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**God, the First Missionary**

**Romans as a Charta of World Mission**

**Mission in the Old Testament**

**Jesus as a Master Educator for Mission**

**Social Responsibility in the Church**

**The Trinity of the OT and the Dialogue with Jews and Moslems**



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Thomas Schirmacher World Mission – Heart of Christianity

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Thomas Schirmacher

# World Mission Heart of Christianity

Essays

**Thomas Schirrmacher**

**World Mission**

## **RVB International**

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- 2 Thomas Schirmmacher: Legends About the Galileo-Affair
- 3 Thomas Schirmmacher: World Mission – Heart of Christianity
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**Thomas Schirrmacher**

**World Mission**  
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Dedicated to

my colleague and close friend

Prof. Dr. Klaus W. Müller

president of the AfeM  
(Association of German Evangelical Missiologists)

Working together with him for 15 years  
has been stimulation, help and correction.



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## Preface

This is a selection of my missiological articles published since 1979, which were originally written in English or translated from German into English. The articles have been published in missiological journals like *Reflection: An International Reformed Review of Missiology* (The Netherlands), *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (USA), *From the Frontiers* (Scotland), and *Field Update* (USA), others in Reformed journals such as *Chalcedon Report*, *Calvinism Today* (now *Christianity and Society*), *Contra Mundum*, *Antithesis* (all USA) and *Symbiotica*<sup>1</sup> (The Netherlands).

All articles are reprinted in their original form, with only minor changes where mistakes had to be corrected. This explains the different style of quotations, footnotes, headings and Scripture verses (e. g. with the German comma between chapter and verse). As several articles have been reprinted by different journals with different styles, I had to choose one version which is always the first mentioned when the source is quoted. The footnotes do not always follow the original numbering.

As the articles have not been updated, readers are asked to keep the year of publication of a certain article in mind. In most cases a German version with updated footnotes exists but only in much longer articles or in books. As most literature quoted is German literature only readers who can read German would have appreciated fuller footnotes in this volume. (See the list of my books at the end of this volume.)

English is not my mother tongue. Therefore all corrections of my English are welcome and should be sent to my address Friedrichstrasse 38, D-53111 Bonn, Germany (or by e-mail to [DrThSchirmacher@bucer.de](mailto:DrThSchirmacher@bucer.de)).

All articles may be reprinted if you send two copies of the original printed volume to my address.

### New edition 2008

In the new edition 2008, some smaller and outdated articles were exchanged for a short article on the Great Commission and a longer article on the Gospels written together with my colleague Drs. Frank Koppelin. All other articles were left as in the 1999 edition and only misspellings were corrected.

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<sup>1</sup>The latter two journals have gone out of business.



## **Romans as a Charter of World Mission: A Lesson in the Relation of Systematic Theology and Missiology (1993)<sup>2</sup>**

### **Paul: Theologian and missionary**

“What is the topic of Romans? It is God’s plan for the world and a discussion on how Paul’s missions to the Gentiles fits into this plan.”<sup>3</sup>

This close relation between the letter to the Romans and Paul’s missionary practice has only rarely been taken into account by exegetes. Emil Weber did not get beyond Rom 3 in his important study, *The relation of Rom 1-3 to the missionary practice of Paul*<sup>4</sup>, and other authors have only outlined the topic<sup>5</sup>. Writes Nils Alstrup:

“Paul has been acclaimed as the first Christian theologian and the greatest Christian missionary of all times. Scholars have, however, often failed to realize how closely these two aspects are interrelated.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Reprinted from “Romans as a Charter of World Mission: A Lesson in the Relation of Systematic Theology and Missiology”. *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 10 (1993) 4 (Oct): 159-162 = *Chalcedon Report* Nr. 342 (Jan 1994): 43-47 = *Reflection: An International Reformed Review of Missiology* 4 (1993/94) 1/2: 34-39 [Dutch version (shortened): “Romeinen: het handvest voor werelzending”. *Reflection* 4 (1993/94) 1/2: 40-43]

<sup>3</sup>Krister Stendahl. *Der Jude Paulus und wir Heiden: Anfragen an das abendländische Christentum*. Chr. Kaiser: Munich, 1978. p. 42 (retranslated from the German); Stendahl, *ibid.* pp. 43-49, believes therefore that Rom 9-11 is the center of Romans.

<sup>4</sup>Emil Weber. *Die Beziehungen von Röm. 1-3 zur Missionspraxis des Paulus*. Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie 9 (1905), No. 4, Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1905

<sup>5</sup>E. g. Walter B. Russell III. “An Alternative Suggestion for the Purpose of Romans”. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (1988): 174-184; Paul S. Minear. *The Obedience of Faith: The Purpose of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans*. *Studies in Biblical Theology* 2/19. SCM Press: London, 1971, especially the appendices pp. 91-110; Nils Alstrup. “The Missionary Theology in the Epistle to the Romans”. pp. 70-94 in: *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission*. Augsburg Publ.: Minneapolis (USA), 1977; Krister Stendahl. *Der Jude Paulus und wir Heiden*. *ibid.*; L. Grant McClung. “An Urban Cross-cultural Role Model: Paul’s Self-image in Romans”. *Global Church Growth (Corunna/USA)* 26 (1989): No. 1: 5-8

<sup>6</sup>Nils Alstrup. “The Missionary Theology in the Epistle to the Romans”. *ibid.* p. 70

At the same time, Romans played a major role in the history of Protestant missions<sup>7</sup>. Especially Rom 10,14ff has been one of the most frequently used texts for missionary sermons<sup>8</sup>. Through the Calvinist Puritans of England and America of the 16th to 18th century, the exegetical literature took notice of the missionary spirit of Romans. But this was an exception. Normally, exegesis of Romans and the use of Romans in the missionary movement were separated.

## The forgotten frame of Romans

Paul probably wrote his letter to the Romans 57 B. C. sometime during the three month of Acts 20,3, prior to his journey to Jerusalem. Thus, the letter was written after he had collected money in all his churches to help the church in Jerusalem. From Jerusalem he wanted to travel to Rome to use its church as the base for the next step of his missionary strategy: evangelizing Spain and the West (Rom 15,27-31).

Paul does not take much time in his letter before describing his future plans (Rom 1,8-15). He wants to preach the Gospel to all men without exception. He does not accept any barrier of culture or race ("*Greeks and Barbarians*", Rom 1,14), of education or social stratum ("*wise and unwise*", Rom 1,14) and therefore wants to come to Rome (Rom 1,15). From this practical topic Paul switches immediately to the 'proper' topic of Romans. The famous verses Rom 1,16-17 start with a "*therefore ...*". Paul only wants to prove through biblical teaching what he is going to do according to Rom 1,8-15. There is no indication that Paul is changing the subject. Rom 1,1-15 is not just a redundant introduction but tells us the very purpose of Romans: proving that the expansion of world missions is God's own plan.

The same can be seen at the end of the body of direct teaching in chapter 15. In Rom 15,14, Paul switches directly from a list of quotations from the Old Testament, which prove that all people will hear the Gospel, to his practical missionary strategy, repeating several things he has mentioned in the introduction.

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<sup>7</sup>See examples in A. F. Walls. "The First Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans and the Modern Missionary Movement". pp. 346-357 in: W. Ward Gasque, Ralph P. Martin (Ed.). *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays presented to F. F. Bruce on his 60th Birthday*. Wm. B. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids (MI), 1970

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. pp. 346-347

<b>The frame of the letter to the Romans: parallels between Rom 1,1-15 and 15,14-16,27</b>		
1,1-6	The Gospel has been foretold in the OT	16,25-27
1,5	The obedience of faith must be preached among all nations	16,26 +15,18
1,7	Grace be with you	16,20
1,8	The faith of the Christians in Rome is known in the whole world	16,19
1,8-13	Travel plans: by way of Jerusalem to Rome	15,22-29
1,11-12	Paul wants to be strengthened spiritually by the Christians in Rome	15,24, 14
1,13	Paul has been hindered from going to Rome in spite of his wishes	15,22
1,13-15	The Gospel must be preached to all peoples	15,14-29 (+16,26)

This is even more impressive if one compares the whole conclusion, Rom 15,14-16,27, to the introduction. The framework of Romans explains the occasion and purpose of the whole letter and defines the topic of the letter in its first and last verses (Rom 1,1-6; 16,25-27): the “*obedience of faith*” must be preached and planted among all peoples, as the Old Testament has prophesied (compare e. g. the context vv. 15-25 of Is 52,15, quoted in Rom 15,21). The parallels between Rom 1,1-15 and 15,14-16,27 show that Paul had not forgotten his practical missions plans during the whole letter.

Too often Romans has been interpreted as a theoretical theological treatise without taking its framework into account. Walter B. Russell III writes:

“Most writers virtually ignore the introductory and closing purpose statements and focus on the theological exposition of the letter’s body.”<sup>9</sup>

## **Dogmatics and world mission**

This is why I have written a Reformed commentary on Romans as a mis-siologist<sup>10</sup>, on which this article is based: The most systematic and theological letter of Paul has been written with missions and practical plans to spread the Gospel to new frontiers in mind. Romans wants to establish the

<sup>9</sup>Walter B. Russell III. “An Alternative Suggestion for the Purpose of Romans”. *ibid.* p. 175

<sup>10</sup>Thomas Schirmacher. *Der Römerbrief*. 2 vols. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1993

right and necessity of world mission using Systematic Theology and the intensive study of the Old Testament. Therefore we can draw the following conclusions from the letter of Romans:

*Whoever wants to practice missions pragmatically and therefore to renounce theology and teaching, because they might hinder practice, is doing missions in his own commission and does not care **what** God said about mission.*

*Whoever teaches dogmatics which do not focus on world missions and do not lead to practical steps to reach the unreached, teaches in his own commission and does not care **why** God gave us His Word and teaching.*

*Biblical and practical world missions will always begin with sound and thorough teaching. Sound and thorough teaching will on the other side always lead to biblical and practical world missions.*

This has been true for Reformed theology throughout its history. Calvin started the first Protestant missionary enterprises in other European countries and in Brazil. For centuries the Reformed Churches have been the forerunners in Protestant world missions, and this not in spite of their strong emphasis on sound doctrine, but because of it. Only in this century have the Reformed Churches given up their place as forethinkers in missiology.

## **World mission the fulfillment of the Old Testament**

Until now we have only spoken about ‘world mission’ and reaching ‘all peoples’. Now we want to highlight two important messages from Rom 15-16 which further explain what world mission is all about. One message is the importance of the Old Testament for proving world mission to be biblical, the second is that practical world missions first of all is to reach the unreached – the main goal of the letter to the Romans.

Paul reminds the ‘strong’ non-Jewish Christians in Rom 15,8, that “*Christ has become a servant of circumcision*” holding to the ceremonial law of the Old Testament. Thus he “*confirmed the promises made to the fathers*” (15,8). But Paul immediately speaks about the same promises of the fathers concerning non-Jewish peoples in the Old Testament: “*so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written ...*” (15,9). As in Rom 9-11 he reminds the Christians that salvation for the Jews and salvation for the Gentiles cannot be separated.

In Rom 15,9-12 Paul gives five quotations from the Old Testament proving that all the nations one day will praise the Lord: 2Sam 22,50; Ps 18,50; Dtn 32,43; Ps 117,1; Jes 11,10. This is the final machine gun of quotations from the Old Testament, after Paul has proved that the Gospel and world mission do not stand against the Old Testament but are backed up by it. Adolf Schlatter writes about the quotations in Rom 15,9-12:

“The common praise of God in which all peoples take part, is the goal of God that Scripture proclaimed. In 2Sam 22,50 Paul probably heard Christ speaking who will confess God among the nations and sing the psalm to His glory. It is the work of Christ that the Church is doing this. Dtn 32,43 is quoted because this verse calls the peoples together with Israel to the common praise of God. Ps 117,1 proclaims that all peoples without exception are invited to the praise of God. Is 11,10 establishes the worship which the nations will bring by their being under the lordship of Christ. ... Paul builds his prayer on the promise of Scripture.”<sup>11</sup>

<b>Quotations and Allusions (in Italics) from the Old Testament in the letter to the Romans</b>			
1,17	Hab 2,4	5,1	<i>Is 53,5; 57,19;</i>
1,23+25	<i>Dtn 4,15-18;</i> <i>Jer 2,11; Ps 106,20</i>		<i>Mi 5,4; Num 6,26</i>
1,25	Gen 9,26; 1Sam 25,32	5,19	<i>Is 53,4, 11, 12;</i> <i>1Sam 15,25; 25,28</i>
2,5	<i>Zef 1,18; 2,3;</i> <i>Ps 110,5</i>	6,12+14	Ps 119,133 Gen 4,7
2,6	Pr 24,12; <i>Ps 62,13;</i> <i>Jer 50,29</i>	6,21	<i>Hes 16,61, 63</i>
2,15	<i>Jer 31,33; Pr 7,3</i>	7,2-3	<i>Dtn 24,1-4;</i>
2,21-22	<i>Ex 20,12-17;</i> <i>Dtn 5,16-18</i>	7,8+1	<i>Gen 2,16-17; 3,1;</i> <i>Pr 9,17</i>
2,24	Is 52,5	7,7	Ex 20,12-17; Dtn 5,16-21
3,4	Ps 116,11	7,10	<i>Lev 18,5;</i> <i>Hes 20,11, 13, 21</i>
3,4	Ps 51,6	7,11	<i>Gen 3,1-7, 13</i>
3,10	Ec 7,20; Ps 4,3; Ps 53,2-4	8,20	<i>Ec 1,2, 14; ch. 2</i>
3,11-12	Ps 14,2-3	8,27	<i>Jer 11,20; 17,10;</i> <i>20,12;</i>
3,13	Ps 5,10		<i>Ps 7,10; 26,2</i>

<sup>11</sup>Adolf Schlatter. Gottes Gerechtigkeit: Ein Kommentar zum Römerbrief. Calwer Verlag: Stuttgart, 1975<sup>5</sup>. p. 383

3,13	<i>Ps 140,4</i>	8,33	<i>Is 50,8-9</i>
3,14	<i>Ps 10,7</i>	8,34	<i>Ps 110,1, 5</i>
3,15-17	<i>Is 59,7-8; Pr 1,16</i>	8,36	<i>Ps 44,23</i>
3,18	<i>Ps 36,2</i>	9,5	<i>Gen 9,26;</i> <i>1Sam 25,32</i>
3,20	<i>Ps 143,2</i>	9,7	<i>Gen 21,12</i>
3,29-30	<i>Dtn 6,4;</i> <i>Is 37,16, 20</i>	9,9	<i>Gen 18,10; 18,14</i>
4,3	<i>Gen 15,6;</i> <i>Ps 106,31</i>	9,11	<i>Gen 25,21-22</i>
4,5	<i>Ex 23,7</i>	9,12	<i>Gen 25,23</i>
4,7-8	<i>Ps 32,1-2</i>	9,13	<i>Mal 1,2-3</i>
4,9	<i>Gen 15,6</i>	9,15	<i>Ex 33,19</i>
4,11	<i>Gen 17,10-11, 5</i>	9,17	<i>Ex 9,16</i>
4,13+16	<i>Gen 12,7; 13,15,</i> <i>17; 24,7; 26,4 etc.</i>	9,18	<i>Ex 33,19</i>
4,17	<i>Gen 17,5</i>	9,20-22	<i>Jer 18,3-6; Is 45,9;</i> <i>29,16; 64,7</i>
4,18	<i>Gen 15,5</i>	9,22	<i>Jer 50,24; Is 13,5;</i> <i>54,16</i>
4,19	<i>Gen 17,17;</i> <i>18,11-12</i>	9,25	<i>Hos 2,25; 1,6-9; 2,3</i>
4,22	<i>Gen 15,6</i>	9,26-27	<i>Hos 2,1</i>
4,25	<i>Is 53,4, 11, 12;</i> <i>1Sam 15,25; 25,28</i>	9,27-28	<i>Is 10,22-23</i>
9,32-33	<i>Is 28,16; Is 8,14</i>	9,29	<i>Is 1,9</i>
10,5	<i>Lev 18,5</i>	9,30-31	<i>Is 51,1</i>
10,6-8	<i>Dtn 30,12-14</i>	11,35	<i>Job 41,3</i>
10,11	<i>Is 28,16; Is 8,14</i>	12,9	<i>Amos 5,15;</i> <i>Ps 97,10</i>
10,13	<i>Joel 3,5</i>	12,14	<i>Ps 109,28</i>
10,15	<i>Is 52,7</i>	12,16	<i>Pr 12,15; 24,12</i>
10,16	<i>Is 53,1</i>	12,16	<i>Pr 3,7; Is 5,21</i>
10,18	<i>Ps 19,5</i>	12,17	<i>Pr 3,4</i>
10,19	<i>Dtn 32,21</i>	12,19	<i>Dtn 32,35</i>
10,20	<i>Is 65,1</i>	12,20	<i>Pr 25,21-22</i>
10,21	<i>Is 65,2</i>	13,9	<i>Ex 20,13</i> <i>=Dtn 5,17</i>
11,2	<i>Ps 94,14</i>	13,9	<i>Ex 20,14</i> <i>=Dtn 5,18</i>
11,3	<i>1Kg 19,14, 10</i>	13,9	<i>Ex 20,17</i> <i>=Dtn 5,21</i>
11,4	<i>1Kg 19,18</i>	13,9	<i>Lev 19,18</i>
11,8	<i>Is 29,10;</i> <i>Dtn 29,3</i>	14,11	<i>Is 45,23</i>
11,9-10	<i>Ps 69,23-24</i>	14,13	<i>Is 8,14</i>

11,11+14 Dtn 32,21	14,20-21 Is 8,14
11,16 Num 15,20; Hes 44,30; Lev 23,10 etc.	15,3 Ps 69,10 15,9 Ps 18,50; 2Sam 22,50
11,16-17 Jer 11,16; Ps 52,10; Sach 4,3, 11, 12, 14	15,10 Dtn 32,43 15,11 Ps 117,1 15,12 Is 11,10
11,25 Pr 3,7; Is 5,21	15,21 Is 52,15
11,26-27 Is 59,20-21; Is 27,9	16,26 Gen 21,33
11,34 Is 40,13	

Although the many quotations from the Old Testament speak to the Jews – and this till today<sup>12</sup> –, they are also meant for the gentile Christians who not only rejoice that they have salvation but are commissioned to spread the Gospel to all other gentile peoples. Writes Reformed scholar C. E. B. Cranfield:

“... neither the constant engagement with the OT to be seen throughout the epistle nor the use of the words *‘I speak to those, who know the Law’* in 7,1 proves that Paul was writing to a predominantly Jewish-Christian church; for the OT was the Bible of the Gentile, as well as of the Jewish, Christian, and it is significant that Paul also assumes familiarity with, and reverence for, the OT in his letters to the Galatians and the Corinthians.”<sup>13</sup>

To prove the Great Commission – to preach the Gospel of Jesus to every people on earth – from the Old Testament is quite common in the New Testament. When Paul and Barnabas wanted to prove that from now on they should preach the Gospel to the Gentiles instead of the Jews they did not quote the Great Commission, given by Jesus, but the Great Commis-

<sup>12</sup>See Thomas Schirrmacher. “Trinity in the Old Testament and Dialogue with the Jews and Muslims”. Calvinism Today (now: Christianity and Society) 1 (1991) 1 (Jan): 24-25+21+27, reprinted as: “Trinity in the Old Testament and Dialogue with the Jews and Muslims”. Field Update: GR International (Apr/Mai 1991): 6-8 and (Jun/Jul 1991): 5-8

<sup>13</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. 2 vols. The International Critical Commentary 11. T & T Clark: Edinburgh, 1989 (reprint from 1979), vol. 1, pp. 18-19; see also Otto Michel. Der Brief an die Römer. Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 4<sup>14</sup>. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1978<sup>5</sup>. p. 36; John Murray. The Epistle to the Romans. The New International Commentary on the NT. Wm. B. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids (MI), 1984, vol. I, p. XX

sion to Isaiah (Acts 13,46-49 quoting from Is 49,6). Peter defends the conversion of Cornelius by saying that all prophets of the Old Testament give testimony that the heathens will be saved (Acts 10,42-43). James also finished the council of Jerusalem on the subject of missions to the Gentiles, not with a quotation from Jesus, but from the Old Testament (Acts 15,13-21 quoting Is 61,4; Ps 22,27-28; Sach 8,22; Am 9,11-12). The promise to the patriarchs, that all people will be blessed through their offspring (Gen 12,3; 18,18; 22,17; 26,4; 28,14), is again and again quoted and mentioned as a proof for world mission (Lk 1,54-55, 72; Acts 3,25-26; Rom 4,13-25; Eph 3,3-4; Gal 3,7-9, 14; Hebr 6,13-20; 11,12). Finally, Jesus Himself did not only give the Great Commission in the well known versions according to Matthew, Mark, John and Acts, but in the version according to Luke proving the worldwide preaching of the Gospel from all parts of the Old Testament (Lk 24,43-49): *“And then he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scripture ...: Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem ...”* (Lk 24,45-47).

Reformed theology has emphasized the value of the Old Testament for Systematic Theology and practical purposes more than any other Christian group. Within its federal theology it has given the Old Testament a place as the fundament of all New Testament theology and the New Testament a place as the final realization and fulfillment of Old Testament faith. So Paul’s arguments for world mission from the Old Testament should not astonish them as it will astonish theologians that hold to theologies who put the Old Testament more or less in opposition to the New. Giving the Old Testament its proper place will always lead to world missions, as it has Reformed theology for a long time.

## Reaching the unreached

It was not just any kind of what is called ‘missions work’ today that made Paul write the letter to the Romans. World missions for Paul was frontier missions, missions reaching the unreached regions, not reaching the single unreached person in an otherwise reached area. Of course there were fulltime people nurturing the new churches, like Apollos or Timothy. Of course there were local evangelists. But the missionary and apostle Paul (apostle and missionary having the same meaning *‘the one sent’*, the one word coming from the Greek, the other from the Latin) did not remain in

the local church or ‘his’ region, but moved on as long as there were regions and peoples without Christ’s salvation.

Listen how Paul argues why he needs the church of Rome as a new base for his missions to Spain: “*So from Jerusalem all the way around Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the Gospel of Christ*” (Rom 15,19); “*But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions ...*” (Rom 15,23). Was every man and every woman in the provinces where Paul and his co-workers had been working a professing Christian? Had everybody at least heard the Gospel? Of course not, but Paul everywhere had established churches which were able to continue the job.

Paul states it beyond doubt: “*It has always been my honor [or: glory] to preach the Gospel where Christ is not being named, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation*” (Rom 15,20). Reaching the unreached is the honor, the glory, the pride (these being the meanings of the Greek word ‘time’) of the missionary. The unreached are not the non-Christians within reach of an established church, but non-Christians in areas where there is no one naming and praising Christ, and where there is no biblical witness at all.

The missionary strategy of Paul was to start churches in the larger cities of regions and among peoples which did not have any church and to pass on the task of reaching everybody within the region to the new churches, while he moved on to new regions. So the Christians in the city of Thessaloniki reached two whole provinces, Achaja and Macedonia (1Thess 1,7-9). Nobody less than Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) – probably the greatest of all Reformed missiologists – saw it as a part of Paul’s missions strategy to make the local church self-governing and self-propagating as soon as possible and – what is often forgotten – to free the missionary for work on new frontiers<sup>14</sup>.

And again Paul proves this from the Old Testament: “*Rather it is written: Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand*” (Rom 15,21). Why is it the honor, pride and glory of every missionary that he is reaching the unreached (e. g. those who cannot be reached by a church)? Because it is God’s plan in salvation history to bring salvation to a growing number of peoples.

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<sup>14</sup>See Thomas Schirrmacher (ed.). ‘Die Zeit für die Bekehrung der Welt ist reif’: Rufus Anderson und die Selbständigkeit der Kirche als Ziel der Mission. Edition afem: mission scripts 3. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993 (‘afem’ is the Association of Evangelical Missiologists in the German-speaking world)

I am happy to witness the development of a new conscience within the worldwide Church and within Reformed circles that frontier missions is not just an extra hobby for adventurers among missionaries, and that missions are not just the self-chosen job of mission societies but the task of the true Church. In 1979, I attended the International Conference on Frontier Missions (and its student counterpart) in Edinburgh, where we as Germans started the German Center for World Mission, together with a network of similar institutions all over the world. I remember that ‘frontier mission’ and ‘hidden people’ were foreign words in German missiology at that time. Things have changed since then and the success of the German edition of *Operation World* (German *Gebet für die Welt*), a handbook on the situation of missions in all countries of the world adapted by the German Center shows that frontier missions, is widely accepted today. The new German edition will appear only two months after the English edition, and a lot of people want to have it sooner! At the same time, I can see the missions society I belong to, Gospel Recordings International, speeding up the recording of languages and dialects of unreached peoples; 4273 languages and dialects being recorded at the moment already<sup>15</sup>. This and hundreds of other examples show not only that world mission is regaining its proper place, but also – if we take into account the purpose of Romans – that theology is improving! Reformed missiologists have a major task insuring that this activity really became an improvement of theology and not just getting busy!

*What was and is the very purpose of the letter to the Romans and its heavy and detailed theology? Paul wanted the Roman church “to join me in my struggle” (Rom 15,30) to reach the unreached those, who have no church in their midst, and the best way to get the Church going was to show from the Old and New Testament that world mission is the very essence of God’s love and of the purpose of the Church.*

*Reformed theology with its strong and necessary emphasis on sound doctrine must not lead to neglect of world mission, but must and will lead to a love for world mission along biblical lines.*

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<sup>15</sup>Thomas Schirmacher. Gospel Recordings Language List. *Missiologica Evangelica* 4. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn 1992

## **'Missio Dei' – God, the First Missionary (1994)<sup>16</sup>**

God was the first missionary. Immediately after the Fall, human history seemed to end only shortly after its beginning. But God did not stop here. In His grace he came Himself into the Garden of Eden (Gen 1,8-9) to ask Adam and Eve: "Where are you?" and to proclaim judgment and the coming salvation to them. However, when Christians speak about God as the first missionary, in most cases they speak about God Father, sending His Son Jesus Christ as a human being to earth to effect and proclaim salvation and punishment.

The Latin term 'missio dei' (mission of God) was coined in the fourth century A. D. by Aurelius Augustinus to describe the sending acts within the Trinity, i. e. God Father sending Jesus Christ, the Son of God. From then on 'missio dei' was a major term in Catholic and Orthodox dogmatics<sup>17</sup>. Only in 1952 the term was acquired for the Protestant world by the Ecumenical World Missions Conference, Willingen (1952) to emphasize that world mission is rooted in the Trinity of God. The term became famous in Protestant missions theology<sup>18</sup> through George F. Vicedom's book "Missio Dei" published 1958<sup>19</sup> and through other German Lutheran theologians and missiologists involved in Ecumenical agencies like Karl Hartenstein and Walther Freytag. Vicedoms writes:

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<sup>16</sup>Reprinted from "'Missio Dei', God, the first Missionary". Reflection: An International Reformed Review of Missiology 5 (1994/95): 1/2 (Sept/Nov 1994): 38-41 = "'Missio Dei' – God the First Missionary". Chalcedon Report No. 352 (Nov 1994): 29-31

<sup>17</sup>See Karl Müller. Missionstheologie. D. Reimer: Berlin, 1985. pp. 57-59

<sup>18</sup>See e. g. Hans-Werner Gensichen. Glaube für die Welt: Theologische Aspekte der Mission. Gütersloher Verlagshaus: Gütersloh, 1971. pp. 55-57

<sup>19</sup>Georg F. Vicedom. Missio Dei. Chr. Kaiser: Munich, 1958. See also the sequel Georg F. Vicedom. Actio Dei. Chr. Kaiser: Munich, 1975. For Vicedoms life and theology see the dissertation: Klaus W. Müller. Peacemaker: Missionary Practice of Georg Friedrich Vicedom in New Guinea (1929-1939). University of Aberdeen, 1991 (available through UMI/University Microfilms)

“Missio Dei declares the sending to be God’s own concern, which He began in His Son and which He continues through the Holy Spirit in His Church till the end of time.”<sup>20</sup>

But is ‘missio dei’ a valid concept for Evangelical and Reformed Christians also? Or is it a Catholic, an Eastern-Orthodox or an Ecumenical concept alone?

Yes, the concept of ‘missio dei’ is a valid concept and belongs to the heart of Christianity, no matter whether this term is used for the fact that God sent Himself for the redemption of the world, or for the fact that the missions of the Church is the outcome of God’s mission.

‘Missio dei’ means nothing less than to realize that sending (Latin: *missio*) for redemption is the essence and center of Christian faith<sup>21</sup>. Without the Trinity and without God sending Himself there would be no redemption and no reason and justification for the Christian Church being sent to all people and to send its missionaries everywhere.

So Evangelicals heartily agree when they read nonevangelical statements on ‘missio dei’, as two examples may show.

Lutheran theologian Karl Hartenstein writes:

“Missions is not only obedience to the Word of the Lord, it is not only obligation to gather the Church, it is participation in the sending of the Son, *missio dei*, with the comprehensive goal of setting up the Lordship of Christ over the whole of redeemed Creation.”<sup>22</sup>

The Orthodox theologian Ion Bria begins his book ‘Orthodox Perspectives on Mission’ with a chapter “The Importance of Trinitarian Theology” and writes:

“The mission of the Church is based on Christ’s mission. A proper understanding of this mission requires, in the first place, an application of trinitarian theology. Christ’s sending of the Apostles is rooted in the fact that Christ Himself is sent by the Father in the Holy Spirit (John 20:21-23). The signifi-

<sup>20</sup>Georg F. Vicedom. “Missio Dei”. p. 352 in: Stephen Neill, Niels-Peter Moritzen, Ernst Schrupp (ed.). *Lexikon der Weltmission*. R. Brockhaus: Wuppertal & Verlag der Evang.-Luth. Mission: Erlangen, 1975

<sup>21</sup>See also Thomas Schirmacher. “Romans as a Charter of World Mission: A Lesson in the Relation of Systematic Theology and Missiology”. *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 10 (1993) 4 (Oct): 159-162; Thomas Schirmacher. “Romeinen: het handvest voor werelzending”. *Reflection: An International Reformed Review of Missiology* 4 (1993/94) 1/2: 40-43

<sup>22</sup>Karl Hartenstein quoted by Georg F. Vicedom. *Missio Dei*. *ibid.* p. 12

cance of this scriptural assertion for the concept of mission is commonly recognized, but the trinitarian theology, which is implied in it, deserves more attention than it normally receives. Trinitarian theology points to the fact that God is, in God's own Self, a life of communion and that God's involvement in history aims at drawing humanity and Creation in general into this communion with God's very life. The implications of this assertion for understanding mission are very important: mission does not primarily aim at the propagation or transmission of intellectual convictions, doctrines, moral commands, etc., but at the transmission of the life of communion that exists in God. The 'sending' of missions is essentially the sending of the Spirit (John 14:26), who precisely manifests the life of God as communion (1 Cor. 13:13)."<sup>23</sup>

But of course there is a big difference between the Catholic and Protestant view of 'missio dei' on the one side and the Orthodox view on the other side. In writing

"The Father sent the Son, Father and Son sent the Holy Spirit for the redemption of mankind"<sup>24</sup>,

Vicedom takes the Catholic and Protestant view for granted, that the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father *and* the Son, expressed by the famous "filioque" (Latin for "and the Son"), which played a major role in the split between the Eastern, Orthodox Churches and the Western, Catholic Churches. Orthodox theology denies that the Holy Spirit comes forth from the Son and believes that the Spirit was only sent by the Father. Thus the Orthodox view of 'missio dei' is somewhat restricted compared to the Catholic and Protestant view. The Orthodox view denies that a Person of the Trinity (Jesus) can be sent fully by a Person of the Trinity (the Father) and at the same time fully send another Person of the Trinity (the Holy Spirit)<sup>25</sup>. But the latter is clearly taught by the Scriptures (John 14,26; 15,26; Lk 24,49). And it is a central element of the biblical view of mis-

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<sup>23</sup>Ion Bria (ed.). *Go Forth in Peace: Orthodox Perspectives on Mission*. WCC Missions series. World Council of Churches: Geneva (CH), 1986. p. 3; see also Paulos Mar Gregorios. *The Meaning and Nature of Diakonia*. Risk Book Series. World Council of Churches: Geneva (CH), 1988

<sup>24</sup>Georg F. Vicedom. "Missio Dei". p. 352 in: Stephen Neill, Niels-Peter Moritzen, Ernst Schrapp (ed.). *Lexikon der Weltmission*. *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>Orthodox theology often distinguishes between the Holy Spirit being sent by the Father and the Son, which they accept, and the Holy Spirit coming forth from the Father and the Son, which they deny, teaching that the Spirit like the Son come out only of the Father.

sions that the sender becomes one being sent, and the one being sent becomes a sender himself.

As the term 'missio dei' was coined by Augustinus, it goes back to a man who is not only important for Catholic theology but also heavily influenced Luther and Calvin and their concept of 'missio dei', as well as their biblical concept of grace. But the main reason for the validity of 'missio dei' for Protestants is of course that it is firmly rooted in biblical revelation.

The genitive case in 'missio dei' (God's mission/mission of God) can grammatically mean both, that God is sent and that God is sending. Both aspects of 'missio dei' can be found in the biblical texts using terms for 'to send' and describing the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity and between Jesus and His Church.

In the New Testament<sup>26</sup>, the sending of the disciples/apostles is understood as a direct continuation of the sending of Jesus by His Father (Mt 10,40; Mk 9,37; Lk 10,16; Acts 3,20, 26; appr. 50 times in John, for the first time in John 3,17; see already Is 48,16) and the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father and Jesus (Father and Son mentioned in John 14,26; 15,26; the Son only in Lk 24,49). Therefore in all three cases the same words for 'to send', 'sending' etc. (Latin: 'missio' etc.) are used.

This is especially true for John's Gospel. In John 17,18 Jesus says to His Father: "As You have sent me into the world, even so I also sent them into the world". In John 20,21 He changes the same statement into a personal word to the disciples: "As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you". God Father sent His Son and His Spirit as the first missionaries, and the Church continues this task of world mission. This is what the Church exists for.

#### *Who sends whom in the Bible?*

- The Father sends the Son (e. g. Gal 4,4).
- The Father sends the Spirit (e. g. Gal 4,6).
- The Son sends the Spirit (e. g. John 15,26).
- The Son sends the Church (e. g. John 17,18).
- The Church sends its members (e. g. Rom 10,15).

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<sup>26</sup>For biblical evidence of 'missio dei', see my short overview in Thomas Schirrmacher. "Missio Dei: Missiologische Begriffe kurz erläutert (6)". *Evangelikale Missiologie* 9 (1993): 110

The Church becomes part of God's sending without any intermingling of God and man, as the Council of Chalcedon has shown.

This participation in God's acts and plans is not only true for 'missio dei' but for other central topics of Scripture, too. Reformed theologians have rightfully stressed, for example, that the believers and the Church become part of a covenant already existing between the Father and the Son.

This especially was stressed by one of the most famous theologians of federal theology, Herman Witsius, in his classical work published 1677.<sup>27</sup> Already within the Trinity there exists a perfect and eternal covenant. The covenant of God with men is to become a part of the covenant of God Father with God Son: "And I appoint [through covenant] to you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed [through covenant] unto me"<sup>28</sup> (Lk 22,29). The Father gave the eternal kingdom and priesthood to Jesus by way of covenant and oath (Hebr 7,21-23; Gal 3,17)<sup>29</sup>, of which the Church becomes part as Christ's body.

Reformed theologians appreciate the concept of 'missio dei' especially because it emphasizes that redemption is always God's act even though God uses men and women as His messengers. Before God's sending of His people, there was God's sending of Himself and thus Jesus is the Lord of world mission. And besides God's sending of His people is God's sending of Himself, and thus the Holy Spirit is the seal and guarantor of world mission. Only the Holy Spirit can change the heart of unbelievers. The human messenger is taken into God's plan but is not able to change any of fellow man he may talk to.

God's mission and God's covenant both show that Christianity is a religion of salvation *history* and of historical progress. The different steps and aspects of 'missio dei' do not follow each other by chance and cannot be interchanged, but follow God's wise pattern of history unfolding His king-

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<sup>27</sup>Herman Witsius. *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Men: Comprehending A Complete Body of Divinity*. 2 vol. The den Dulk Christian Foundation: Escondido (CA) & Presbyterian and Reformed: Phillipsburg (NJ), 1990 (original 1677), vol. 1. pp. 165-192

<sup>28</sup>The Greek term for "appointed" is the technical term for the cutting of a covenant, and translates the Hebrew term for cutting a covenant in the Old Testament. That the text is speaking about a covenant is obscured in some translations.

<sup>29</sup>Those three verses are discussed in *ibid.* pp. 166-167

dom step by step. 'Missio dei' does not happen again and again in cycles, but points linearly to the great goal of all history.

In the Bible, everything good comes from the Trinity<sup>30</sup>. Because the members of the Trinity speak to each other and Jesus is the Word, we can talk to each other. Because the Persons of the Trinity do not live for themselves only, but live for each other, men can be told to do the same. Because the Persons of the Trinity discuss and plan with each other, not to decide things alone is a biblical principle. In the Trinity, obedience exists without anybody being forced to do something: *love and Law are identical*. Communication, love, honoring each other and working for a goal outside of ourselves all come from the Trinity. But the Trinity has been existing eternally, before the world was created. Therefore loving, talking, helping, listening and obedience exist eternally. God does not need men to exist or to be good.

In Christianity everything is rooted in the Trinity. The center of salvation history is that God sends Himself to earth and Jesus Himself sends His Church into all the world while the Holy Spirit at the same time is sent by the Father and the Son to be the executor of world mission.

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<sup>30</sup>See Thomas Schirmacher. "Der trinitarische Gottesglaube und die monotheistischen Religionen". pp. 113-151 in Rolf Hille, Eberhard Troeger (ed.). *Die Einzigartigkeit Jesu Christi*. TVG. Brockhaus: Wuppertal, 1993 and Thomas Schirmacher. "Trinity in the Old Testament and Dialogue with the Jews and Muslims". *Calvinism Today* (now: *Christianity and Society*) 1 (1991) 1 (Jan): 24-25+21+27, reprinted as: "Trinity in the Old Testament and Dialogue with the Jews and Muslims". *Field Update: GR International* (Apr/Mai 1991): 6-8 and (Jun/Jul 1991): 5-8

## Biblical Texts on Mission – Seven Lessons<sup>31</sup>

### Missions in the Old Testament Prophets

There are many Old Testament texts which address the heathen peoples directly. The general tone of these texts is “Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts (Ps.96:7-8). This is particularly the case with the Old Testament prophets.

First we must consider those prophets who addressed non-Jewish nations exclusively. *Obadiah* writes only against Edom, *Nahum* against Nineveh, which is also the object of the prophet *Jonah*, whom we will consider later.

*Isaiah* prophesied against Babylon (Isa. 13:1-14,21. 21:1-10), against the Assyrians (Isa. 14:24-27. 31:4-9), against the Philistines (Isa. 14:28-32), Moab (Isa. 15-16), Damascus (Isa. 17:1-11), Ethiopia (Isa. 18 and 20:1-6), Egypt (Isa. 19:1-20:6), Edom (Isa. 21:11-12. 34:1-17), Arabia (Isa. 21:11-17), and the Phoenician cities Tyre and Zidon (Isa. 23).

*Ezekiel* prophesied against the Ammonites (Ez. 25:1-7), Moab (Ez. 25:8-11), Edom (Ez. 25:12-14. 35:1-15), the Philistines and the Cretes (Ez. 25:13-17), Tyre (Ez. 26:1-28:19), Zidon (Ez. 28:20-24) and Egypt (Ez. 29-32).

*Jeremia* speaks of Egypt (Jer. 46), the Philistines (Jer. 47), Moab (Jer. 48), Ammon (Jer. 49:1-6), Edom (Jer. 49:7-22), Damascus (Jer. 49:23-27), the Arabian tribes (Jer. 49:28-33), Elam (Jer. 49:34-39) and Babylon (Jer. 50-53). These prophecies are titled, “The word of the LORD ... against the Gentiles” in Jeremia 46:1. God commands the prophet to speak to a list of rulers, including Judah and 25 Gentile nations and kingdoms, “all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the earth” (Jer. 25:18-26).

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<sup>31</sup>Reprinted from “Biblical Foundations for Missions: Seven Clear Lessons”. International Journal of Frontier Missions 13 (1996) 1 (Jan-März): 33-39 and in the parts given here from “Missions in the Old Testament Prophets”. Chalcedon Report Nr. 372 (Juli 1996): 10; “Missions in the Book of Jonah”. Chalcedon Report Nr. 373 (Aug 1996): 7-8; “Missions in the Book of Joel”. Chalcedon Report Nr. 374 (Sept 1996): 17-18; “Missions in the Gospel of Matthew”. Chalcedon Report Nr. 378 (Jan 1997): 17-18

*Amos* warns Damascus (Amos 1:3-5), Gaza (Amos 1:6-8), Tyre (Amos 1:9-10), Edom (Amos 1:11-12), Ammon (Amos 1:13-15), Moab (Amos 2:1-3) and finally in the same list, Judah (Amos 2:4-5) and Israel (Amos 2:6-16). *Zephania* addresses Moab and Ammon (Zeph. 2:8-11). *Joel* speaks of Tyre, Zidon and the Philistines (Joel 4:4-8), but actually to all nations (Joel 4:2): “Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles” (Joel 4:9, compare vs. 1-13).

The dreams which *Daniel* had or interpreted (Dan. 2, 7, 8 and 11) include the great heathen world empires, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rom.

It is by far not only judgment the prophets have to preach against heathen nations but also salvation through repentance (see Nineveh in *Jonah*) or through the coming Messiah. God was always the God of all nations, so naturally, He speaks to the nations. Israel’s particular role was not to hinder salvation for all peoples, for Abraham’s calling included the proclamation, “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3), and even clearer, “all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 18:18).

For this reason, Paul and Barnabas support their evangelization among the Gentiles (Acts 13:47) with a quote from the Book of *Isaiah*, “It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth” (Isa. 49:6).

## **Missions in the Book of Jonah**

In the Book of *Jonah*, God, Who created all nations and wants to bring His salvation to all of them, demonstrates how He deals with the particularistic attitude of His people Israel, who claimed Him for themselves alone. His covenant with Abraham gave Israel a special position, but only in order to bless all nations of the earth (Gen. 18:18). The whole Book of *Nahum* treats “God’s word to Nineveh”, as well (Nahum 1:1, compare Nahum 1-3).

The Book of *Jonah* begins, as if it were a matter of course, with the command that *Jonah* proclaim God’s word to a heathen city. “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it.” It is obvious that the sin of a Gentile is also considered sin against God, for they too are under the Law of God: “for their wickedness is come up before me” (Jonah 1:2).

In spite of his disobedience, Jonah confesses to the sailors in which God he believes: “I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land” (1:9). He uses the description of God – Creator of heaven and earth – which the Jews preferred when speaking to Gentiles, and which implies God’s universal sovereignty over all human beings. (Compare 2 Kings 19:15, Isa. 37:16, 40:12, Jer. 10:11, Acts 4:24, 14:15, 17:24-25, Rev. 14:6-7).

After that, the sailors, having first prayed “every man to his god” (1:5), cry to the Lord (see their prayer in 1:14), and even “feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.” (1:16). It is very significant that the book of Jonah reports not only the conversion of the heathen in Nineveh, but also that the mariners, as a matter of course, brought sacrifices and offerings to the true God.

In his prayer in the fish’s belly (2:2-10), which includes parts of various Psalms, Jonah remembers that “Those who cling to worthless idols (literally, ‘the vapor of emptiness’) forfeit the grace that could be theirs.” (NIV) – that is, the grace that they can only receive from God. Jonah then promises to bring the Lord offerings and vows. (2:9-10).

The command to preach God’s message in Nineveh having been given in Jonah 1:2 and repeated in 3:2, its fulfillment is described with the classic terminology of missionary activity: Jonah “proclaimed” and the residents of Nineveh “believed” (3:4-5 NIV). (The prophecy of judgment does not contradict the fact that the sermon was intended to be evangelistic. Both Peter in his sermon on Pentecost [Acts 2:14-26] and Paul in Athens [Acts 17:14-31], preach judgment only to wait for the reaction of their audience before introducing the theme of grace.)

The prophet uses the term ‘to turn’, which is otherwise used to describe Israel’s turning from sin to God. In 3:5-9, the book reports a mass conversion of Gentiles that has few parallels, even in the history of Israel. The report ends with the message of 3:12, “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do, and he did it not.” For this reason, Jesus later uses Nineveh’s conversion as an accusation against His Jewish contemporaries, “For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. ... The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it. For they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and, behold a greater than Jonas is here” (Luke 11:30, 32, see also Mt 12:41). What a disgrace: the Gentiles being held up as good examples for the Jews!

Jonah was, of course, a good theologian, for he knew very well that God wanted to be merciful to the heathen as well as to Israel. The prophet's anger (4:1) arose from this knowledge, "Was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." (4:2). It becomes evident here, that Jonah had fled from his evangelistic mission for theological, not from personal reasons! As a Jew, the prophet could not endure the thought of heathens being treated with the same mercy as Israel.

Using the first verdant then withered gourd, God however illustrates His relationship to the heathen, and concludes in the final verse with an distinct justification for Old Testament missions, "But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?" (4:11, NIV).

## **Missions in Book of Joel**

The prophet Joel proclaims not only the pending judgment over Israel (Joel 1-2) but also the future judgment on the heathens who oppose His people. In both cases, the prophet also speaks of God's grace and salvation and of returning to the Lord. The two sections have the proclamation of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in Joel 3 in common. This outpouring of the Spirit is as significant for the salvation of the Jews as for that of all nations ("all flesh" Joel 2,28). For Peter, this text was fulfilled on Pentecost ("but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel"; Acts 2:16). For this reason, he quotes the whole chapter (Acts 2,17-21), beginning with the outpouring of the Spirit with miraculous signs on "all flesh" (Joel 2:28) – that is, on Jews and Gentiles, men and women, etc. (Joel 2:28), continuing with terrible judgments (Joel 2:30-31) and ending with the statement that from this time on, all can be saved by calling on the Lord, and that salvation will come out of Zion (Joel 2:32).

When Paul wanted to prove in Romans 10:11-12 that all people – not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles – can be saved through faith on Jesus Christ, he quotes not only Isaiah 28:16 ("he that believeth shall not make haste"), but also the same promise from Joel cited by Peter (Joel 2:32, "whosoever calleth on the name of the LORD shall be delivered"). In 1 Corinthians 1:2, the description, "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ" is used to define the universal church. Paul assumes in both cases that his audience knows that Joel 2 refers to "all flesh".

Paul adopts in his phrasing not only the meaning of ‘calling on the name of the Lord’ for the New Testament church from Joel, but the significance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as well, for God has “saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost ... shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our savior” (Tit.3:5-6).

In short, the apostles understood Joel to proclaim world missions, which depends on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as well as on God’s grace, which saves all without exception, who accept and call upon Him as Lord.

Dispensationalists see Pentecost only as a ‘prefulfillment’ of Joel 2 and do not expect the complete fulfillment until the Millennium. This interpretation is primarily directed against the Charismatic’s, who expect the fulfillment of the latter rain of Joel 2 in the form of a universal outburst of charismatic activity in the last days.

In my opinion, neither interpretation adequately explains the fact that Peter is preaching an immediate fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy in the Pentecostal occurrence. He includes the miraculous signs of Joel 2:28-32 in his description of the signs of Pentecost, which in the Old Testament always indicated overwhelming spiritual, mental and political upheavals, such as sufficiently accompanied the end of the Old Covenant. No stars must literally fall from Heaven, which would destroy the earth in any case, so that there could be no more history on the earth.

Note that the sermon on Pentecost uses not only this passage out of Joel, but the whole book. Joel prophecies the destruction of Jerusalem (Joel 1-2), which can only be prevented by a thorough conversion of the people and the priests (Joel 2:12-17), for God is “gracious and merciful” (Joel 2:13). Peter’s Pentecost sermon is held in the face of judgment pending over Jerusalem, which took place in 70 B. C. Peter exhorts his audience, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40), that is, the generation living in the forty years between Christ’s crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem; the last generation which had the opportunity to repent before the great catastrophe, which Jesus had also predicted (“All these things shall come upon this generation”, Mt. 23:36. See also ‘generation’ in Mt. 24:34 and 17:17).

## **Missions in the Book of Daniel**

### **Daniel as missionary to the heathen**

The prophet Daniel is of double significance for missions to all nations. On the one hand, his book takes place among the heathens and reports that they have heard of the God of Israel on an international scale. On the other

hand, he announces prophetically how God will deal with them and that His kingdom will one day include the whole world through the atoning death of His Son.

Daniel and his three friends are at the Babylonian Court (Dan 1) and, in spite of Chaldean education, keep the commands of Israel's God (Dan. 1:8-17), apparently with God's blessing (Dan. 1:15-20), so that Daniel becomes the third most powerful man in the government of three successive world empires (Dan. 1:21. 2:48-49. 5:29. 6:3, 29).

God reveals himself in a dream to the pagan ruler Nebuchadnezzar – even though the dream could only be interpreted by the Jewish missionary Daniel (Dan. 2; compare the dream in Dan. 4:7-24). The courageous testimony of Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace leads the King to an initial, wonderful confession of the God of Israel to all the world (Dan. 3:28-30) “because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort” (Dan. 3:29). Even more wonderful is Nebuchadnezzar's letter (Dan. 4:1-37) to all “people, nations and languages that dwell in all the earth” (Dan. 4:1). In this letter, the most powerful man of his time confesses how God had humiliated him. He begins and ends the document with magnificent confessions and descriptions of the living God (Dan. 4:1 2. 34-36). “His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and his dominion is from generation to generation” (Dan. 4:1 and 34): “All his works are truth and his ways judgment:” (Dan. 4:37).

In the same way, God reveals himself to Nebuchadnezzar's heir, Belshazzar (Dan. 5) through a writing on the wall, and to the Mede, Darius, through Daniel's courageous testimony in the lions' den. Darius also proclaims God's power to the whole world in an official, international circular (Dan. 6:25-28). He commands that “in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel ... for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his ... dominion shall be even unto the end” (Dan. 6:26). Like Nebuchadnezzar, he emphasizes that Daniel's God “delivereth and rescueth” (Dan. 6:27). (The final chapters of Daniel include the prophet's own dreams during the reigns of Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus).

During Daniel's lifetime, therefore, the great world empires had heard at least twice from the highest rulers, that the God of Israel is the most powerful God, the Creator and the only real Savior! Daniel was one of the most significant and successful missionaries of history!

## **God's worldwide kingdom is coming**

We have assumed that the prophet Daniel was significant for missions to all nations for two reasons, that is, 1. because the contents of his book takes place among pagans and reports that heathens have heard of the God of Israel on an international scale, and 2. because Daniel prophetically announces how God will deal with the heathen nations, and that His kingdom will encompass the whole world through the atoning death of the Son of Man. We will now consider the second point.

The future of the world's great empires and the coming of the Son of Man to save mankind are primarily described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 and in the prophet's visions in chapters 7 to 12. Although heathen nations play an important role in other prophecies in the book (Dan. 8), we will discuss here only the prophecies which deal with the relationship between the kingdoms of the world and the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Most Bible-believing theologians agree that the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2) and in Daniel's vision of the four beasts (Dan. 7) represent a succession of great world kingdoms; the Babylonians (gold, lion), the Medes and the Persians (silver, bear), the Greeks (copper, panther) and the Romans (iron, terrible beast). Both visions show that God will replace these human kingdoms in the period of Roman rule by his own eternal Kingdom – which has been realized in the New Testament Church. The theme that God is the actual Sovereign of the world – and that His Kingdom, not those of human rulers, will last eternally – permeates the whole book of Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream ends when the figure is destroyed by a stone which grows into a "great mountain and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35 and 45). Daniel explains, "In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Dan. 2:44) The Age of World Empires will therefore end with the Romans. The Kingdom of God will be established during the period of Roman rule and grow until it fills the whole earth. This kingdom will not be taken over by any other nation, either by those mentioned in the text or by the Jews – as the statement, "shall not be left to another people" is interpreted by many. Jesus – beginning with the disciples and the Church – had indeed established His Kingdom during the Roman period, and in many parables had already announced

that the Kingdom would grow until it filled the earth (for example, Mt. 13:24-35).

Daniel interprets the end of the kingdoms represented by the beasts in the same way (Dan. 7:9-14. Interpretation, Dan. 7:26-27). God decides from His throne to end the empires (Dan. 7:9-12). This occurs when the Son of Man, Jesus' own name for Himself, ascends to Heaven and there receives "dominion and glory, and a kingdom" from God, so that "all people, nations and languages, should serve him" (Dan. 7:14) This kingdom will be eternal (Dan. 7:14). "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him." (Dan. 7:27)

In the context of the prophecy of the establishment of an eternal kingdom including all peoples, Daniel 9:24-27 is significant, although its interpretation is disputed. In my opinion, this concerns the time between the reconstruction of Jerusalem (vs 24, 25) and the crucifixion of Jesus ("to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and the prophecy and to anoint the most Holy," vs 24, "shall Messiah be cut off" vs 26, the cessation of the sacrifices, vs 9:27). The period of time between the events is set at 490 years (70 year-weeks of 7 years per week), which fits arithmetically, in any case. Not until the elimination of Messiah does a prince destroy the holy city (vs 26), which initiates the "end" (vs 26) of the Age of the Jews. This occurred in 70 A.D., when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman Emperor. (Vs 27 repeats vs 26 chronologically. "He" in vs 27 would therefore be the Messiah, the "Abomination of desolation" the destruction of the Temple; see Mt. 24:15).

## **Old Testament Arguments for New Testament Missions**

Although the apostles spoke of Jesus' commandment several times after Pentecost, (Acts 1:2. 10:42). they never cited the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20. Mk.16:15-16). Did the early church agree universally on preaching the Gospel to all peoples. so that there was no need to mention Christ's command? On the contrary, missions to the Gentiles began only very slowly and was for a long time very controversial. Take the Apostolic Council and the Epistle to the Galatians, for example.

In studying the New Testament discussions on the justification of missions, we discover that wherever we would have quoted the Great Com-

mission, the apostles referred to the Old Testament. The Great Commission is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, a signal that the long-announced plan was now to be set into action. The Letter to the Romans, particularly Chapter 15 is an obvious example.<sup>32</sup>

The promise made to the patriarchs, that all nations would be blessed in them (Gen. 12:3. 18:18. 22:17. 26:4. 28:14), is also used repeatedly to support the evangelization of non-Jewish peoples (Lk. 1:54-55, 72. Acts 3:25-26. Rom. 4:13-25. Eph. 3:3-4. Gal. 3:7-9, 14. Heb. 6:13-20. 11:12).

Several examples will demonstrate that New Testament Missions were based on Old Testament teaching.

In Acts 13:46-49, Paul and Barnabas, having been rejected by the Jews in Antioch, explain their decision to preach to the Gentiles in future by citing Isaiah 49:6 (Acts 13:47) “For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.”

James uses Amos 9:11-12 in his closing speech at the Apostolic Council to justify Paul’s right to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 15:13-21. See Is. 61:4. Ps. 22:27-28. Zech. 8:22). He believes the Church to be the “tabernacle of David that is fallen”, which will join the remnant of Judah with the heathens.

Peter combines the Great Commission with a reference to the Old Testament as an argument for his preaching the Gospel to the Gentile, Cornelius. “And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” (Acts 10:42-43)

For this reason, we are not surprised that the Great Commission takes on a different form in Luke than in Matthew and Mark, and that Jesus’ command in Luke is derived directly from the Old Testament. In Luke 24:43-49, Jesus says to the disciples, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved

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<sup>32</sup>Compare “Romans as a Charter of World Missions: A Lesson in the Relation of Systematic Theology and Missiology”. *Chalcedon Report* No 342 (Jan 1994): p. 43-47.

Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” According to Jesus’ own words, all parts of the Old Testament speak not only of His coming, as well as of the cross and the resurrection, but also of world missions: forgiveness must also be preached to all nations.

## Missions in the Gospel of John

When studying the significance of missionary thought in the Gospel of John, there are four points of interest.

### 1. Missio Dei

In the Gospel of John, Jesus’ sending of His disciples into the world is understood to be a continuation of His commission from His Father (about fifty times in John, the first time 3:17, esp. 10:16, 17:18,21 and 23, compare 14:31) and the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father and Jesus (John 14:26, 15:26, Luke 24:49). For this reason, John uses the same word, ‘to send’, (Latin: ‘missio’) both times. In John 17:18-23, Jesus says, “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” In John 20:21, He changes this phrase into a personal address, “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” In His prayer for the disciples of chapter 17, He reports to His Father that He has given them God’s Word, and has prepared them to carry the message to the world.

### 2. The Gospel of John as evangelistic tract

Much attention has been paid to this gospel’s character as an evangelistic tract, that is, as a text for people who have not yet come to believe in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as Savior and Light of the World. We cannot consider here the discussion between Wilhelm Oehler, who held this gospel to have been written for the world,<sup>33</sup> that is, for the Non-Jew, or for Israel, as

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<sup>33</sup>Oehler, Wilhelm. *Das Johannesevangelium eine Missionsschrift für die Welt*, C. Bertelsmann, Gütersloh, 1936.

Oehler, Wilhelm. *Zum Missionscharakter des Johannesevangeliums*, Beiträge zu Förderung christlicher Theologie, Reihe 1, No 43, pp. 435-546, 1950.

Karl Bornhäuser interprets it.<sup>34</sup> I believe that John's emphasis on Jesus' coming for the whole world, as Light of the World, etc, supports the theory that it was intended to be a 'tract for the heathen'. (See point 4).

### 3. Non-Jews in the Gospel of John

After Jesus' long discussion with Nicodemus, representative of Jewish spirituality (John 3:1-26), John had no qualms to continue with a long conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42). While John does not tell us how Nicodemus reacted to Jesus' words, the depiction of the incident at the well ends with the confession of a whole Samaritan city, "that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world" (4:42). Jesus had made it clear to the woman that with His coming, the question of where one was to worship God had become insignificant, but that "the true worshipper," should worship Him in "spirit and in truth," therefore providing the possibility that the Gentiles who lived far away from Jerusalem could now honor God just as the Jews could.

### 4. The "World" as Goal of Jesus' Activity

John's strong emphasis that Jesus is not only the Savior of the Jews, but of all peoples, and that the disciples, as His ambassadors, were to preach the Gospel to all nations, becomes particularly apparent when one observes all occurrences in the book of the word, 'the world'. The following list includes about half of the occurrences.

The usage of the word, 'world', with few exceptions, (12:19, for example) always means either the whole of human creation or all those who rebel against God. (The term 'world' is used with such a wide scale of possible meanings, that only examples can be mentioned here.)

We have already examined those texts in which Jesus proclaims that His Father had sent Him into the world, and that He now sends His disciples into the world. A close look at the context of the central role of the 'Missio Dei' shows how strongly both Jesus and John wish the whole world to believe in Jesus Christ. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world ... Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one

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<sup>34</sup>Bornhäuser, Karl. *Das Johannesevangelium eine Missionsschrift für Israel*, Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie, Reihe 2, Band 15, C. Bertelsmann, Gütersloh, 1928.

in us; that the world may believe that thou has sent me ... that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou has sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (17:18-23).

That Jesus’ commission is meant not only for Israel, but for the ‘World’ is further developed by the repeated insistence that Jesus’ significance in His offices (king, priest, prophet, Son of God, Christ, sacrificial lamb), His properties (Truth) and in central imagery (bread, light) is intended for the whole world.

John emphasizes most often that Jesus is the “Light of the World” (in Jesus’ description of Himself, 8:12, 9:5, similarly in 1:9, 3:19, 11:9, 12:46). Jesus says, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (8:12). At the very beginning of the gospel, John, speaking of the ‘Word’, that is of Jesus, says, “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him and the world knew him not” (1:9-10).

Jesus tells Pilate, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (18:37). John emphasizes repeatedly that Jesus had come into the ‘world’, that is, into the creation rebelling against God on the one hand, and all people, not just to Israel, on the other. “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world” (16:28). Jesus is the Bread that comes from Heaven, so that men may live eternally, for He will give His body “for the life of the world” (6:51). The divine Bread which has come down from Heaven “giveth life unto the world.” (6:33). Jesus is the ‘Christ’ and the ‘Son of God’ “which should come into the world” (11:27) as Martha confesses and believes. He is the prophet that “should come into the world” (6:14). He has come to judgment (9:39), although He has not come to judge, but to save the world (12:47). His well-known words to Nicodemus underline this idea, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son so that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved” (3:16-17).

Nor does John the Baptists’ early confession concern only the Jews, although his term, ‘the lamb’, calls to mind a central Jewish, Old Testament thought, for he says, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (1:29). We have already considered the confession of the Samaritans, that Jesus is “indeed ... the Savior of the world” (4:42).

The activity of the Holy Spirit concerns the whole world, not only the Jews, when Jesus promises the Spirit's coming and the success of world missions. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (16:8).

## **Missions in the Gospel of Matthew**

The Great Commission (Mt. 28,16-20) is not only the end of the Gospel of Matthew, it is also its climax and its goal. For this reason, Matthew emphasizes from the first chapter on that the Good News is also for the heathen. This particular Gospel was written for Jewish Christians. This is clearly demonstrated in the book itself and the Early Church unanimously reports the same. That Matthew should so emphasize missions, demonstrates that Jesus was already the Salvation of the Gentiles from the very beginning – that is from his birth.

According to Mt. 5:14, Christ's disciples are "the salt of the world", that is of the Cosmos, not only of the Jewish homeland, as in the case of "the salt of the land (or of the earth)" in Mt. 4:13. Similarly, the "field" which God sows in Mt. 13:38 is the whole "world". "This gospel shall be preached in the whole world" (Mt. 26:13).

The harvest in Mt. 9:37-38 is great, so that the disciples must ask God for more laborers, for "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (Mt. 24:14).

In Mt. 25:31-46, when the heathen nations appear before the throne of the Son of Man, some are lost and others saved (the "blessed of My Father", vs 34). For this reason, the disciples will "be hated of all nations" (Mt. 24:9).

In Mt.12:18-21, Matthew quotes a prophecy from Isaiah (Isa. 4:1-4) that the Messiah will "shew judgment to the Gentiles" and that "in his name shall the Gentiles trust." (Compare a similar quote Isa. 8:23 and 9:1 in Mt. 4:13-17.)

The "nations", whom Mt.28:18 describes as recipients of the proclamation of the Gospel, have therefore already been mentioned in the whole book (approximately half of the examples of the word Gentiles or nations in Matthew have been mentioned).

Matthew's genealogy of Jesus (Mt. 1:1-7) mentions women only when they were Gentiles! The Canaanite Tamar (Mt. 1:3. Gen 38) and the Hittite Bathsheba (in Mt. 1:6, he calls her "the wife of Uria" rather than nam-

ing her, because she was a Hittite only by marriage) were cases of adultery. Two of the women, however, were Gentiles who had come to believe in the living God of Israel. The former prostitute, Rahab, (Mt. 1:5) had made a covenant with the Israelite spies and was saved from the destruction of Jericho (Josh. 2). Because she had taken the God of Israel to be her own God, she could be married to Salma (Mt. 1:5). Ruth (Mt1:4) had been born a Moabite (Ruth 1:4), and had thus been cut off from the fellowship with the people of God (Deut. 23:4). However, because of her vow “thy people shall be my people and thy God my God” (Ruth 1:16), she was able to marry Boaz and become the best-known ancestress of David and of Jesus.

What an affront to Matthew’s Jewish contemporaries, to find heathen women in Jesus’ genealogical table! He must have mentioned them on purpose, in order to show that the very purpose of Israel’s history was to bring salvation and blessing to the Gentiles! (Compare Gen.12:3. 18:18).

While Luke, a Gentile, mentions the Jewish shepherds in the Christmas story as the first visitors to the newborn Savior of the world (Lk. 2), Matthew ignores them and reports the journey of the heathen Wise Men of the East, who believed, unlike the educated Jewish scribes, and travelled to Bethlehem and worshipped (Mt. 2:1-12).

That Gentiles were often more likely to believe than were the Jews, is an unbroken thread in the Gospel of Matthew. The following examples must have been seemed as insulting to his Jewish readers as Jesus’ own statements were to his hearers.

- Jesus had to flee his homeland and seek refuge in Egypt – of all places (Mt. 2:13-15)!
- In Mt. 4 13-17 the writer reports that Jesus began his call to repentance in heathen Galilee, in order to fulfill the prophecy in Isa. 28:23. 9:2, that “the people what walked in great darkness” that is, in the above mentioned Gentile territory, “have seen a great light” – namely Jesus (Mt. 4:15-16).
- Mt. 8:5-13 describes a heathen centurion, who has come to believe in Jesus, who says: “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (vs 10) and adds that many people from all the corners of the earth will feast with the patriarchs in Heaven, while many Jews (“children of the kingdom”) will be cast out (vs 12-13).
- Shortly after, Matthew reports that Jesus said of the Jewish cities that rejected His messengers (Mt. 10:15), “Verily, I say unto you, it

shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.”

- A similar statement may be found in the following chapter (Mt. 11:20-24) for Tyre and Sidon, symbols of paganism as were Sodom and Gomorrah, which would have repented, had Jesus done such miracles there as He had done in Jewish cities.
- In Mt. 15:21-28, Jesus is on Gentile territory again and meets a believing Canaanite woman, who is willing to be satisfied with Israel’s leftovers and with the Messiah.
- In Mt. 16:4, He reminds the Pharisees of the “sign of Jonah” that had been understood by the Gentiles (see “Missions in Jona”).
- In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16), the Jews would seem to be the first who are last and the Gentiles to be the last who are first.
- This idea is repeated more strongly in the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Mt. 21:33-46), in which the vineyard is taken from the original tenants, the Jews, and given to others, the Gentiles (Mt. 21:43), as the chief priests had to realize, to their own condemnation (Mt. 21,41, 45).
- The parable of the two sons (Mt. 21:28-32) carries the same message, as it is the son who said no but finally obeys (the Gentile Christians) who does the will of his father, not the son who officially says ‘Yes’, but de facto is disobedient.
- This message recurs once more in the parable of the wedding guests (Mt. 22:1-14), for here again, the original guests, the Jews, are rejected in favor of the people from the highways, the Gentiles, who certainly did not belong there.

The message that the Gentiles could be grafted onto the olive tree of Israel’s salvation history through the cutting off of the Jews (Rom 11:11-24) – which does not contradict the doctrine of the repentance of Israel in the future – had, therefore, been preached by Jesus again and again, and Matthew, demonstrating that faith is the essential factor, not nationality, held up the mirror to his Jewish contemporaries.



## **Biblical Reasons for Evangelical Missions: 31 Propositions<sup>35</sup>**

Note 1. The following propositions are not intended to present the author's own theological position, but to formulate Biblical justifications for a doctrine common to the majority of Evangelical missiologists. The author is aware that such a generalization can never satisfactorily reflect all views, and that his own opinion will always be evident. For this reason, he has chosen the title, "Biblical Reasons" rather than "the Biblical Reasons", as if he represented Evangelical missiology in general.

Note 2: The following propositions do not intent to present a summary of Christian doctrine. They assume acceptance of the Apostolic Creed, of the great dogmas of the Early Church (the Trinity, Jesus truly man and truly God) and of the Soteriology of the Reformation (Salvation by Grace and the Scriptures as sole authority for faith and salvation), etc.

### **Part I: World Missions are an essential part of Christianity**

Proposition 1: God was the first missionary.

God was and is the first missionary. After the Fall of Man, the history of mankind appeared to come to an end. God, however, did not leave things as they were, but came Himself, in His grace and mercy, to the Garden of Eden to seek Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:8-9). He proclaimed to them both the Judgment and Salvation to come (Gen. 3:14-21).

Proposition 2: Jesus is the prototype of the missionary.

God the Father sent Jesus as a human being to earth to carry the punishment on the cross, and to bring about and proclaim salvation. Before the Creation (Eph. 1:4), God had already decided not to abandon mankind to his fate, but to send Himself into the world as a missionary in Jesus (John 3:16).

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<sup>35</sup>This propositions were presented as a common formulation of evangelical missiology to the tenth jubilee of the journal "Evangelikale Missiologie" of the "Association of German evangelical missiologists" (AfeM) in 1994 and published in the jubilee edition of this magazine as well as several other evangelical magazines in the German speaking world and the Netherlands. This is an updated version, making 31 propositions out of the original 30.

Proposition 3: The mission of Christ's church is rooted in God's original sending of Himself into the world as a missionary (*Missio Dei*).

The New Testament sees the sending of the disciples (the apostles) as the direct continuation of God's sending of Christ (Mt. 10:40, Mk. 9:37, Luk. 10:16, Acts 3:20, 26; about 50 times in the Gospel of John; first in Jn. 3:17. See Is. 48:16) and of the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26, 15:26, Luk. 24:49). In John 17:18, Jesus says, "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world". In John 20:21, he addresses the disciples personally, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you". God the Father sends His Son and His Spirit as the first missionaries. The church carries on this task through world missions. This is the reason for the existence of the New Testament church. Christian missions are rooted in the triune God and in His sending of Himself.

Proposition 4: Jesus chose the Twelve only for the purpose of preparing them for their commission in the world.

Jesus chose the disciples "that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach" (Mk. 3:13). From the very beginning, the goal of their intensive training through living and working with Him was to prepare them for the Great Commission. Their training as missionaries was not arbitrary, but clearly according to His deliberate plan. Take, for example, the following steps. 1). Jesus first preached alone; 2). then preached while the disciples observed; 3). then let the disciples preach while He observed. 4). Next, He sent them out for a short mission (Mt. 10:1-11, Mk. 6:7-13, Luk. 9:1-6); discusses the results with them and then finally; 5). sends them out alone (although He is, as resurrected Lord, still with them. Mt. 28:20). The disciples then began to do the same with other Christians. Thus, training towards independence is a central element of missions.

Proposition 5: Jesus' most important concern between the resurrection and His ascent into Heaven was world missions.

All four Gospels include some form of the Great Commission given in the period of time following the resurrection (Mt. 28:16-20, Mk. 16:15-20, Luk. 24:13-53, particularly vs. 44-49, Jn. 20:11-23, particularly vs. 21-23, Acts 1:4-11). The various commissions indicate that Jesus proclaimed world missions, made possible by His sacrificial death on the Cross, for the most important aspect of His suffering, death and resurrection.

Proposition 6: Pentecost demonstrates that world missions in the power of the Spirit is the most significant characteristic of Christ's church.

Jesus had often commanded the disciples to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit before beginning to evangelize the peoples of the world (Mk. 16:15-20, Acts 1:4-11). The Spirit was to come order to convince the world of the Gospel in Jesus' place (Jn. 16:7-11). With the coming of the Spirit, both the New Testament church and world missions had their beginning. On the day of Pentecost, as the apostles began to speak in the languages of hearers from different parts of the whole world, and as their audience was able, to understand them, it became clear that the Gospel was able through the power of the Holy Spirit, to overcome all barriers of culture and language.

Proposition 7: Without the Holy Spirit, all world missions and mission strategies would be futile and come to nothing.

Only the Holy Spirit can convict men of their guilt (John 16:7-10), lead them into the knowledge of God and salvation through Jesus and make them new creatures in Christ (John 3:5). Although God permits Christians to take part in world missions and wants them to use their intellect in order to reach others (see e. g. Pauls many detailed travel plans as well as his general strategy, e. g. in Rom. 1+15), mission strategies can only be successful when God has decided to let them succeed (1 Cor. 12:4-6; Rom. 1:13).

Proposition 8: Jesus guaranteed the success of world missions as the result of His invisible Lordship. The success of world missions confirms His Lordship.

Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew's Gospel justifies world missions by the assurance, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18), and that he will always be with His church (Mt. 28:20). Thus, the Great Commission is not only an assignment but also a promise. Jesus Himself carries the responsibility for discipling all nations, for, He says, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18).

The Book of Revelations proclaims repeatedly that people of all languages and cultures belong to the numberless congregation of the re-

deemed. “And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God’” (Rev. 5:9-10. See also Rev. 7:9, 10:11, 14:6).

Proposition 9: Expansion is a characteristic of the Kingdom of Heaven, as is made clear especially in prophetic imagery in the Book of Daniel and in Jesus’ parables.

Nebukadnezars dream ends with a stone rolling down from Heaven to destroy the statue of the empires, and then to become a great mountain which filled the earth. Daniel comments, “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (Dan. 2:34-35, 44). Similarly, Daniel also dreams of empires portrayed as beasts (Dan. 7:9-14, 26-27). These kingdoms come to an end when the Son of Man, later Jesus’ name for Himself, ascends to Heaven (the Ascension of Christ), where He receives “dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him” (Dan. 7:14). This kingdom will be eternal (Dan. 7:14, 27).

As a matter of fact, Jesus established His kingdom, beginning with the disciples and the Church, in the time of the Roman Empire. In many parables Jesus prophesied that His kingdom will grow until it fills the whole earth (e. g. the parable of the weeds: Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43; the parable of the mustard seed: Mt. 13:31-32; the parable of the yeast: Mt. 13:33-35). The promise of growth in both Testaments is universal, internal and external, spiritual and numerical, for the individual and for the group.

The internal and external growth of the Kingdom of Heaven and of the Church of Jesus Christ does not mean that every single Christian church, denomination or group automatically takes part in this expansion. God sometimes disciplines His Church or lets unfaithful churches die out (see Rev. 2:5; Rom. 11:20-21).

Proposition 10: The growth and the final success of the Kingdom of Heaven does not exclude, but includes the suffering of the Church of Jesus Christ. Christianity does not insure a life without problems.

Paul is not arrogant because of His “peace with God” through the mercy of Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1-2), but writes: “We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance ... because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit ...” (Rom 5:3-5).

The parable of the wheat and the tares (Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43), which describes the growth of the Kingdom of God, demonstrates that not only the Kingdom of God, but also the kingdom of evil will mature. The weeds, however, can only last until the wheat has ripened. The evil may only grow because God grows his church. If there would be no church in the world, the world would be ready for final judgment (cf. Gen. 18:22-23).

Proposition 11: The New Testament justifies world missions not so much with the Great Commission, but with quotations from the Old Testament.

In studying the New Testament discussion on the justification of world missions, one realizes that, in nearly all cases, the Old Testament is quoted instead of the Great Commission, which was the starting signal that God’s plan, which had already been announced and prepared, was now to go ahead. The Great Commission is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. The whole book of Romans, especially Chapter 15, is an obvious example because Paul quotes the Old Testament continuously in this letter in defense of missions.

When Paul and Barnabas had been rejected by the Jews, and wanted to justify preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles of Antioch instead, they did not cite the Great Commission given by Jesus, but the Great Commission to Isaiah, “For so the LORD has commanded us: ‘I have set You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be for salvation to the ends of the earth’” (Acts 13:46-49, quoting Is. 49:6). The context of the verse in Isaiah shows that the apostles were appealing to an Old Testament Commission, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel, I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth”.

James also concluded the council of Jerusalem by justifying Paul's plan to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles with Amos 9:11-12 (Compare Is. 61:4, Ps. 22:27-28, Zech. 8:22), in which the tabernacle of David – for James the Church – is rebuilt by adding the Gentiles to the remnant of Judah. Peter defends the conversion of Cornelius with a reference to the Old Testament, “And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remissions of sins” (Acts 10:42-43).

**Proposition 12:** The Old Testament justification for New Testament missions demonstrates that world missions are a direct continuation of God's activity from the Fall of Man and the election of Abraham on.

Jesus confirmed the Old Testament justification for New Testament missions in the Great Commission of Luke. “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.’” (Luke 24:44-48) According to these words, all parts of the Old Testament speak not only of His coming and of the Cross and the resurrection, but expressly also of world missions: forgiveness must be preached to all nations.

**Proposition 13:** The choosing (election) of the Old Testament covenant people was made with the thought of all nations in mind, so that the theme of world missions was already present in the Old Testament.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were elected, so that all nations of the earth should be blessed through them. (Gen. 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14). The promise made to the patriarchs is thus referred to in the New Testament as justification for the evangelization of non-Jews (Luk. 1:54-55, Acts 3:25-26, Rom. 4:13-25, Eph. 3:3-4, Gal. 3:7-9, 14, Heb. 6:13-20, 11:12).

Proposition 14: For this reason, the Old Testament includes many examples of non-Jews who heard God's message from Jews and came to a saving faith in the one true God. At the same time, many texts in the Old Testament prophetic books are addressed to heathen nations.

The Book of Ruth, for example, reports the conversion of a heathen, the Book of Jonah the prophet's successful missionary journey to Nineveh. Almost all Old Testament prophets call heathen nations to repentance. Naaman, the Syrian, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law and the prostitute, Rahab are only three examples of heathens converted to the Living God. The Old Testament frequently records proclamations of world rulers which praise God and are directed to all peoples (above all in Ezra, Nehemia, Esther and Daniel).

Proposition 15: Thus, world missions cannot be divorced from the Old Testament, from the history of the people of Israel and from the Old Testament salvation history but must be practiced and interpreted in the light of its teaching.

Paul confirms this in Romans 9-11. The relationship between world missions and the Jewish people has two sides: first, the election of the Jews, and second, their disobedience, "Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers" (Rom. 11:28). Paul shows that the future conversion of the Jews to their Messiah, Jesus Christ, will have immeasurably positive effects on the evangelization of all nations (Rom. 11:15,24-26).

Proposition 16: The book of Romans shows that world missions must be rooted in sound, thorough Biblical teaching, and that healthy, systematic Biblical teaching always leads to world missions.

Paul wrote the book of Romans in the midst of mission work and justifies the necessity of the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel. At the same time, the Book of Romans is the most systematic Biblical presentation of the Gospel and the Christian creed in the Bible. In the book of Romans, Paul plans to come to Rome (Rom. 1:14-17), because he wants to proclaim the Gospel to all men without exception, regardless of language, culture and race ("Greeks and non-Greeks"), education or social class ("the wise and the foolish"). Following this description of his missionary plans, he begins his 'actual' subject. The well-known verses which introduce his

doctrine (Rom. 1:16-17), begin with “For ...”. At the end of his letter (Rom 15,14-16,27) Paul returns to his concrete missions plans. The chapters between are simply a dogmatic justification of his plans. The ‘obedience of faith’ must be delineated first, so that it can be proclaimed to all nations.

Whoever practices missions only pragmatically, without reference to ‘doctrine’, does so in his own name, because he ignores God’s directions. Whoever teaches ‘doctrine’ without reference to missions, teaches his own ideas and ignores the reasons why God has given for His Word.

## **Part II. Missions and Cultural Diversity**

Proposition 17: The variety of peoples and cultures is not the result of sin, but was planned by God. According the Scripture, we need to reject only those elements of a culture which expressly contradict His holy will.

Cultural diversity is neither negative nor the consequence of God’s judgment by means of the confusion of languages following the erection of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). By confusing man’s languages, God enforced His own command, to scatter all over the earth (“fill the earth”, Gen. 1:28, 9:1), which automatically resulted in the division of mankind into a multitude of families and nations, as well as professions, capabilities and cultures. In building the Tower of Babel, man tried to establish a single, uniform worldwide culture. As the Book of Revelation and the Anti-christ in both Testaments make clear, this has always been Satan’s plan. The ‘Beast’ of Revelation receives his power from the ‘Dragon’: “It was granted to him to make war ... And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation” (Rev. 13:1-10). God, however, wants neither a single uniform city, a single worldwide government, nor a worldwide uniform Humanism. His Word guarantees the unity of the world, but not any visible earthly structure. He “scattered” mankind “over all the earth” (Gen 11:9).

From the sons of Noah onwards “the whole earth became inhabited” (Gen 9:19) and people “spread out ... according to their nations” (Gen. 10:5, cf. 10:32). God is therefore Creator of all nationalities, because “from one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live” (Acts 17:26, similarly in Deut. 32:8, Ps. 74:17).

Proposition 18: Christians are free from any cultural pressure. They do not have to accept any human tradition or commandment besides those given by God.

This is especially evident in Mark 7:1-13, where Jesus criticises the Pharisees for raising their own human culture to the level of divine Law.

Proposition 19: Christians are able to judge other cultures according to Biblical standards, once they have learned to distinguish between their own culture (even their own Christian culture) and the overall valid commandments of God.

Mark 7:1-13 explains this best. The Pharisees had honorable, pious motives for creating obligatory regulations in addition to God's Law which many of these rules actually contradicted. Jesus severely criticizes the sect for equating their own customs with divine Law: "They serve me in vain, because they teach commandments of men" (Mark 7,7; Mat. 15:9).

Proposition 20: Because Christians belong to Christ alone and must submit to His Word alone, they can view their own culture and that of other people's critically, but are obliged by love to adjust to other's cultures.

In 1 Cor. 9:19-23, Paul explains the necessity of adjusting to other cultures while evangelizing: "For through I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law, to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you."

A Christian can be so heavily involved in his own culture, that he does not realize that at the best he is not understood and at the worst he is a "barrier" (1 Cor. 9:12) for others to understand the Gospel.

Proposition 21: We are not only responsible to tell other people the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, but also to insure that people have understood the message.

This is the reason, why the Bible other than the Quran may be translated into every language and that the Gospel may and should be proclaimed in every dialect and cultural form.

Proposition 22: World missions does not ignore the existing social situation, but use it strategically. For this reason, Paul founded churches at the great merchant junctions and population centers, left the evangelization of the surrounding areas to these churches and moved on to unreached areas by the Gospel to found new churches.

Paul usually founded churches in the great cultural centers, soon appointed elders trained by him to lead the churches, and then moved on, leaving the penetration of the surrounding areas with the Gospel to the new church. He writes to the Thessalonians, "... you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything" (1 Thess. 1:7-8).

When Paul says, "from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:19), he does not mean that he had proclaimed the Gospel to every individual in the area, but that he had founded churches in strategic places. This is also true of the statement that he has no place in these parts (Rom. 15:23). He seeks not areas where Christ is already named, nor where others had preached (Rom. 15:20-21), but where no one had proclaimed the Gospel and where there were no churches.

Proposition 23: All partiality – whether due to culture, economic status or for any other reason – contradicts God's character and the Christian faith.

Because God is completely impartial, both the State and the New Testament church must be impartial (Deut.1:17, 10:17-18, 16:18-20, 2 Chr. 19:7, Prov. 18:5, 24:23, Job 13:10, Col. 3:25, Eph.6:9, Jas. 2:1-12). James writes, "my brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality ... If you really fulfill the royal law according

to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors ... So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty” (Jas. 2:1, 8-9, 12).

Proposition 24: Dialogue is a Christian virtue when it means peaceful discussion, honest, patient listening and learning from others.

A dialogue between convinced Christians and believers in other religions is possible, insofar as Christians are willing to speak peacefully about their faith with others (“always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you but with meekness and fear”, 1 Pet. 3:15) and listen to others (Jas. 1:19). They wish to learn from others’ experiences in many aspects of life (See esp. the Book of Proverbs) and are willing to call themselves and their behavior into question.

Proposition 25: Dialogue which surrenders Christianity’s assertion of absolute truth or abandons world missions is inconceivable, for it gives up Christianity itself.

Dialogue which requires the Christian to temporarily or principally waive the claims of absolute truth about Jesus Christ (John 14:6), the Gospel (Rom. 1:16-17, 2:16) or the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Heb. 4:12-13, John 17:17, so that Biblical revelation is equated with the beliefs of other religions, cannot be reconciled with Christian missions or with the essence of Christianity itself.

Christianity’s assertion of absolute authority is above all expressed in the doctrines of the Last Judgment and of Eternal Life. Hebrews 6:1-2 describes the “resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment” as two of the six most important elements of our faith, as the Apostolic Creed says, “... from whence he will return to judge both the quick and the dead”.

### **Part III. Conversion and Social Change**

Proposition 26: Peace between the individual and God – personal salvation through the merciful atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross – is the first and foremost goal of missions and the prerequisite out of which all others developed.

In Mt. 16:26, Jesus expressed clearly that the salvation of the soul is more important than anything else: “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul accordingly explains why Jews and Gentiles are lost in sin, and why only Jesus could achieve salvation. Romans 5:1-2 concludes, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand ...”. Only then, does he turn to questions of personal, social, cultural and political ethics.

**Proposition 27:** The priority of the goal of personal salvation for missions does not eliminate further goals, but lends them their significance

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 includes the command to make all men “pupils” (disciples). The first step is personal conviction and repentance. Baptism in the Name of the Trinity must be experienced personally. Still, this is the way God has chosen to win whole ‘nations’. Thus, the goal of converting high percentage of a people does not contradict the need for personal repentance.

Conversion does not mark the conclusion, but the beginning of personal renewal, as well as the renewal of the family, church, economics, state and society. Every individual should become a pupil (‘disciple’) of Jesus Christ. In the command to teach “them to obey everything I have commanded you”, the Great Commission includes the exhortation to teach the whole range of biblical ethics. In transforming the individual, his everyday life and his environment, mission overcomes sinful structures and visible injustice.

**Proposition 28:** Social service within the Christian church, particularly in view of cultural differences, was institutionalized from the very beginning in the office of deacon.

The appointment of deacons in Acts 6 and the New Testament church in general is of great significance. It is remarkable, that besides the offices of overseers (bishops) and elders (presbyters), who were responsible for leadership and teaching, the church had only one other office, that of the deacons (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-10) and the deaconesses (Rom. 16:1; 1 Tim 3:11-13), whose duties were exclusively social in nature. The social responsibility of the church for its members is so institutionalized in the of-

fice of the deacons, that a church without them is just as unthinkable as a church without leadership or Biblical teaching.

The church carries fully the social responsibility for its own members, insofar as the individual's family is unable to do so (1 Tim. 5:1-4). This duty consists in more than donations or symbolic assistance for a few, but in responsibility for all.

The charge in Matthew 25:45, to help the least of the brothers, is also to be understood in this sense. The 'brothers' are Jesus' brothers and sisters-believers, not just anyone. Otherwise, this would be the only text in the New Testament which uses the term 'brother' metaphorically to indicate anyone other than church members and fellow Christians.

**Proposition 29:** Acts 6 makes social responsibility an important role of the church, but the proclamation of God's word and prayer remain the foremost tasks, institutionalized in the office of elder and apostle.

The apostles' reason for refusing the "responsibility" (Acts 6:3) for support of the widows in addition to their other duties was so that they could "... give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). The service of the presbyters and overseers is more important than that of the deacons, as in the Old Testament the service of the priests was more important than that of the Levites. Prayer and preaching take priority over social engagement. The Word and prayer belong together. Even Samuel's ministry was prayer and teaching (1 Sam. 12:23).

**Proposition 30:** Christians' social responsibility for their brethren must be distinguished from their social responsibility towards others.

Social help for the brethren is a duty institutionalized in the office of deacons, whereas social service is offered to others symbolically, where possible and insofar as means are available. Additionally, the person who requests help should not be the cause for his need. "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in the power of your hand to do so" (Prov. 3:27). Galatians 6:10 challenges believers to serve all men, but emphasizes the priority of fellow believers, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith".

Because they wish to express God's love towards their enemies, and are to bless those who curse them (Rom. 12:14), Christians help impartially

wherever they can. They are willing to assist in situations of concrete need, as well as to expose sinful social structures by use of the Scriptures, and change them when possible, but without force.

Proposition 31: Mission work begins within the Christian church and family by being an example, though education and by teaching the Word of God to the next generation.

The proclamation of God's word to people outside of the church must not take place at the cost of the Christian family. A sound Christian family is a prerequisite for all leading positions in the New Testament church (1 Tim. 3:4-5, 12-13, Tit. 1:6-7). When Christian parents relinquish the raising of their children to others, they can give up their endeavors to influence the Church, the State, the economy and society, for they have abandoned the best road to achieving that goal.

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## **An Evangelical View of Missions – A Summary (1995)**

1. The sending of the church of Jesus Christ goes back to the fact that God has sent himself as a missionary into the world ('Missio Dei'). In the NT the sending of the disciples/apostles by Jesus is understood as a direct continuation of the sending of Jesus by his Father (John 17,18; 20,21; Matthew 10,40; Mark 9,37 etc.) as well as the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father and Jesus (John 14,26; 15,26 etc.). Therefore, Christian missions are rooted in the triune God and God's sending of Himself.

2. The success of world missions as a result of the invisible ruling of Jesus Christ has been guaranteed by Jesus Himself (Mt 16,18; Rev 5,9-10; 7,9; 10,11; 11,9; 13,7; 14,6; 17,15). The success of world missions certifies the rule of Jesus. In the Great Commission according to Matthew, Jesus backs up world missions by stating that he has "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matth 28,18) and that he will be with his church always (Matth 28,20). According to this, the Great Commission is not only command but also promise and prophecy.

3. Expansion is a characteristic of the Kingdom of Heaven, as is made clear especially in the prophetic books (Dan 2,34-35, 44; 7,9-14, 26-27; 7,14, 27), as well as by Jesus' sayings. In many parables Jesus prophesied that His kingdom will grow until it fills the whole earth (e. g. the parable of the weeds: Matthew 13,24-30, 36-43; the parable of the mustard seed: Matthew 13, 31-32; the parable of the yeast: Matthew 13,33-35). The inward and outward growth of the Kingdom of Heaven and of the Church of Jesus Christ does not mean automatically that every single Christian church, denomination or group takes part in this expansion. God can discipline His Church or let unfaithful churches die out (see Rev 2,5; Rom 11,20-21).

4. Without the Holy Spirit, all world missions and every mission strategy would be futile and come to nothing. Only the Holy Spirit can convict men of their guilt (John 16,7-10), lead them into the knowledge of God and salvation by Jesus and make them new creatures in Christ (John 3,5). Although God let Christians take part in world missions and wants them to use their intellect, in order to reach other people, such mission strategies can only be successful if God has decided to let them be successful (1Cor 12,4-6).

5. The growth and the success of the Kingdom of Heaven in the end does not exclude, but include the suffering of the Church of Jesus Christ. The Christian creed is not only meant for times without problems. Paul does not become arrogant because of His peace with God through the mercy of Jesus Christ (Rom 5,1-2), but writes: “We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance ... because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit ...” (Rom 5,3-5).

6. In the NT world missions are above all not justified by quoting the Great Commission, but by quotations from the OT. If we study the NT discussion on the justification of world mission, one can be astonished to realize that in most cases the OT is quoted instead of the Great Commission. The Great Commission is the fulfillment of the OT. The whole book of Romans and especially Romans 15 are an obvious example. When Paul and Barnabas wanted to prove that from now on they should preach the gospel to the Gentiles instead of the Jews they did not quote the Great Commission, given by Jesus, but the Great Commission to Isaiah (Acts 13,46-49). Peter defends the conversion of Cornelius by saying that all prophets of the Old Testament give testimony that the heathens will be saved (Acts 10,42-43). James also finished the council of Jerusalem on the subject of missions to the Gentiles, not with a quotation from Jesus, but from the Old Testament (Acts 15,13-21 quoting Is 61,4; Ps 22,27-28; Sach 8,22; Am 9,11-12). The promise to the patriarchs, that all people will be blessed through their offspring (Gen 12,3; 18,18; 22,17; 26,4; 28,14), is again and again quoted and mentioned as a proof of the necessity of world missions (Lk 1,54-55, 72; Acts 3,25-26; Rom 4,13-25; Eph 3,3-4; Gal 3,7-9, 14; Hebr 6,13-20; 11,12). Finally, Jesus Himself did not only give the Great Commission in the well known versions according to Matthew, Mark, John and Acts, but in the version according to Luke proving the worldwide preaching of the Gospel from all parts of the Old Testament (Lk 24,43-49). The OT justification of mission in the NT makes clear that world missions is a direct continuation of God’s history of salvation, since the Fall of man, the election of Abraham and the successive covenants of God with his people.

8. The book of Romans shows that world missions must be rooted in sound and thorough biblical teaching and that sound and thorough biblical teaching always leads to world missions. The book of Romans was written in the midst of mission work. It gives reasons for the justification and necessity of the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. At the same time, the

book of Romans is the most systematic biblical presentation of the gospel and the Christian creed. In the book of Romans, Paul wants to proclaim the gospel to all men without exception, regardless of language, culture and race (“Greeks and non-Greeks”, Romans 1,14) and of education and social class (“the wise and the foolish”, Romans 1,14) and therefore wants to come to Rome (Romans 1,15). At the end of his letter (Rom 15,14-16,27) Paul returns to his concrete missions plans.

9. The diversity of peoples and cultures is principally not a consequence of sin, but the will of God. From a biblical viewpoint, only those aspects of a certain culture are to be rejected which expressly contradict God’s holy will. Cultural diversity is no consequence of the judgment of God by means of the confusion of languages, as it happened at the erection of the tower of Babel (Gen 11,1-9). By the confusion of languages God wanted to enforce what he had already commanded men to do, that is, to scatter all over the earth (“fill the earth”, Gen 1,28; 9,1) and resulting the splitting of mankind into a multitude of families, peoples as well as professions, capabilities and cultures. With the erection of the tower of Babel, mankind tried to establish a single, uniform worldwide culture. This has always been Satan’s plan as the Book of Revelation and the Antichrist in the Old and NT make clear. But God did not want a single uniform city, a single worldwide government, nor a worldwide uniform humanism. God and His Word guarantee the unity of the world, but no visible structure on earth. God “scattered” mankind “over all the earth” (Gen 11,9). From the sons of Noah onwards “the whole earth became “inhabited” (Gen 9,19) and people “spread out ... within their nations” (Gen 10,5; cf. 10,32). God is therefore creator of all peoples, because “from one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live” (Acts 17,26; similar in Deut 32,8; Ps 74,17).

10. Christians are free from any cultural pressure. They do not have to accept any human tradition or commandment beside God’s commandments and God-given lawful authorities. This is especially evident in Mark 7,1-13. Jesus severely criticizes the Pharisees, because they declared their own customs to be God’s Law.

11. Christians are able to judge other cultures according to biblical standards, because, and if, they have learnt to distinguish between their own culture (also between their own Christian culture) and the overall valid commandments of God.

12. Christians belong to Christ only and they are submitted to his Word alone. Therefore, they cannot only view their own culture and other people's culture critically, but they are obliged to adjust to other people's culture for their sake and for the love of them. In 1Cor 9,19-23 Paul gives reasons for the necessity of adjusting to other cultures while evangelizing: he is free and belongs to no man. Christians are not only responsible to tell other people the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, but they are also responsible to insure that people have understood the good news.

13. Peace between single persons and God – that is personal salvation through the merciful atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross – is the first and foremost goal of missions, from which originate all other goals. In Mt 16,26, Jesus summed up in a few words, that salvation of the soul is more important than anything else.

14. Even if personal salvation is the first and foremost goal of missions, this does not mean that there are no further goals. On the contrary, all further goals get their significance from there on. Personal repentance does not mark the end, but the beginning of a personal renewal as well as a renewal of family, work/economy, church and state, because every human being should become a pupil ('disciple') of Jesus Christ. Jesus tells His disciples, they should teach "them to obey everything I have commanded you", and the Great Commission ends with the exhortation to teach the whole range of ethics. Then every single person, his everyday life and his environment will be changed, as well as sinful structures and visible injustice will be overcome.

15. Social work within the Christian church in face of cultural differences is embodied in the NT church from the very beginning, with the institution of the church deacon. The church is fully responsible for its own members, if the family and relatives cannot take care of them. This social responsibility does not mean just to give donations, nor to help some individuals, but to be responsible for all.

16. In Acts 6, social responsibility within the church plays an important role, but the proclamation of God's word and the prayer remain the foremost tasks, which are institutionalized in the elder and the apostle. The apostles mention the reason, why they did not want to take over the "responsibility" (Acts 6,3) of the support of the widows in addition to their other duties: "We will ... give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6,4). Prayer and preaching come first, social engagement afterwards.

17. The social responsibility of Christians for their brethren is different from the social responsibility for all men. Social help for the brethren is a duty. It is institutionalized in the deacons, whereas social help in general is given to individuals as a symbol, where it is possible and means are available: “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers”. Additionally, the one getting help should not be in need because of his own fault (Prov 3,27).

18. Mission work begins within the Christian church and family by being an example, by education and by teaching the word of God to the next generation. Beside the proclamation of God’s word to people outside of the church, the Christian family must not be neglected. A sound Christian family is a prerequisite for all leading positions in the church of the NT (1Tim 3,4-5, 12-13; Tit 1,6-7).



## Jesus as Master Educator

“People do not care what you know,  
until they know that you care.”

### 1. Teaching and Life

As far as Christians are concerned, the issue of education must be addressed from the divine revelation of the Word of God. The New Testament text which most clearly teaches the divine inspiration of Scripture also clearly teaches the Bible’s role in education. “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work,” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Paul is concerned not only with imparting knowledge about the Bible or with academic education or the formation of character or spiritual qualities, but with a comprehensive training which covers all aspects of life which thoroughly equips the Christian “for every good work.” If full-time service in the church or in missions is to be worthwhile, the Bible is necessary in the preparation for carrying out that service. Not only is the biblical *content* important, but also biblical instructions on *how* those contents are to be communicated.

Many Christians have a split faith! Because they distinguish between character, ethics, doctrine and life, they lack a comprehensive unity in their lives – at least as far as education is concerned. The ‘Enlightenment’ (a term which summarizes a multi-faceted development) has created a division between thought and action which disagrees with biblical teaching. Ever since, a university professor’s life and character are considered insignificant to his scientific achievements, even when reality – even if only the reality of his students or colleagues – catches up with science.

‘Perception’, ‘learning’, ‘understanding’, ‘teaching’, ‘training’ etc. are all terms which the Bible relates to intellectual aspects as well as to the ability to apply what one has learned.<sup>36</sup> The Old Testament usage of the word ‘to know’ to describe consummation of the marital relationship dem-

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<sup>36</sup>see: Laurence O. Richards. *A Theology of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975) pp. 32-24.

onstrates this aspect very well (Gen. 1:4.17.25; 19:8; 24:16; 1 Kings 1:4),<sup>37</sup> for this ‘knowledge’ involves the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, mental and physical experience of the individual.

Countless scriptures point to the indivisibility of doctrine and life, but one example will do. Paul tells Timothy, a colleague and successor he had trained himself, “*Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine,*” (1 Tim. 4:16; see also 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:10; 3:-4:5; 1 Thess. 1:1-2:12). For Paul, it is obvious that Timothy’s responsibility for himself and for several churches includes resistance to doctrinal error.

The Book of Proverbs is the Bible’s greatest handbook for education. Its description of comprehensive training includes the ability to be independent in daily life and to cooperate with others by working with them, caring for them, making peace and instituting justice and righteousness. Central to all is the “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 9:10; 1:7; 15:33; Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10). The goal of Proverbs’ training program is clearly to lead the student to ‘wisdom’, the pre-requisite for independence, by instructing him to obey the rules of his instructors and the Law of God. Wisdom is, of course, not only an intellectual exercise, but also the ability to apply knowledge to life and to personal relationships (see Prov. 4:1-9).

In the Old Testament, the term ‘disciple’ or ‘student’ is often used to designate the believer. “The LORD God has given me the ear of the learned ... He awakens me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned” (Isa. 50:4-5). The word ‘disciple’, was derived from the superlative form (‘discipulus’)<sup>38</sup> of the Latin word ‘junior’ (an apprentice, a pupil or a subordinate<sup>39</sup>) and means ‘a pupil’. The New Testament first uses the term ‘mathetes’ to designate the twelve apostles (beginning with John 2:2 and in general in this gospel) and then to describe all followers of Jesus (Luke 6:17, Acts 9:25). The Great Commission, which also uses this word, expressly speaks of teaching and of doing what has been learned, “... make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you ...” (Mt. 28:18-20). Christians are students who never stop learning, a characteristic typical of wisdom. The more one knows, the more one realizes how little one knows and how much more there is to learn, “... ”

<sup>37</sup>Friso Melzer. *Das Wort in den Wörtern: Die deutsche Sprache im Lichte der Christus-Nachfolge: Ein theo-philologisches Wörterbuch* (Tübingen, Germany: J.C. B. Mohr, 1965) p. 113.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 237-238.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 237

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:8-10).

## 2. The Training of the Twelve Apostles.

The best example for the significance of training and education is the training of the twelve apostles, which was built on a detailed pedagogical program which we can only sketch here. More detail would require information on the chronology of the material Jesus covered in the three years and a description of His behavior in individual and group counseling. At any rate, His program dovetailed instruction and life, everyday life and lecture, teaching and individual counseling and resulted in a comprehensive education.<sup>40</sup>

The Twelve had already heard Jesus preach before their conversion and first became general followers of Jesus. Not until later were they elected out of the larger group to become apostles. (Examples for the general calling are the calling of Peter in John 1:35-42 and Luke 5:1-11; the calling of Levi/Matthew in Matthew 9:9-13, Mark 2:13-17 and Luke 5:27-32. Compare the calling of other disciples in Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20).

All three synoptic gospels describe the special calling of the Twelve, including a complete list of their names (Matthew 10:1-4, Mark 3:13-17, Luke 6:12-16). Let us take a look at the three accounts. “And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease “ (Matthew 10:1. The list follows in verse 2-4). In Luke 6:12, Jesus prays all night, then calls His disciples and chooses twelve, “whom He also named apostles” (Luke 6:13. The list of names follows in verses 14-16). Jesus must have had more followers than the Twelve; Luke 6:17 distinguishes between the “great multitude of people” and the “crowd of the disciples”, which also included women who accompanied the Lord (Luke 8:2-3). When Jesus spoke of the requirements of discipleship, many turned away, but many, including the Twelve, remained (John 6:66-69<sup>41</sup>). Mark tells us, “And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to

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<sup>40</sup>The best study is still: A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publ., 1971 (originally publ. 1894)

<sup>41</sup>Unlike the other Gospels, the Book of John uses the term ‘disciple’ to designate only the Twelve.

have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons” (Mark 3:13-16. The list of names follows in verses 16-19). Jesus therefore chose the Twelve out of a larger group of disciples, but this last text describes the process and the goal of His selection.

I would now like to summarize the characteristics of the training program given to the Twelve as described in Mark 3:14. Three factors were of importance in the selection of the Apostles:

**1) Jesus limited his group of pupils to a small number, for, just as a father can only properly care for a small number of children, He could provide adequate training to only a few followers at a time.**

The Twelve had been chosen to be with Him and to share His life, but no one can share his life with a larger group of people. Marriage, the closest human relationship, is limited to two people. The number of children in a family is larger, but still manageable – no individual could carry out his parental responsibilities sufficiently if he had 40 children – only an orphanage or juvenile institution would try. (Although I would never criticize the self-sacrificing labor of the social workers employed in such institutions, I must note that they cannot fully provide the same intensive care which parents can give to the smaller number of children in a family.) Jesus’ conscious restriction can also be seen in the decreasing concentric circles of the groups of His friends, the smaller groups having more intensive contact with Him. He even had a favorite, John, the “disciple whom He loved” (John 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20, 19:27). The two brother-pairs, James and John, and Peter and Andrew, shared many events not experienced by the others (Matthew 4:21, 10:2, Mark 1:19, 3:17, 10:35,41, Luke 5:10, 6:14, 9:54, Acts 1:13, 12:2). All four brothers were present in Mark 1:29, 13:3, three of them (with Andrew missing) in Mark 5:37, 14:33 and Luke 8:51 and particularly at the Transfiguration, Matthew 17:1-3, Mark 9:1-4, Luke 9:28-30 and later, as a pillar of the church in Galatians 2:9).

### **The Concentric Circles around Jesus**

#### **Largest Number (= all), loosest relationship**

- \* The crowd
- \* the group of disciples
- \* all the disciples who accompanied Him, including the women
- \* the Seventy
- \* the Twelve
- \* the four disciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John

(the two pairs of brothers or, sometimes only Peter, James and John)

\* His favorite disciple, John

**Smallest Number (= one), closest relationship**

**2) Jesus chose the Twelve, “that they might be with Him and that He might send them out”. The goal of the intensive fellowship with Jesus and the dependence on Him was preparation for their mission.**

This intense relationship with Jesus was not the final goal of the disciples’ training. Rather, they were to go out alone and continue His work. Just as He had been ‘sent’ by His Father (John 3:16-18, 8:16,26,29, 12:45-49, 16:5,28, 17:3,8) and sends out the Holy Spirit in His place (John 14:15-31, 16:5-11, 12-17), He transfers His commission to the apostles. In John 17:18, He tells His Father, “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world”. In John 20:21, He tells the Twelve, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you”.

Jesus had intended from the very beginning to prepare them for the Great Commission, to “... make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you ...” (Matthew 28:18-20). They were to do the same thing in the world that He had done with them – preach the Gospel to the masses, elect disciples out of the larger group of converts, and by sharing their lives and by teaching, train the chosen to become spiritual leaders.<sup>42</sup>

His prayer in John 17 clearly demonstrates that besides achieving our salvation on the Cross, He had another specific assignment to be carried out with the Twelve. In verse 4, He says, “I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” and adds the reason, “Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have know surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me” (Verses 7-8). Jesus wanted the disciples not only to know what He knew, but to live as He had lived. The goal of His training program was for them to follow in His steps (except for His divinity and for His sacrificial death on the Cross), as He had repeatedly taught them.

The context of Luke 6:40 is particularly interesting (“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.”). In verse 39,<sup>43</sup> He asks, “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they

<sup>42</sup>See Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelisation*, Old Tappan: Revell, 1963

<sup>43</sup>Lawrence O. Richards. *A Theology of Christian Education*, *op.cit.*, pp. 54-56.

not both fall into the ditch?” Blind leaders of the blind are people who may speak well, but are poor role-models, for they have nothing worth copying.

Important is the fact that both aspects belong together, *“that they might be with Him and that He might sent them out.”* Such close ties between teacher and pupil are only justified when they are intended to help the pupil become independent. Raising children properly always includes a certain tension in the development from the helpless infant completely dependent on its parents to the independent adult. Every tie, including the insistence on obedience, is directed toward independence, not only in child raising, but also the training of workers in the Kingdom of God. From the very beginning of His training program, even as He was calling His disciples, Jesus had the Great Commission in view. He knew what they could not yet see, that He had chosen them in order to train them as the future leaders in church and mission field, for the day that He would leave them.

3) Jesus’ training program was not haphazard, but followed a clear plan. The disciples were to be trained for the mission field by living and working several years with the prototype of the missionary, Jesus Himself. The chronological order of His program makes this clear. First, He preached alone, then preached while the disciples observed. Next He let them preach while He observed. After that He sent them out in groups of two and discussed the results with them. This first, short term assignment is described in Matthew 10:1-11, Mark 6:7-13 and Luke 9:1-6. Finally He sent them out alone,<sup>44</sup> (remaining with them as Risen Lord – Matthew 28:18-20). The Twelve continued by doing the same with other Christians.

### **On the Way to Independence**

- 1) Jesus preaches by Himself
- 2) Jesus preaches while His disciples observe
- 3) The disciples preach while Jesus observes
- 4) The disciples are sent out for a short term assignment
- 5) The disciples are sent out on a permanent assignment
- 6) The disciples preach while others observe
- 7) et cetera

<sup>44</sup>The first, short term assignment is described in Matthew 10:1-11, Mark 6:7-13, Luke 9:1-6. See also the sending out of the Seventy in Luke 10:1-16 and His discussion with them about their experiences in Luke 10:17-21.

- 1) I
- 2) I and You
- 3) You and I
- 4) You try alone, I comment
- 5) You are completely alone
- 6) You and another
- 7) Another and you
- 8) et cetera.

This scheme works well, not only in the training of church workers, but in every kind of education which sets itself the proper goal, independence under God.

**4) Jesus’ training program for the disciples included the full scope of instruction and life, theory and practice, individual and group counseling, personal and public activity, activity and rest, profession and private life. Teaching and counseling formed a single unit.**

These apparent contradictions were not compartmentalized into separate areas of life, but were carried out at one time, depending on the demands and possibilities of the situation.

### 3. Paul and his COLLEAGUES

Beside Jesus and the Twelve, the best-known example for a discipling process which includes life and instruction, teaching and counseling, pattern and imitation, is Paul’s work with his colleagues, which we know only from a few ‘chains of role models’.

#### Examples of Chains of Role Models

Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges: Moses – Joshua – the elders

1 Peter 5:1-3: Jesus – Peter – the elders – the disciples

2 Timothy 2:2: Paul – Timothy – “faithful men” – “others also”

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7: Paul – Timothy & Silvanus – Thessalonians – Province of Achaia – the whole earth

Paul did not work alone, but was accompanied by assistants or colleagues (Acts 17:15 for example), who received spiritual training while with him. Before beginning his evangelistic work in Ephesus, he waited until his colleagues had arrived: “When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that*

Jesus *is* the Christ.” (Acts 18:5) Even after he, the apostle, had dreamed of a man calling him to Macedonia, he consulted with the others before starting the journey: “Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.” (Acts 16:10). These assistants were generally people he had led to Christ and had trained from the very beginning, Timothy (Acts 16:1-3), Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2, 18:26; Romans 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19). There were ‘apostles of the churches as well (2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25), missionaries sent to take responsibility for the churches Paul had founded.<sup>45</sup> Besides his assistants, Paul concentrated on training other disciples, especially the elders of the new churches. He ordained elders at a surprisingly early stage in the work (Acts 14:22-23), usually the first converts, and remained for only a short time in one area, for he expected the elders to carry on his work. His longest stay, three and a half years, in one area was in Ephesus, and that was probably punctuated by long interruptions.<sup>46</sup>

The Epistles to the Thessalonians are the most beautiful testimony that not only Paul, but also his colleagues (Silvanus and Timothy), not only preached the Gospel, but were prepared to share their own lives (1 Thessalonians 2:8) as models. Naturally all three proclaimed with words and with doctrine. Otherwise, how would their audience understand the meaning of their example? These letters demonstrate how Timothy and Silvanus, trained by Paul as their model, became models themselves for the Christians in Thessalonica who were also to become models in their turn.

Silvanus and Timothy are included, for 1 Thessalonians 1:6 tells us, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord”. Many have found this statement offensive. How can Paul compare himself with Jesus? But the Scripture itself recommends models to emulate God’s example. And is that not always so? A child’s understanding of God depends on his parents’, whether good or bad. Spiritual children are influenced by the good or bad example of their spiritual parents’ relationship with God. Everyone is a role model: we cannot choose whether we want to be an example or not, but only between being a good example or a poor one. Every church leader

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<sup>45</sup>Thomas Schirmacher. *Der Römerbrief*. 2 Vols, (Neuhausen, Germany: Hänssler, 1993) Vol. 1, p. 291-299.

<sup>46</sup>Heinz Warnecke. Thomas Schirmacher. “Plädoyer für die historische Glaubwürdigkeit der Apostelgeschichte und der Pastoralbriefe.” in *War Paulus wirklich auf Malta* (Neuhausen, Germany: Hänssler, 1992) pp. 223-227.

and every politician is an example and can only choose what kind of example he wants to be. This is particularly true for theological training.

### **Doctrine and Life, Model and Imitation in the Letters to the Thessalonians**

1 Thess. 1:5-9: “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.”

1Thessalonians. 2:7-12 “But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

1 Thess. 2:14: (to the church in Thessalonica) “For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans.”

2 Thess 3:7: “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;”

2Thess. 3:9: “not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.”

There are many studies about Paul's opponents, but his friends and colleagues have been greatly ignored.<sup>47</sup> There are two publications on Paul's colleagues, both written from a different point of view.<sup>48</sup> Wolff-Henning Ollrog assumes that Paul's use of many assistants was not made by a random decision, but a deliberate missionary strategy. Beginning with the historical information given in the New Testament and a study of the terminology 'synergos' ('colleague'), this revised dissertation arrives at three circles of assistants.: 'the closest colleagues', who accompanied Paul continually, 'the independent colleagues', who aided him in specific, 'chance' situations, and the 'envoys of the local churches', delegated by their congregations to accompany the apostle in order to take part in his missionary efforts. The last-mentioned group made cooperation possible between congregation, assistants and missions. Ollrog concludes with a study of the theologies of the individual and a discussion of Paul's evaluation of them. The book opens new fields of investigation and uncovers relationships overlooked by traditional studies, but is unfortunately fragmentary, since the writer rejects 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians and the pastoral letters (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) as non-Pauline<sup>49</sup>, thus ignoring quite a bit of material. Many of the questions he fails to resolve could have been answered, if a rigorously critical method had not eliminated authentic material. The Book of Acts suffers a similar fate, for Ollrog fails to take it seriously, although he considers it to be the work of Luke. Ollrog always seems to know why Luke supposedly distorted his facts.

This last problem does not occur in Bönig's book.<sup>50</sup> Concentrating on their relationship to the apostle, the writer describes sixteen of Paul's assistants. Although Bönig provides an excellent study derived from a thorough study of all New Testament sources, he fails to consider Paul's strategy in his choice of methods. Again, we encounter the old problem: the liberal critic provides an excellent study which opens new dimensions of the New Testament, but ignores too much material to break through traditional barriers, while a conservative author gives us a work which is edifying but insufficient. Until it becomes possible to unite academic thoroughness and

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<sup>47</sup>Wolf-Henning Ollrog. *Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis der paulinischen Mission*. Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 50 (Neukirchen, Germany: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979) p. 3.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, and Manfred Bönig. *Wir haben die Welt erobert: Die Mitarbeiter des Apostel Paulus* (Witten, Germany: Bundes Verlag, 1980).

<sup>49</sup>Ollrog, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup>Manfred Bönig, *op. cit.*

conservative interpretation, the interested reader must read both books and reap the best out of them.

One might object that this intensive sharing of life and work with a small number of spiritual children is restricted to Jesus and to Paul. 2 Timothy 2:2 refutes this assumption, however, by commanding discipling as an ongoing program for church and missions: “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also”. Jesus’ example is made into an obligatory training program. Christ’s church expands through the intensive occupation of mature, spiritually minded Christians with small groups of believers, not by the attempts of one responsible leader who tries to do justice to dozens, hundreds or even thousands at once. True spiritual growth and fruitful training occurs when spiritually-minded, mature Christians concentrate on a small group of spiritual children, with whom they share life and instruction until the children have become independent adults, themselves capable of taking on responsibility for others. This is the best way to fulfill the Great Commission, “... Make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18-20).

#### **Definition of Discipling<sup>51</sup>**

*Every line describes a major point*

- Discipling others
- is the process,
- by which a Christian with a
- life worth emulating
- commits himself
- for an extended period of time
- to a few individuals
- who have been won to Christ,
- the purpose being
- to aid
- and to guide
- their growth to spiritual maturity
- so that they can reproduce themselves
- in a third spiritual generation,
- which they build up through discipling.

<sup>51</sup>This definition is an adapted version of the definition in Allen Hadidian, *Successful Discipling*, Moody Press: Chicago, 1979. p. 29. The book is a good introduction to discipling in the local church.

We find many chains of models in the Bible.

#### **4. Having a role model, being a role model**

Scripture considers role models a significant element of preparing the individual for independence. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, describing his vision of the renewed Church, writes:

“The Church cannot underestimate the value of human ‘role models’ (originating with Jesus and so highly valued by Paul!): not terminology, but the ‘role model’ gives its word emphasis and power. (I will write on role models in the New Testament especially! We have almost lost the idea!)”<sup>52</sup>

Peter is in agreement with Jesus and with Paul when he gives the elders the commandment, not to rule, but to win their authority by their example. “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:1-3).

The best overview of the New Testament teaching on examples and imitation can be developed by collecting all references to the appropriate terminology.

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<sup>52</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *Widerstand und Ergebung: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen aus der Haft* (Munich, Germany: Chr. Kaiser, 1958<sup>8</sup>) p. 262. As far as I know, Bonhoeffer never managed to write on the subject.

**Who is a Role Model?**

*The following texts all use the word 'model' (Greek 'typos', 'hypotyposo') and the terms 'imitator' or 'to imitate' (Greek 'mimetes', 'mimeistai' or 'symmimetai').*

**1. God**

Ephesians 5:1 “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children”.

**2. Jesus Christ**

1 Thessalonians 1:6 “And you became followers of us and of the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 11:1 “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”

**3. The Apostles etc.**

Philippians 3:17 “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.”

1 Thessalonians 1:6-7 “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia.”

2 Thessalonians 3:7 “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you.”

2 Thessalonians 3:9 “... not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.”

1 Corinthians 11:1 “Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.”

1 Corinthians 4:16” Therefore I urge you, imitate me.”

**4. Men and women of history**

Hebrews 6:12 “... that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Hebrews 13:7-(8) “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.”

**5. Our spiritual father, who introduced us to Biblical truth**

1 Corinthians 4:(14)-16 “For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.”

## **6. The elders**

1 Peter 5:(1)-3 “The elders who are among you I exhort, ... Shepherd the flock of God ... not as being lords over those entrusted to you; but being examples to the flock.”

## **7. Young men who are true**

1 Timothy 4:12 “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

## **8. Other churches**

1 Thessalonians 2:14 “For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus”

1 Thessalonians 1:7 “so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.”

## **9. The Old Testament and its people**

1 Corinthians 10:6 “Now these things became our examples”

1 Corinthians 10:11 “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition (Compare the Old Testament examples in verses 1-13)

## **10. Sound Doctrine**

Romans 6:17 “... yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.”

2 Timothy 1:13 “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus.”

## **11. All which is good**

3 John 11 “Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good.”

Titus 2:7 “... in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works.”

Being an example does not require perfection, as Lawrence O. Richards, the American theologian and educator, explains. He describes the role model as an example not of perfection, but of growth (or change).<sup>53</sup> When Scripture itself assumes that mature Christians should serve others as role models, any opposing arguments or fears prove to be excuses which appear more pious than the Bible itself.

In 1 Corinthians 4:14-16, Paul describes his relationship to the Church in Corinth: “I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn *you*. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do* not *have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.” Paul calls the congregation ‘his beloved children, himself their father. Because he is their spiritual father, he must admonish them (verse 14). Surprisingly, Paul not only identifies himself with the other Christians who serve the Corinthian believers, but he also claims a higher position. He distinguishes between himself and these ‘instructors’ (Greek ‘paidagogos’). This term referred to slaves who taught children and is the origin for our term ‘pedagogy’. These instructors were responsible for the intellectual education of their pupils. Paul is saying, “Even if you had 10,000 excellent teachers, who taught you only good and correct things, that would not change the fact that I am your father. From your father, you learn not only doctrine, but also life. And a father questions not only his children’s thinking, but also their actions. He is not only present when all is going well, but also in emergencies and in danger.”

Lawrence O. Richards once described the difference between modern pedagogical methods and those of the Bible in a way which reflects Paul’s ideas. “Much of education is concerned with helping people know what their teachers know; Christian education is concerned with helping people become what their teachers are.”<sup>54</sup>

In the world, a pupil is often expected to know what his teacher knows, but in the church a student should live like his teacher lives. As Lawrence O. Richards<sup>55</sup> reminds us, Jesus told His disciples, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher”

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<sup>53</sup>Lawrence O. Richards. *A Theology of Christian Education*, *op.cit.*, p 142.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 30

<sup>55</sup>See Lawrence O. Richards. *Ibid.* See also Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), and Lawrence O. Richards, *A Theology of Personal Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981)

(Luke 6:40). “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master” (Mt. 10:24-25). After washing His disciples’ feet, He tells them, “For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him” (John 13:15-16).

Of course we need knowledge! Without it a people or a church will lose control (Proverbs 29:18), but if a church is dead, knowledge is of no use. Has the modern church neglected role modeling? Isn’t it easier to refer to good books or sermons, than to share one’s life with others as an example? If we want new believers to grow in Christ and remain in the faith, however, we must take an interest in their lives. In order to do that, we must ourselves have a personal relationship to Christ and must live according to his law. Can we still challenge others to imitate our example (1 Cor. 4:16)? Is our Christian life worth imitating? Do others experience enough of our lives that they can imitate us in a scriptural fashion?

Theological instructors must become strong fathers and mothers who no longer share only knowledge, but who are available in all aspects of life.

Not by chance does the book of Proverbs give the teacher of wisdom the title ‘Father’ (4:1), and call his pupil his son (13:1; 1:10.15). Elijah and Elisha are also addressed as ‘my father’ by their ‘children’, the sons of the prophets (2 Kings 20:35; 2:3.57; 4:1.38; 5:22; 6:1; 9:1).<sup>56</sup>

**Discipling is significant for the training of spiritual leaders and workers in the church and in world missions. Although the examples of Jesus and Paul, or of Old Testament leaders, can only be imperfectly carried over into modern life, this is still the best way to train and form the leaders of the future.**

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<sup>56</sup>Hans Walter Wolff. *Anthropologie des Alten Testamentes*. Chr. Kaiser: München, 1977<sup>3</sup>. p. 263.

## **Social Responsibility in the New Testament Church according to Acts 6**

The appointment of deacons in Acts 6 and in the New Testament church in general is of great significance. It is surprising, that besides the offices of overseers (bishops) and elders, who were responsible for leadership and teaching, the church had only one other office, that of the deacons and the deaconesses, whose duties were exclusively social in nature. The social responsibility of the church for its members is so institutionalized in the office of the deacons, that a church without them is just as unthinkable as a church without leadership or Biblical teaching.

**1) The church carries fully the social responsibility for its own members, insofar as the individual's family is unable to do so.** This duty consists in more than donations or symbolic assistance for a few, but in responsibility for all.

**2) Therefore the church must distinguish clearly between its social obligations toward fellow Christians and its social responsibility for others.** The former has been institutionalized in the office of deacons and is binding, insofar as funds and possibilities are available (assuming that the individual has not willfully brought the situation upon himself). Proverbs 3:27 speaks of both cases, *“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so”*. Galatians 6:10 speaks of our duties toward all men, but emphasizes the priority of the believers: *“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially the those who are of the household of faith”*.

The command in Matthew 25:45 should also be understood in this sense. Jesus is speaking of believers, not of everyone. Were the “brethren” mentioned in verse 40 intended to mean all men, this would be the only text in the New Testament that uses the term figuratively to indicate anyone other than church members or fellow Christians.<sup>57</sup>

A comparison with the question of peace-making will help clarify the matter. The Scripture obliges Christians to live in peace with fellow-believers. If they do not, than the church leadership is to interfere. As far as the relationship to non-Christians is concerned, Paul says, “If it is possible,

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<sup>57</sup>Kurt Hennig, “Beim Wort kommt es auch auf die Worte an”, Das Fundament, (DCTB) 1, 1991, pp. 9-24 (particularly pp. 22 and 19-24).

as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18). The New Testament church is based on a covenant binding on all members. The expectation that the believer is obliged to care for all men stems from a false understanding of fairness and justice, for the Bible requires the believer to provide first for his own family, next for the members of the local congregation, finally for the world-wide church. Only when these obligations are fulfilled, does he have any responsibilities for other people.

**3) Acts 6 gives great priority to the social obligations of the church towards its members, but the responsibility for proclaiming the Word of God and prayer remains more important and is institutionalized in the offices of the elders and the apostles.**

The apostles give the following reason for refusing to accept this “business” (Acts 6:3), “we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). Prayer and proclamation of the Word, which always belong together, have priority over social engagement and must never be neglected. The combination of prayer and teaching is not new. Long before, it had been the ministry of the prophet Samuel and other Old Testament leaders to “pray” and to “teach” (1 Sam. 12:23).<sup>58</sup>

The provision for the socially weak was also considered a matter of course in the Early Church, which universally reserved special funds for social purposes.<sup>59</sup> Its provision for widows was exemplary.<sup>60</sup> As a matter of fact, more money was spent on social concerns than on the salaries of the elders and pastors. According to the Church Father, Eusebius, the church in Rome in the year 250 A.D., for example, supported 100 clergymen and 1500 poor people, particularly widows and orphans. Alois Kehl writes,

“Never, in the whole of antiquity, had there been a society or a religious group which cared for its members as the Christian Church did.”<sup>61</sup>

By the way: The responsibility of the wealthy, above all, for the provision for the poor, gave the donors no special rights in the congregation. For this reason, James 2:1-13 energetically attacks their attempts to exploit their position in the church.

<sup>58</sup>Compare the combination of prayer and watching in Neh. 4:9.

<sup>59</sup>Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (VMA-Verlag: Wiesbaden, o. J., reprint 1924<sup>4</sup>), pp. 178-183, and the chapter, “Das Evangelium der Liebe und Hilfsleistung”, pp. 170-220.

<sup>60</sup>Ebd. pp. 184-186.

<sup>61</sup>Ebd. pp. 182-184.

## **The Trinity in the Old Testament and Dialogue with Jews and Muslims (1991)<sup>62</sup>**

### **1. The problem**

The example of Indonesia

The State philosophy of Indonesia, 'Pancasila', consists of 'five pillars', in which every Indonesian must believe. The first pillar simply states: We believe in one God. Officially, therefore monotheism is the State religion of Indonesia. The Constitution of Indonesia is specific which religions can claim to fulfill this first and basic law of Indonesia: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism and Hindu-Buddhism. For this reason all other religious groups had to change their religious affiliations, and thousands of tribal groups and villages 'converted' to Islam or Christianity, preferring the latter, because they could keep their pigs. The largest Muslim country in the world has monotheism, not Islam, as its State religion<sup>63</sup>. Many Evangelicals – nationals as well as missionaries – are in favor of this State philosophy and fight for it in Indonesia as well as at conferences abroad. Does it not give them at least officially freedom of religion? Does it not help to fight Communism, atheism and animism? Is it not good that people know that they have to have a religion? And would the other choice – an Islamic State – be better?

Even if we were to accept this, we would have to ask why the same Evangelicals do not mention that Hindu-Buddhism is accepted as the fourth 'monotheistic' religion? Why do they not mention that most of the Muslims, including the President, actually follow the Javanic Kebatinan-mysticism as their everyday religion – this probably being the main reason why they do not plead for an orthodox Islamic State<sup>64</sup>?

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<sup>62</sup>Reprinted from *Trinity in the Old Testament and Dialogue with the Jews and Muslims*. *Calvinism Today* (now: *Christianity and Society*) 1 (1991) 1 (Jan): 24-25+21+27 = "Trinity in the Old Testament and Dialogue with the Jews and Muslims". *Field Update: GR International* (Apr/Mai 1991): 6-8 and (Jun/Jul 1991): 5-8

<sup>63</sup>See in detail my article "Religion ist Pflicht in Indonesien", *idea-Spektrum* 21.10.1981

<sup>64</sup>See in detail my article "Javanische Mystik", *Factum* 10/1987: 3-5

But even if we assume that only Islam and the two Christian confessions were accepted in Indonesia, the attitude of these Evangelicals reveals the confusion about monotheism and Trinity. They feel that all monotheistic religions have something in common.

### The Jews: A second people of God?

While most Evangelicals in Indonesia would hold that the other monotheistic religions still do not believe in the same God as they do, the picture becomes even more complicated when we turn to the Christian attitude toward Jewish monotheism. Most Christians hold that the Jews believe in the right God, but that something is missing to complete their religion and bring it to the standard of Christianity. In Germany, two groups fight for accepting the Jews as a second people of God, a people that believes in the same biblical God as the Christians. So argue the liberals engaged in dialogue. The Rhenish State Church Synod decided that Jews do not need to become Christians to be accepted by God. On the other side, Dispensationalists – most of whom belong to the State Churches, while fewer belong to the Brethren Churches, where Dispensationalism originated – would not go so far to say that the Jews need no conversion, but still think that the Jews believe in the right God and only need a revelation of the Messiah at the end of time. They are right that Yahweh still is the God of Israel (Rom 11), but this does not automatically mean that all Jews pray to him today. Some of them even fight Christian missions work among Jews. Most of these liberals and Dispensationalists therefore have no problems sending Christian workers to Israel, although they are forbidden by the Law of Israel to convert Jews. They just engage in so-called social work and in dialogue and do not convert Jews. (Dispensationalists with a Calvinist soteriology see this differently.)

## **2. The Trinity in the Old Testament**

### Monotheism and Trinity

The whole confusion concerns the relation between monotheism and Trinity. Ask Christians in Germany what they lose when they lose the Trinity. They know they will have problems explaining the role of Jesus and the role of the Holy Spirit. But most pastors of German churches will admit that their church members are not able to explain the Trinity to a Jehovah's Witness. And the pastors themselves? The Trinity is rarely

preached, as questionnaires have shown. Both sides are missing: The biblical foundation of the Trinity and the implications of the Trinity.

The German word *‘Dreieinigkeit’* (threeness, triunity) shows very well that Trinity has two enemies: *the ‘one’ stands against polytheism, the ‘three’ against monistic monotheism*. Polytheism will vitiate biblical faith as much as nontrinitarian monotheism.

## The Trinity in the New Testament

I do not want to repeat New Testament evidence for the Trinity here. Following hermeneutical logic, we simply need to prove that Father, Son and Spirit are God and that there is only one God, Creator, Judge and Savior alike.

But there is one question regarding the biblical foundations of the Trinity that brings the whole problem more into focus than any other: Is the Trinity found in the Old Testament? Is the Trinity a New Testament addition to Old Testament monotheism? Or, if we believe that the Trinity existed in Old Testament times, because the New Testament says so, was the Trinity at least a new revelation in the New Testament? Could it be that Jews or even other monotheists are in the state of Old Testament believers and just need to hear about the fulfillment of their monotheism in the New Testament Trinity?

## The Trinity and the Jews in Jesus’ times

Before we turn to the Old Testament, let us look at the attitude of Jesus towards Jews who did not believe in Him. Did He say that they still believe in the God of the Old Testament? That there were Jews who believed in Jesus and His Father as their God, is not in question, but this does not prove that all Jews believed in the God of the Old Testament.

There can be no doubt about it: rejecting Jesus meant rejecting God. Two examples from the Gospel of John may be enough evidence. In both cases the Jews tried to kill Jesus and the text gives the reason for their hatred. The first is found in John 8:37-59. The Jews state their monotheism especially in v. 41: “we have one Father, God”. Jesus’ answer follows immediately: “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God. I did not come of Myself, instead He sent Me” (v. 42). In vv. 54-55 Jesus says: “It is My Father that honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him ... but I know Him”. He claims that Abraham rejoiced about the days of Jesus and that

He was (existed), before Abraham ever lived (vv. 56-58). Against the Jewish “Abraham is our father” (v. 39) Jesus claims: “you are of your father, the devil” (v. 44).

In John 5:17-47 Jesus proclaims His divine Sonship. The Jews understood that Jesus made Himself “equal with God” (v. 18). Within His long statement about the relationship between Father and Son, Jesus says: “He who does not honor the Son, does not honor the Father who sent Him” (v. 23). Later He states: “And you do not have His Word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe” (v. 38). Jesus immediately connects this with their understanding of the Old Testament: “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they that testify of Me” (v. 39). And finally He brings the whole question down to Moses, the lawgiver: “Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you: Moses, in whom you put your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me” (v. 45-46). In Luke 24:43-49 he states similarly that the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms speak about him.

Compare the opposite example. People like Simeon, Hannah, John the Baptist and his disciples were Jews believing in the Yahweh of the Old Testament. Proof? They accepted Jesus as Messiah as soon as they met him for the first time, some of them even when he still was a baby.

The New Testament frequently states that the Old Testament taught and believed in the second Person of the Trinity. We will see in a moment how that is true. John says in John 12:41 that Isaiah saw Jesus on the throne (Is 6) and Paul believed that Jesus was with Israel in the desert (1Cor 10,4), just to name some examples.

## The Trinity in the Old Testament

Since the dogma of the Trinity and of the divine and human nature of Jesus is so interwoven (see e. g. Rom 1:1-4) that proving the existence of Jesus and of the Trinity in the Old Testament is more or less the same.

## The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Let us start with the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. The Spirit of God has several names in the New Testament. Nearly all of them come from the Old Testament. How can Christians defend the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity in the New Testament and have doubts whether the Spirit in the Old Testament is a person or just the power of God? Can any-

one find a difference between the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and in the New Testament? In the Old Testament and New Testament the Spirit inspires the writers of the Bible, reveals God and His message, gives life, gives the spiritual gifts and sends the Messiah together with God the Father (Is 48:16; v. 12 proves that Jesus is speaking). When Jesus claimed that the Spirit of Yahweh is on him (Luke 4:18) he did it by quoting Isaiah 61:1f. The Holy Spirit is God in the Old Testament, but there is only one God in the Old Testament. One cannot not find a much better argument from the New Testament.

### Jesus in the Old Testament

Only liberal Christians will doubt that Jesus was promised in the Old Testament. But most books on ‘Jesus in the Old Testament’ deal with those promises and totally neglect the ‘real Jesus’ in the Old Testament. Did Jesus act in the Old Testament? Was He part of what the believing Jews believed? Was He promised to act for the first time in history or was He acting in history already and promised additionally to become the Messiah and God coming in the flesh? We have already quoted examples from the New Testament stating that Jesus was active in the Old Testament. But even Christians who accept this often underestimate its importance. Perhaps one reason is that the personal name of the incarnate God, ‘Jesus’, is not used in the Old Testament, although the Hebrew equivalent ‘Yeshua’, meaning ‘salvation’, is very often used as a personal name for the Messiah, the salvation of the world (e. g. Hab 3:13; Gen 49:18; Ps 9:14; 91:14-16; Is 12:2-3; 62:11; compare Luke 2:29-30; Mat 1:21).

According to the New Testament, nobody ever saw or heard God the Father (John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46; Mat 11:27; 1Tim 6:16; 1John 4:12). But in all places where this is stated, it is stated in the same moment that Jesus is the only revelation of God. Is this only true for the New Testament? Or take the question the other way round: If no man, including Old Testament men, ever saw or heard God, who else did the Old Testament saints see and hear? From the New Testament the only answer can be that the revelation came through the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ. Now we understand why John says that Isaiah saw Jesus on the throne. Isaiah saw “the glory of God”, one of the names of Jesus in the Old Testament (cf. John 1:14).

Until the beginning of German higher criticism the Church nearly without exception believed that the famous ‘Angel of Yahweh’ was a preincar-

nation revelation of God<sup>65</sup>. Moses saw “the Angel of Yahweh” in the burning bush (Ex 3:2), but the story goes on telling us what “Yahweh” said (Ex 3:3-22) and Moses knew that he was speaking with God. The Angel of Yahweh not only speaks in the name of Yahweh, but acts like Yahweh, even accepting burnt offerings, which no other angel ever would have done. He forgives sins and makes salvation and judgment dependent on him. Finally he talks to Yahweh Himself while accepting the honor man give him as God. Jesus thus is Yahweh-God, but not Yahweh-Father!

In Jos 5:10-15 Joshua meets “the commander of the army of Yahweh” (vv. 14-15). What does Joshua do? He falls on his face and has to take off his shoes like Moses. The name of this commander is better known as “Zebaoth”, the “Lord of the Heavenly armies”. Who is the chief commander of the army of Yahweh bringing judgment to the wicked and salvation to the believers? No other than the second Person of the Trinity. The Father delegated judgment and salvation to the Son – not only in New Testament times but from eternity to eternity including Old Testament times.<sup>66</sup>

We could go on with other names and titles of the second Person of the Trinity. But if one only accepts “the Glory of God”, “Yeshua”, “the Angel of Yahweh” and “Zebaoth” as titles and names of Jesus in the Old Testament, one already has hundreds of examples showing that Jesus was not just there, but played the major role of history, as He does in the New Testament.

### The Father in the Old Testament

After finding the Spirit and the Son in the Old Testament, we ask: Is the Father acting in the Old Testament? “Of course”, most Christians would say. But is He only there as God in general or is He there as one of the Persons of the Trinity? Is He already known as “Father” or is this a new quality or at least a new revelation in the New Testament? If we accept Jesus and the Spirit in the Old Testament, we have already accepted the Father also. Who is sending them both? To whom do they talk, if not to the Father?<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>See e. g. the discussion in Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenbergs “Christology of the Old Testament” (newly reprinted)

<sup>66</sup>This paragraph is not to be found in the original printed version of this article.

<sup>67</sup>This paragraph is not to be found in the original printed version of this article.

## The Old Testament confession

We could go further into details but space does not permit a complete ‘theology’ here. We could go on to discuss the famous “we” in the Creation Account (Gen 1:26), which is surely referring to God alone (see the “we” Gen 3:22) or the plural name of God “Elohim”. But we only want to take a deeper look at the confession of Israel in Deut 6:4: “Hear Israel, the LORD our God is *one* God”. Some translations say “is God alone”. But the word “one” does not have this meaning. (The word for “alone” is ‘yachid’.) This confession is not mainly directed against having several gods. The word ‘*echad*’ is a compound unity noun – that is to say, a noun which demonstrates oneness or unity, but at the same time contains several entities<sup>68</sup> (see Gen 1:5; 2:24; Num 13:23; Ezra 2:64; Jer 32:38-39)<sup>69</sup>. In German we can translate it “ist ein einiger Gott” (is a God being one). *I believe that the ‘confession’ is a confession against monistic monotheism!* God is one consisting of several. Was this confession necessary? Was there ever a danger that Israel thought that Yahweh was two gods? Yes. If you see them worshipping the Angel of Yahweh, the commander of God’s army, and listening to the voice out of the cloud of glory etc., it was necessary to reaffirm that this was not the result of polytheism, but of tri-unity.

### 3. Ethics and trinitarian monotheism versus monistic monotheism

Now let us return to the question of Jewish and Islamic monotheism. Can a monotheist believe in the God of the Bible while neglecting Jesus? No, the second and third Persons of the Trinity are not just additions to God, they are God from eternity to eternity. Isn’t it strange that those religions and states – Jewish and Islamic – that fight Jesus Christ most are claimed to be half way to the biblical God, while governments that persecute Christians in the name of monotheistic religions still may be partners in fighting atheism?

When Christians favor dialogue with Jews, Muslims or other monotheists they only can do so because of their low view of the Trinity. One who

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<sup>68</sup>See Herbert Wolf. 61: “echad”. in: R. Laird Harris (ed.). “Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament”. vol. 1. Moody, Chicago, 1980, p. 30 and Millard J. Erickson. “Christian Theology”. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1990. p. 329

<sup>69</sup>Stanley Rosenthal, “The Tri-Unity of God in the Old Testament”, The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Collingswood, USA, 1978, pp. 4-5 (see also the examples pp. 5-6)

really believes in the Trinity can never accept that Talmudic Jews and Muslims somehow believe in the same God.

The low view of Trinity is also the reason why many Christians cannot see the great gap between the God of the Bible and the God of the Jews and the Muslims.

### God and communication

In the Bible everything good comes from the Trinity. Because the members of the Trinity speak to each other and Jesus is the Word, we can talk to each other. Because the Persons of the Trinity do not live for themselves, but for each other, man can be told to do the same. Because the Persons of the Trinity discuss with each other, not deciding things totally alone is a biblical principle. In the Trinity, obedience exists without any force: love and law are identical. Communication, love, honoring each other and working toward a goal outside of ourselves come from the Trinity. The Trinity existed before the world was created. So loving, talking, helping, listening and obedience exist eternally. God does not need men to exist or to be good.

### God and trust

For the Jews and the Muslims this is different. Of course God existed before the world was created. But he only has Creation to love. Both religions can only speak about how God deals with Creation. Christians have the revelation about how God deals with Himself. Therefore the Jews and Muslims only know actions of God without proof that God could deal otherwise. The Bible reveals not only what God does, but what He is from eternity to eternity. And therefore only Christianity can speak of trusting in God in the fullest sense and preach assurance of salvation. That God never changes is a message that cannot be proclaimed without Trinity. Why do Muslims still ask Allah daily to accept Mohammed? If even Mohammed does not know how God will deal with him in the end, who else can know? When the direction for prayer was changed from Jerusalem to Mecca, the Koran (2,143-144) tells us, Allah told Mohammed that the old direction was wrong, but that he had given this direction first in order to test who

would be obedient to the prophet<sup>70</sup>. Allah even lies to unbelievers in order to judge them<sup>71</sup>.

The God of Islam is above all Creation and has the right to change what he said and to act in opposition to what he promised. The God of the Bible is above all Creation, too, and has the right to do whatever he wants. But he cannot change and cannot lie, because he is a Trinity and he cannot change His Being, nor his relationship to himself within the Trinity.

## God and work

Take a last example. In the Trinity the Persons work for each other. In and after Creation, God works for Creation. If He would not work for us, we could not work at all. In the Ten Commandments God's work is the reason for our duty to work (Ex 20,9-11). Therefore work is nothing dirty or bad. The higher your position, the more work you have to do. The mighty apostle Paul worked more than anybody else (1Cor 15,10; 2Cor 11,23) – unlike the Pope at the time of the Reformation, whom Luther rebuked for not working for the Church and for being lazy, eating and drinking all time.

But if you have no Trinity, you have no God working before Creation existed. The Christian attitude that more responsibility brings more work, will change into the humanistic and tyrannical attitude that low people work for high people so that the higher need not work<sup>72</sup>.

Implications like this are all too often neglected by Christians in favor of a cooperation with monotheistic religion. The less important the Trinity and its theological and ethical implications are to Christians, the more they will be interested in a monotheistic cooperation. Dialogue with Jews and Muslims is possible today not because those religions have changed, but because of changes among Christians who do not understand the Trinity. And this is because German higher criticism more than anything else has vitiated theology and ethics and especially confidence in the Old Testament.

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<sup>70</sup>The change took place, when Mohammed started to fight Jewish religion, see our book "Mohammed: Prophet aus der Wüste", 2nd ed., Schwengeler Verlag, Berneck, 1986, pp. 53-54

<sup>71</sup>Dito

<sup>72</sup>See the chapter on the ethics of work in my book "Marxismus – Opium für das Volk?", Schwengeler Verlag, Berneck, 1990



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## Postmillennialism and Missions<sup>73</sup>

Postmillennialists believe that the Kingdom of God is already being realized in the present age through the proclamation of the Gospel and through the saving influence of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of individual people. As a result, the whole world – the majority of the members of all nations including Israel, that is – will be christianized at a future, presently unknown time. Christ will return at the end of the Millennium, an age of unknown duration, marked by justice and peace. In contrast to Premillennialism, the Postmillennialists therefore emphasize the present aspects of God's kingdom which will reach fruition in the future. The new age will not be essentially different from the present and will come about as more people are converted to Christ. The postmillennialist view is the only one of the three significant eschatologies based directly on the charter of Christianity, the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20), interpreting it not only as a command, but also as a promise and as prophecy. Postmillennialists believe that the Great Commission will be fulfilled by all nations becoming disciples.

The roots of modern Protestant world missions lie to a great extent in the work of Calvinist, Puritan, postmillennial preachers in England and America, as well as that of Lutheran, Pietist, postmillennial pastors in Germany. The eighteenth century was the great age of Postmillennialism, which played a key role in the development of missions-oriented attitudes.

The first Anglo-Saxon missionaries, who emigrated from England to America to preach to the Indians, were motivated by a Calvinist, postmillennial hope that God wanted to bring the gospel to unreached peoples and areas in order to initiate the Millennium. That postmillennial expectations led to the establishment of practical missionary activity, is true not only for the Calvinists themselves (Anglicans, Presbyterians and Congregationalists), but also for Calvinist Baptists such as William Carey whose major work, "An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians ... " (1792), initiated the final awakening of Protestant missions. As a result, definite postmillennial expectations can be discovered in the sermons held at the founding of the London Missionary Society in 1795, of the New York Missionary Society in 1797, of the Glasgow Missionary Society in 1802 and to a cer-

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<sup>73</sup>Reprinted from "Postmillennialism and World Missions". Chalcedon Report Nr. 371 (Juni 1996): 9-11

tain extent of the Church Missionary Society in 1799. Many Calvinist missionaries and mission leaders such as John Elliot, Alexander Duff, David Livingstone, Henry Martin, Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn expressed a postmillennial hope.

In the light of postmillennial expectations, American and British revival movements were seen as the first indications of a wider wave of conversion, expected to soon engulf the whole earth. Not only Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), who sparked off an extensive revival and missionary movement, but also English (Isaac Watts, Philipp Doddridge) and Scottish theologians (John Willision, John Erskin) related postmillennial hope to revival and to the idea of missions – a combination which led directly to the development of organized missionary activity at the end of the eighteenth century.

The close relationship between Postmillennialism and missions can be traced through the ideas of the Reformed Puritans of America and England back to the optimism of the Reformed theologians John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, Theodor Bibliander, Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr and Theodor Beza, even though none of them expressed a postmillennial system. This had, however, already occurred in the Reformation period in England, then by leading Puritan theologians such as John Cotton, John Owen, Matthew Henry and Samuel Rutherford. For all of these Reformed men since the Reformation, the Kingdom of God still had a long period of time before it, in contrast to the immediate expectations of the end of the world of Lutheran orthodoxy. God had said that He had elected people, the predestined, in all nations of the world. The majority of Reformed theologians believed in a future full conversion of Israel through missionary activity as well. Thomas Brightman (1562-1607) was one of the first Puritans who expected the conversion of the Jews not at the end of the world, but as the beginning of the Millennium.

With the exception of early Lutheran Pietism in Germany, the Reformed tradition was much closer to Postmillennialism than were other denominations. This is mostly due to its emphasis on the sovereignty of God and to the belief that Christ is now Lord over the whole of human life. The Reformed faith teaches, as well, that the Holy Spirit has empowered Christianity to succeed in spreading gospel to the whole world and in transforming culture and society according to Christ' spirit and will. It is therefore not surprising that Postmillennialism, with its emphasis on reaching all peoples with the gospel, has been integrated only into Reformed confessions of faith (Calvin's Genevan Catechism, Questions 268-270, and the

Larger Catechism of Westminster, Question 191, [both of which concern the second request of the Lord's Prayer], the Congregationalist Savoy Declaration of 1658 in Article 26.5, an addition to the Westminster Confession). Postmillennialism offers the best explanation altogether, why the dogma of double predestination should not detract from missions but support them. Because God has proclaimed the election of many individuals out of all nations, it is now essential for His Church to find them.

Rufus Anderson (1796-1880), Director of the ABCFM, and the most significant missions leader of the nineteenth century, became, in 1866, the first Professor of Missiology (Andover Theological Seminary). He was the first theologian to again emphasize the love for the lost as motivation for missions rather than postmillennial expectations, even though his well-known sermons, "The Time for the World's Conversion Comes" and "Promised Advent of the Spirit" clearly express a postmillennial belief. As late as 1909, W. O. Carver observed that the postmillennial view was still the most influential motivation for missions. Not until the end of the First World War did Postmillennialism lose its preeminence. Following Hudson Taylor it had, in the area of world missions, however, been gradually superseded by faith missions, which were strongly influenced by Premillennialism.

These developments in Anglo-Saxon Protestantism can be observed in German-speaking evangelical missions, as well, for Philipp Jakob Spener (1633-1705), and August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), the fathers of German Pietism and its growing missions movement based their activities on postmillennial ideas. Not only Spener's major works, "Pia desideria" and "Theologische Bedencken" are eschatologically characterized by expectations of a better future, but also his previous dissertations on Revelation 9:13-21 and his "Von der Hoffnung zukünftiger besserer Zeiten" (1696). In his expression of the hope of a better future, he radically rejects the pessimistic orthodox Lutheran interpretation of history, which was determined by the expectation of Christ's immediate return within an Amillennialist framework. Postmillennialism maintained its dominant position in German Pietism until Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752) began to combine Premillennialism with Postmillennialism by teaching the idea of two Millennia. His pupils then completely rejected Postmillennialism in favor of Premillennialism and taught that missions should not be carried out until the Millennium (for example, Johann Tobias Beck [1804-1871]). Many state church mission societies, such as the Baseler Mission (Theodor Oehler and Hermann Gundert, for example) continued to think in a post-

millennial context. It was the rise of faith missions which bound Premillennialism to an attitude positive to missions and supplanted Postmillennialism in the missionary movement.

A missionary minded postmillennialism strongly emphasizing Old Testament Law became prominent since the 70ies through the Christian Reconstruction movement, best represented by Kenneth L. Gentry's book 'The Greatness of the Great Commission'.

*Note: This dictionary article does not intend to propagate or criticize any eschatological position, but had the task to give a historic overview over an eschatological position, that played a major role in Protestant mission history.*

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## Great Missiologists

### Gisbertus Voetius<sup>74</sup>

Gisbert Voetius (1589-1676), 1634-1676 professor of theology and Oriental languages in Utrecht, Netherlands, was an active member of the Synod of Dord (1617/19) and a chief proponent of Calvinistic orthodoxy and the most influential Dutch theologian of the 17th century. At the same time, he was one of the spokesman of the emerging mission oriented Reformed Pietism in the Netherlands and had personal contacts to English Puritans. His book 'Disputations on Atheism' (1639) and other books against philosophies of his time show him to be an evangelist to the well educated. Voetius is also the founder of the comparative study of religions for missionary purposes. Nearly all his books and tracts contain long sections on missions, which do not appeal and call to mission work but discuss all major problems of missions scientifically as a fourth part of Systematic Theology 'Theologica elenctica' beside Exegetical, Dogmatic, and Practical Theology. Thus Voetius designed the first comprehensive mission theology written by a Protestant. He was well-read in Catholic mission literature. Following a distinction made in Reformed ethics, Voetius combines double predestination as God's absolute will with the conviction that God's moral will is world missions under Biblical promises.

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<sup>74</sup>Forthcoming in Baker's Dictionary of Missions

## Aurelius Augustinus<sup>75</sup>

Augustinus, Aurelius (354-430), bishop of Hippo (North Africa), called the theologian of grace, is the most important theologian of the Roman-Catholic Church and spiritual father of all major Reformers, especially Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. In most of his writings Augustinus discusses problems of missions, as he was heavily involved in reaching heathen African tribal people and heathen Roman citizens. Gonsalvus Walter has combined those quotations to a full-orbed theology of missions. Augustinus consoled the belief in double predestination with an urgent call, that it is the will of God to preach the Gospel everywhere. In his famous Letter No. 199 Augustinus denies that the Great Commission was already achieved by the apostles because, exegetically, the commission goes “till the end of the world” and practically, he knows of “innumerable barbarian tribes in Africa to whom the gospel has not yet been preached” (199,46). God had not promised Abraham the Romans alone but all nations. Before the return of Jesus Christ the majority of nations and people will become Christians (199,47-49), a postmillennial element in Augustinus’ otherwise amillennial eschatology.

Letter 199: Maurice Wiles, Mark Santer (ed.). *Documents in Early Christian Thought*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1975. pp. 259-264 = Norman E. Thomas (ed.). *Classic Texts in Mission and World Christianity*. Orbis Books: Maryknoll (NY), 1995. p. 18

P. Gonsalvus Walter O. M. Cap. *Die Heidenmission nach der Lehre des heiligen Augustinus*. *Missionswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen und Texte 3*. Aschendorff: Münster, 1921

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F. van der Meer. *Augustinus der Seelsorger*. J. P. Bachem: Köln, 1958<sup>3</sup>

## Theodor Christlieb<sup>76</sup>

Christlieb, Theodor (7 March 1833 – 15 August 1889), since 1868 till his death outstanding professor of practical theology at Bonn University. He made a course on missiology part of his practical theology ever since 1868 and thus became the first German theologian to lecture missiology continually on an academic level. As one of the few Lutheran professors

<sup>75</sup>Forthcoming in Baker’s Dictionary of Missions

<sup>76</sup>Forthcoming in Baker’s Dictionary of Missions

who favored pietism and strongly influenced by British-American revivalism through personal contacts during his time as pastor of a church in London (1858-1865), he became the foremost promotor of the re-evangelization of Germany after industrialization. He thus became the father of the Westgerman Evangelical Alliance (1880) and the Gnadauer Fellowship Movement (1888), till today the largest evangelical lay movement within the German Protestant State Churches.

His missiological program was similar to the one of his close associate Gustav Warneck and of Rufus Anderson. Together with Warneck he started (1874) and edited the first scientific missiological journal (“Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift”). In 1873, when he was the celebrated major speaker at the International Conference of the Evangelical Alliance in New York, Christlieb met Anderson, whom he then made known to the German speaking world. For the International Conference of the Evangelical Alliance in Bâle 1879 he produced the major survey on Protestant world missions of his time with 600 pages, which went through several editions and was translated into all major European languages (engl. 1880: “Protestant Foreign Missions: Their Present State: A Universal Survey”, several British, American and Indian editions). The same is true of his missiological protest against “The Indo-British Opium Trade and its Effect” (German 1878, English, French, Japanese, Chinese etc. 1879), which was discussed in the British Parliament, and of his major apologetics “Modern Doubt and Christian Belief” (German 1870, Engl. 1874).

Thomas Schirmmacher. Theodor Christlieb und seine Missionstheologie. EGfD: Wuppertal (Germany), 1985

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Thomas Schirmmacher (ed.). ‘Die Zeit für die Bekehrung der Welt ist reif’: Rufus Anderson und die Selbständigkeit der Kirche als Ziel der Mission. Edition afem: mission scripts 3. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993

## Missions in Martin Luthers Thinking<sup>77</sup>

*Evaluation of the dissertation: Paul Wetter, “Missions in Martin Luthers Thinking” by the promotor*

*Rev. Dr. theol. Paul Wetter. “Das Missionsverständnis Martin Luthers”. ThD-Dissertation for Whitefield Theological Seminary – German Extension. 1998. appr. 254.000 words. The dissertation will be published in the series “Missiologica Evangelica” (Culture and Science Publ.)*

This dissertation fills a lack in theological and missiological research, which has been pointed out since the last century. There are uncounted essays and paragraphs on whether or not Luther thought about missions at all and why there is a gulp of more than one hundred years between the Reformation and the upraising of Protestant missions under the postmillennial father of pietism Philipp J. Spener. But none of the prior authors proved his position by investigating all of Luthers writings, obviously, because there are so many. Wetter has done just this: He went through all of Luthers writings, sermons and even songs to search for thoughts in favour or against world mission. The dissertation is so massive as the author quotes Luther extensively, because most of the quotes come from unknown texts of the vast corpus of Luthers writings. The quotations are the best proof that Luther really was a missiologist.

In chapter one Wetter discusses 98 authors who said, that Luther had no thoughts on missions or even was opposed to world mission, or that Luther wrote a lot on missions and was in favor of it. He shows that even the latter have not really proven their thesis and that they do not explain why the Lutheran reformation did not lead to world missions as did the Reformed.

In chapter two Wetter follows Luthers views on mission in several important writings (Romans, Genesis, catechisms) as well as in sermons and songs. This chapter proves beyond doubt, that Luther wanted the gospel to be preached to all heathen nations.

In chapter three Wetter describes Luthers thoughts on mission not in the context of his writings, but systematically in the context of his theology. As basic to his mission theology he sees Luthers unbroken view of Holy Scripture as well as his Augustinian theology including original sin, the

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<sup>77</sup>Text presented to the dissertation committee and read at the oral defense; the German version is published as “Laudatio – Promotionsfeier von Paul Wetter (‘Das Missionsverständnis Martin Luthers’). Evangelikale Missiologie 15 (1999) 1: 32-34

denial of free will in conversion, and double predestination. This leads Luther to say that mission is God's sole thing which he does by his own holy word. But this is no statement against mission but just the right theological base for any preaching of the gospel according to the Great Commandment. Luther wanted the gospel to be spread amongst Turks and heathens and wrote handbooks for lay Christians to reach them, organized a translation of the Quran to better understand Islam etc., but he never wanted man to see himself as the motor of missions. To say that Luther was against preaching the gospel among non-Christian people is to deny the facts.

In chapter four Wetter discusses the few Lutherans of the 16th and 17th century who were in favor of missions, wrote about it or even helped to organize the sending of missionaries. Even though they were few, they could easily build on Luther's views. But in general, Lutheran Orthodoxy was against working outside the boundaries of its churches.

In chapter five Wetter now has to answer the question: Why was Lutheran world missions never put into practice if Luther was a master of mission thoughts? First he gives different reasons, for example, the fact, that the Lutherans had no access to the See as had the Catholic, Anglican, and Reformed countries. But the main reason he sees is in the emerging Protestant State Church. In the beginning Luther wanted to build churches out of believers only or at least to gather the serious believers in house churches beside the main church. But the Reformation ran into a changing political scene. When Luther – against his own convictions about the separation of State and Church – asked the princes to become “Notbischöfe” (emergency-bishops) in order to have protection, the churches became State churches. This stopped missions in three regards: 1) The church became nationalistic, 2) The church had no interest in helping people in States seen as enemies, 3) Missions lost its base in pressure groups of local believing communities. Only when international minded pietism started to gather the concerned Christians in small, active and praying circles, those circles became the base for sending out missionaries.

Paul Wetter has masterfully defended his thesis and gets a doctoral degree in Church History and World Missions rightly so.

Prof. Thomas Schirmacher, MTh, Drs. theol., Dr. theol., ThD, PhD, DD

## **Martin Bucer – The German Who Gave England its Liturgy<sup>78</sup>**

*Martin Bucer, Reformed Reformer of Straßbourg, lived, preached and wrote in Bonn for one year to prepare the reformation of the state of Cologne on behalf of the Archbishop until the Archbishop was dismissed. Later his proposed church order and liturgy for Cologne was used by Archbishop Cranmer in the Reformation of England. At the end of his life Bucer fled to England, taught at Oxford, helped Cranmer to revise the Book of Common Prayer and wrote his major treatises ‘De regno Christi’ (1550), an ethics demanding the Church to transform every part of society under Christ’s rule. Martin Bucer is the only Reformer of the 16th century who had a great impact on all three branches of the Protestant Church, Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican. His theology is a combination of Reformed and Anglican elements as well as of French, German and English influences.*

Martin Bucer (1491-1551) was born of humble parentage in Sélestat and was schooled as a Dominican in humanism and Scholasticism. He became first a follower of Erasmus of Rotterdam and then, after moving to Heidelberg, one of the earliest followers of Luther through Luther’s disputation in 1518. He was released from his order in 1521 and in 1522 was one of the first of the Reformers to marry. Excommunicated in 1523 he fled to Strasbourg to become the leader of the Reformation there for two decades.

He organized churches, church discipline, the training of pastors, the liturgy (printing a prayer book and the psalms), schools and many more things. As the magistrate restricted the scope of his plans, the fullest realization of his program are to be found in Hessen (Lutheran), Geneva and in Scotland (both Reformed). No Reformer was more on the road to organize the Reformation at other places and wrote more books and pamphlets for other Reformers. Bucer would help Lutherans, Reformed and even Catholics.

Thus the Archbishop of Cologne Hermann von Wied, one of the seven men to elect the Caesar and the most important Catholic Bishop beside the Pope, called Bucer to Bonn (near Cologne) in 1542/1543 to preach in Bonn Cathedral weekly and prepare and organize the Reformation of Cologne and its provinces. Bucer, sometimes helped by Philipp Melancthon, produced everything: a small Systematic Theology, a book of church order, a book of church discipline, a book of common prayer, a book reintroducing

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<sup>78</sup>Reprinted from “Martin Bucer: The German Who Gave England Its Liturgy”. At Stake: A Pastoral Journal for Churchmen 1 (1997) 4: 21-22

the ordination rites and offices of the Ancient Church and more. But he had to flee, when Bavarian and Imperial troops captured the Archbishop. Nevertheless the work of Bucer was not in vain, as Archbishop Cranmer used this material to plan the Reformation in England and everybody reading the program for the Reformation in Cologne will easily realize that he is reading the program for the Reformation in England! As Bucer wanted to re-emphasize the practice of the Ancient Church he kept the old church orders and liturgies and only deleted those superstitions that were added in the centuries prior the 16th century. He did not want to throw out every tradition but only those traditions which were not rooted in the Bible and the Ancient Church. This was the goal Cranmer had as well. As Cranmer did not want his church to split into several Protestant camps, Bucer's approach to cooperate with all Reformers, to learn from everybody and to find as much common ground as possible with other Christians, was just what Cranmer needed.

But Bucer influenced other branches of the Reformation as well. John Calvin sat at Bucer's feet for three years during his exile from Geneva, notably in his theological views of the Church, the Eucharist and the ecumenical idea to bring the different wings of reformation together. Bucer was a profuse biblical commentator and his way of doing exegesis verse by verse – the beginning of modern exegesis – became a source for Calvin's lecturers and commentaries on the whole Bible (with the exception of Revelation).

Martin Bucer was Reformed, even though he never understood himself to be Reformed in the narrow sense of later Reformed confessionalist, but more in the broad sense of the English Church. Bucer was the leader of those Reformed cities and states that wanted to live in harmony with Lutherans and even Anabaptists as far as possible.

Bucer is best known as a Christian diplomat trying to achieve the unity of the Protestant or even all Christians. He played a major role in virtually every meeting of Lutherans with Reformed, initiating the discussion of Luther and Zwingli in Marburg (1529). In the late 1530s and early 1540s he was the leading Protestant negotiator for agreement with the Catholic Church in Germany, especially in the conferences of Leipzig (1539), Hagenau and Worms (1540), and Regensburg (1541).

Thus no reformer had more connections to the Reformation in all European countries and to all branches of Christianity. Bucer had the whole Christian world, yea, even the whole world in view and never was satisfied to have problems solved for himself, if others still needed help.

Because he did not agree with the Imperial settlement of 1548 he had to flee to England, where he immediately became regius professor at Cambridge till the end of his life in 1551. The University of Cambridge conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Theology. It is amazing how much he influenced the English Reformation during those three years.

He mediated in the vestment controversy, helped to introduce confirmation (his own idea to replace Catholic communion originally realized in Hessen), recommended the tutor to Princess Elisabeth, corresponded with the major leaders in Church and State on necessary reforms, left his impress on John Bradford, Matthew Parker and later John Whitgift. But his major contributions were two books.

One is his major treatise 'De regno Christi' (The Kingdom of Christ) (1550), written for Edward VI, an ethics demanding the Church to transform every part of society under Christ's rule. This blueprint of a Christian society for a long time influenced English politics.

The second is his 'Censura' (1549), a detailed comment on the draft for the Second Book of Common Prayer. When Bucer arrived in England, Cranmer was still working on the First Book of Common Prayer. This actually was to a great extent a translation of Bucer's liturgy for Cologne and of Bucer's 'De Ordinatione Legitima'. Thus the German Reformer gave England its Liturgy! The Book of Common Prayer thus is not only a revision of the liturgy of the Ancient English Church, but includes many elements of the tradition of the Ancient Church in Continental Europe transmitted by Bucer, who, by the way, was a great patristic scholar.

Many of the changes in the draft for a revision of the Second Book of Prayer, which soon became necessary, were a result of Bucer's long discussions with Archbishop Cranmer, even though we never will know the details of this process. The 'Censura' furthermore heavily influenced the Book of Common Prayer, but again we lack the documentation to prove in detail, where Cranmer followed Bucer. Nevertheless it is no exaggeration to say, that the Book of Common Prayer is mainly a result of Cranmer's discussions with his close friend Martin Bucer.

Literature: *Constantin Hopf. Martin Bucer and the English Reformation. Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1946; Hastings Eells. Martin Bucer. Russell & Russell: New York, 1971; Wilhelm Pauck. "Martin Bucer's Conception of a Christian State". Princeton Theological Review 2 (1928) 80-88*

## **Great Commission**

### **The Great Commission as climax of the four Gospels**

In Christian tradition, the Great Commission is an old term for the instruction of the resurrected Jesus Christ to his disciples, that they should spread his gospel to all the nations of the world. In a narrower sense, the terms defines five specific texts in the NT. In an even narrower meaning, the terms often just defines Mt 28:16-20.

Jesus' most important concern between the resurrection and His ascent into Heaven seems to have been world missions, made possible by His sacrificial death on the Cross, as the most important aspect of His suffering, death and resurrection. All four Gospels include some form of the Great Commission given in the period of time following the resurrection (Mt. 28:16-20, Mk. 16:15-20, Luk. 24:13-53, particularly vs. 44-49, Jn. 20:11-23, particularly vs. 21-23, Acts 1:4-11).

In all gospels the sending of the disciples into the world at the end points back to the twelve apostles being chosen by Jesus in the beginning. Jesus chose the disciples "that they might be with Him and that He might sent them out to preach" (Mk 3:13). From the very beginning, the goal of their intensive training through living and working with Him was to prepare them for the Great Commission. Their training as missionaries was not arbitrary, but clearly according to His deliberate plan: 1). Jesus first preached alone; 2). then he preached while the disciples observed; 3). then he let the disciples preach while He observed. 4). Next, He sent them out for a short mission (Mt 10:1-11, Mk 6:7-13, Luk 9:1-6) and discussed the results with them and then finally; 5). sent them out alone. The disciples then began to do the same with other Christians. Thus, training towards independence is a central element of missions.

The Great Commission in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 28:16-20) is not only the end of the Gospel of Matthew, it is also its climax and its goal. For this reason, Matthew emphasizes from the first chapter on that the Good News is also for the heathen (e.g. 5:14; 9:37-38; 12: 8-21).

### **The Great Commission and the OT**

Although the apostles spoke of Jesus' commandment several times after Pentecost, (Acts 1:2. 10:42), they never cited the Great Commission di-

rectly. Peter combines the Great Commission with a reference to the OT as an argument for his preaching the Gospel to the Gentile, Cornelius (Acts 10:42-43).

For this reason, it is not surprised that the Great Commission according to Luke is derived directly from the OT (Luk 24:43-49). According to Jesus, all parts of the OT speak not only of His coming, dying and rising, but of forgiveness to be preached to all nations.

## **The content**

Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew's Gospel justifies world missions by the assurance, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18), and that he will always be with His church (Mt. 28:20). Thus, the Great Commission is not only an assignment but also a promise. Jesus himself carries the responsibility for discipling all nations, for, He says, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18). The success of world missions confirms the promise of Christ's dominion.

The Great Commission in Mt 28:18-20 includes the command to make all men "pupils" (disciples). The first step is personal conviction and repentance. Baptism in the Name of the Trinity must be experienced personally. Still, this is the way God has chosen to win whole 'nations'. Thus, the goal of converting whole people does not contradict the need for personal repentance.

Conversion and baptism according to the Great Commission not mark the conclusion, but the beginning of personal renewal, as well as the renewal of the family, church, economics, state and society. Every individual should become a pupil ('disciple') of Jesus Christ. In the command to teach "them to obey everything I have commanded you", the Great Commission includes the exhortation to teach the whole range of biblical ethics. In transforming the individual, his everyday life and his environment, mission overcomes sinful structures and visible injustice.

## **History**

The prevailing historic view till the 18th century was, that the Great Commission has been directed to the NT apostles alone, even there were important exceptions of theologians holding to the 'modern' view, like St. Augustine, the German reformer Martin Bucer or the Dutch Reformed missiologist Gisbert Voetius. The change was introduced in 1792 through

William Carey book “An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens”. Carey points out that the Great Commission is binding “even to the end of the age.” One of his best arguments for the validity of the Commission is the fact that it includes the command to baptize that all churches and theologians consider valid. If the Great Commission was directed only to the apostles, churches would have to stop baptizing people. Careys also argues, that the Great Commission will be fulfilled, as it is authorized by the power of the Lord of Lords.

Careys view became more and more common and soon the Great Commission became the most quoted base for Christian mission in all confessions. In the 1960s missiologists in the ecumenical movement wanted to exchange the ‘commission’ or ‘command’ for the ‘missio dei’-concept, but today both are seen to complete each other.

In higher criticism there have been several attempts to prove, that none of the great commissions in the NT stems from Jesus, but the debate never came to a common conclusion.

In the Church Growth Movement, initiated by the American methodist missionary to India Donald McGavran, the Great Commission according to Matthew got a special emphasis. The church can only grow, if it spreads within people groups, and it can only grow, if people are not made Christians, but are discipled into mature Christians who than again make the Great Commission their own task.

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## **The Gospels as Evidence of the Necessity for Cultural Adaptation in the Missionary Proclamation**

Frank Koppelin, Thomas Schirmmacher

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### **Missions in light of cultural diversity**

The diversity among people groups and cultures is, according to the biblical witness, not principally a consequence of sin. Rather, it is desired by God. The diversity and variety between cultures is mentioned in the early chapters of the Bible, which lay the foundation for the teaching on sin found in the entire Holy Scriptures, and is not to be understood negatively as a consequence of sin. This diversity is also not to be understood as a consequence of God's judgment that confused languages at the building of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). By confusing languages, God wanted to achieve exactly that what prior thereto he had given to mankind as a command, namely the spreading of humanity over the entire earth ("fill the earth" Genesis 1:28; 9:1). This brought about the division of humanity into a multitude of families and peoples as well as occupations, abilities, and cultures. With the building of the Tower of Babel, the establishment of a world culture was sought, which has since then always been the goal of Satan. This is seen in the book of Revelation and in the person of the Anti-Christ in the New Testaments. This is what is said of the "beast," which has his power from the "dragon" (Revelation 13:1-10): "He was given power to make war ... [and] ... was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation ..." God, on the other hand, wants neither a united world city nor a united world government nor a united world humanism. God and His Word guarantee the unity of the world without a visible structure on earth. God "scattered" mankind "over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:9).

From the sons of Noah came "the people who were scattered over the earth" and the "nations" spread out (Genesis 10:5). For this reason, the formation of individual peoples via family trees can be explained (Genesis 10:1-32), and at the end of such explanation, it is said that "from these the

nations spread out over the earth after the flood” (Genesis 10:32). God is therefore the Creator of all peoples, because “from one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live” (Acts 17:26; similarly, Deuteronomy 32:8; Psalm 74:17).

Christians are people who are freed from all cultural bondage. They no longer have to recognize human traditions and commandments next to God’s commandments. This is made particularly clear in Mark 7:1-13, where Jesus strongly criticises the Pharisees because they had elevated their human culture to the level of God’s binding commandments.

Christians can only judge other cultures in the light of the Bible, if they have learned to discern between their own culture, even if it is a pious culture, and the commandments of God that cross over cultural bounds. Mark 7:1-13 again is the best starting point for looking at this issue. Very reputable and pious motives prompted the Pharisees to enact supplemental guidelines binding for everyone in addition to, and even against, God’s Word. Jesus vehemently criticizes the Pharisees, because they have thereby made themselves into law-givers next to God: “They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men” (Mark 7:7; Matthew 15:9).

Because Christians belong solely to Christ and are solely subordinate to His Word, they cannot look at their own culture and the cultures of others only critically. Rather, they are obliged out of love to be attuned to others’ cultures.

In I Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul establishes the necessity to be attuned to others’ cultures when conducting evangelization with the very point that he is free with respect to all men: “Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.” It is apparent that a Christian can live in his own culture in such a manner that he does not notice one of two results – that in

the best case he is misunderstood and in the worst case he is a hindrance (1Kor 9,12) to others to understand the gospel.

Christians are therefore not only responsible to see to it that the message of salvation through Christ is proclaimed. They are also responsible to see to it that the message of salvation through Christ can be understood. That is why the Bible is allowed to be translated into every conceivable language and that the gospel can and should be expressed in every dialect and cultural form.

World missions do not bypass the preexisting sociological facts. Rather, missions strategy orients itself by them. For this reason, Paul started churches in metropolitan areas and centers of commerce and transportation. He left it to these churches to penetrate the surrounding areas. Paul himself started new churches in areas that had not been reached with the gospel. Paul mostly started churches in centrally located cities, soon installed elders whom he had trained, and then soon moved to other locations. He left the entire penetration of the region to the churches in the cities. Regarding the church in Thessalonica the following is said, “And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia – your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it ...“ (1Thess 1:7-8).

## **A Comparison with the Koran**

For Christians it goes without saying that the Holy Scriptures may be translated into every language and that missions work does not consist of reading out holy texts in their original language(s). Even the Sunday sermon and every form of proclamation of ‘God’s Word’ within Christianity are based on the idea that a read Bible text requires commentary for the hearer. The earlier Lutheran and pietistic saying that in worship one goes ‘under the Word’ and that it is the responsibility of the one preaching to proclaim ‘God’s Word’ is not honored by simply using, as close to the original as possible, as many and long Bible texts as possible. Rather, it is important to speak the message of the Bible as relevantly and as understandably as possible into the life of the hearers. We have seen that this sign of the Christian faith is addressed, even required, by the Holy Scriptures. Jesus and Paul proclaim the Word of God by propagating its content in new forms, not by simply reading out existing texts. In Acts 17:16-34, we find an outstanding example of how one can express Old Testament

and New Testament contents in the language and thought of another culture.

A comparison of the Bible and the Koran makes it evident that this idea is not self-evident for a holy scripture. Koran Arabic is unique in its sound and has fascinated millions, and it is very difficult to translate. However, this Arabic text solely remains 'god's word,' and for this reason millions of Muslims pray their daily prayers in this holy language, which most of them naturally do not understand. Alongside this is the fact that for hundreds of years, the Koran was not allowed to be translated. It was not until the twentieth century, in the course of missionary and political awakening, that the Koran was translated by Muslims themselves and disseminated. It is to be noted that every translation of the Koran is viewed as a commentary and not as 'god's word.'

<b>Comparison of the Understanding of Inspiration between the Bible and the Koran, i.e., the Understanding within Islam<sup>79</sup></b>	
<b>Bible</b>	<b>Koran</b>
God and man are both authors.	God alone is the author.
God is committed to His own Word.	God is not bound to his word; rather, he is sovereign over it.
Reflects the human personality of the authors	Has nothing to do with personality
Many and varied authorship	No human author; only a recipient
Large literary variety <sup>80</sup>	Practically a uniform style
No perfection in the language used	Perfection in the language used
No holy language; multiple languages used	Holy language
Obligation to translate	Translation is for all intents and purposes not possible.
Textual criticism is allowed and is a part of history.	Textual criticism has not been allowed and has been suppressed.
Textual critical versions printed	Uniformity of transmission stated by belief
Created over thousands of years	Revealed in the matter of a few years
Contains many details about its historical origin	Contains practically no historical details regarding its origin
Many historical details (e.g., chronologies, geography)	Scant concrete historical details

<sup>79</sup> Christine Schirrmacher. *Islam*. 2 volumes. Hänssler Publishing House, 2003<sup>2</sup>. vol. 1. pp. 108-137; the same. “Die Muslime und ihre Heilige Schrift – dargestellt an der Frage nach Frieden und Gewaltbereitschaft” (“The Muslims and their Holy Scripture – illustrated by the Question of Peace and Propensity to Use Violence”). Lecture in Leverkusen 2003. [www.ekir.de/lutherkonvent/Ziele/schirm2.htm](http://www.ekir.de/lutherkonvent/Ziele/schirm2.htm); Compare also the same. “Der Einfluss der europäischen Bibelkritik auf die muslimische Apologetik”. *Fundamentum* 1/1995: 66-84 = “The Influence of Higher Bible Criticism on Muslim Apologetics in the Nineteenth Century”, pp. 270-279 in: Jacques

## The Recipients of the Four Gospels

In the following, we will attempt to demonstrate that the Bible, with its incredible fact of containing the life story of the founder of Christianity in quadruplicate, at the same time thereby provides testimony to the necessity that the gospel has to be proclaimed to each target group in new and varying ways.

At the same time, the Gospels also substantiate that the missionary work of the first generation of Christians had exactly this characteristic. As a matter of fact, the Gospels were indisputably compiled in order to proclaim the gospel. They were also meant to provide, in addition to the oral “Evangelisation,” a written proclamation of the gospel. That is, after all, the reason for their name! While gospel (Greek: ‘evangelion’ – ‘good news’) is a general indication of the good news of redemption by Jesus Christ, a Gospel tells the story of Jesus in a special sense. And it is only from such multiple reports that one can come refer to the plural term ‘Gospels.’ It is significant that the authors are referred to as evangelists. In the cases of Matthew and John, the Gospels stem from Apostles, that is to say, from the circle of the twelve disciples who lived with Jesus. Mark was a co-worker with the Apostle Peter, and Luke was a co-worker with Paul. As a guideline, there were oral tradition and the usual keyword notes from Judaism and the rabbis about the life and work of Jesus, as well as the testimony of witnesses, who were asked (Luke 1:1-4), which were collected and ordered by the authors of the Gospels and framed with their own reports and comments.

In order to be able to better understand a written document, it is, in any event, helpful to know the recipient of the document. The Gospels also were intended for a certain circle of recipients, which we will look at more closely. What do biblical studies and introductory New Testament scholarship roughly tell us about this?

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Waardenburg. *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions*. Oxford University Press: New York/Oxford, 1999; also pp. 107-133 in: Andrew Sandlin (Hg.). *A Comprehensive Faith: An International Festschrift for Rousas John Rushdoony*. Friends of Chalcedon: San Jose (CA), 1996.

<sup>80</sup> Comp. Thomas Schirmacher. *Die Vielfalt biblischer Sprache: Über 100 alt- und neutestamentliche Stilarten, Ausdrucksweisen, Redeweisen und Gliederungsformen (The Diversity of Biblical Language: Over 100 Old and New Testament Types of Style, Expression, Modes of Speaking and Tactical Forms)*. Bonn: VKW, 1997<sup>1</sup>; 2001<sup>2</sup>.

No Gospel expresses clearly for whom it was written, even when Luke, in the forward to his Gospel, names a highly venerated Theophilus (Luke 1:3). Theophilus is initially named as a recipient. However, according to more common practice, it was more likely that he was the financial backer or promoter of the Gospel. In any case, he was surely not the sole or literal recipient.<sup>81</sup> For that reason one can look at the contents of the Gospels in order to come to a conclusion regarding the recipients. In the following, all four Gospels will be investigated with regard to their recipients.

## The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew wrote his Gospel according to the traditional view of Jews. Zahn mentions the background of the Gospel as an “historical apologetic of the Nazarene and his congregation to Judaism.”<sup>82</sup> In so doing, Matthew’s Gospel is a document that is directed toward Jews and Jewish Christians.<sup>83</sup>

There are also some internal considerations that make this conclusion clear. An often and fondly repeated argument is that the readers were obviously familiar with Jewish customs and practices, and these did not have to be explained. The entire Gospel presupposes the Old Testament as a known entity and is based upon it.<sup>84</sup> Even the concept of the Kingdom of God, which plays an important role in other Gospels, is translated into a Jewish formulation that avoids using the name of God and is therefore expressed as the “Kingdom of Heaven.”

Even the famous Fragments of Papias<sup>85</sup> should not be too lightly placed in the category of the improbable. Papias mentions that the Gospel of Matthew was present in the Hebrew language and Aramaic language, respec-

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<sup>81</sup> Gerhard Hörster. *Einleitung und Bibelkunde zum Neuen Testament (Introduction and New Testament Biblical Studies)*. Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1993. S. 52.

<sup>82</sup> Theodor Zahn. *Einleitung in das Neue Testament (Introduction to the New Testament)*. Bd. 2. 3. Aufl. Leipzig: Deichert’sche, 1907. p. 268, 294, 303.

<sup>83</sup> Wilhelm Michaelis. *Einleitung in das Neue Testament (Introduction to the New Testament)*. Bern: BEG, 1946.

<sup>84</sup> Gerhard Hörster. *Einleitung und Bibelkunde*. p. 42; comp. See more below.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted by Eusebius KG III,39,16; comp. Werner Georg Kümmel. *Einleitung in das Neue Testament (Introduction to the New Testament)*. 21. edition. Heidelberg: Quelle + Meyer, 1983. p. 91ff.

tively.<sup>86</sup> The Jewish background becomes even more clearly evident, since in the Greek-speaking world, this Gospel was initially rarely read.

### The Gospel of Mark

According to tradition, Mark wrote down the sermons of Peter. Mark was with Peter in Rome, and Mark had his notes with him when he wrote the Gospel after being urged to write by the congregation in Rome.<sup>87</sup> Mark concentrated on what was conveyed to him by Peter.

Mark's Gospel is conspicuous evidence of a document, the recipients of which did not have a Jewish background. Customs and practices are explained by Mark (Mark 7:3), Latinisms<sup>88</sup> are present (e.g., Mark 5:9), and from this one can see that Mark was writing to a Roman audience. While one should deal with this thesis with some reservation, it does admittedly fit well into the picture.<sup>89</sup>

### The Gospel of Luke

Luke, as already mentioned, includes a dedication in his Gospel. Since this was common in Hellenistic culture, Mark's inclusion of a dedication is evidence for the fact that he wrote for a Hellenistic culture.<sup>90</sup> Luke's emphasis lies clearly on the global claims of the gospel (e.g., the angel's announcement at the birth of Jesus; Luke 2:10, 14). Thus one can say that Luke's Gospel was written to Greeks and Gentiles, respectively.<sup>91</sup> Especially when one reads the Gospel with the Book of Acts, this thought is visible: What is at stake is that the gospel is preached in all the world (Luke 24:47). For this reason, one can agree with Craig Blomberg when he writes: "... he perhaps knowingly tried to reach a broad audience."<sup>92</sup>

<sup>86</sup> See the following discussion by Erich Mauerhofer. *Einleitung in die Schriften des Neuen Testaments (Introduction to the Writings of the New Testament)* vol. 1. 2. Edition, Stuttgart: Hänssler Publishing House, 1997. p. 53-58.

<sup>87</sup> Craig L. Blomberg. *Jesus und die Evangelien (Jesus and the Gospels)*. Nuremberg: VTR, 2000. p. 118f.

<sup>88</sup> Werner Georg Kümmel. *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*. p. 69 for examples.

<sup>89</sup> Comp. Also Gerhard Hörster. *Einleitung und Bibelkunde*. p. 33.

<sup>90</sup> Comp. Armin Daniel Baum. *Lukas als Historiker der letzten Jesusreise (Luke as Historian of Jesus' Last Journey)*. Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1993.

<sup>91</sup> Comp. Erich Mauerhofer. *Einleitung ...* p. 157, 161.

<sup>92</sup> Craig L. Blomberg. *Jesus und die Evangelien*. p. 149.

Luke's Gospel is distinguished by an elevated Greek style. Apart from the term "amen," there are no Hebrew words that arise.<sup>93</sup> The language and the style indicate that the Gospel is knowingly directed toward Greek-speaking readers. Luke himself might very well have come out of a Greek-Hellenistic Gentile background, as comes out in Colossians 4:10-14. Luke is mentioned there, among others (4, 14); however prior thereto Paul expressly names those of Jewish background who are accompanying him (verse 11).

## The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John occupies a special position. It complements the first three Gospels, and John describes the intention of his Gospel in John 20:30-31. His intention has to do with giving readers certainty that Jesus is the Christ. From these words it appears that the Gospel of John was certainly intend for the church.<sup>94</sup> John wanted to give the church a footing and certainty for their faith.<sup>95</sup> For this reason, one sees in the letters again and again the testimony that seeks to express the fact that "I was there!"

## The Four Gospels as Evidence That the Proclamation of the Gospel Was Accommodated to the Target Group

For the recipients of the Gospel the following picture can be conceived:

<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Probable Target Group</b>
Matthew	Jews
Mark	Romans
Luke	Greeks (Gentiles)
John	The Church

With this, there is evidence marshaled from within the New Testament itself that the message of Jesus Christ is not only meant to be read unchanged in one holy original language, but that rather translation, selection,

<sup>93</sup> Gerhard Hörster. *Bibelkunde und Einleitung*. p.45.

<sup>94</sup> Klaus-Michael Bull. *Bibelkunde des Neuen Testaments (Biblical Study of the New Testament)*. Neukirchen – Vluyn: Neukirchner, 1997. p. 41.

<sup>95</sup> Also Erich Mauerhofer. *Einleitung ...* p. 245.

and explanation are forged ahead with in a manner that a particular target group can understand culturally and linguistically.

This stage would be a good point for a transition to an investigation of the missionary thought found within the four Gospels. It has exegetically been demonstrated numerous times that in all four Gospels, in various ways, missions as proclamation of the gospel is a central theme. Here we see that missions also has to do with proclamation among the Gentiles and is part of the goal to reach the entire world.<sup>96</sup> The Gospels propagate what they themselves already do.

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<sup>96</sup> E.g., Johannes Nissen. *New Testament and Mission*. Frankfurt u. a.: Peter Lang, 1999. Matt: pp. 21-48, Mark: pp. 37-48; Luke: pp. 49-60; John: pp. 77-95; Andreas J. Köstenberger, Peter T. O'Brien. *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*. *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 11. Downers Grove (IL), 2001. Matthew: 87-110, Mark: 73-86, Luke: 111-126; John: 203-226; comp. Thomas Schirmacher. „Mission im Matthäusevangelium – Biblische Texte zur Mission 4“. *Evangelikale Missiologie* 9 (1993) 2: 52; „Mission im Matthäusevangelium – Biblische Texte zur Mission 5“. *Evangelikale Missiologie* 9 (1993) 3: 83; „Missions in the Gospel of Matthew.“ *Chalcedon Report* Nr. 378 (Jan 1997): 17-18; „Mission im Johannesevangelium (1): Eine Missionsschrift: Biblische Texte zur Mission (9)“. *Evangelikale Missiologie* 11 (1995) 4: 112; „Mission im Johannesevangelium (2): ‚Die Welt‘: Biblische Texte zur Mission (10)“. *Evangelikale Missiologie* 12 (1996) 1: 22; all printed in Thomas Schirmacher. *World Missions – The Heart of the Christian Faith*. edition afem – mission scripts 18. Bonn: VKW, 2001.

## About the Author

### Biography

Thomas Schirmmacher holds a chair in theology (ethics, missions, world religions), is rector of Martin Bucer Theological Seminary (Bonn, Hamburg, Berlin, Zurich, Innsbruck, Prague, Zlin, Istanbul), director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (Bonn, Cape Town, Colombo) of the World Evangelical Alliance and president of Gebende Hände gGmbH (Giving Hands), an internationally active relief organisation, as well as owner of a publishing house and co-owner of a consulting company.

Born in 1960, Schirmmacher studied theology from 1978 to 1982 at STH Basel and since 1983 Cultural Anthropology and Comparative Religions at Bonn State University. He earned a Drs. theol. in Missiology and Ecumenics at Theological University (Kampen/Netherlands) in 1984, and a Dr. theol. in Missiology and Ecumenics at Johannes Calvin Foundation (Kampen/Netherlands) in 1985, a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology at Pacific Western University in Los Angeles (CA) in 1989, a Th.D. in Ethics at Whitefield Theological Seminary in Lakeland (FL) in 1996, and a Dr. phil. in Comparative Religions / Sociology of Religion at State University of Bonn in 2007. In 1997 he got honorary doctorates (D.D.) from Cranmer Theological House, in 2006 from Acts University in Bangalore.

He was pastor of the 'Protestant Society of Germany' in Bonn and Erftstadt, 1982 to 1986, co-theologian of the 'Evangelical Free Church' in Bonn 1992-1998, and 1998-2000 pastor of the Free Reformed Church in Bonn. Nowadays he is active in the 'Church on the Rhine' in Bonn.

Schirmmacher taught Missions, World Religions and Cultural Anthropology at FTA Giessen (Germany) from 1983-1989 and from 1990-1996 ethics, missiology, comparative religions and cultural anthropology at 'Independent Theological Seminary' in Basel ('Staatsunabhängige Theologische Hochschule Basel' – STH Basel). He held and holds different chairs, e.g. 1994-1999 'Philadelphia Theological Seminary' (PA, USA) (professor of missions), 1995-2000 at Cranmer Theological House (Shreveport, LA) (professor of missions and ethics), since 1996 at Whitefield Theological Seminary (Lakeland, FL) (professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics), since 2000 at William Carey University (Bangalore, India) (profes-

sor of International Development), and since 2006 at State University of Oradea, Romania.

He is internationally active pro family and against abortion (as director of the Institute for Life and Family) and against persecution of Christians (as director of the Institute of Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance and as director of the Commission for Religious Freedom of the German and the Austrian Evangelical Alliance and member of the same commission of the World Evangelical Alliance).

He also is involved in all kinds of publishing activities. He has been editor of 'Bibel und Gemeinde' and editor of 'Evangelikale Missiologie', co-editor of 'Contra Mundum: A Reformed Cultural Review', and of 'Reflection: An International Reformed Review of Missiology'. Since 1986 he owns the publishing house 'Culture and Science Publ.' ('Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft'), which publishes scientific books on language, culture, religion and missions, and co-owns Consulting Schirmmacher GbR, a business and educational business company.

He has written or edited 74 books on ethics, missiology and cultural anthropology, which were translated into 14 languages. In 2002 he was named 'Man of Achievement' by the International Biographical Center Oxford for his achievements in the area of the ethics of international development.

He is listed in Marquis' Who's Who in the World, Dictionary of International Biography, International Who is Who of Professionals, EU-Who is Who, Who is Who in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 2000 Outstanding People of the 21st Century, 2000 Outstanding Intellectuals of the 21st Century, International Who's Who in Distance Learning, and other biographical yearbooks.

He is married to Dr. Christine Schirmmacher, professor of Islamic Studies and director of the Islam Institute of the German Evangelical Alliance, and author of a two-volume standard introduction to Islam. The couple has two children.

## Books by Thomas Schirmacher in chronological order (With short commentaries)

### As author:

Das Mißverständnis des Emil Brunner: Emil Brunners Bibliologie als Ursache für das Scheitern seiner Ekklesiologie. Theologische Untersuchungen zu Weltmission und Gemeindebau. ed. by Hans-Georg Wüch and Thomas Schirmacher. Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Weltmission und Gemeindebau: Lörrach, 1982. 54 pp.

[The misunderstanding of Emil Brunner] *A study and critique of Emil Brunner's ecclesiology and of the bibliology and hermeneutics of dialectical theology.*

Mohammed: Prophet aus der Wüste. Schwengeler: Berneck (CH), 1984<sup>1</sup>, 1986<sup>2</sup>, 1990<sup>3</sup>, 1996<sup>4</sup>. VTR: Nürnberg, 2006<sup>5</sup>. 120 pp.

[Muhammad] *A short biography of the founder of Islam and an introduction into Islam.*

Theodor Christlieb und seine Missionstheologie. Verlag der Evangelischen Gesellschaft für Deutschland: Wuppertal, 1985. 308 pp.

[Theodor Christlieb and his theology of mission] *A study of the biography, theology and missiology of the leading German Pietist, professor of practical theology and international missions leader in the second half of the nineteenth century. (Thesis for Dr. theol. in missiology.)*

Marxismus: Opium für das Volk? Schwengeler: Berneck (CH), 1990<sup>1</sup>, 1997<sup>2</sup>. 150 pp.

[Marxism: Opiate for the People?] *Marxism is proven to be a religion and an opiate for the masses. Emphasizes the differences between Marxist and Biblical work ethics.*

Zur marxistischen Sagen- und Märchenforschung und andere volkskundliche Beiträge. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1991<sup>1</sup>, 2003<sup>2</sup>. 227 pp.

[On the Marxist View of Sagas and Tales and other essays in folklore and cultural anthropology] *10 essays and articles on the science of folklore and cultural anthropology in Germany. Includes a critique of the Marxist interpretation of tales and sagas, and studies on the history of marriage and family in Europe from the 6th century onward.*

„Der göttliche Volkstumsbegriff“ und der „Glaube an Deutschlands Größe und heilige Sendung“: Hans Naumann als Volkskundler und Germanist unter dem Nationalsozialismus. 2 volumes. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2 volumes, 1992<sup>1</sup>, in one volume 2000<sup>2</sup>. 606 pp.

[Hans Naumann as Anthropologist and Germanist under National Socialism] *Discusses the history of German cultural anthropology and folklore under Hitler, especially the leading figure Naumann, professor of German language, whose scientific theory is shown to be very religious in tone. (Thesis for a PhD in Cultural Anthropology.)*

War Paulus wirklich auf Malta? Hänszler: Neuhausen, 1992, VTR: Nürnberg, 2000<sup>2</sup> (together with Heinz Warnecke). 254 pp.

[Was Paul Really on Malta?] *The book shows that Paul was not shipwrecked on Malta but on another island, Kephallenia, and that the report in Acts is very accurate. The Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is defended with theological and linguistic arguments against higher criticism.*

Psychotherapie – der fatale Irrtum. Schwengeler: Berneck (CH), 1993<sup>1</sup>, 1994<sup>2</sup>; 1997<sup>3</sup>; 2001<sup>4</sup> (together with Rudolf Antholzer). 150 pp.

[Psychotherapy – the Fatal Mistake] *A critique of secular psychotherapy, showing that psychotherapy often is a religion, and that most psychotherapists call every school except their own to be unscientific.*

Paulus im Kampf gegen den Schleier: Eine alternative Sicht von 1. Korinther 11,2-16. Biblia et symbiotica 4. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993<sup>1</sup>, 1994<sup>2</sup>, 1995<sup>3</sup>, 1997<sup>4</sup> 168 pp. Revised: VTR: Nürnberg, 2002<sup>5</sup>

[Paul in Conflict with the Veil!?!] *Exegetical examination of 1. Corinthians 11,2-16, following an alternative view of John Lightfoot, member of the Westminster assembly in the 16th century.*

„Schirmacher argues that from the biblical teaching that man is the head of woman (1 Cor

11:3) the Corinthians had drawn the false conclusions that in prayer a woman must be veiled (11:4-6) and a man is forbidden to be veiled (11:7), and that the wife exists for the husband but not the husband for the wife (11:8-9). Paul, however, rejected these conclusions and showed in 11:10-16 why the veiling of women did not belong to God's commandments binding upon all the Christian communities. After stating the thesis and presenting his alternative translation and exposition of 1 Cor 11:2-16, he considers the difficulties in the text, presents his alternative exposition in detail (in the form of thirteen theses), discusses quotations and irony in 1 Corinthians, and deals with other NT texts about women's clothing and prayer and about the subordination of wives." (*New Testament Abstracts* vol. 39 (1995) 1, p. 154).

Der Römerbrief. 2 vol. Neuhausen: Hänssler, 1994<sup>1</sup>; Hamburg: RVB & Nürnberg: VTR, 2001<sup>2</sup>. 331 + 323 pp.

[The Letter to the Romans] *Commentary on Romans in form of major topics of Systematic Theology starting from the text of Romans, but then going on to the whole Bible.*

Der Text des Römerbriefes: Für das Selbststudium gegliedert. *Biblia et symbiotica* 7. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1994. 68 pp.

[The Text of the Letters to the Romans] *The text of Romans newly translated and structured for self study.*

Ethik. Neuhausen: Hänssler, 1994<sup>1</sup>. 2 vol. 883 & 889 pp.; Hamburg: RVB & Nürnberg: VTR, 2001<sup>2</sup>. 3 vol. 2150 pp.; 2002<sup>3</sup>. 8 volumes. 2850 pp.

[Ethics] *Major Evangelical ethics in German covering all aspects of general, special, personal and public ethics.*

Galilei-Legenden und andere Beiträge zu Schöpfungsforschung, Evolutionskritik und Chronologie der Kulturgeschichte 1979-1994. *Biblia et symbiotica* 12. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1996. 331 pp.

[Legends of Galileo and other Contributions to Creation Science, Criticism of Evolution and Chronology of the History of Culture 1979-1994].

Völker – Drogen – Kannibalismus: Ethnologische und länderkundliche Beiträge 1984 – 1994. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1997. 218 pp.

[Peoples – Drugs – Cannibalism] *A collection*

*of articles on cultural anthropology, especially on Indians in South America, cannibalism and the religious use of drugs.*

Die Vielfalt biblischer Sprache: Über 100 alt- und neutestamentliche Stilarten, Ausdrucksweisen, Redeweisen und Gliederungsformen. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1997. 130 pp.

[The Diversity of Biblical Language] *A hermeneutical study, listing more than 100 specific language techniques in the Bible with several proof texts for each of them.*

Gottesdienst ist mehr: Plädoyer für einen liturgischen Gottesdienst. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1998. 130 pp.

[Church Service is More] *An investigation into biblical proof texts for liturgical elements in Christian Sunday service.*

Gesetz und Geist: Eine alternative Sicht des Galaterbriefes. Reformatorische Paperbacks. Reformatorischer Verlag: Hamburg, 1999. 160 pp.

[Law and Spirit] *This commentary emphasizing the ethical aspects of Galatians wants to prove that Galatians is not only fighting legalists but also a second party of Paul's opponents, who were totally opposed to the Old Testament and the Law, and lived immorally in the name of Christian freedom, a view especially endorsed by Wilhelm Lütgert's commentary of 1919. Paul is fighting against the abrogation of the Old Testament Law as well as against using this Law as way of salvation instead of God's grace.*

Law and Spirit: An Alternative View of Galatians. RVB International: Hamburg, 2001. 160 pp.

*English version of the same book.*

God Wants You to Learn, Labour and Love. Reformation Books: Hamburg, 1999. 120 pp.

*Four essays for Third World Christian Leaders on Learning with Jesus, Work Ethic, Love and Law and Social Involvement.*

Dios Quiere que Tú Aprendas Trabajes y Ames. Funad: Managua (Nikaragua), 1999<sup>1</sup>; 2000<sup>2</sup>; RVB International: Hamburg, 2003<sup>3</sup>. 70 pp.

[God Wants You to Learn, Labour and Love] *Spanish version of the same book.*

37 Gründe, warum Christen sich für eine Erneuerung unserer Gesellschaft auf christlicher Grundlage einsetzen sollten. Die Wende, 1999. 40 pp.

[37 reasons for Christian involvement in society and politics].

Christenverfolgung geht uns alle an: Auf dem Weg zu einer Theologie des Martyriums. Idea-Dokumentation 15/99. Idea: Wetzlar, 1999. 64 pp.

[The Persecution of Christians Concerns Us All: Towards a Theology of Martyrdom] *70 thesis on persecution and martyrdom, written for the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on behalf of the German and European Evangelical Alliance*

World Mission – Heart of Christianity. RVB International: Hamburg, 1999. 120 pp. *Articles on the Biblical and systematic fundament of World Mission, especially on mission as rooted in God's being, on 'Mission in the OT', and 'Romans as a Charter for World Mission'. Shorter version of German original 2001.*

Eugen Drewermann und der Buddhismus. Verlag für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft: Nürnberg, 2000<sup>1</sup>; 2001<sup>2</sup>. 132 pp.

[Drewermann and Buddhism] *Deals with the German Catholic Author Drewermann and his propagating Buddhist thinking. Includes chapter on a Christian Ethics of Environment.*

Ausverkaufte Würde? Der Pornographie-Boom und seine psychischen Folgen. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2000. (with Christa Meves). 130 pp.

[The Selling Off of Dignity] *The psychological results of pornography.*

Eine Sekte wird evangelisch – Die Reformation der Weltweiten Kirche Gottes. Idea-Dokumentation 11/2000. Idea: Wetzlar, 2000. 56 pp.

[A Cult Becomes Protestant] *Detailed report on the reformation of the Worldwide Church of God (Herbert W. Armstrong) from a sect to an evangelical church.*

Legends About the Galilei-Affair. RVB International: Hamburg, 2001. 120 pp.

*Shorter version of the German book 'Galilei-Legenden' mentioned above with essays on the Galilei-affair and creation science.*

Human Rights Threatened in Europe: Euthanasia – Abortion – Bioethicconvention. RVB International: Hamburg, 2001. 100 pp.

*Updated Lectures on euthanasia and biomedicine at the 1st European Right to Life Forum Berlin, 1998, and articles on abortion.*

Menschenrechte in Europa in Gefahr. RVB: Hamburg, 2001... 110 pp.

[Human Rights Threatened in Europe] *Updated Lectures on euthanasia and biomedicine at the 1st European Right to Life Forum Berlin, 1998, and articles on abortion. See slightly different English version above.*

Aufbruch zur modernen Weltmission: William Careys Theologie. RVB. 64 pp.

[Be Keen to Get Going: William Careys Theology] *First discussion of Carey's theology in length, explaining his Calvinistic and Postmillennial background.*

Be Keen to Get Going: William Careys Theology. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 64 pp. *Same book in English.*

Darf ein Christ schwören? RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 140 pp.

[May Christians Take an Oath?] *On Swearing and on its meaning for covenant theology. Taken from 'Ethik', vol. 1.*

Christus im Alten Testament. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 84 pp.

[Christ in the Old Testament] *On Christ and the Trinity in the Old Testament and on 'the Angel of the Lord'. Taken from 'Ethik'.*

Wie erkenne ich den Willen Gottes? Führungsmystik auf dem Prüfstand. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 184 pp.

[How to know the will of God] – *Criticizes the inner leading of the Spirit. Taken from 'Ethik'.*

Love is the Fulfillment of Love – Essays in Ethics. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 140 pp.

*Essays on ethical topics, including role of the Law, work ethics, and European Union.*

Mission und der Kampf um die Menschenrechte. RVB: Hamburg, 2001. 108 S.

[Mission and the Battle for Human Rights] *The relationship of world missions and the fight for human rights is discussed on an ethical level (theology of human rights) as well as on a practical level.*

The Persecution of Christians Concerns Us All: Towards a Theology of Martyrdom. zugleich Idea-Dokumentation 15/99 E. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 156 pp.

*70 thesis on persecution and martyrdom, written for the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on behalf of the German and European Evangelical Alliance*

Irrtumslosigkeit der Schrift oder Hermeneutik der Demut? VTR: Nürnberg, 2001. 82 pp.

[Inerrancy of Scripture or 'Hermeneutics of

Humility'] *Debate with Dr. Hempelmann on the inerrancy of scripture.*

Beiträge zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte: Heiligenverehrung — Universität Gießen — Reformation / Augustin – Böhl — Spurgeon — Brunner. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 200 pp.

[Essay on the History of church and Dogma] *Articles on topics from church history like 'The beginning of the veneration of saints' and on the named theologians.*

Weltmission — Das Herz des christlichen Glaubens: Beiträge aus 'Evangelikale Missiologie'. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 200 pp.

[World Mission – Heart of Christianity] *Articles on the Biblical and systematic fundament of World Mission, especially on mission as rooted in God's being, on 'Mission in the OT', and 'Romans as a Charter for World Mission'. Shorter version of German original 2001.*

Säkulare Religionen: Aufsätze zum religiösen Charakter von Nationalsozialismus und Kommunismus. VKW: Bonn, 2001. 140 pp.

[Secular Religions] *Articles on the religious nature of National Socialism and Communism. Includes texts of prayers to Hitler.*

Paulus im Kampf gegen den Schleier!? VTR: Nürnberg, 2002<sup>5</sup>. 130 pp.  
*Revised version. See commentary on first edition 1993<sup>1</sup>.*

Paul in Conflict with the Veil!? VTR: Nürnberg, 2002<sup>1</sup>; 2007<sup>2</sup>. 130 pp.  
*Same book in English.*

Hoffnung für Europa: 66 Thesen. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002

*Official thesis and study of hope in the Old and New Testament for Hope for Europe of the European Ev. Alliance and Lausanne Europe.*

Hope for Europe: 66 Theses. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002

*Same book in English.*

*Also available in Czech, Dutch, Spanish, Rumanina, Portugese, French, Russian, Italian, Portugese, Hungarian, Lettish, Latvian.*

ABC der Demut. RVB: Hamburg, 2002  
[ABC of Humility] *Notes and bible studies on humility in alphabetical order.*

Führen in ethischer Verantwortung: Die drei Seiten jeder Verantwortung. Edition ACF. Brunnen: Gießen, 2002

[Leading in ethical responsibility] *An introduction into ethics for economic and other leaders for the Academy of Christian Leaders.*

Der Papst und das Leiden: Warum der Papst nicht zurücktritt. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002. 64 pp.

[The Pope and Suffering] *A study of the writings of Pope John II. on suffering and an evaluation of their exegetical basis. Gives reasons why the pope does not resign.*

Erziehung, Bildung, Schule. VTR: Nürnberg, 2002. 88 pp.

[Instruction, Education, School] *The chapters on rising of children, example, education, and Christian school from 'Ethics'.*

Thomas Schirrmacher, Christine Schirrmacher u. a. Harenberg Lexikon der Religionen. Harenberg Verlag: Düsseldorf, 2002. 1020 pp.

[Harenberg Dictionary of World Religions] *In a major secular dictionary on world religions, Thomas Schirrmacher wrote the section on Christianity ('Lexicon of Christianity', pp. 8-267) and Christine Schirrmacher the section on Islam ('Lexicon of Islam', 'pp. 428-549).*

Studies in Church Leadership: New Testament Church Structure – Paul and His Co-workers – An Alternative Theological Education – A Critique of Catholic Canon Law. VKW: Bonn, 2003. 112 pp.

*Contains the named five essays. The first essay is translated from vol. 5 of 'Ethics'.*

Im Gespräch mit dem Wanderprediger des New Age – und andere apologetische Beiträge. VKW: Bonn, 2003. 210 pp.

[In Discussion with the Itinerant Preacher of the New Age] *Essays and reports on non-Christian religions, New Age, reincarnation, manicheism from two decades of apologetic debates.*

Verborgene Zahlenwerte in der Bibel? – und andere Beiträge zur Bibel. VKW: Bonn, 2003. 200 pp.

[Secret Numbers in the Bible?] *Essays and articles on Bible Numeric's, the importance of Hebrew studies, Obadiah, the Psalms and other Bible related topics from 2 decades of studies.*

Feindbild Islam. VKW: Bonn, 2003. 111 pp.

[Bogeyman Islam] *May Arab Christians call God 'Allah'? Is Allah the Father of Jesus? How Political Parties in Germany misrepresent Islam.*

Religijos mokslas. Prizmės knyga. Siaulai (Litauen): Campus Fidus, 2004. 106 pp.

[Secular Religions] *In Latvian: Essays on*

*Religions, Marxism, National Socialism and the devil in Art and Literature.*

Bildungspflicht statt Schulzwang. VKW/VTR/idea: Bonn et. al., 2005. 90 pp.  
[Compulsary Education or Compulsary Schooling] *A scientific evaluation of homeschooling.*

Der Ablass RVB/VTR: Hamburg, 2005. 144 pp.  
[The Indulgences] *History and theology of the Catholic view on indulgences.*

Die Apokryphen RVB/VTR: Hamburg, 2005. 92 pp.  
[The Apocrypha] *History and theology of the Catholic view on the apocrypha and an apology of the Protestant position.*

Thomas Schirmmacher et al. Christ und Politik: 50 Antworten auf Fragen und kritische Einwände. VKW: Bonn, 2006. 125 pp.  
[Christians and Politics] *Schirmmacher and three members of parliament from Switzerland answer questions around the relation of church and state and the political involvement of Evangelicals.*

Der Segen von Ehe und Familie: Interessante Erkenntnisse aus Forschung und Statistik. VKW: Bonn, 2006. 125 pp.  
[The Blessing of Marriage and Family] *Introduction to 200 scientific studies and statistics, that prove the blessing of longterm marriage and stable family.*

Multikulturelle Gesellschaft: Chancen und Gefahren. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2006. 100 pp.  
[Multicultural Society] *A history of multiculturalism (especially Muslims and Russian-Germans) in Germany and its political, economic and religious implications for the future of Germany.*

Die neue Unterschicht: Armut in Deutschland? Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2007. 120 pp.  
[The New Low Cast] *A sociology of low cast people in Germany, the differences in culture to low cast people one hundred years ago, tasks for churches and the State.*

Hitlers Kriegsreligion: Die Verankerung der Weltanschauung Hitlers in seiner religiösen Begrifflichkeit und seinem Gottesbild. 2 vol. VKW: Bonn, 2007. 1220 pp.  
[Hitlers Religion of War] *A research about the religious terms and thoughts in all texts and speeches of Hitler of Hitler, pleading for a new way of explaining Hitlers worldview, rise and breakdown.*

Moderne Väter: Weder Waschlappen, noch Despot. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2007. 96 pp.  
[Modern Fathers] *Presents the result of international father research, explains the necessity of the father's involvement for his children and gives practical guidelines.*

Sheria au Roho? Trans-Africa Swahili Christian Ministries: Mwanza, Tanzania, 2007. 96 pp.  
*Kiswahili-Version of 'Law and Spirit' about Galatians.*

Koran und Bibel: Die größten Religionen im Vergleich. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2008. 96 pp.  
[Quran and Bible] *Compares the differences between the Muslim of the Quran as the 'Word of God' and the Christian view of the Bible as the 'Word of God'. A classic on the inspiration of the Bible.*

Christenverfolgung heute. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2008. 96 pp.  
[The Persecution of Christians today] *Gives an overview over the persecution of Christians worldwide and presents a short theology of persecution as well political reasons for the fight for religious freedom.*

Internetpornografie. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2008. 156 pp.  
[Internet pornography] *Intense study of spread of pornography, its use amongst children and young people, its psychological results and dangers, including steps how to escape sex and pornography addiction.*

## As editor (always with own contributions):

Patrick Johnstone. Handbuch für Weltmission: Gebet für die Welt. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1987<sup>2</sup>, newest edition 1993<sup>6</sup> (together with Christine Schirmmacher). 811 pp.  
[Handbook on World Mission] *Adapted Ger-*

*man version of 'Operation World', a handbook and lexicon on the situation of Christianity and missions in every country of the world.*

Gospel Recordings Language List: Liste der Sprachaufnahmen in 4.273 Sprachen. Missio-

logica Evangelica 4. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1992. 120 pp.

*List of 4273 languages in the world, in which evangelistic cassettes are available.*

„Die Zeit für die Bekehrung der Welt ist reif“: Rufus Anderson und die Selbständigkeit der Kirche als Ziel der Mission. Edition afem: mission scripts 3. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993. 134 pp.

[The Time of Conversion is Ripe: Rufus Anderson and The Independence of ] *Articles by Schirrmacher and by theologians from the 19th century about Rufus Anderson, leading American missionary statesman, Reformed professor of missions and postmillennial theologian – together with the first translation of texts of Anderson into German.*

William Carey. Eine Untersuchung über die Verpflichtung der Christen [1792]. Edition afem: mission classics 1. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993 (together with Klaus Fiedler). 100 pp.

[An Inquire into the Means ...] *First German translation of the book by the Calvinist Baptist William Carey of 1792, with which the age of modern Protestant world missions started.*

Bibeltreue in der Offensive: Die drei Chicagoerklärungen zur biblischen Unfehlbarkeit, Hermeneutik und Anwendung. Biblia et symbiotica 2. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993<sup>1</sup>; 2000<sup>2</sup>. 90 pp.

*German translation of the three Chicago-Declarations on biblical inerrancy, hermeneutics and application.*

Im Kampf um die Bibel – 100 Jahre Bibelbund. Biblia et symbiotica 6. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1994 (together with Stephan Holthaus). 168 pp.

[The Battle for the Bible] *‘Festschrift’ for 100 years of „Bibelbund“.* *Articles on biblical inerrancy and on the history of the major German organization fighting higher criticism, the „Bibelbund“ (Bible League), and its theological journal „Bibel und Gemeinde“, edited by Schirrmacher 1988-1997.*

Eduard Böhl. Dogmatik. Hänssler Theologie. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1995; 2nd ed.: Hamburg: RVB & Bonn: VKW, 2004. 508 pp. [Dogmatic Theology] *A Reformed Systematic Theology from the last century edited by Thomas Schirrmacher; with an lengthy introduction on Böhl’s life and work.*

Der evangelische Glaube kompakt: Ein Arbeitsbuch. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1998; 2nd

ed.: Hamburg: RVB & Bonn: VKW, 2004. 246 pp.

[The Protestant Faith in Nuce] *German translation of the Westminster Confession of Faith, adapted and with commentary and changes in Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Baptist versions.*

Werden alle gerettet? Referate der Jahrestagung 1998 des AfeM (with Klaus W. Müller). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1998. 160 pp.

[Will All Be Saved?] *The proceedings of a missiological consultation on the relationship between Christianity’s mission and other religions.*

The Right to Life for Every Person / Lebensrecht für jeden Menschen. Abortion – Euthanasia – Gen Technology: Proceedings of the 1st European Right to Life Forum Berlin, 1998. Abtreibung – Euthanasie – Gentechnik: Beiträge des 1. Europäischen Forums Lebensrecht Berlin, 1999 (with Walter Schrader, Hartmut Steeb). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1999. 310 pp.

*Basic articles on biomedical topics, includes reports on the prolife movements in most European countries.*

Kein anderer Name: Die Einzigartigkeit Jesu Christi und das Gespräch mit nichtchristlichen Religionen. Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Peter Beyerhaus. Verlag für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft: Nürnberg, 1999. 470 pp.

[No Other Name: The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ ...] *Festschrift for Prof. Peter Beyerhaus, the leading evangelical authority on missions, ecumenical issues and on other religions and an evangelical elder statesmen. Covers all aspects of the relationship of Christian faith to other religions.*

Missionswissenschaft im Zeichen der Erneuerung: Ehrengabe zum 70. Geburtstag von Peter Beyerhaus. Sonderausgabe = Evangelikale Missiologie 15 (1999) Heft 2 (together with Klaus W. Müller und Christof Sauer) (1999) afem

*Shorter version of the former Festschrift for mass distribution*

Ausbildung als missionarischer Auftrag: Referate der Jahrestagung 1999 des AfeM (with Klaus W. Müller). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2000. 210 pp.

[Theological education as World Mission] *Lectures on the relation of missions and theo-*

*logical education by leading representatives of theological schools, alternative programs, missions and third world churches.*

Mission in der Spannung zwischen Hoffnung, Resignation und Endzeitenthusiasmus: Referate der Jahrestagung 2000 des AfEM (together with Klaus W. Müller). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2001. 240 pp.  
*Lectures on the relation of eschatology and missions in history and in present reality.*

Märtyrer 2001 — Christenverfolgung vor allem in islamischen Ländern. (with Max Klingberg). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2001. 140 pp.  
[Martyrs 2001] *Documentation on the present status of persecution of Christians in Islamic countries.*

Anwalt der Liebe – Martin Bucer als Theologe und Seelsorger: Zum 450. Todestag des Reformators. Jahrbuch des Martin Bucer Seminars 1 (2001). VKW: Bonn, 2001. 160 pp.  
[Advocate of Love: Martin Bucer as Theologian and Counselor] *Yearbook of the Martin Bucer Seminary on Life and Theology of the reformer Martin Bucer.*

Die vier Schöpfungsordnungen Gottes: Kirche, Staat, Wirtschaft und Familie bei Dietrich Bonhoeffer und Martin Luther. VTR: Nürnberg, 2001. 110 pp.  
[The four Creation Orders] *Three lengthy essays discuss the importance of the four major creation orders family, church, work and state in the Bible, and in the work of Martin Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.*

Baumeister bleibt der Herr: Festgabe zum 80. Geburtstag von Prof. Bernd Schirrmacher (with Klaus Schirrmacher und Ingrid von Torklus). VKW: Bonn, 2001. 33300 pp.  
[God Stays the Master Builder] *Festschrift for Thomas Schirrmacher's father on his 80th birthday. Essays mainly concentrate on Christian education and Evangelical schools.*

A Life of Transformation: Festschrift for Colonel V. Doner. RVB International: Hamburg, 2001. 350 pp.  
*Festschrift for one of the giants of international Christian relief work and social involvement.*

Märtyrer 2002 — Jahrbuch zur Christenverfolgung heute (with Max Klingberg). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2002. 140 pp.  
[Martyrs 2002] *Yearbook with documentation of the present status of persecution of Chris-*

*tians with special emphasize on Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey and Vietnam.*

Patrick Johnstone. Gebet für die Welt. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 2003. 1010 pp.  
[Prayer for the World] *Adapted German version of 'Operation World', a handbook and lexicon on the situation of Christianity and missions in every country of the world.*

Märtyrer 2003 — Jahrbuch zur Christenverfolgung heute (with Max Klingberg). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2003. 180 pp.  
[Martyrs 2003] *Yearbook with documentation of the present status of persecution of Christians, featuring Cuba, Japan, North Korea, Vietnam.*

Wenn Kinder zu Hause zur Schule gehen (with Thomas Mayer). VTR: Nürnberg, 2004. 260 pp.  
[When Children Go to Scholl at Home] *Documentation and scientific essays on homeschooling in Germany and Europe.*

Menschenrechte für Minderheiten in Deutschland und Europa: Vom Einsatz für die Religionsfreiheit durch die Evangelische Allianz und die Freikirchen im 19. Jahrhundert (with Karl Heinz Voigt). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2004. 120 pp.  
[Human Rights for Minorities in Germany and Europe] *Research articles on the history of the defence of religious freedom by the Evangelical Alliance in Germany and Great Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

Herausforderung China: Ansichten, Einsichten, Aussichten: Eine Dokumentation von idea und China Partner (with Konrad Brandt). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2004. 214 pp.  
[Challenge China] *A collection of reports, lectures and opinion on the the situation of religions and the Christian faith in China, combining reports on persecution and reports on huge progress for public Christianity.*

Europa Hoffnung geben: Dokumentation (with Thomas Mayer). VTR: Nürnberg, 2004. 197 pp.  
[To Give Hope to Europe] *Lectures of a theological conference in Budapest by John-Warwick Montgomery, Thomas K. Johnstone, William Mikler, Bernhard Knieß on the future of Europe and how to defend the gospel of hope in Europe.*

Märtyrer 2004 – Das Jahrbuch zur Christenverfolgung heute. (with Max Klingberg).

Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2004. 160 pp.

[Martyrs 2004] *Yearbook with documentation of the present status of persecution of Christians, with two longer studies on the situation in Nigeria and Iran.*

Tabuthema Tod? Vom Sterben in Würde. (with Roland Jung, Frank Koppelin). Jahrbuch des Martin Bucer Seminars 4 (2004). VKW: Bonn, 2004. 220 pp.

[*Death as Taboo?*] *8 major Evangelical ethicists discuss topics around counseling serious ill and dying people, death, euthanasia, counseling to relatives.*

Mission verändert – Mission verändert sich / Mission Transformes – Mission is Transformed: Festschrift für Klaus Fiedler. (with Christof Sauer). Nürnberg: VTR & Bonn: VKW, 2005. 572 pp.

*Festschrift for African missionary and doyen of African and German mission history Klaus Fiedler.*

Märtyrer 2005 – Das Jahrbuch zur Christenverfolgung heute. (mit Max Klingberg). Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2005. 170 pp.

[Martyrs 2005] *Yearbook with documentation of the present status of persecution of Christians, featuring Nigeria, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Turkey.*

Ein Maulkorb für Christen? Juristen nehmen Stellung zum deutschen Antidiskriminierungsgesetz und ähnlichen Gesetzen in Europa und Australien. (with Thomas Zimmermanns). VKW: Bonn, 2005

[A Muzzle for Christians?] *Studies in religious hate laws, antidiscrimination laws and their influence on Christian communities.*

Scham- oder Schuldgefühl? Die christliche Botschaft angesichts von schuld- und schamorientierten Gewissen und Kulturen. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2005. 99 pp.

[Shame- and Guiltfeeling] *This study explains the difference between shame- and guiltoriented cultures and shows, that the 'Biblical' message emphasizes shame and guilt equally and thus can be applied to cultures in the West, the East, in modern and in Third World cultures.*

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