 6 (2008), 11.

[98] Lynn Scofield Clark & Stewart M. Hoover, 'At the Intersection of Media, Culture, and Religion: A Bibliographic Essay', in Stewart M. Hoover and Knut Lundby (eds), *Rethinking Media, Religion, and Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997), 20; Lyn Gorman & David McLean, *Media and Society in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 221.

[99] Knud Jørgensen, *Åpen kanal – Misjon og medier* (Oslo: Luther Forlag, 1987), 50.

[100] For the whole list, see www.sat7.org/en/sat7/ethos.

[101] John B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 56.

[102] Viggo Søgaard, *Media in Church and Mission: Communicating the Gospel* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1993), 118-119.

[103] Quentin J. Schultze, 'Evangelicals' Uneasy Alliance With the Media', in Daniel A. Stout & Judith M. Buddenbaum (eds). *Religion and Mass Media: Audiences and Adaptions* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1996), 64.

[104] Knud Jørgensen, *Åpen kanal*, 43.

[105] See David Field, 'Journey Beyond The Gate: The Reign of God and the Response Ability of the Globalised Middle Class' in the *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 123 (November 2005), for a discussion on global capitalism and the reign of God.

[106] See A. E Warmback, 'The Journey Continues: Oikotheology and Urban Ministry', *Missionalia* 36/2-3, 165-179.

[107] See Stephan de Beer, 'Contesting Inner-city Space: Global Trends, Local Exclusion/s and an Alternative Christian Spatial Praxis', *Missionalia* 36/2-3, 180-206.

[108] See Rudolf von Sinner, 'Trust and *Convivencia*', *The Ecumenical Review* 57/3 (July 2005), 322-41, for an interesting look at 'trust and *convivencia* in ecumenical communion'.