

To Participate

in Looking for an ecclesial structure
to be a witnessing church today

God's Mission

Jan van 't Spijker

To Participate in God's Mission

Looking for an ecclesial structure to be a witnessing church today

The publication of this dissertation was made possible in part by the Promise Foundation and by a gift from a befriended couple.

ISBN 978-94-6301-361-1

Eburon Academic Publishers, Utrecht, The Netherlands
info@eburon.nl / www.eburon.nl

Cover design: Textcetera, The Hague

© 2021. J. van 't Spijker. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing from the proprietor.

To Participate in God's Mission

Looking for an ecclesial structure to be a witnessing church today

(with a summary in English and in Dutch)

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Theologische Universiteit van de
Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken
in Nederland te Apeldoorn
op gezag van de rector, prof. dr. H.J. Selderhuis,
hoogleraar kerkgeschiedenis en kerkrecht,
volgens het besluit van het college van hoogleraren
in het openbaar te verdedigen
op D.V. 1 oktober 2021 om 14.00 uur
in de aula van de Theologische Universiteit,
Wilhelminapark 4 te Apeldoorn

door

Jan van 't Spijker

geboren 31 januari 1960 te Drogeham

Promotores:

Prof. dr. A. Huijgen

Prof. dr. S. Paas

Examencommissie:

Prof. dr. M.W. Goheen

Prof. dr. M.J. Kater

Prof. dr. T.D. Mashau

Prof. dr. D. Nagy

Prof. dr. J.H.F. Schaeffer

To my colleagues in the Zambezi province
Dedicado aos meus colegas na província de Zambézia

In grateful remembrance of my parents,
Willem van 't Spijker († 2021) and Ienje van 't Spijker-Hovius († 2008),
and my father-in-law,
Ferdinand van der Veen († 2002)

PREFACE

The love for mission has entered my life in a very profound way. When I studied theology at the Theological University of Apeldoorn (TUA) in the 1980s, I did so in order to become a minister within the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken* in the Netherlands. I knew the Lord had called me to be a minister, to read the Scriptures together with the congregation and to spend time with people in pastoral care to discover with them how the Lord is present in life.

After a few years, however, the Lord made it clear to us that He wanted us in Mozambique. We were not able to ignore that calling, although questioning our ability to do so, and we lived and worked in Mozambique from the beginning of 1998 to the end of 2004. During those years, God firmly instilled in me love for mission.

After returning to the Netherlands, the Lord confirmed this love when the request was made to come and teach in the area of missiology at the TUA. Initially this was a part-time appointment, but when it was expanded to full-time, the assignment was also to take up PhD study. It was precisely in those years that there was a discussion (or debate) at the synodal level about the question of how churches should deal with the missionary character of being church. In that situation I saw taking up the study that concludes with this thesis as an opportunity to contribute to that conversation. The theme came naturally to me from within the conversation that was going on.

Now that the thesis is on the table, I think of all the people who guided and helped me to complete it. I think especially of Prof. Dr. Arnold Huijgen and Prof. Dr. Stefan Paas who acted as my supervisors. Initially it was Prof. Dr. Arie Baars who was my supervisor, for which I am still grateful to him. After his retirement, Prof. Huijgen took over from him. The way in which he and Prof. Paas have given shape to this guidance has been of great value and significance to me. They helped me overcome difficulties at crucial moments. I thank them very much for that. When it comes to finding all kinds of resources, I am grateful for the help I received from Mrs. Nikè van der Mijden-Groenendijk who almost always managed to get that difficult to trace book or article to Apeldoorn. And there were also the colleagues who regularly gave me a helping hand, including in telling me about the long journey they had taken when they themselves were busy with their PhD studies. In particular, I also mention here the support I have received during this entire study project from the circle of the Deputies for Evangelism and of the Deputies for Foreign Mission. Their support was essential, also because they made a financial contribution to my appointment at the TUA.

In my studies I have been particularly supported by my brother, Willem, and by my colleague minister in the congregation of Hoogeveen, drs. Renger van de Kamp. That is why I very much appreciate that they wanted to be my paranymphs at the conclusion of this promotional project.

I would not have been able to write this dissertation if my wife Fennie had not been willing to fully support my studies. I am deeply grateful that all these years she gave me the opportunity to return to the study. She has spent many evenings alone. Our children also contributed in that they had to do without me many times. Everyone will understand that I am expressing my gratitude to them not only in these words.

Finally, and above all and everyone, I am grateful to the Lord God for giving me the courage and energy to keep going over the years. In studying the themes of this study, I have realized again and again that I was studying things that are not ours, but His, and that I was focusing on things that we do not do ourselves, but in which He is fully engaged. Mission is God's work, and He uses us. During the years in Mozambique this was often my experience, but when studying the material for this thesis it became clear to me again and again.

I dedicate this study to the colleagues with whom I have had the privilege to work in Mozambique. In doing so, my thoughts go also out to all those pastors in the churches in Zambezi province who participated in our study program. I have seen in the way they did (and do) their work how the Lord builds His church there. That church looks different than in the Netherlands, but it is His church.

My mother-in-law is still with us at this moment. I am glad about that. The grateful remembrance of my father and mother and of my father-in-law leads me to mention their names as well. We are grateful that our parents have shown us the way of the Lord, and that they have led us in that way.

Hoogeveen, September 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
ABBREVIATIONS	7
1. INTRODUCTION.....	9
1.1 THE QUESTION MARK.....	9
1.2 CONTEXT, FOCUS AND PROBLEM.....	10
1.3 MOTIVATION.....	16
1.4 ZOOMING IN	17
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION	18
1.6 RELEVANCE.....	20
1.7 PLAN OF STUDY, METHODOLOGY AND THEOLOGICAL EMBEDDING	20
1.7.1 <i>Missionary Ecclesiological Discussion in the Ecumenical Context</i>	20
1.7.2 <i>Missionary Ecclesiological Thinking in the Reformed Context</i>	21
1.7.3 <i>Dream or Reality – a Test Case of Theology</i>	22
1.7.4 <i>Lessons to Be Learned – Conclusions and Recommendations</i>	23
1.8 TITLE	23
2. MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGICAL DISCUSSION IN ECUMENICAL CONTEXT.....	25
2.1 INTRODUCTION AND AIM.....	25
2.2 PROCEDURE, METHOD, AND SOURCES	27
2.3 A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF MISSION	28
2.3.1 <i>Before Willingen</i>	28
2.3.2 <i>Willingen and its First Evaluation</i>	33
2.3.3 <i>Continuation of the Discussion</i>	35
2.4 THE AIM OF MISSION – THE DEVELOPMENT OF KINGDOM THEOLOGY	38
2.4.1 <i>Before Willingen</i>	38
2.4.2 <i>Willingen and its First Evaluation</i>	42
2.4.3 <i>Continuation of the Discussion in Ecumenical Circles</i>	44
2.4.4 <i>Continuation of the Discussion in Evangelical Circles</i>	50
2.5. KINGDOM AND MISSION IN THEIR ESCHATOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE.....	56
2.5.1 <i>Before Willingen</i>	56
2.5.2 <i>Willingen and its First Evaluation</i>	59

2.5.3	<i>Continuation of the Discussion in Ecumenical Circles</i>	62
2.5.4	<i>Continuation of the Discussion in Evangelical Circles</i>	65
2.6	MISSION AND CHURCH – THE MISSIONARY IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH	68
2.6.1	<i>Before Willigen</i>	68
2.6.2	<i>Willigen and its First Evaluation</i>	72
2.6.3	<i>Continuation of the Discussion in Ecumenical Circles</i>	75
2.6.4	<i>Continuation of the Discussion in Evangelical Circles</i>	81
2.7	THE MISSIONARY INVOLVEMENT OF THE WHOLE CHURCH	84
2.7.1	<i>Before Willigen</i>	84
2.7.2	<i>Willigen and its First Evaluation</i>	86
2.7.3	<i>Continuation of the Discussion in Ecumenical Circles</i>	86
2.7.4	<i>Continuation of the Discussion in Evangelical Circles</i>	88
2.8	RESULTS	90

**3. MISSIONARY ECCLESIOLOGICAL THINKING IN THE REFORMED
CONTEXT..... 93**

3.1	INTRODUCTION AND AIM	93
3.2	PROCEDURE, METHOD, AND SOURCES	94
3.3	A PRELUDE: KARL BARTH AND MISSIOLOGICAL THEOLOGY.....	95
3.4	JOHAN HERMAN BAVINCK	98
3.4.1	<i>Fundamental Thoughts and Themes</i>	100
3.4.2	<i>Missio Dei</i>	100
3.4.3	<i>Mission and Kingdom</i>	100
3.4.4	<i>Kingdom and Salvation-History</i>	102
3.4.5	<i>Mission and Church</i>	102
3.4.6	<i>The Involvement of the Whole Church</i>	103
3.4.7	<i>Results</i>	104
3.5	HENDRIK KRAEMER.....	105
3.5.1	<i>Fundamental Thoughts and Themes of Kraemer</i>	107
3.5.2	<i>Missio Dei</i>	107
3.5.3	<i>Mission and Kingdom</i>	109
3.5.4	<i>Kingdom and Salvation-History</i>	109
3.5.5	<i>Mission and Church</i>	110
3.5.6	<i>The Involvement of the Whole Church</i>	111
3.5.7	<i>Results</i>	112
3.6	JOHANNES VERKUYL	114
3.6.1	<i>Fundamental Thoughts and Themes of Verkuyl</i>	115

3.6.2 <i>Missio Dei</i>	115
3.6.3 <i>Mission and Kingdom</i>	116
3.6.4 <i>Kingdom and Salvation-History</i>	117
3.6.5 <i>Mission and Church</i>	118
3.6.6 <i>The Involvement of the Whole Church</i>	119
3.6.7 <i>Results</i>	120
3.7 JAMES EDWARD LESSLIE NEWBIGIN.....	121
3.7.1 <i>Fundamental Thoughts and Themes</i>	123
3.7.2 <i>Missio Dei</i>	123
3.7.3 <i>Mission and Kingdom</i>	125
3.7.4 <i>Kingdom and Salvation-History</i>	126
3.7.5 <i>Mission and Church</i>	127
3.7.6 <i>The Involvement of the Whole Church</i>	130
3.7.7 <i>Results</i>	131
3.8 THEOLOGICAL RESULTS AND EVALUATION – FOUNDED THE MISSIONARY	
IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH.....	133
3.8.1 <i>Missio Dei</i>	134
3.8.2 <i>Mission and Kingdom</i>	135
3.8.3 <i>Kingdom and Salvation-History</i>	137
3.8.4 <i>Mission and Church</i>	139
3.8.5 <i>The Involvement of the Whole Church</i>	139
3.9 CONCLUSION – CONNECTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONTINUING	
DISCOURSE.....	140
4. DREAM OR REALITY – A TESTCASE FOR THEOLOGY.....	143
4.1 INTRODUCTION AND AIM.....	143
4.2 METHOD AND SOURCES.....	143
4.3 A HEURISTIC LENS.....	147
4.3.1 <i>Missio Dei</i>	147
4.3.2 <i>Mission and Kingdom</i>	148
4.3.3 <i>Kingdom and Salvation-History</i>	150
4.3.4 <i>Mission and Church</i>	151
4.3.5 <i>Involvement of the Whole Church</i>	153
4.4 NORMATIVE VOICES.....	154
4.4.1 <i>Church Documents</i>	154
4.5 FORMAL VOICES.....	159
4.5.1 <i>Documents Used in Decision-Making</i>	159

4.5.2 <i>Periodicals Contributing to the Conversation</i>	164
4.6 ESPOUSED VOICES	168
4.6.1 <i>Procedure</i>	168
4.6.2 <i>Involvement and Distance</i>	170
4.6.3 <i>Voices of Workers in the Field</i>	171
4.7 EVALUATION.....	179
4.7.1 <i>Missio Dei</i>	179
4.7.2 <i>Mission and Kingdom</i>	182
4.7.3 <i>Kingdom and Salvation-History</i>	184
4.7.4 <i>Mission and Church</i>	185
4.7.5 <i>Involvement of the Whole Church</i>	185
4.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS	186
5. CONCLUSION	189
5.1 THE <i>MISSIO DEI</i> IS FOUNDATIONAL TO THEOLOGY	191
5.2 THE CHURCH PARTICIPATES IN CHRIST’S ONGOING GATHERING WORK	193
5.3 GOD BUILDS HIS KINGDOM	196
5.4 THE CHURCH AS THE MISSIONARY COMMUNITY OF THE KINGDOM	197
5.5 THE OPENNESS OF THE KINGDOM COMMUNITY	198
5.6 THE SERVICE TO THE WORD OF THE KINGDOM COMMUNITY	199
5.7 THE AGENDA OF THE KINGDOM COMMUNITY.....	200
5.8 CONCLUSION.....	201
SUMMARY.....	203
SAMENVATTING	209
APPENDIX: PLAN OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION.....	215
LITERATURE.....	217
INDEX OF NAMES.....	241
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	246

ABBREVIATIONS

CGKN	Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands)
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (of the World Council of Churches)
GKN	Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Reformed Churches in the Netherlands)
GOCN	Gospel and Our Culture Network
IMC	International Missionary Council
LCWE	Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism
NHK	Nederlands Hervormde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church)
NZR	Nederlandse Zendingsraad (Netherlands Missionary Council)
PNK	Protestantse Kerk in Nederland (Protestant Church in the Netherlands)
PThU	Protestantse Theologische Universiteit (Protestant Theological University)
TUA	Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn (Theological University Apeldoorn)
VU	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU University Amsterdam)
WCC	World Council of Churches

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Question Mark

The position of the church in the Netherlands and wider, in western Europe, has changed drastically over the course of the last century. Many studies reveal that the number of people that confess to belong to a church has decreased immensely.¹ Increasingly larger numbers of people within the Netherlands are completely unfamiliar with the most basic facts about the Bible.² Secularization did and still does its job.³ Christianity has become a faith of the minority. In the private domain of life, every person is free to believe whatever he or she wishes. In the public realm, however, the influence of Christianity is something of the past. Christendom, the period in which the Christian faith and the so-called Christian culture was one of the main sources for the whole of society, has been left behind, sometimes in a very deliberate sense.⁴

¹ See BERNTS & BERGHUIS, *God in Nederland: 1966 – 2015*. The most recent publication in the series *God in Nederland* was published in 2020 (<https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/longread/statistische-trends/2020/religie-in-nederland>, consulted on 2021/02/20). See further DE HART, *Geloven binnen en buiten verband*, and also DE HART & VAN HOUWELINGEN, *Christenen in Nederland*.

² For the Dutch context can be referred to the publications of, for instance, several authors in the area of social science. To name but a few: BECKER, *Secularisatie*; VAN HARKAMP, ‘Simply astounding’; DEKKER, *Van het centrum naar de marge*; PAUL, *De slag om het hart*. In the area of missiology there are also several studies to be mentioned here: the studies of DEKKER, *Marginaal*; KENNEDY, *Stad*; NOORDEGRAAF, *Vijf broden*; PAAS, *Werkers*; PAAS, *Pilgrims and Priests* deal in their own way with the changing context of the Netherlands.

³ VAN HARKAMP, ‘Simply astounding’, 43: ‘What is secularization? Let us keep it simple and view this social process as the adjustment of religion to the secular world and the decline in the meaning of religion for society *and the individual*’ (italics JvtS). In speaking of secularization, it is good to be aware of the fact that there is no single secularization paradigm. PAAS, ‘Post-Christian’, 6-9, states that there ‘is rather a collection of theories, operating on different levels of analysis, and using different definitions of “secularization” on each level.’ He lists five definitions that are currently used, viz. Differentiation, Rationalization, Privatization, Pluralisation, and Individual loss of faith, and states that the causal connections between these different types of secularization ‘are subject to ongoing debate.’

⁴ Cf. the many publications on this subject. To name just a few: MURRAY, *Church after Christendom*; MURRAY, *Post-Christendom*; PAAS, *Church Planting in the Secular West*; ROEST, *The Gospel in the Western context*; STONE, *Evangelism after Christendom*; see further the different publications of the Gospel and Our Culture Series.

This leads to the conclusion that Europe has changed back into a mission field; a conclusion that is supported by the fact that missionaries from all over the world come to Europe to bring the former missionary countries the message of life and hope in Jesus Christ. In this situation in which the Netherlands are no exception, the churches are confronted with the urgent question of how to witness to the gospel of Christ. This question is all the more urgent because the churches themselves are fully part of the post-Christian and postmodern society, in which Christian belief is at best one of the many options in the wide spectrum of all sorts of religions.⁵ After all, postmodern and post-Christendom thinking are not only found outside the church, but also inside the church. Nicholas Healy's remark that 'about half of baby boomers believe that "[a]ll the great religions of the world are equally true and good,"'⁶ applies both outside and inside the church.

The church, therefore, finds itself confronted with a number of pressing questions regarding its existence in relation to the society in which it exists. How is this relation to be characterized, and what does this imply with regard to the identity of the church? What does this mean for the concepts the church used (for centuries) when it developed the whole idea of mission? Is it necessary to change the definition of mission, because of the situation in which the church is being called to exist? Or is it perhaps necessary to dig even deeper? Will it be necessary for the church to reconsider its existence, its essence, its reason for being?

1.2 Context, Focus and Problem

The *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (CGKN)⁷ forms a small denomination in the Netherlands with a little more than 70.000 members.⁸ Their roots lay in the *Afscheiding* (the Secession Movement) of 1834. In 1892, when the churches of the *Afscheiding* merged with the churches that stemmed from the *Doleantie* (the secession movement under the leadership of Abraham Kuyper), a small number of churches stayed

⁵ See for this aspect of secularism TAYLOR, *Secular Age*. Already in the Introduction Taylor speaks of the change 'which takes us from a society in which it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others.' 'Belief in God is no longer axiomatic. There are alternatives' (TAYLOR, *Secular Age*, 3).

⁶ HEALY, *Church*, 16, citing some statistics mentioned in: ROOF, *Generation*, 72.

⁷ On the official website of the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* the abbreviation CGKN is used, also on the English version of the website. See: <https://cgk.nl/download/christian-reformed-churches/> (consulted 2021/03/08). Therefore, this abbreviation will be used in this study also.

⁸ See BIKKER, *Jaarboek 2021*, 180.

separate and continued as the CGKN. Spiritually the CGKN connect to the movement of the Reformation in the line of Calvinism as it was professed in the 16th and 17th centuries. Next to the three ecumenical creeds, the so-called *Three Forms of Unity* (the Catechism of Heidelberg, the Belgic Confession of Faith, and the Canons of Dordt) are adopted as the confessional basis of the denomination. The spiritual atmosphere circles around a pietist slant. There is diversity in the way it is expressed, but a personal relationship with God in Christ through the Spirit is typical. Nowadays, there are 181 local congregations, organized in four regional synods and thirteen classes. The number of members per congregation varies: A few congregations have less than 40, the biggest congregation has around 4600 members. The denomination is organized in a presbyterial-synodal system, abiding by the *Church Order* of Dordrecht that has been adapted regularly to changing circumstances. The church-council is the only permanent body. The other official assemblies only meet when called together (the classes twice a year, the regional synod once a year and the general synod every third year). Ergo, there is no permanent national nor regional body that governs the denomination. The different issues that require permanent attention, such as the relation to Israel, foreign mission, evangelism, diaconate, mutual assistance between the local churches in material affairs, the pastoral care of people in the military to name just a few, are taken care of by *deputaatschappen* (church committees). These committees report to the synods, both regional and national. The denomination has its own theological university where future pastors are academically trained, the Theological University of Apeldoorn (TUA). This university is accountable to the national government according to the legal regulations regarding academic education in the Netherlands. The university is also accountable to the denomination. The main percentage of funding comes from the government, but the denomination also provides a substantial financial subsidy. The synod appoints the board and full professors in the various theological disciplines. Students from different denominations study in Apeldoorn, preparing either for work as a pastor, pastoral worker, missionary worker, academic theologian and so on.⁹

Within the CGKN, the awareness of all of the developments mentioned in the previous section led to some important decisions with missionary implications. The

⁹ See for all this extensively BRIENEN, *De Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*, 9-15. It is important to distinguish the CGKN from the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). Both denominations stem from the Secession Movement of 1834 in the Netherlands. But whereas the CGKN distanced themselves deliberately from the views of Abraham Kuyper, the CRCNA have from the end of the 19th century developed more in a direction in which some of Kuyper's views became increasingly influential. The theological history of the CGKN is, therefore, different from the theological history of the CRCNA.

2004 synod decided to add some special sub-articles to the current *Church Order* (*Kerkerde*), to open the possibility to establish so-called “mission congregations” (*zendingsgemeenten*) next to the existing congregations.¹⁰ A “mission congregation” is, says the *Church Order*, ‘a community of believers stemming from missionary work, and developing into an autonomous functioning congregation, that dedicates itself again to missionary work.’¹¹ The *Church Order* further states that a “mission congregation” is ‘accountable to the church council that took the initiative for the missionary work, or to another church council that has been given this task by the classis.’¹² It is also stipulated that when ‘a “mission congregation” is able to function autonomously’ within the denomination, it can be constituted ‘in accordance with’ the precepts of the *Church Order*.¹³ The synod also decided to create an official position for an evangelist with special authority to administer the sacraments and added a sub-article to the *Church Order* stating that in “mission congregations” an ‘evangelist can be given the right to administer all things that belong to his specific task and that stem from his position as “extraordinary minister of the Word”.’¹⁴

¹⁰ The Dutch designation *zendingsgemeente*, “mission congregation”, is problematic in terms of translation because it is not intended to indicate the missionary character of the congregation (despite the clear presence of this missionary character) but the origin of the congregation that stems from missionary work. The synod labeled the new communities that came to existence within the denomination as “mission congregations” in distinction of the already existing congregations, although it was articulated that the “mission congregations” fully belong to the denomination. For this reason, the distinction as introduced by the synod is used in this study, made visible in the consistent use of quotation marks in the designation “mission congregations”.

¹¹ *Kerkerde*, 30, article 21, sub-article 1a (translation JvtS; without mentioning all further translations into English are made by the author, unless specifically mentioned otherwise).

See for the discussion and the decisions taken at the synod, *Acta 2004*, 113-115, 163-166, and the corresponding appendices 25 (with especially the report ‘gelijkschakelen of inschakelen?’ at the pages 300-324), 50 (pages 497-499) and 88 (pages 693-696). See more extensively Chapter Four.

¹² *Kerkerde*, 30, article 21, sub-article 1b.

¹³ *Kerkerde*, 30, article 21, sub-article 1e. See *Kerkerde*, article 38 for the regulation of the process of constituting a new congregation.

¹⁴ *Kerkerde*, 14, article 4, sub-article 6. The difference between an ‘ordinary’ and an ‘extraordinary’ minister of the Word is that an ordinary minister of the Word (a pastor) is admitted into the ministry after an academic exam at the Theological University of Apeldoorn by the ecclesiastical board (*curatorium*) of the University, and after a peremptory exam by one of the regional classes of the church. An extraordinary minister of the Word does not necessarily need an academic preparation; a theological degree of an institute for higher professional education is sufficient.

These decisions were made by the synod, following some unfolding missionary developments within the Netherlands. In a number of cities so-called missionary communities were planted, and some of them sought to connect to the denomination of the CGKN.¹⁵ The CGKN was the first protestant denomination in the Netherlands to give an official status to this new category of congregations within the denomination and also to ordain the evangelist as an extraordinary minister of the Word. In the following years still more “mission congregations” started. The initiators of these church-planting projects often have a reformed background and the majority of the congregations that have been formed choose to stay within the reformed family of churches. The official regulations in the *Church Order* of the CGKN offer them the opportunity to bring their missionary activities into practice within the parameters of the denomination to which they belong and in which they feel at home because of their own reformed convictions. Among these “mission congregations” there are some differences of approach since they have to deal with different situations and contexts. Some of these congregations can be characterized as multicultural because of the mix of the different cultural backgrounds of the people that are visiting the church services and other activities of these mission congregations. Other congregations operate in a more mono-cultural setting. Still others focus on a certain area of the city in which the project is inaugurated. Apparently, it is possible to reach out with the message of the love of God in Jesus Christ in a deeply secularized society.

The new “mission congregations” were welcomed within the CGKN initially with gladness. In the process that led to the above-mentioned decisions at the general synod, there were evidently missionary motifs that inspired the synod. The longing to really create possibilities to bring into practice the missionary responsibility of the church was in the hearts and minds of many of the members of the synod. There were, however, also hesitations, given that the development of these “mission congregations” directly confronted the church from within with all kinds of new questions. Many of these questions were (and still are) related to the different practices in the new “mission congregations”. It should be stated as well that the decisions of the general synod were also taken to examine and regulate the things happening in the new “mission congregations” within the trusted parameters of the functioning *Church Order*.

After an ecclesiastical (peremptory) exam by one of the regional classes he may be admitted in the ministry in a local church. There is a further difference: whereas an ‘ordinary’ pastor is entitled to administer the sacraments in all the local churches within the denomination of the CGKN, an ‘extraordinary’ minister of the Word (an evangelist) has this right only in the specific local congregation in which he is installed.

¹⁵ See *Acta 2001*, 318-319, and *Acta 2004*, 289 and 303-304.

During the time of its existence the CGKN have always shown a remarkable flexibility in dealing with differences within the denomination. The culture within the CGKN has always been not to polarize its diversity of spiritualities but to try and understand one another and to hold to one another. Because of the shared understanding regarding the most essential elements of the gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, it always was possible to tolerate diversity in “outward” matters. However, the questions that arose because of the practices in the new “mission congregations” were of another kind. They confronted the church with the necessity of studying some of the most fundamental issues of ecclesiology in a new way. This came to the surface during the meetings of the 2010 synod. Because of the ongoing developments related to the “mission congregations”, some members of the synod suggested that it would perhaps be better for the “mission congregations” to start a separate new denomination. The CGKN could then relate to this new denomination in the same way as the CGKN related to a church on a foreign mission field: The CGKN would be the mother church and the new denomination of “mission congregations” would be the daughter churches.¹⁶ In the discussion, this suggestion was almost immediately silenced. One of the pre-advisers commented on it, saying that ‘the “mission congregations” challenge the church in its identity instead of being a problem.’¹⁷ The synod stated as its firm conviction that the “mission congregations” are part of the denomination of the CGKN. In the official report of the synod, a strong statement was made, declaring that the creation of a new and separate denomination of “mission congregations” would manifestly demonstrate the inability of the CGKN to be a church.¹⁸ The “mission congregations” rightfully belong to the CGKN and therefore it is a challenge for the church to find ways to put this conviction into practice.¹⁹ The synod realized that all kinds of questions were

¹⁶ *Acta 2010*, 97. It is important to state that the relation to the churches that came to existence on the so-called ‘mission fields’ of the CGKN through the work of the mission of the CGKN is normally characterized as a relation of fully independent ‘sister-churches’. Only in the earliest stages of the mission work, when the church is still in the process of being planted, the relation could be characterized as mother to daughter. In this respect therefore, the comparison made during the meeting of the synod to speak of a mother-daughter relation between the CGKN and a new denomination of “mission congregations” is – to say the least – an unhappy choice; strictly speaking it shows a relation in which the daughter is depending on and in a way subordinate to the mother.

¹⁷ *Acta 2010*, 98. The comment was of Prof. Dr. J.W. Maris.

¹⁸ See *Acta 2010*, 97, where the discussion on this subject at the synod is reported.

¹⁹ See *Acta 2010*, 98. Prof. Dr. H.G.L. Peels said that the discussion at the synod made it convincingly clear that any suggestion to separate the “mission congregations” from the CGKN was rejected completely by the whole synod.

coming to the surface because of the new situation in the denomination as a result of the developments in the “mission congregations”. The synod therefore instructed Deputies for Evangelism to study these questions together with the TUA and the “mission congregations”.²⁰ One of the main objectives was to bring the existing and the “mission congregations” into a relation that would lead to a better mutual understanding and that would enable them to learn to be church together.²¹

After the synod of 2010, the developments in the CGKN continued. At the 2013 synod, the relationship between the existing churches and the “mission congregations” within the CGKN was on the agenda again. The issue became even more urgent, because the question came forward if it would be possible at all to connect the “mission congregations” with their (sometimes) different practices to the existing churches with their more traditional ways. That at least can be seen as the gist of the instructions given to Deputies for Evangelism at the synod. Despite the growing sympathy with and involvement of many churches in the new “mission congregations”, the sense of unrest and fear within (some parts of) the denomination dominated the discussions at the synod: What would the things that were now happening in the “mission congregations” do to the denomination as a whole? What would these new “mission congregations” bring about, regarding the unity of the church within the denomination? Would the acceptance of the new “mission congregations” lead to more division and perhaps even secession, or would the development bring more unity? The result of this discussion was that the synod instructed Deputies for Evangelism to examine, with priority,²² ‘in cooperation with Deputies for Church Law the actual functioning of the tasks and responsibilities of “mission congregations”, mother-churches, classes and the wider denomination *with a view to guiding* the “mission congregations” *toward autonomy within the denomination and to the shaping and preserving of a reformed identity in that process.*’²³

²⁰ See *Acta 2010*, 101.

²¹ See *Acta 2010*, 102. The last instruction concerning the “mission congregations” was to study continuingly the relationship to and the place of the “mission congregations” within the denomination of the CGKN and to find ways to learn reciprocally from one another and to be a church together.

²² *Acta 2013*, 86. The synod instructed Deputies for Evangelism to give priority in their activities to the instructions regarding the relation between the existing congregations and the “mission congregations”.

²³ *Acta 2013*, 86 (italics JvtS). The synod also instructed Deputies to ‘apply the spiritual richness of the confessions of the church in a fruitful way by translating this richness into concrete written documents that would assist and advise with regards to the questions that the “mission congregations” are facing, and discuss these documents in the period prior to the next general synod

Compared to the instruction given in 2010, the element of mutual learning from one another is no longer present. The main purpose seems to be that the “mission congregations” will take their place within the denomination. The wording of the instruction gives the impression that a process of assimilation is meant, in which the adaptation must come mainly from the side of the “mission congregations”. They must be guided in this, as it literally says (see above the italicized text). There is even a slight hint in the instruction that “mission congregations” in the process of integrating into the denomination need to learn what it means to have a reformed identity. Apparently, they need shaping in that direction (see also here the italicized text).

This development, in which the questions brought forward at the synod illustrate the problematic situation within the CGKN, underscores the need of the study called for by the synod of 2010. It not only justifies but also necessitates the research that is the object of this study. What is needed for the church that will enable the church in its entirety to be the church within the current context in the Netherlands?

1.3 Motivation

As a delegate to the 2010 synod, I was present when the above-mentioned discussion regarding the tension between the existing and the “mission congregations” within the CGKN took place. The result of this discussion, namely, the instruction for Deputies for Evangelism to study the relationship to and the place of the “mission congregations” within the denomination of the CGKN and to find ways to learn from one another and to be a church together,²⁴ directed me toward the theme of this study. The urgency of the matter manifested itself during the 2013 synod, where the relationship between the existing and the “mission congregations” was again an important issue in the discussions (see above). This prompted me to take up this theme, starting with the question that came up in 2010: How both existing and “mission congregations” could learn to be church together? I started to study the theme, asking what would be needed for such a learning process? How could the question best be approached? What questions need to be asked to find a way for the existing and “mission congregations” within the CGKN to learn to be church together?

My personal experience in mission work in Mozambique, where I was involved from the beginning of 1998 until the end of 2004 in a project of training and equipping

with the “mission congregations”, the mother-churches and those classes within which “missionary” congregations came into existence and then to report about this process at the next synod.’

²⁴ Cf. again *Acta 2010*, 102.

church leaders, has confirmed my belief that it is indeed Christ Himself who builds His church. He does (did) it in that specific country and in that specific context, and he does it in His own way. He is doing what is necessary and, in that process, He uses all kinds of people with their own abilities. I have seen that, within the parameters of the Scriptures, there are several forms in which a church can be shaped, and indeed, is being shaped in a missionary situation. Obviously, the biblical parameters do not limit the shaping of the church to one single form or structure. It is this experience of observing this variety in being a church in Mozambique, that immediately came to my mind when I started to think about the subject of this research program. It also was (and is) a direct stimulus to be involved in the quest of the churches in the Netherlands to be a witnessing church today.

1.4 Zooming In

The missionary situation in which the church in the post-Christendom context has to view and structure itself, makes it necessary to study on the fundamental issues of ecclesiology in its relation to mission. Paul Avis has stated that ‘the cutting edge of ecclesiology is the effectiveness of God’s mission through the Church.’²⁵ Ecclesiology and missiology do really belong together, when the lens is pointed at the essence and identity of the church. For, what *is* the essence of the church? What *is* its identity, and, consequently, what are the implications of this essence and identity for the church’s ecclesial structure?

As a researcher, I take my point of departure from within the reformed tradition. That implies that the parameters within which the process of theologizing takes place are given by Scripture. At the same time, it is apparent that theologizing is more than just reading and applying Scripture in a pure and non-contextual way. Theology is always practiced in a particular context which influences the process of doing theology. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the context. The reformers of the first decades of the Reformation, in reflecting on ecclesiology, went back to Scripture and to the teachings of the early church, looking for that data that would help them reform the church, back to its essence. They built their ecclesiological concepts, and they looked for possibilities to apply their concepts in an ecclesial structure that fitted the situation and circumstances of their time. Today, it is still the same. It is neither sufficient nor possible to simply repeat what has been said about the church throughout the ages. There is no

²⁵ AVIS, ‘Ecclesiology’, 81, who continues, saying that an ‘ecclesiologist, who is not at the same time a missiologist, is incomplete, almost a contradiction in terms,’ and also that a ‘missiologist, who is not at the same time an exponent of the doctrine of the Church, is woefully deficient.’

one-size-fits-all ecclesiology that can be deduced by simply bringing together all data that can be applied in all ages and situations. The essence of the church cannot be separated from the context within which the church exists, and thus, ecclesiology and the way in which we speak about it, is directly related to this context. Ecclesiology, to use the words of Healy, has as its ‘main function (...) to help the church respond as best it can to its context by reflecting theologically and critically upon its concrete identity.’²⁶

Studying ecclesiology, therefore, must take into account the shifts and changes that take place regarding this context. In looking at the developments throughout the ages from the New Testament era into the post-Christian period in which the church finds itself in western Europe nowadays, it is clear that the relation of the church to its surrounding context changed fundamentally. In the period of the New Testament and in the first centuries the church found itself more or less on the margins of society. In the so-called era of Christendom, that started with Constantine at the beginning of the fourth century, the church became one of the influential factors in society. This continued roughly until, in the period of the Enlightenment, the church started to lose its important place in public life, with all further developments in the time of modernity and postmodernity, forcing back the church into a marginal position.²⁷ In all these different periods, the church found itself confronted with the urgent question of how to faithfully witness to the gospel in its actual context, and it felt the need to, sometimes, make important modifications.

The drawing of this sketch with these broad strokes already shows that all the shifts in the religious, political and cultural context impacted theology in general and – thus – also the development of ecclesiology. This is even more the case when ecclesiology is being examined, as in this study, with the focus on missionary aspects and implications. It is apparent that the consequences and implications of all these shifts and modifications should definitely be taken into account. Therefore, it is really necessary to once again examine the questions the church is facing regarding its essence. These questions all boil down to the fundamental question of what the biblical data imply for the church for its being and for its doing in its current context. Evidently, the church must find its way within the context in which it exists and of which it is fully a part. This applies to all churches and therefore also to the CGKN.

²⁶ HEALY, *Church*, 22.

²⁷ See for all this extensively FOX, *Pagans and Christians*; see further also MARKUS, *Christianity and the Secular*, 13-30; RAEDTS, *Uitwinding*, 33-54.

1.5 Research Question

When connecting all this to the instruction, given to the Deputies for Evangelism to study the relation between “mission congregations” and existing congregations in view of the question of how to be church together in the context of today, it is evident that coming up with some “workable” answers or modifications in structuring the church is not sufficient. The changing context indeed confronts the church with the fundamental question as to what the essence and identity of the church is. As mentioned in section 1.3, what prompted starting this research was the question posed at the 2010 synod, ‘how both existing and “mission congregations” could learn to be church together?’

This question is theologically connected to the missiological discourse about the relation between mission and church that has been fundamental in missionary circles in the last century, both in ecumenical and reformed contexts. It will therefore be helpful to relate the question that prompted this study to this discourse. Hence, first of all, the development of this discourse will be followed as it has occurred in the gatherings of the worldwide missionary movement. Second, and also because of the particular context of the CGKN within the reformed family of churches, the development of this discourse within reformed missionary theology will be studied. Third, the development of this discourse within the CGKN will be studied, especially in relation to the discourse in the ecumenical and reformed context. Finally, the question will be what does all this lead to?

Because of all this, the central question of this research is as follows:

What can both existing and mission congregations within the CGKN learn from the missiological/theological discourse within the last century, to be able to be a witnessing church of Christ in a post-Christian and secular society?

The following sub-questions will be dealt with:

1. *What are the main lessons of the 20th century missionary-ecclesiological discussion in the ecumenical context?*
2. *What are the main lessons of the 20th century missionary-ecclesiological discussion in the reformed context?*
3. *To what extent is what is found in the global and in the wider reformed missiological discourse (sub-question 1 and 2) recognizable in the actual missiological discourse and development within the context of the CGKN?*
4. *What does the result of this research imply for ecclesiological thinking and practice within the CGKN in its quest to be a witnessing church of Christ in a post-Christian and secular society?*

1.6 Relevance

The relevance of the study is indicated by the fact that the CGKN, as mentioned in section 1.2, are confronted with several ecclesiological issues and questions because of the “mission congregations” that function within the denomination. This study aims at contributing to the ecclesiological discussions that are still developing and ongoing within the CGKN. Within that discussion it intends to contribute specifically to the development of a reformed missionary ecclesiological framework, applicable in the post-Christian and secular context of Western Europe and especially in the Netherlands.

The CGKN is not the only denomination that finds itself confronted with the fundamental question regarding the relation between mission and church. It is known that the developments within the CGKN around the installment of “mission congregations” and the extension of the right to administer the sacraments to the evangelist were seen as important pioneering moments by several other denominations within the protestant family of churches. This already reveals the wider significance and relevance of this study. After all, the church in general, and not just the CGKN, finds itself confronted with the fundamental question how to be a witnessing body of Christ in today’s society. In looking for a way to answer this question, the focus of this study is on the CGKN because of the particular context of that denomination where the developments started, but it is my hope that the result will be applicable in a wider circle.

1.7 Plan of Study, Methodology and Theological Embedding

All this brings us to the following outline of this study, and also to the questions of methodology and theological embedding.

1.7.1 Missionary Ecclesiological Discussion in the Ecumenical Context

To answer the first sub-question, (*What are the main lessons of the 20th century missionary-ecclesiological discussion in the ecumenical context?*), in Chapter Two an overview will be given of the development in the theological and specifically missio-ecclesiological discussion as it developed since the beginning of the 20th century. In order to get such an overview, the lens will be pointed especially at the theological discourse regarding the very essence of mission in its relation to the nature and essence of the church. What is said about the essence of mission? What does this imply for the essence and nature of the church, or: How is the connection between mission and church described? Did changes occur? Is it possible to discern some sort of progress in this relation towards one side or another? This kind of question will be studied in due course.

Because of the plethora of data in this respect, the focus will be on the theological discourse regarding a number of central themes as it took place in the world missionary movement as it came to existence at the beginning of the 20th century. In focusing on the subsequent world missionary meetings and conferences, it will be possible to give the necessary overview of this development for this study.

In this part of the study, the approach is first of all descriptive in the area of *historical missiology*, leading to an *interpretative summarizing analysis* of the data regarding the central themes found, thus providing a general image of the theological-missiological discourse regarding mission and church.

1.7.2 Missionary Ecclesiological Thinking in the Reformed Context

To answer the second sub-question, (*What are the main lessons of the 20th century missionary-ecclesiological discussion in the reformed context?*), in Chapter Three an overview will be given of what is found in the missiological literature regarding the ecclesiology of a number of reformed missionary theologians. The intention is to bring together the most important points of view concerning the call for a missionary ecclesiology, in which the church is identified as Christ's faithful witness in today's society.

Because of the context within which this study is being done, it is legitimate to limit the number of voices in this discussion to those authors that are associated with the reformed tradition in one way or another. The intention is to describe and analyze the main points of view of these authors, and in this process the same questions are used as in the previous chapter. What do these authors say about the essence of mission? How do they define the very nature of the church? And how do they describe the connection between mission and church? In describing the points of view of these authors it will become clear if, and if so, which changes in missionary thinking occurred throughout the years. It also will become clear if certain patterns of thinking developed.

In this part of the study, the approach is also descriptive in the area of *historical missiology*, but the emphasis will be more on the *systematic-missiological* development of the ecclesiological understanding as described by the various authors to be studied. This chapter will provide an overview of the approach of the missiological-ecclesiological questions within a reformed context. Also here, an *interpretative summarizing analysis* of the data will be given. Using the same themes as in the previous chapter will help in bringing together the missiological-ecclesiological concepts, thus providing a missiological-theological framework for being a witnessing church as it is understood within the reformed family of churches.

1.7.3 *Dream or Reality – a Test Case of Theology*

To answer the third sub-question, (*To what extent is what is found in the global and in the wider reformed missiological discourse (sub-question 1 and 2) recognizable in the actual missiological discourse and development within the context of the CGKN?*), in Chapter Four several steps are to be taken. First of all, a theological reflection will be given, in which the results of the research so far are brought together and put into a so-called heuristic lens. This lens will provide the needed framework to evaluate at the end of this chapter to what extent the missiological discourse has been influential in the missiological discussion and development within the CGKN. In order to bring forward this discussion, the different participating theological voices must be successively mapped.²⁸ A first voice, to be defined as normative, is found in official reports and decisions of the synod. The respective Acta of the synod of the CGKN over the last century are scrutinized to bring forward the missiological theological development within the CGKN. A second voice, to be defined as formal, stems from the theological thinking of the Deputies for Evangelism, brought to the attention of the synod in their reports, of which many resulted in actual proposals. All the reports of Deputies will be studied, regarding the theme of this study. A third voice, also to be defined as formal, is found in articles, written by professionals on the subject in the official ecclesiastical periodicals. A fourth voice, to be defined as espoused, comes from workers in the field. To bring this voice into hearing, a qualitative interview method is used, namely a focus group conversation,²⁹ the verbatim of which serves as source for the further elaboration. On the basis of all these data, a theological evaluation of the whole will take place to answer the central question of this chapter.

In this part of the study, the approach is partly descriptive-reflective in the first part of the chapter, and descriptive-analytical, as well as qualitative empirical³⁰ in mapping and discussing the theological voices that take part in the missiological discussion within the CGKN in the following parts. It takes place in the area of *systematic missiology* linked to *ecclesiology*.

²⁸ For the method used, I am indebted to the study of CAMERON, *Talking About God in Practice*, where the four theological voices as they come forward in theological action research are defined and characterized. I have made use of this theory although adapted to the specific research of this study, which is not directly theological action research. See further Chapter Four, section 4.2.

²⁹ See Appendix 1, for the model used for this interview.

³⁰ For the empirical research methods, this study takes its orientation in BRYMAN, *Social Research Methods*; CAMERON, *Talking About God in Practice*; and EVERS, *Kwalitatief interviewen*.

1.7.4 Lessons to Be Learned – Conclusions and Recommendations

After having answered the three sub-questions, in Chapter Five, the results of the study are presented, answering the last sub-question (*What does the result of this research imply for the ecclesiological thinking and practice within the CGKN in its quest to be a witnessing church of Christ in a post-Christian and secular society?*) On the basis of the analysis at the end of Chapter Four, first the actual situation within the CGKN will be described in relation to the missiological ecclesiological discourse and related developments. It will become clear whether this relation is to be defined as connection or agreement or rather as tension.

In the second part, the study will be concluded with a description of a number of pithy propositions that arise from the missiological-ecclesiological discourse and that guide the design of an ecclesiological framework for a church that bears witness to God's work in Christ and by the Spirit in today's world.

In this last part of the study, the approach will mainly be *theoretical* and *conceptual*, in the process of which the outcome of the previous parts will provide the different elements that will together form the building blocks for constructing the stage for the final result. All this will bring together elements from *systematic* and *practical missiology*.

1.8 Title

The title of this study – *To Participate in God's Mission* – is derived directly from the formulation that can be called paradigmatic since the Willingen Meeting. From the beginning until the end of this study, the conviction that is fundamental to the reformed approach of theology, namely that in theology we must always and first of all speak about God's salvific revelation and of His acts of salvation, was only more and more affirmed. This conviction applies to the whole of theology and therefore also, and especially to mission, which after all stems fundamentally and principally from God's mission and from His own acting in that mission. It is the Father who sent His Son, and who, together with the Son, sent forth the Spirit into the church, to make the church what it is in Christ and by the Spirit: The instrument in which and through which God continues His mission in the world, on the way to His future. Therefore, mission is really about participation in the mission of the Triune God. Hence the title indicates why and for what purpose the church exists, namely, *To Participate in God's Mission*.

Because of the context in which the church today finds itself, the subtitle adds to this title: *Looking for an ecclesial structure to be a witnessing church today*.

2. MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGICAL DISCUSSION IN ECUMENICAL CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction and Aim

Both existing and “mission congregations” within the CGKN are faced with the quest to be a witnessing body of Christ in a 21st century secular context. The question of this chapter is what can be learned with regard to this quest from the international missiological discourse and its development? With that aim in mind, an overview is given of the theological development concerning the meaning of mission in its relation to the existence of the church. This overview begins at the beginning of the 20th century, because of the profound changes that have taken place in missiological theology since then. Several world-changing factors played a role in the background: The 1917 Russian Revolution; the horrors of World War I and World War II that radically shifted the political map of Europe; the awakening and growing nationalism in the (former) colonies of the European states; the end of the Iron Curtain in 1989; and the continuous and increasing development of secularism. These factors affected all of life, including the church, whose place in society changed. The era of Christendom ended, and the church saw itself confronted with the necessity to fundamentally reflect on its essential being, and related to that, its mission. This necessity became even more urgent because of the growing awareness that Europe itself had never ceased to be a mission field, even though it had for a long time functioned as a mission base.¹ It is obvious that all these factors and developments impacted the international missiological discourse.

In the overview, the focus is especially on the global missionary movement as it came into existence from 1910 onwards. In that year, a first international missionary conference was held in Edinburgh, marking ‘the transition’ between the 19th and 20th centuries², and paving the road for an ecumenical missionary movement, the later *International Missionary Council* (IMC). The IMC organized a series of global missionary meetings and conferences, before integrating into the *World Council of Churches* (WCC) in 1961, after which it continued as the *Commission on World Mission and Evangelism* (CWME)

¹ See PAAS, ‘Making’, 46: ‘In fact, Europe has never been not a “mission field”, even if it was a “mission base” at the same time.’ PAAS, ‘Making’, 67, concludes at the end of his article that the ‘slogan “mission in six continents” (Mexico 1963) did not come as a surprise. In fact, it was a rather late and formal recognition of a consciousness that had been very much alive among European missionary thinkers and practitioners for a long time already.’

² BASSHAM, *Mission Theology*, 5.

of the WCC. In 1974, the first *International Congress on World Evangelization*, held in Lausanne, led to the formation of the *Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization* (LCWE). This *Lausanne Movement* has been part of the discussion ever since (see figure 1. for an overview).

Ecumenical Missionary Meetings	Evangelical Missionary Meetings	WCC Meetings
1910 – Edinburgh		
1928 – Jerusalem (IMC)		
1938 – Tambaram (IMC)		
1947 – Whitby (IMC)		
1952 – Willingen (IMC)		1948 – Amsterdam
1957/58 – Accra (IMC)		1954 – Evanston
1963 – Mexico (CMWE)		1961 – New Delhi
1973 – Bangkok (CMWE)		1968 – Uppsala
1980 – Melbourne (CMWE)	1974 – Lausanne	1975 – Nairobi
1989 – San Antonio (CMWE)	1989 – Lausanne II – Manila	1983 – Vancouver
1996 – Salvador (CMWE)		1991 – Canberra
2005 – Athens (CMWE)		1998 – Harare
2010 – Edinburgh (CMWE)	2010 – Lausanne III – Cape Town	2006 – Porto Alegre

Figure 1: World missionary meetings, conferences, and WCC assemblies

In this chapter, the official publicized statements of the main meetings and conferences of both these organizations, the so-called ecumenical as well as the so-called evangelical movement, will be studied. The last meetings to be studied are the Edinburgh Centenary

World Conference of the CWME and the Cape Town Congress of the LCWE, both held in 2010, including the documents that are to be seen as their results.

2.2 Procedure, Method, and Sources

Scrutinizing the official reports and documents of the respective conferences and meetings shows that over the years certain themes emerged that proved to be of fundamental significance. In this chapter, the focus is on five of them that, in their mutual relationships, have played and still play a role in the process of the development of missionary theology within the international missionary community. It concerns the foundation of mission (section 2.3); the aim of mission (section 2.4); the significance of eschatology (section 2.5); the relation between mission and church (section 2.6); and the missionary witness of the church (section 2.7). In these sections, the discussion of the Willingen Meeting is an important factor, because of the fundamental significance that turned out to determine the course of mission as a whole, also in relation to the church. This implies that the material studied can be divided into pre- and post-Willingen parts. In section 2.8, the results will be brought together in a missiological-ecclesiological reflection, pointing out the implications with regard to the central question of research.

The main sources for this chapter are the reports, statements, and further documents as they were officially published by the meetings and conferences. Regarding the documents of the LCWE, it is to be noted that the *Lausanne Movement* introduced its coming into existence with a clearly defined purpose, namely, to come to a commitment to missionary action. The aim of the LCWE was not to wander ‘in the labyrinths of theological dispute.’³ As Timothy Tennent observes: ‘Lausanne is not about documents or global gatherings. Lausanne is about Christians working and praying together in a shared commitment that we might live to see, in our generation, “the whole Gospel brought by the whole church to the whole world”.’⁴ This is to be taken into account and explains why, in the official documents, no direct statements about more theological themes and issues are found. All this implies that in several of the following sections, the references to the standpoint of the LCWE are described in a process of deduction. Secondary and contemporary material is used when necessary, to describe the theological context that influenced the process of the discussions at the meetings and conferences. A great deal of this material is to be found in the *International Review of Mission (IRM)*, the official journal of the IMC and later of the CWME within the WCC.

³ Christopher J. H. Wright in the preface of the 2009 edition of the *Lausanne Covenant* in the Didasko Files Series. See STOTT, *Covenant*, 6.

⁴ TENNENT, ‘Lausanne and Global Evangelicalism’, 60.

2.3 A Biblical Foundation of Mission

2.3.1 Before Willingen

Anne Wind observes that it is remarkable that, although ‘the *missio Dei* concept, i.e., mission as God’s own work, only after the world mission conference of Willingen 1952 [...] and especially in the 1960s started to become the central issue in missiological reflection,’ the notion itself ‘was never absent at any conference since Edinburgh 1910.’⁵ There was a ‘trinitarian missiological tradition,’ the roots of which are found in the 19th century.⁶ The World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh 1910 pointed out that God is ‘the God of missions,’⁷ Christ the ‘Supreme Worker in all mission work,’⁸ and the Spirit ‘the great Missioner,’⁹ who is at work ‘through human instruments.’¹⁰

Notwithstanding this, Edinburgh discussed mission mainly as a matter of obedience. The church has received ‘the great charter of Missions,’¹¹ and must comply with it.¹² In his closing address, John R. Mott referred to the Great Commission when he listed the things to which God ‘summoned’ the attendees that were returning home. God ‘summoned’ them ‘to vaster, greater plans,’ to ‘larger sacrifice.’¹³ They were ‘entrusted by God with large responsibility’ with regard to the ‘missionary enterprise,’

⁵ WIND, *Zending en Oecumene I*, 33. For a description of the background and proceedings of the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh 1910, see extensively STANLEY, *Edinburgh*; ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 5-13; GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 7-26; HOGG, *Foundations*, 98-142; LATOURETTE, ‘Ecumenical Bearings’, 355-362; VAN ’T HOF, *Geheim*, 12-62; WIND, *Zending en Oecumene I*, 26-44; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 29-31 and 59-60; ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 7-42.

⁶ VAN ’T HOF, *Geheim*, 17, points to, amongst others, the theological thinking of Abraham Kuyper, Paul Tschackert, and Gustav Warneck, adding that the trinitarian concept was elaborated more theologically at a later stage by Hartenstein and at the Willingen Meeting. For Kuyper, cf. *Acta Zending-congres*, 2, where Kuyper states that mission is ‘grounded in the confession that the holy Spirit is proceeding from the Father and the Son; all mission by creatures is but a shadow, representation and instrument of the eternal and principal mission, viz. that of the Son by the Father.’ Cf. TSCHACKERT, *Die Mission*, 10, and WARNECK, *Evangelische Missionslehre I*, 65. WIND, *Zending en Oecumene I*, 33-34, states that ‘Edinburgh spoke very emphatically about the Trinitarian foundation of mission.’

⁷ WMC, VI, 221.

⁸ WMC, I, 370.

⁹ WMC, I, 351.

¹⁰ WMC, VI, 270.

¹¹ WMC, III, 16.

¹² WMC, I, 1.

¹³ WMC, IX, 347-348.

because the church had ‘not yet seriously attempted to bring the living Christ to all living men.’¹⁴ Therefore, the final message of the conference was to get to work. ‘The end of the Conference is the beginning of the conquest. The end of the planning is the beginning of the doing.’¹⁵

Edinburgh was still connected to the optimistic expectation regarding economical and colonial expansion of the 19th century, and as a consequence also with regard to the work of mission. Europe would be able to civilize the world, i.e., to Christianize it, for western civilization was believed to exist in an unbroken unity with the gospel.¹⁶ This context changed dramatically in the following years. World War I demonstrated the bankruptcy of western superiority and optimism. Besides that, nationalism started to emerge in the colonial areas in the postwar period, in many regions connected with the renaissance of local cultural and religious traditions. Some of the major world religions, Buddhism, Hindu-traditions, and Islam, started missionary activities. In addition to all this, the Russian Revolution (1917) had provoked a huge increase of secularization.¹⁷ All this led to a situation in which mission was ‘subjected to extreme and searching scrutiny,’¹⁸ especially for its paternalistic and imperialistic approach.¹⁹ The Christian faith was no longer automatically seen as superior to other faiths.²⁰ This did not only call for a more modest attitude toward the world and other religions, but also for a new reflection on the foundation of mission.

Small theological ripples appeared in the formulations of the Enlarged Meeting of the IMC in Jerusalem (1928).²¹ God’s nature to share was referred to as the source of mission. In His love, God gave Christ, ‘the expression in time of the eternal self-giving

¹⁴ *WMC*, IX, 349.

¹⁵ *WMC*, IX, 347.

¹⁶ See FREYTAG, ‘Weltmissionskonferenzen’, 101-102.

¹⁷ WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 60.

¹⁸ YATES, *Christian Mission*, 57. See also ELLIS, *Century*, 62.

¹⁹ GORT, ‘Jerusalem’, 282, refers to a remark of P. Oommen Philip, an Indian church leader, who said that it might be good when missionary activities from the West would be arrested.

²⁰ Cf. YATES, *Christian Mission*, 63-64, who refers to Daniel Johnson Fleming, who published some critical books about missionary (or Western) superiority, telling about a Christian from India, who said ‘of European Christians: “you know, you make us feel that you want to do good to us but you don’t make us feel that you need us”’ (quote from FLEMING, *Bound in Missions*, 27).

²¹ For a description of the background and the proceedings of the Enlarged Meeting of the IMC in Jerusalem 1928, see ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 14-80 (with emphasis on 40-80); GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 27-42; HOGG, *Foundations*, 244-289; LATOURETTE, ‘Ecumenical Bearings’, 362-369; VAN ’T HOF, *Geheim*, 63-96; WIND, *Zending en Oecumene I*, 45-81; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 60-62; ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 43-49.

of the Father.’ Whoever comes ‘into fellowship with Christ’ experiences ‘an over-mastering impulse to share Him with others.’²² This ‘nature and will of God in Christ’ is ‘the supreme motive for all missionary enterprise.’²³ Nevertheless, the main line of Jerusalem remained that mission was spoken of as a responsibility of the church: ‘We are trusted by God to tell mankind what He has done.’²⁴

A further step in the theological elaboration of the relation between church and mission was made at the Tambaram Meeting of the IMC (1938).²⁵ Mission is not the result of the ‘zeal of Christian people’ but ‘is the outcome of a Divine initiative.’²⁶ God came to men in giving His Son, ‘His Word made flesh.’ To ‘the gift of Christ’ He added ‘the gift of His Holy Spirit in the Church,’ that it ‘may continue Christ’s saving work in the world.’²⁷ Mission, thus, is ‘the loving initiative of the Eternal in Jesus.’²⁸ This way of speaking about the continuation of the saving work of Christ led to the development of the view that ‘mission represents an essential function of the Church’s life.’²⁹ Mission and church cannot exist separately from one another. The thought that the ‘very being of the Church depends on its being a bearer of God’s message to the world’³⁰ received increasing attention.

This development continued. After the horrors of World War II, the Whitby Meeting of the IMC (1947)³¹ stressed the need to study on the ‘nature of the missionary claim upon the Church.’³² A ‘fuller and clearer apprehension’ of the place of mission ‘in the total counsel of God’ would be necessary to help the world mission ‘in policy and

²² RJM, I, 485.

²³ RJM, III, 223.

²⁴ RJM, III, 150.

²⁵ For a description of the background and the proceedings of the Tambaram Meeting of the IMC in 1938, see ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 121-133; HOGG, *Foundations*, 286-303; LATOURETTE, ‘Ecumenical Bearings’, 369-370; VAN ’T HOF, *Gebeim*, 97-130; GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 43-66; WIND, *Zending en Oecumene I*, 128-145; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 62-64; ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 50-57.

²⁶ *World Mission of the Church*, 33.

²⁷ *World Mission of the Church*, 17.

²⁸ *Tam*, IV, 87.

²⁹ SCHLUNK, ‘Theology and Missions in Germany’, 464.

³⁰ SCHLUNK, ‘Theology and Missions in Germany’, 472.

³¹ For a description of the background and the proceedings of the Whitby Meeting of the IMC in 1947, see ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 188-200; HOGG, *Foundations*, 334-342; LATOURETTE, ‘Ecumenical Bearings’, 370-372; VAN ’T HOF, *Gebeim*, 131-154; GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 67-73; WIND, *Zending en Oecumene I*, 157-174; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 64-66; ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 58-61. See also LATOURETTE & HOGG, *Tomorrow is Here*.

³² *Minutes Whitby*, 63 (minute 32.3/c).

execution.³³ At the close of the Whitby Meeting, the missionary obligation of the church was put on the agenda.³⁴ It was the start of an international discourse on the theme, in which various voices participated, providing preparational material for the impactful Willingen Meeting of the IMC (1952).³⁵ In this preparational discussion, especially the relation of mission to the eschatological momentum, and the Christocentric aspect of mission were important aspects.

The eschatological aspect was brought forward by Karl Hartenstein, and Walter Freytag, and it is also found in the contribution of the *Nederlandse Zendingsraad* (Netherlands Missionary Council - NZR). It sheds specific light on God's own involvement in mission. Karl Hartenstein points out that the 'line of salvation' is continued 'in the present towards the Parousia'.³⁶ He, therefore, speaks of mission as the 'eschatological act of God, through which He executes His plan of salvation'.³⁷ Freytag, friend and colleague of Hartenstein, expressed the same line of thought: Mission is 'God's action, in which He executes His plan in view of the coming of His Kingdom'.³⁸ The report on *The Biblical Foundations of Mission* of the NZR³⁹ speaks of the gospel as 'the *gospel of fulfillment*, the good news of God's decisive coming to the world, bringing everything to its final completion'.⁴⁰ This work of fulfillment is being executed 'between the past and the

³³ WARD, 'Towards a Theology of Missions', 250.

³⁴ GOODALL, 'First Principles', 257.

³⁵ For a description of the background and the proceedings of the Willingen Meeting of the IMC in 1952, see ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 219-275; NEWBIGIN, 'Mission to Six Continents', 178-181; VAN 'T HOF, *Geheim*, 155-177; GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 74-114; WIND, *Zending en Oecumene I*, 212-233; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 66-70; ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 62-68. See also GOODALL, 'Willingen—Milestone, not Terminus'.

³⁶ HARTENSTEIN, 'Neubesinnung', 18. For Hartenstein, see SCHWARZ, 'Legacy of Hartenstein'. For the contribution of Hartenstein, see GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 88-91. See also WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 50-54. Hartenstein already spoke in this way about mission in his 1933 dissertation. See HARTENSTEIN, *Mission als Problem*, 31.

³⁷ HARTENSTEIN, 'Neubesinnung', 21.

³⁸ Freytag, 'Strukturwandel', 118. See for Freytag IHMELS, 'Walter Freytag', 9; see also GENSICHEN, 'Freytag', and also 'Legacy of Freytag'. For the contribution of Freytag, see ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 229-230; see also GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 92-93, and further WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 54-57.

³⁹ BAVINCK, 'Rapport', 197. See BAVINCK, 'Rapport', 221: The report was the result of the work of a study-group of the NZR, in which J.H. Bavinck, J. Blauw, P. Boendermaker, K.J. Brouwer, E. Jansen Schoonhoven, J. van der Linden, A.J. Rasker, H.N. Ridderbos, G. Sevenster, and Th.C. Vriezen worked together. For a summary of the Dutch contribution, see ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 241-242; and GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 84-88.

⁴⁰ BAVINCK, 'Rapport', 202 (italics in the original).

future,' through Christ Himself, who in and through His Spirit is constantly present in the church and fully involved in the work of mission.⁴¹

The Christocentric aspect was brought forward by John A. Mackay, and it was also the leading thought in the North American report *Why Missions?* For Mackay, chairman of the IMC,⁴² it is clear that a 'theological approach to the Church's missionary obligation' should be 'profoundly Christocentric.' What does it mean theologically, with regard to mission, that Christ is Lord? Reaffirming the lordship of Christ, the church will be enabled to act in the same 'revolutionary' way as the apostles and the early Christians.⁴³ The Great Commission gives 'a deepened understanding of the question as to how and why Jesus Christ is Lord, and why, by implication, the Church, which is His Body, must be responsive to Him in fulfilling the mission which He ordains.'⁴⁴ If the church 'is not loyal to its apostolate,' it is no church in 'any worthy sense.' It is not enough to sponsor or organize mission. 'It must itself become the mission. Let the Church be the mission.'⁴⁵ The report *Why Missions?*⁴⁶ also sees 'the lordship of the living Christ' as the point of departure for the missionary activity of the church.⁴⁷ Through the church, as His Body, Christ 'continues his mission in the world.'⁴⁸ Because of this, the missionary obligation is 'not a deduction, but a reflex of faith.' It is 'the missionary response as discipleship.'⁴⁹ The Great Commission is no 'directive for Christian action' but 'a description of Christian response' to Christ, to God's 'activity in the world' today.⁵⁰

⁴¹ BAVINCK, 'Rapport', 207.

⁴² See for Mackay, ESCOBAR, 'Mackay'; see also ESCOBAR, 'Legacy of Mackay.' For the contribution of Mackay, see ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 239-241; see also GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 77-78.

⁴³ MACKAY, 'Theology', 430-432.

⁴⁴ MACKAY, 'Great Commission', 131.

⁴⁵ MACKAY, 'Great Commission', 141.

⁴⁶ GOODALL, 'Willingen—Milestone', 20: The North American Report 'remained in manuscript.' It was the result of a study of twenty American scholars under the auspices of the Committee on Research in Foreign Missions of the Division of Foreign Missions and the Central Department of Research and Survey of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. An abridged version was published in 1952 in *Theology Today* (see LEHMANN, 'Obligation'). GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 218, footnote 211, lists the names of the scholars who worked together in this study. A summary of the report is given by ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 243-246; see also GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 99-104.

⁴⁷ LEHMANN, 'Obligation', 21.

⁴⁸ LEHMANN, 'Obligation', 29.

⁴⁹ LEHMANN, 'Obligation', 36.

⁵⁰ LEHMANN, 'Obligation', 37.

2.3.2 Willingen and its First Evaluation

The general feeling at the start of the actual Willingen Meeting was that the results of the necessary theological reflection on the foundation of mission would be provisional. Too many different voices had to be brought together. It was agreed on that ‘far more work was necessary before an adequate theology of missions could be re-formulated.’⁵¹ The endeavor had only just started. At the end of the Meeting, after a lot of discussions and amendments, a statement entitled *The Missionary Calling of the Church* was adopted and published.⁵² The statement affirms that God, notwithstanding all terrible events in the world, ‘works out His purpose by the hidden power of the Cross.’ Mission ‘has its source in the Triune God Himself. Out of the depths of His love for us, the Father has sent forth His own beloved Son to reconcile all things to Himself.’ Christ, ‘by His death, resurrection and ascension has broken down the barrier between man and God,’ and ‘accomplished a full and perfect atonement, and created in Himself one new humanity, the Body of which Christ is the exalted and regnant Head.’ On this foundation ‘God has sent forth His Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, to gather us together in one Body in Him,’ to ‘empower us for the continuance of His mission as His witnesses and ambassadors, the first fruits and earnest of its completion.’ Consequently, the statement points out that those ‘who have been chosen in Christ, reconciled to God through Him, made members of His Body, sharers in His Spirit, and heirs through hope of His Kingdom, are by these facts committed to full participation in His redeeming mission. There is no participation in Christ without participation in His mission to the world. That by which the Church receives its existence is that by which it is also given its world mission. “As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you”.’⁵³

Willingen provided the process of reformulating the theology of mission with a pivotal impetus, as was brought forward in the following years. Several evaluations were given. Hartenstein, writing still in 1952, observed that mission was reinstated into its central place according to Scripture,⁵⁴ connecting it to the New Testament message that the crusading Christ ‘is always on the way in the world.’ Mission is ‘participation in the Son being sent, in the *Missio Dei*.’ It is participation in ‘the dynamic and universal

⁵¹ GOODALL, ‘Willingen—Milestone’, 20.

⁵² ‘Missionary Calling.’ The adopted statement emanated from the draft report on ‘The Missionary Obligation of the Church’ that was only received ‘as a basis for further study.’ See for this, ‘Theological Basis Report’, 238; *Minutes Willingen*, 20 (minute 40), and also *Minutes Willingen*, 34 (minute 13b).

⁵³ ‘Missionary Calling’, 2-3.

⁵⁴ Cf. HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 53.

movement of Christ.⁵⁵ Mission, thus, is part of the plan of salvation of which Christ is the Mediator to bring it to its completion.⁵⁶

In an essay, entitled *Towards a Theology of Mission* (1955),⁵⁷ Wilhelm Andersen stated that Willingen is ‘a decisive step in the direction of a “reformulation of a theology of missions”.’⁵⁸ By turning back ‘to the self-revelation of the triune God in Jesus Christ,’⁵⁹ mission is ‘set in the widest possible context of God’s saving actions and of God’s plan of salvation.’⁶⁰ Christ’s death and resurrection show that God has intervened decisively in history. And He Himself continues His saving work. The Spirit is sent, ‘to follow upon the mission of the Son,’ declaring at the same time that ‘the work of reconciliation is already accomplished,’ but also that the eternal ‘manifestation’ is ‘yet to be accomplished.’⁶¹ In sending the Spirit, God ‘retains the missionary enterprise in His own hands.’ He sends and ‘guarantees’ the ‘continuity’ of mission, guiding ‘it to the destiny that He has appointed for it.’⁶²

In 1958, Georg Friedrich Vicedom published his *Missio Dei. Einführung in eine Theologie der Mission I*,⁶³ taking up and developing the fundamental thoughts of the statement of Willingen.⁶⁴ He stressed that mission ‘is work that belongs to God.’ God ‘conducts’ the mission, for ‘the mission, and with it the church, is God’s very own work.’ They are ‘tools of God, instruments through which God carries out His mission.’⁶⁵ Mission

⁵⁵ HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 54; Hartenstein here connects the concept of *missio Dei* to the theological thoughts about mission as formulated at Willingen. See FLETT, *Witness*, 123-162, discussing Hartenstein’s influence in the coining of the phrase *missio Dei*. See also ENGELSVIKEN, ‘Missio Dei’, 482, who refers to Hartenstein’s ‘Theologische Besinnung’.

⁵⁶ Cf. HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 67.

⁵⁷ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*.

⁵⁸ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 9.

⁵⁹ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 40.

⁶⁰ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 41, referring to HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 62.

⁶¹ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 44.

⁶² ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 47-49.

⁶³ VICEDOM, *Missio Dei*. The foreword is dated November 17, 1957; the publication was in 1958. Quotes are taken from the English translation of 1965: *The Mission of God. An Introduction to a Theology of Mission*.

⁶⁴ ENGELSVIKEN, ‘Missio Dei’, 482. HAAPIAINEN, ‘Development’, 52, discusses the development of Vicedom’s thinking regarding the *missio Dei* concept. He points to a publication of Vicedom from 1952 (VICEDOM, *Rechtfertigung*), in which the concept already appears in a less systematic way. His conclusion is that this earlier publication ‘seems to be more of a pamphlet urging mission rather than a theological essay on the foundation of mission or an exposition of the basis for *missio Dei*’ (italics in the original).

⁶⁵ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 5-6.

‘grows’ out of the ‘mystery’, that ‘God sends his Son; Father and Son send the Holy Ghost.’ Thus, ‘God makes Himself not only the One sent, but at the same time the Content of the sending.’ This ‘intra-divine sending’ impacts the whole concept of mission.⁶⁶ Mission is ‘the continuation of the saving activity of God through the publication of the deeds of salvation.’⁶⁷

Commissioned to give a ‘survey and appraisal of recent work in Biblical theology having any bearing upon the nature and necessity of the Church’s mission to the world,’⁶⁸ Johannes Blauw wrote his *Gottes Werk in dieser Welt. Grundzüge einer biblischen Theologie der Mission* (1961).⁶⁹ He pointed out that in the new developed theology of mission, mission rests on the work accomplished by Christ. It is a ‘consequence’ and at the same time the ‘actualization’ of the dominion of Christ over the world.⁷⁰

2.3.3 Continuation of the Discussion

History shows that the statement of Willingen was open to different interpretations regarding its implications for the church and the actual way in which to embody mission.⁷¹ It is not without reason that the term *missio Dei* has been characterized as a ‘container term,’⁷² also in the sense that ‘debating positions that had been in serious opposition before and during the conference’ were held together in the ‘paper-clip’ of the statement.⁷³ The diversity in interpretations does, however, not concern the essential biblical foundation of mission. Mission is built on the confidence that, ‘in the midst of crumbling historical and cultural certainties the risen Christ remained in control, and reached beyond all boundaries even to the places where it seemed that the church had never been active.’⁷⁴ The new foundation acted as a ‘compass’ to keep mission ‘on course.’⁷⁵ This explains why, in the following years, the actual discussion about the theological foundation of mission seems to be over. Continuing the line of thought of

⁶⁶ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 8.

⁶⁷ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 9.

⁶⁸ BLAUW, *The Missionary Nature*, 7.

⁶⁹ BLAUW, *Gottes Werk*. The English translation came in 1962 under the title: *The Missionary Nature of the Church. A Survey of the Biblical Theology of Mission*. Quotes are taken from the English translation. It is interesting to see the difference between the German and the English title of Blauw’s book.

⁷⁰ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 105 (italics in the original).

⁷¹ See the next section of this chapter.

⁷² GÜNTHER, ‘Gott selbst treibt Mission’, 56.

⁷³ RICHBÄCHER, ‘Missio Dei’, 591.

⁷⁴ RICHBÄCHER, ‘Missio Dei’, 591.

⁷⁵ RICHBÄCHER, ‘Missio Dei’, 590.

Willingen, the trinitarian origin of mission, the *missio Dei*, is foundational, and implicitly affirmed as the basis for the statements of the further meetings that were organized by the CWME (the successor of the IMC after merging with the WCC in 1961). It is explicitly mentioned in the preparational documents of the Mexico Meeting of the CWME (1963),⁷⁶ where “witness” is primarily defined as ‘a trinitarian work, a divine, not a human work,’ and where it is stated that man is ‘invited and enabled to participate in this trinitarian activity.’⁷⁷ It is, further, mentioned in the preparational work for the 2005 Athens Conference of the CWME.⁷⁸ Mission is ‘primarily and ultimately God’s mission – the *missio Dei*,’ says the 1997 statement *Towards Common Witness*.⁷⁹ The *Letter from Athens* affirms that the church ‘participates in the mission of God who has sent us into a fragmented and broken world.’⁸⁰ The same happens in the ecumenical mission affirmation that was prepared in a process of several years, starting in 2006 and leading to the final publication in 2012 under the title *Together Towards Life*.⁸¹ The document marks a ‘century of ecumenical missiology that began with Edinburgh 1910,’⁸² affirming the basic thoughts of 1910: Mission ‘begins in the heart of the Triune God.’ The ‘love which binds together the Holy Trinity overflows to all humanity and creation.’⁸³

In 1974, the *Lausanne Movement* joined the discussion from an evangelical perspective, as a reaction to several developments within the circles of the WCC and as a result of those developments also in the CWME. One of the main criticisms was that the merger of the IMC with the WCC in 1961⁸⁴ had virtually destroyed the missionary energy in the churches. In the run-up to the merger, this concern had been expressed and

⁷⁶ For a description of the background, preparations and proceedings of the Mexico Meeting of the CWME in 1963, see NEWBIGIN, ‘Mission to Six Continents’, 185-195; VAN ’T HOF, *Gebeim*, 195-220; GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 121-132; WIND, *Zending en Oecumene IIa*, 143-194; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 98-102; ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 82-85.

⁷⁷ BERKHOF & POTTER, *Key Words*, 98-99.

⁷⁸ For a description of the background, preparations and proceedings of the Athens Conference of the CWME, 2005, see ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 138-141; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 149-153.

⁷⁹ ‘Towards Common Witness’, 45 (italics in the original).

⁸⁰ ‘Letter from Athens’, 324.

⁸¹ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 3. See extensively IRM 101/1 (2012), the issue that contains the reports of the diverse working groups that were engaged in the composing of the new ecumenical affirmation. The full title of the affirmation is: *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*.

⁸² ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 146.

⁸³ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 4-5.

⁸⁴ Prepared by the decision taken at Accra (Ghana), the integration of the IMC and the WCC was effectuated at the Third Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi in 1961. See *New Delhi Report*, 6-7, and 56-60, for the official ‘story’ and the official ‘minutes’ of the process of integration.

recognized as ‘sincere,’⁸⁵ but the process continued, nonetheless, leading to a process of “churchification” of the IMC.⁸⁶ Mission became part of the life of the church with its institutionalized organizational processes to come to decisions.⁸⁷ The churchification also implied a shift in focus. After all, in the church not ‘evangelists or missionaries’ sit at the table, but ‘churchmen’ who are busy with the questions of their home-situation, preoccupied ‘with social and political problems.’ Over against this, the *Lausanne Movement* committed itself to evangelism as the ‘specific sector of the Church’s responsibility.’⁸⁸

The critique that formed an important motive to start the *Lausanne Movement* did not concern the biblical basis of mission. The so-called *Lausanne Covenant*, in which the movement states its convictions, is ‘clearly compatible with the classical understanding of the *missio Dei*’ although ‘the term *missio Dei* is not used explicitly.’⁸⁹ John Stott, the ‘chief architect of the Covenant,’⁹⁰ spoke at the opening of the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism in 1974⁹¹ about the meaning of mission in words that resemble the *missio Dei* formulations. He pointed out that mission is ‘an activity of God arising out of the very nature of God.’ God is a ‘sending God,’ who ‘sent his Son into the world.’ The Son sent ‘the church,’ and also ‘the Spirit.’ Mission, thus Stott, ‘arises from the mission of God and is to be modeled on it,’ referring to John 20:21 and 17:18. The ‘nature of the church’s mission’ can only be understood in relation to the nature of the mission of

⁸⁵ *Minutes Ghana*, 86, resolution 4. See NISSEN, ‘Mission and Unity’, 546, for an explicit critique of Stephen Neill: By integrating ‘the IMC would become simply one department of the WCC among ten or twelve, and by no means one of the most important.’

⁸⁶ Cf. NISSEN, ‘Mission and Unity’, 542.

⁸⁷ Max Warren had said in Accra that a ‘very tentative movement’ would be stifled, if not ‘killed’ because of the ‘integration.’ See *Minutes Ghana*, 131-132.

⁸⁸ GRAHAM, ‘Why Lausanne’, 26-27. See for this also extensively ENGELSVIKEN, ‘Role of Lausanne.’

⁸⁹ ENGELSVIKEN, ‘Role of Lausanne’, 34. Cf. also TENNENT, ‘Lausanne and Global Evangelicalism’, 56, who poses that ‘evangelical Christians avoided the phrase *missio Dei*’ for ‘a significant period,’ because ‘it became associated with the separation of God’s work from the life and witness of the church.’

⁹⁰ S. Douglas Birdsall in his foreword to the study-edition of the text of the Covenant. See STOTT, *Covenant*, 4.

⁹¹ For a description of the history, the background, preparations and proceedings of the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism, see extensively DAHLE, *Lausanne Movement*. See further BASSHAM, *Mission Theology*, 209-246; SCHERER, *Gospel, Church & Kingdom*, 164-195; FIEDLER, ‘Evangelical Mission Theology I’; SCHERER et al., ‘Evangelical Mission Theology II’; WIND, *Zending en Oecumene IIb*, 58-72; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 115-129; BEVANS & SCHROEDER, *Constants*, 261-262; BOSCH, ‘Ecumenicals’; SUNQUIST, *Understanding*, 161-162; STOTT, ‘Significance’.

the Son.⁹² These remarks of Stott in the opening address connect the actual statements of the *Covenant* to the *missio Dei*-concept. They are indeed compatible with one another. It is the Triune God, ‘who governs all things according to the purpose of his will,’ who ‘has been calling out from the world a people for himself,’ sending it ‘back into the world to be his servants and witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building up of Christ’s body, and the glory of his name.’⁹³ In this, the Spirit is especially active. He is ‘a missionary spirit,’ endowing the people of God with all the gifts needed to make it ‘a fit instrument’ in the hands of God, ‘that the whole earth may hear his voice.’⁹⁴

Mission, thus, is the work of God. In reaffirming these basic convictions, as pronounced in the *Lausanne Covenant*, the *Manila Manifesto*, which is to be seen as an extension of the *Lausanne Covenant*,⁹⁵ states ‘that God himself is the chief evangelist’,⁹⁶ but that He ‘gives his people the privilege of being his “fellow-workers”,’ for the ‘whole church and every member of it’ is called ‘to be his witnesses.’⁹⁷ The *Cape Town Commitment* endorses this once more, stating that God’s mission ‘flows from the love of God,’ and that the ‘mission of God’s people flows’ from their love ‘for God and for all what God loves.’ It is ‘the outflow of God’s love to us and through us.’⁹⁸ Because God’s mission ‘continues to the ends of the earth and to the end of the world,’ the ‘participation in God’s mission continues’ also until that time,⁹⁹ for ‘God calls his people to share his mission,’ to participate in it.¹⁰⁰

2.4 The Aim of Mission – the Development of Kingdom Theology

2.4.1 Before Willingen

Throughout all of the relevant conferences and meetings, the aim of mission is described in terms of the Kingdom of God. At the beginning of the 20th century, the belief was that by planting churches everywhere, the whole world would be conquered for

⁹² STOTT, ‘Biblical Basis’, 66.

⁹³ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 3 (Lausanne Covenant 1).

⁹⁴ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 8 (Lausanne Covenant 14).

⁹⁵ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 229, where Tom Houston, International Director of LCWE refers to the decision to jointly publish the *Lausanne Covenant* and the *Manila Manifesto*. The *Manifesto* endorses in twenty-one affirmations its commitment to the *Lausanne Covenant*.

⁹⁶ DOUGLAS, *Proclaim Christ*, 31 (Manila Manifesto 5).

⁹⁷ DOUGLAS, *Proclaim Christ*, 31 (Manila Manifesto 6).

⁹⁸ *Cape Town Commitment*, 9 (Part I,1).

⁹⁹ *Cape Town Commitment*, 8 (Preamble).

¹⁰⁰ *Cape Town Commitment*, 27 (Part I,10).

Christ. Edinburgh pointed out that mission not only aimed at turning ‘heathens unto Christ,’ but ‘heathendom’ needed to be turned ‘into Christendom.’¹⁰¹ Edinburgh echoed the voice of its time in this. The world was divided into a Christian and a non-Christian part, and people in the West sincerely believed that Christianity had ‘greater ethical power than the non-Christian religions.’¹⁰² Education would bring people ‘under the influence of Christianity,’ thus creating ‘a greater readiness to consider its claims.’¹⁰³ Education was a steppingstone for the proclamation of the gospel in all the world ‘to win it for God.’¹⁰⁴ In this way, the Kingdom of God was to be ‘extended.’¹⁰⁵

The dramatic change in context in the period between Edinburgh and Jerusalem incited a fundamental discussion about the aim of mission. In Jerusalem, a different interpretation of the relation between the proclamation and the practical expression of the Kingdom of God came to the surface. The issue was whether or not the Kingdom of God is built by human action. On the one hand, there were theologians (mainly from the continent of Europe¹⁰⁶) who stated, ‘that the Gospel is addressed to individuals alone, through whose personal conversion justice and righteousness would gradually begin to permeate society.’¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, there were theologians (mainly of Anglo-Saxon origin) who, without denying the personal aspect, stressed the need to be ‘involved in the attempt to achieve social justice as part of the Christian mission.’¹⁰⁸ The tension between the two positions was resolved in a seemingly unifying message, that described mission as preparing ‘for the coming of His Kingdom in its fullness,’ in the fulfillment of which the Triune God is fully active.¹⁰⁹ As a result of this discussion, Jerusalem reaffirmed that mission is about the extension of God’s Kingdom. The world needs to be conquered for Christ.¹¹⁰ In explaining the significance of this conquest, the

¹⁰¹ *WMC*, I, 424.

¹⁰² *WMC*, I, 35.

¹⁰³ *WMC*, III, 369-370.

¹⁰⁴ *WMC*, IV, 229. Cf. also *WMC*, I, 313: ‘The most prominent [method] is education.’

¹⁰⁵ *WMC*, I, 353. Cf. further also *WMC*, I, 33, 97, 323 and *passim* for the same terminology.

¹⁰⁶ YATES, *Christian Mission*, 65, points to the term ‘Continental’, used for the German, Dutch, and Scandinavian representatives.

¹⁰⁷ GORT, ‘Jerusalem’, 277. Cf. GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 32-34.

¹⁰⁸ GORT, ‘Jerusalem’, 277.

¹⁰⁹ *RJM*, I, 481. The formulation was received with gladness by all, although the feeling of unanimity faded away when either side explained the unifying words in its own way. See GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 30-34; HOGG, *Foundations*, 248; GORT, ‘Jerusalem’, 276-278; YATES, *Christian Mission*, 68-70; SCHLUNK, *Höhen des Ölberges*, 85-101 and 203-218, evaluates critically the seemingly experienced unity at the Jerusalem Meeting.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *RJM*, I, 326; see also *RJM*, I, 329.

Anglo-Saxon point of view was recognizable. It was stressed that Christ did not come ‘to be ministered unto but to minister and to sacrifice Himself.’ Because of that, ‘conquest and service are fused in one.’¹¹¹ The gospel of the crucified and risen Christ is ‘the sure source of power for social regeneration,’¹¹² producing ‘Christ-like character in individuals and societies and nations.’¹¹³ Mission has all kinds of ‘implications for Kingdom-building.’¹¹⁴ It is a ‘comprehensive’ program, creating the necessary conditions for the ‘abundant life’ that God promises to His children.¹¹⁵

The emphasis on this earthly manifestation of the Kingdom dominates the discussion in the following years. Tamaram speaks of the realization,¹¹⁶ the establishment,¹¹⁷ the extension,¹¹⁸ and the advancement¹¹⁹ of the Kingdom. It ‘is God’s purpose’ that the Kingdom comes and manifests itself in ‘the increase of justice, truth and brotherhood upon earth.’¹²⁰ At the same time, it is professed that the Kingdom is not built by human endeavor. The relation of the worldly Kingdom in its relation to its eschatological establishment at the return of Jesus starts to be taken into consideration. The Kingdom is ‘both present and future; both a growth and a final consummation by God.’¹²¹

The eschatological aspect played a more decisive role in the preparations for the Willigen Meeting, and consequently in the understanding of the Kingdom. In this discourse, the view of Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk¹²² was of an outspoken character. He emphatically spoke about the actual beginning of the ‘intronization’ of Christ in the here and now, based on His proclamation of having received all power.¹²³ The Kingdom

¹¹¹ *RJM*, I, 431.

¹¹² *RJM*, I, 482-483.

¹¹³ *RJM*, I, 486.

¹¹⁴ *RJM*, VI, 288. See also *RJM*, III, 207.

¹¹⁵ *RJM*, VI, 287.

¹¹⁶ *World Mission of the Church*, 126; see also *Tam*, I, 61.

¹¹⁷ *World Mission of the Church*, 17; see also *World Mission of the Church*, 69; see further *Tam*, II, 75; *Tam*, III, 390.

¹¹⁸ *World Mission of the Church*, 46, see also *World Mission of the Church*, 152; see further *Tam*, V, 26.

¹¹⁹ *Tam*, V, 40.

¹²⁰ *World Mission of the Church*, 17.

¹²¹ *World Mission of the Church*, 126. Cf. HARTENSTEIN, ‘Was haben wir von Tamaram zu lernen’, 202, who points out that the discussion about the social responsibility of the church ‘surprisingly led to the quest to the proper understanding of eschatology,’ in light of the relation between the world and the Kingdom and the realizability of the Kingdom in the current world.

¹²² See for Hoekendijk, HOEDEMAEKER, ‘Legacy of Hoekendijk’. For the contribution of Hoekendijk, see ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 236-239; see also GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 79-82; and further WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 73-91.

¹²³ See HOEKENDIJK, *Kerk en volk*, 223-228.

is a reality, the *shalom* of which ‘is *proclaimed*,’ i.e., it is ‘represented in the literal sense’ in ‘the *kerygma*.’ It ‘is made present,’ not just verbally, but factually: The *shalom* is ‘*lived*’ in ‘*koinonia*,’ and ‘*demonstrated* in humble service, *diakonia*.’¹²⁴ The *diakonia* is ‘demonstration of shalom, by way of humble service,’¹²⁵ and therefore has priority in the missionary approach. Proclamation comes as an ‘explanatory postscript’¹²⁶ to this *diakonia*. All this does not mean that the Kingdom of God is constructed in its definitive form, but ‘significant tokens are set up,’ teaching ‘what shalom should be.’¹²⁷

The report of the NZR fully affirmed that in and through Christ the Kingdom of God is a present reality. The ‘kingdom of God has come on earth,’ and ‘this conviction ought to be realized in this world.’ At the same time, ‘it is to be recognized that the Kingdom is hidden, as Christ Himself is hidden.’ The ‘authority of Christ is real,’ but simultaneously, the knowledge that Christ is still to come, ‘keeps mission from a superficial culture-optimism, and from a trading in of the gospel of God’s grace for a program of social reconstruction.’¹²⁸ All this implies, nevertheless, that the gospel of the Kingdom is of a comprehensive nature, for the salvation in Christ ‘touches the whole of human life.’¹²⁹ There are obvious social implications, for the spiritual and the social cannot be separated: Jesus Christ Himself ‘connected the message that He proclaimed intensively with bringing salvation in a most practical way.’¹³⁰ The implication of the ‘restoration of the communion with God,’ is the ‘restoration of human life in every respect.’¹³¹

The North American report *Why Missions?* stressed, as mentioned, the lordship of Christ as the point of departure for the missionary activity of the church. He ‘is not only the Head of the church but ahead of both the Church and the world “making all things new.”’ Because of this, mission is not just about saving souls, but must be understood as the ‘sensitive and total response of the Church to what the triune God has done and is doing in the world.’¹³² Stressing the saving of souls, although belonging to ‘the center of missionary activity,’ has in history led to a situation in which the individual was

¹²⁴ HOEKENDIJK, ‘Call’, 171 (italics in the original).

¹²⁵ HOEKENDIJK, ‘Church in Missionary Thinking’, 334.

¹²⁶ HOEKENDIJK, *Kirche und Volk*, 337.

¹²⁷ HOEKENDIJK, ‘Call’, 175. See WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 73-91, for an extensive discussion on the position of Hoekendijk. See also FLETT, *Apostolicity*, 187-240, who discusses the point of view of Hoekendijk from the starting point of the apostolate.

¹²⁸ BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 205-206.

¹²⁹ BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 211.

¹³⁰ BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 216.

¹³¹ BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 220-221.

¹³² LEHMANN, ‘Obligation’, 21-22.

isolated ‘from his social and cultural matrix,’¹³³ whereas the gospel, properly understood, is about ‘the coming of God’s kingdom.’ It is about the ‘transition, now impending, from the kingdoms of this world to the kingdom of our Lord.’¹³⁴

2.4.2 Willingen and its First Evaluation

Willingen did not result in a unified point of view regarding the interpretation of the Kingdom of God.¹³⁵ The contributions discussed above, however, demonstrate the central place of both the eschatological aspect and the comprehensive meaning in the understanding of the Kingdom. Both are pronounced in the adopted and published statement. The Kingdom is a present reality, for Christ was ‘raised by God to the right hand of His power.’ His rule is ‘sure’, although it is ‘hidden,’¹³⁶ and it will become manifest in the end.¹³⁷ Because of this, ‘His Kingship’ needs to be proclaimed ‘to the uttermost parts of the earth,’¹³⁸ in ‘every moment and every situation.’ In this proclamation, it is needed to ‘come to grips with the social, political, economic and cultural life’ of all the people.¹³⁹ Mission, thus, is witnessing both verbally and actually ‘to what God has done, is doing, and will do in Christ.’ Consequently, the church does not stand ‘over against the world,’ nor is it ‘detached from it.’ The church’s principal position is ‘in the world.’ Christians ‘are God’s people in the world,’ called to identify ‘with the world’ as Christ did, ‘not only in its perplexity and distress, its guilt and its sorrow, but also in its real acts of love and justice – acts by which it often puts the churches to shame.’¹⁴⁰

Evaluating the result of Willingen, Hartenstein concluded that a ‘new Theology of the Kingdom of God started to develop,’ rooted ‘in the great plan of salvation of God.’¹⁴¹ Mission, in that context, is ‘the dynamic and universal movement of Christ, the ultimate aim of which is the proclamation of the coming of the kingdom of God, the kingship of God over the world.’¹⁴² Hartenstein stressed the need to consider the

¹³³ LEHMANN, ‘Obligation’, 23.

¹³⁴ LEHMANN, ‘Obligation’, 26.

¹³⁵ The statement of Willingen has been characterized as a ‘compromise declaration, which in a deliberately eschatological formulation clumsily set out side by side elements of the preparatory studies with their fully integrated contemporary theology.’ See GÜNTHER & COOK, ‘World Missionary Conferences’, 505.

¹³⁶ ‘Missionary Calling’, 2.

¹³⁷ ‘Missionary Calling’, 2.

¹³⁸ ‘Missionary Calling’, 3.

¹³⁹ ‘Missionary Calling’, 4.

¹⁴⁰ ‘Missionary Calling’, 4-5.

¹⁴¹ HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 67.

¹⁴² HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 54.

relation between the “Kingdom” of God and His “Kingship” from the proper perspective. Kingdom and Kingship must not be identified because that would lead to the risk that ‘the concept of the Kingdom melds with the concept of the dominion of God,’ as if the Kingdom of God exists where people submit to the rule of Christ. It would narrow ‘the Kingdom of God in a vertical sense,’ leaving the ‘horizontal aspect’ out of sight, with all consequences of it, also regarding the eschatological aspect.¹⁴³ It would mean a fusing of the “already” with the “not yet”. Because of this, it is necessary to further study the relation between the Kingdom of God and the church, especially from the perspective of the ‘synoptic witness of the Kingdom of God and His ecclesia.’ This perspective is needed to take into account the comprehensive significance of the teaching of Christ.¹⁴⁴

Andersen also emphasized the connection between God’s mission and the Kingdom. In the death and resurrection of Christ, ‘God has decisively taken a hand in human history,’ bringing in ‘His sovereign rule’ although ‘the battle is still engaged between His hidden Kingdom and the opposing spiritual powers.’ The cross of Christ is not only to be seen as judgment, but it is also God’s claim on the world ‘for His coming Kingdom.’ God, therefore, ‘caused the mission of the Holy Spirit to follow upon the mission of the Son.’¹⁴⁵

Vicedom pinpointed the Kingdom as the ‘goal of the *missio Dei*,’¹⁴⁶ for God has decided to ‘pluck’ men ‘from the kingdom of darkness,’ and transfer them ‘through His *missio* into His kingdom.’¹⁴⁷ In Christ, this Kingdom has come. God made Him ‘the bearer of the Kingdom.’ He is ‘the one sent in the name of the Lord (Matt. 21:9)’ and therefore, ‘God’s reign and Jesus Christ are one and the same thing.’ Consequently, proclaiming ‘the name of Jesus’ is proclaiming ‘the reign of God (Acts 8:12; 28:31).’¹⁴⁸ The Kingdom must ‘be understood soteriologically,’ because of which it has ‘rules entirely different from those of the kingdoms of the world.’ The Kingdom is ‘ushered in by God alone’ in the proclamation of the gospel.¹⁴⁹ The rule of God, ‘in contrast to the rule of the world, develops in secret.’¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 68.

¹⁴⁴ HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 69. Hartenstein notes, that Protestantism for too long ‘dealt exclusively with the Pauline teaching of the church as the body of Christ, neglecting the reality of the Kingdom-message in the comprehensive sense of the Lord’s preaching.’

¹⁴⁵ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 43-44.

¹⁴⁶ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 14 (italics in the original).

¹⁴⁷ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 20 (italics in the original).

¹⁴⁸ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 23.

¹⁴⁹ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 24.

¹⁵⁰ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 25.

Blauw pointed out that the element of the Kingdom is fundamental when it comes to the aim of mission. It corresponds with what Scripture says about salvation in its direct relation to the Messiah and the Kingdom. The ‘universal lordship of God, the eschatological expectation of salvation and the expectation of the Messiah belong together.’¹⁵¹ In the Messiah, the expectation of the Old and the New Testament come together, in which the idea of Kingship is evidently present, for the ‘dominion over the world of nations’ is given to Him. He brings and gives the ‘universal-eschatological-Messianic salvation,’¹⁵² which is to be understood in a comprehensive way. The ‘word “salvation” in the Old Testament is a rendering of the word *šalôm*,’ which has not just a ‘religious’ but ‘an unmistakably material content as well.’¹⁵³ All this stands in the background with regard to mission and reveals the direct link with the Kingdom. In Christ’s resurrection, the ‘new creation’ arose around Him. He is ‘the end of a world,’ and ‘the beginning of a new one, “the hinge of history”.’¹⁵⁴

2.4.3 *Continuation of the Discussion in Ecumenical Circles*

The further elaboration of this kingdom-theology manifested a difference in understanding. Starting in the 1960s, the emphasis seemed to be put especially on the physical and social implications of the Kingdom. This happened evidently at the meetings of the CWME in Mexico and Bangkok. Mexico-City (1963) focused on ‘the witness of Christians to men in the secular world,’¹⁵⁵ and stated that secularization, different from earlier times,¹⁵⁶ should be understood as a ‘revolutionary attempt of man to become emancipated from all forms of dependency,’ making it possible to increase ‘control over nature,’ over the ‘social environment,’ and over his ‘own life.’ This is ‘God’s intended

¹⁵¹ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 47 (in the original, this phrase is in italics).

¹⁵² BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 52.

¹⁵³ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 53.

¹⁵⁴ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 105, quoting the expression of JEAN DANIELOU in his *Essai sur le mystère de l'histoire*, 193: Christ as ‘charnière de l'histoire.’

¹⁵⁵ See *Minutes Mexico City*, 5. The other themes to be studied were the witness of Christians to men of other faiths; the witness of the congregation in its neighborhood; and the witness of the Christian church across national and confessional boundaries.

¹⁵⁶ Secularization was identified as a rival of Christianity at the Jerusalem Meeting of 1928. See HOGG, *Foundations*, 241: The preparatory committee of the Jerusalem Meeting, having read a contribution of Rufus Jones on secularism, was convinced that the real ‘opponent’ of Christianity ‘was not one of the ancient religions but *secularism*’ (italics in the original). For Jones’ contribution, see *RJM*, I, 284-338. See also *RJM*, II, 199: ‘Our enemy is not civilization, but secularism.’ Cf. PAAS, ‘Making’, 62-63: ‘Jones suggested that Christianity (...) had found a formidable adversary, an alternative “religion”, as it were.’

purpose,' for humankind is meant to have 'dominion over nature.' The 'material world is God's creation,' in which men are 'to play their part in his continuing work.' Science and technology serve in this. Secularization ends 'the historical limitations of race, class, nationality, and occupation.' It frees 'from old social stratifications' and enables people to make their 'unique contribution,' made as they are in the image of God, 'with infinite possibilities' to use this 'freedom to fulfil God's will.' Secular structures help in the 'fight for justice' of 'individuals and minorities.' Although not denying the task to proclaim 'a transcendent God' who is 'concerned with individuals,' Mexico stressed that God is the 'Lord of world history, who became a man in Christ.' Christ became one of us, to enable mankind to 'fulfil the task to which they were ordained in creation.' The 'Christian message' not just aims at 'religious inwardness,' but at the total 'restoration' of mankind in all its relationships, 'as the making whole of the person in Christ,' who 'reconciles men in one and the same act to each other, and to God.' The focus must be on 'the destiny of mankind as a whole,' namely the 'Kingdom of God,' in which people are freed from selfishness to a life of service to others.¹⁵⁷

As a direct continuation of an international conference on Salvation Today, the CWME Assembly of Bangkok (1973)¹⁵⁸ convened around the same theme. Logically, the outcome of this conference had straightforward implications on the Assembly. It was pointed out that the salvation 'God is offering' is 'simple and comprehensive.' God wants 'the whole of human reality' to be freed 'from all that keeps it in slavery.'¹⁵⁹ Salvation has a 'personal' and a 'corporate dimension,' and 'integrates man into a companionship of which Christ is the head.' This 'companionship' is a 'sign' of and witnesses to the 'new humanity of the Kingdom of God.'¹⁶⁰ Christ revealed the true 'humanity' and 'identity' of mankind. All people are invited to be 'constantly re-created' in this image, and to join the 'eschatological community' that is 'committed to man's struggle

¹⁵⁷ *Minutes Mexico City*, 119-121.

¹⁵⁸ See for the program of the conference, *Salvation Today*. See further *Bangkok Assembly*, 3. The opening of the CWME Assembly on December 31 was at a session of the Conference on Salvation Today, which 'was therefore regarded as a session of the Assembly.' Next to the Assembly attendants, 'some 100 other persons' were present at the Salvation Today Conference.

For a description of the background, preparations and proceedings of the Assembly of the CWME in Bangkok in 1973, see BASSHAM, *Mission Theology*, 92-98; WIND, *Zending en Oecumene IIb*, 7-58; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 107-115; ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 86-93. See also *From Mexico City to Bangkok*, for the developments within the CWME between the Mexico Meeting and the Assembly of Bangkok.

¹⁵⁹ *Bangkok Assembly*, 1.

¹⁶⁰ *Bangkok Assembly*, 65.

for liberation, unity, justice, peace and the fulness of life.¹⁶¹ This corresponds with the mission of God, who sent Christ into this world. 'In Him the Kingdom of God and of free people is at hand.' He came to bring salvation, inviting people to 'participate' in it, offering them 'a comprehensive wholeness in this divided life.' It is 'newness of life – the unfolding of true humanity' in God's fullness. It is 'salvation of the soul and the body, of the individual and society, mankind and "the groaning creation".' Just as 'evil works both in personal life and in exploitative social structures which humiliate human-kind,' God's justice also 'manifests itself both in the justification of the sinner and in social and political justice.'¹⁶²

The Melbourne Conference of the CWME (1980) continued this approach in discussing its central theme, 'Your Kingdom Come,'¹⁶³ with a focus on the social implications of the theme. The Kingdom of God, the goal of mission, must be understood especially in its significance for the poor. Proclaiming the Kingdom demands 'solidarity with the struggles of the poor,' active participating in their fight 'against the powers of exploitation and impoverishment,' as well as establishing 'a new relationship with the poor inside the churches' and 'pray and work for the kingdom of God.' The church must show the world that the Kingdom of God is 'concerned for liberation, not oppression; justice, not exploitation; fulness, not deprivation; freedom, not slavery; health, not disease; life, not death.'¹⁶⁴ The proclamation of the Kingdom unmistakably has a 'prophetic' aspect, to 'say "yes"' to all that corresponds with the Kingdom 'as revealed to humankind in the life of Jesus Christ,' and 'to say "no"' to all that harms the 'dignity and the freedom of human beings and all that is alive.' The Kingdom of God 'is not "of this world";' but that does not justify avoiding 'confrontation with the struggles of this world,' for the Kingdom 'is "at hand" precisely in a confrontation with principalities and powers' as it became manifest 'in the life of Jesus Christ.'¹⁶⁵

The *Ecumenical Affirmation* of 1982¹⁶⁶ acknowledged the immense contrast between the 'biblical promise of a new earth and a new heaven' and the 'reality of today.' The

¹⁶¹ *Bangkok Assembly*, 67.

¹⁶² *Bangkok Assembly*, 88.

¹⁶³ For a description of the background, preparations and proceedings of the Melbourne Conference of the CWME, 1980, see extensively SCHERER, *Gospel, Church & Kingdom*, 130-145; WIND, *Zending en Oecumene IIb*, 250-267; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 133-137; ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 94-98.

¹⁶⁴ MATTHEY, *Your Kingdom Come*, 176-178.

¹⁶⁵ MATTHEY, *Your Kingdom Come*, 180.

¹⁶⁶ The full title of the Affirmation was *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation*. Cf. SCHERER, *Gospel, Church & Kingdom*, 145. The Affirmation was meant as a formulation of the

results of sin are ‘found’ in many forms, in all kinds of wrongs, in social, political, and economical structures. The majority of people who do not know ‘the story of Jesus’ live in poverty and are ‘struggling for justice, freedom and liberation.’ Therefore, the ‘Good News’ that ‘God’s kingdom is promised to them’ needs to be announced and shared with them with ‘urgency.’¹⁶⁷ The church must ‘witness to the full realization of God’s kingdom in Jesus Christ,’ in a way in which ‘eucharistic worship, thanksgiving, intercessory prayer’ go hand in hand with ‘planning for mission and evangelism,’ a ‘daily lifestyle of solidarity with the poor,’ and ‘advocacy even to confrontation with the powers that oppress human beings.’¹⁶⁸ The ‘example’ of Christ must be followed. He ‘was incarnated as poor’ and ‘lived as one among them,’ giving them ‘the promise of the kingdom of God.’ The proclamation ‘among the poor is a sign of the messianic kingdom,’ for the spiritual and material aspects ‘were in Jesus one gospel.’ It is impossible to proclaim the gospel without speaking of ‘the promises of the justice of the kingdom to the poor of the earth.’ That would make ‘a caricature of the gospel.’¹⁶⁹

The CWME Conference of San Antonio (1989) centered on the theme ‘Your Will be Done: Mission in Christ’s Way,’¹⁷⁰ and stressed ‘solidarity with those who suffer and struggle for justice and human dignity’ as a fundamental element of the ‘wholeness of the gospel.’¹⁷¹ God envisions ‘unity and renewal of the human family.’¹⁷² ‘Mission in Christ’s way’ implies therefore ‘the mission of God in justice,’ as in ‘the biblical concept of *dikaïosune*’ that speaks about ‘the justice of God’ but also about ‘justification, forgiveness and reconciliation.’ Justice is about ‘distributive (sharing) and retributive (judgmental) justice,’ but also has a ‘fundamental aspect’ as ‘the founding, building and organizing of community: a community with people, a community with God, and a community with nature.’¹⁷³

‘official WCC position on mission and evangelism’ in relation to ‘the missiological debate of the time.’ See ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 1.

¹⁶⁷ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 4.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 7-8. Cf. ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 9: ‘taking sides with the poor struggling to overcome poverty.’

¹⁶⁹ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 22-23. It is stated that ‘Christian participation in the struggles for justice’ without pointing to ‘the promises of the kingdom also makes a caricature of a Christian understanding of mission.’

¹⁷⁰ For a description of the background, preparations and proceedings of the San Antonio Conference of the CWME, 1989, see ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 126-131; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 137-142.

¹⁷¹ WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 23.

¹⁷² WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 28.

¹⁷³ WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 39, (italics in the original).

The 2000 statement *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today* summarized ‘new insights, emphases and trends since 1982,¹⁷⁴ and pointed out the need of ‘fresh missiological insights and learnings’ because of the encounter ‘with new mission challenges’ and the change of ‘many of the world’s realities.’ Reflection ‘on the nature, content and implications’ of the gospel ‘in the varied but inter-related contexts’ in which mission is to take place was to be stimulated.¹⁷⁵ In light of all the challenges from within and without¹⁷⁶ people need help in their ‘needs and searches’ to find ‘answers’ and ‘directions’ that are based on Scripture.¹⁷⁷ In this, there is an aspect of mission in its holistic sense, ‘for the whole person and the totality of life are inseparable in God’s plan of salvation accomplished in Jesus Christ.’ People, therefore, are called ‘into communion with God, with one another and with creation.’ There is also an aspect of evangelism, which includes proclamation and ‘explication of the gospel’ and the ‘invitation to believe’ and to ‘become a disciple of Christ and join the community of an existing church.’¹⁷⁸ The proclamation of the gospel aims at a ‘personal encounter’ with Christ, that calls for a reaction in ‘terms of metanoia, of repentance,’ and leads to ‘a radical change of mind and life’ and ‘discipleship.’¹⁷⁹

The 2004 paper *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation*¹⁸⁰ affirmed the ‘holistic interpretation of Christian witness’ because of the inner connection with the way in which Christ acted. He was ‘anointed’ by the Holy Spirit ‘to “preach good news to the poor, heal the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18).’ Mission, therefore, is about the continuation of this ‘liberating and healing mission.’ It involves ‘bold proclamation of

¹⁷⁴ ‘Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today’, 59. The document served as preparatory paper for the 2005 CWME Conference to be held in Athens.

¹⁷⁵ ‘Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today’, 62-63.

¹⁷⁶ See ‘Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today’, 67-72. The document points to the effects of globalization, the recent political shifts (the collapse of communism), the economic developments, the ‘increasing degradation of the environment,’ the enormous change in the world of communication (the internet), the spread of postmodernity throughout the world, the fragmentation of life, the changes within the churches (growing Pentecostalism and charismatic renewal, new ways of being church, resurgence of confessionalism over against ecumenical dialogue), and the proliferation of new religious movements.

¹⁷⁷ ‘Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today’, 73.

¹⁷⁸ ‘Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today’, 66-67.

¹⁷⁹ HAM, ‘Unity in Mission,’ 232, discussing the CWME statement and directly referring to ‘Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today’, 64 and 67.

¹⁸⁰ ‘Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation’. See ‘Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation’, 67, for the history of this paper that also served as preparatory material for the 2005 CWME Conference to be held in Athens.

the liberating gospel,' a 'healing ministry to the sick and suffering,' and 'struggle for justice on the side of the oppressed and marginalized.'¹⁸¹ Reconciliation is important in all this, because of the 'reconciliation we have received in Jesus Christ,' which must 'be shared in the world,' involving also 'the work for reconciliation among persons and societies.' After all, a real community is established, 'where brokenness and sectarianism are overcome and people live together with mutual respect and tolerance.'¹⁸²

Athens 2005, with its theme 'Come Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile,'¹⁸³ aimed at empowering 'participants to continue in their call to be in mission together and work towards reconciliation and healing in Christ, in God's world today.' The Conference sent a *Letter from Athens* to the churches,¹⁸⁴ stating that the 'goal' of mission is 'the new creation heralded by Christ and enabled by the Holy Spirit.' To reach that goal, 'reconciliation and healing are pivotal,' for reconciliation is 'the restoration of right relations with God', which 'is the source of reconciliation with oneself, with other people and with the whole of creation.' True healing is to be celebrated 'as a living sign of God's new creation,' within 'the troubled and confusing present.'¹⁸⁵

The ecumenical affirmation *Together Towards Life* affirmed that salvation is not 'partial' or just about 'the salvation of humanity,' but is to be understood 'in a cosmic sense.' It is 'good news for every part of creation and every aspect of our life and society,' because 'all life, the whole *oikoumene*,' is 'interconnected in God's web of life.' Mission, therefore, is about furthering 'God's mission of justice and peace so that life may flourish.'¹⁸⁶ It is about 'transformation' of the world 'towards the kingdom of God.'¹⁸⁷ In this transformation, God is Himself fully involved. He uses the church, but not in an exclusive sense. In the 'complex, diverse and pluralistic' world, 'we need to be sensitive to the action of God the Holy Spirit beyond the church.'¹⁸⁸ It is the Spirit who blows wherever He wills, 'embracing the whole of the cosmos,' bringing the church to 'participate in the mission of love that is at the heart of the life of the Trinity.'¹⁸⁹ It is participating 'in what God is doing in the world.'¹⁹⁰

¹⁸¹ 'Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation', 70.

¹⁸² 'Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation', 76.

¹⁸³ See MATTHEY, *Come Holy Spirit*, 13-14. The sub-theme was 'Called in Christ to be reconciling and healing communities.'

¹⁸⁴ See MATTHEY, 'Descriptive Introduction', 331.

¹⁸⁵ 'Letter from Athens', 325-326.

¹⁸⁶ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 5 (italics in the original).

¹⁸⁷ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 7.

¹⁸⁸ KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 121.

¹⁸⁹ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 9.

¹⁹⁰ KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 126.

2.4.4 Continuation of the Discussion in Evangelical Circles

An important reason for the founding of the *Lausanne Movement* was the objection to the approach of the CWME with its stress on the social implications of the gospel. Nevertheless, this did not lead to a negating of these implications in evangelical discussions. As a matter of fact, the social implications of the gospel have always been part of the missionary endeavor within evangelical circles. History shows this convincingly.¹⁹¹ This history proved to be of importance in the discussion at the Lausanne Congresses. Mission is, stated the *Lausanne Covenant*, about the ‘extension’ of God’s Kingdom.¹⁹² This extension must first and foremost be interpreted in terms of being ‘reconciled to God,’ in and through Christ Jesus. This leads to a life that can be characterized as ‘obedience to Christ, incorporation into his church and responsible service in the world.’¹⁹³ This bears, however, unavoidable consequences, for ‘God is both the Creator and the Judge of all men.’ The responsible service in the world, therefore, implies the call to share God’s ‘concern for justice and reconciliation’ but also ‘for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression.’ Because every person on earth is created in God’s image, it follows that every person ‘has an intrinsic dignity because of which he should be respected and served,’ and ‘not exploited.’ Although it is possible to distinguish between ‘reconciliation’ with people and with God, and although ‘social action’ is no ‘evangelism,’ and ‘political liberation’ is no ‘salvation,’ it is clear that ‘evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty.’ Christians ‘must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread’ the righteousness of the Kingdom ‘in the midst of an unrighteous world.’ Salvation transforms ‘us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.’¹⁹⁴

No ‘section of the *Covenant* was more controversial’ and at the same time ‘more indicative of the new direction of evangelicalism’ than the section out of which the formulations in the previous paragraph were taken.¹⁹⁵ The social issue was brought to the table and sparked an intense and lengthy discussion regarding the relation between evangelism and social action.¹⁹⁶ This already shows in the *Covenant* itself, where the section that follows on the one that discussed the social implications of the gospel, on the

¹⁹¹ See e.g. PADILLA, *Mission Between the Times*, 3. See further the handbooks on the history of Christian mission, e.g. LATOURETTE, *History of Expansion IV*, 34-46; LATOURETTE, *History of Christianity II*, 1018-1019.

¹⁹² DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 3 (Lausanne Covenant 1).

¹⁹³ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 4 (Lausanne Covenant 4).

¹⁹⁴ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 4-5 (Lausanne Covenant 5).

¹⁹⁵ SCHERER, *Gospel, Church & Kingdom*, 173.

¹⁹⁶ See extensively TIZON, ‘Evangelism and Social Responsibility’.

one hand states that in ‘the church’s mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary,’ whereas in the next line it states that world ‘evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world.’¹⁹⁷ Lausanne somehow ‘lumped together’ evangelism and socio-political involvement without ‘theologically’ defining ‘the relationship between them.’¹⁹⁸ This was already seen at the 1974 Congress and addressed by an hoc group in a document entitled ‘Theological Implications of Radical Discipleship.’¹⁹⁹ The document stressed that the gospel prophetically exposes and opposes ‘all demonic forces that deny the Lordship of Christ and keep men less than fully human.’ The gospel pursues ‘real justice for all men.’ It is possible that the ‘communication’ of the gospel sometimes is a matter of ‘attitude and action only,’ as it is also possible that ‘the spoken Word will stand alone,’ but the ‘demonic attempt to drive a wedge between evangelism and social action’ must be repudiated for there is ‘no biblical dichotomy between the Word spoken and the Word made visible in the lives of God’s people.’ What people see ‘must be at one with what they hear.’²⁰⁰ The church is sent out by Christ, ‘as the Father sent him,’ and therefore it must, as He did, ‘identify and agonize with men.’ The church must ‘renounce status and demonic power,’ and ‘give itself in selfless service of others for God.’ In all this, the church needs to ‘meet men on their own ground and be particularly attentive to the powerless.’ The church ‘must allow God to make visible in the new humanity the quality of life that reflects Christ and demonstrates his reign.’²⁰¹

A consultation in Hoddesdon, a suburb of London, resulting in *An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Life-style* (1980),²⁰² stated that ‘involuntary poverty is an offence against the goodness of God.’ The church ‘must stand with God and the poor against injustice.’ The Kingdom is ‘offered to all, but it is especially good news for the poor because they benefit most from the changes it brings.’ The church, therefore, should ‘get to know the poor and oppressed people,’ with the aim to ‘learn issues of injustice from them,’ and ‘to seek to relieve their suffering.’²⁰³ The church is called by Christ to ‘be the world’s salt and light, in order to hinder its social decay and illumine its

¹⁹⁷ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 5 (Lausanne Covenant 6).

¹⁹⁸ WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 119.

¹⁹⁹ For the statement of the ad hoc group, see DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 1294-1296. PADILLA, *Mission Between the Times*, 5, remarks that the document was ‘signed by about four hundred of the participants including John Stott.’

²⁰⁰ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 1294.

²⁰¹ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 1295.

²⁰² For the Hoddesdon consultation, see SCHERER, *Gospel, Church & Kingdom*, 179-182; STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, xviii.

²⁰³ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 144-145 (Evangelical Commitment 3).

darkness.²⁰⁴ The ‘present situation of social injustice’ is ‘abhorrent to God.’ This calls the church to be involved, first in praying ‘for peace and justice, as God commands,’ secondly in seeking to ‘educate Christian people in the moral and political issues involved,’ and thirdly in taking ‘action.’²⁰⁵ The *Commitment* observes that the church must not separate ‘a responsible life-style’ from ‘the call to responsible witness.’ When ‘Christians care for each other and for the deprived, Jesus Christ becomes more visibly attractive.’²⁰⁶

This line of thought became a more constant element in the considerations of the *Lausanne Movement*, although the discussion regarding the relation between evangelism and social action continued. The Consultation on World Evangelization in Pattaya (1980)²⁰⁷ affirmed in its *Thailand Statement* that Christ calls ‘not only to obey him as Lord in every area of our lives, but also to serve as he served.’ The church must follow Christ’s example, ‘identifying with the poor and hungry, the deprived and oppressed.’ It is stated that ‘evangelism and social action are not identical,’ but to be ‘integrally integrated,’ although it is to be acknowledged at the same time ‘that of all the tragic needs of human beings none is greater’ than being alienated from God. It is, therefore, a ‘lack of human compassion’ when the ‘task of evangelization’ is not executed with the greatest ‘urgency.’ In line with this, the *Thailand Statement* reaffirms the 6th statement of the *Lausanne Covenant*: In ‘the church’s mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary.’²⁰⁸

The Pattaya affirmation about the primacy of evangelism was not shared *unisono* by all participants of the consultation. A group of some 200 people protested in ‘A Statement of Concerns on the Future of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism.’²⁰⁹ Their fear was that the Lausanne Movement was not ‘seriously concerned with the social, political and economic issues in many parts of the world that are a great stumbling block to the proclamation of the gospel.’²¹⁰ Their suggestion to organize an international congress on evangelical social responsibility²¹¹ was not accepted by the executive

²⁰⁴ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 146 (Evangelical Commitment 4).

²⁰⁵ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 147-148 (Evangelical Commitment 7).

²⁰⁶ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 148 (Evangelical Commitment 8).

²⁰⁷ For the Pattaya Consultation, see MOREAU, ‘World Consultation’. See also SCOTT, ‘Significance of Pattaya’. See further SCHERER, *Gospel, Church & Kingdom*, 187-189; STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, xviii-xix.

²⁰⁸ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 159 (Thailand Statement, 1 & 2); cf. DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 5 (Lausanne Covenant, statement 6).

²⁰⁹ See TIZON, ‘Evangelism and Social Responsibility’, 175; see further SCHERER, *Gospel, Church & Kingdom*, 182; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 123-125.

²¹⁰ KIRK, *A New World Coming*, 148 (Statement of Concerns).

²¹¹ KIRK, *A New World Coming*, 150 (Statement of Concerns, suggestion 3).

committee of the Movement. The committee, instead, pointed to the already existing plan ‘to arrange a small consultation’ on the issue to be held in Grand Rapids.²¹²

Against this background, the international consultation on The Relationship of Evangelism and Social Responsibility, held in Grand Rapids (1982),²¹³ aimed at ‘a real theological agreement according to Scripture.’²¹⁴ Both the call to evangelism²¹⁵ and the call to social responsibility on a ‘Trinitarian basis’²¹⁶ were affirmed. The consultation saw three possible and ‘equally valid relationships.’ Firstly, social activity can be seen as ‘a *consequence* of evangelism,’ for ‘new life’ becomes manifest ‘in the service of others.’ Secondly, social activity can be ‘a *bridge* to evangelism,’ in that it breaks down ‘prejudice and suspicion,’ opening ‘closed doors,’ and gaining ‘a hearing for the Gospel.’ The risk of making rice Christians was to be taken, ‘so long as we retain our own integrity,’ serving people ‘out of genuine love.’ Social actions will ‘be “not bribes but bridges—bridges of love to the world”.’ Thirdly, social activity can be seen as a partner of evangelism. In Jesus’ ministry ‘*kerygma* (proclamation) and *diakonia* (service) went hand in hand.’ Evangelism always ‘has a social dimension,’ as social responsibility always ‘has an evangelistic dimension.’ The ‘partnership is, in reality, a marriage.’²¹⁷ The consultation affirmed a ‘*logical*’ instead of a ‘*temporal*’ primacy of evangelism, for ‘Christian social responsibility presupposes socially responsible Christians.’ The consultation also affirmed a primacy of evangelism, for it ‘relates to people’s eternal destiny,’ and only Christians can bring that ‘good news of salvation.’ Evangelism and social activity are ‘inseparable.’ Authentic ‘love for our neighbour will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person.’ Thus, evangelism and social activity ‘mutually support and strengthen each other in an upward spiral of increased concern for both.’²¹⁸ Both are ‘fruits’ of the gospel, that ‘demands

²¹² See for all this COSTAS, *Christ Outside the Gate*, 142-145. He refers to the official response of the Executive Committee to the group and discusses critically the reception of and dealing with the Statement of Concerns, which raises for him ‘a very serious question of *integrity* on the part of the LCWE’ (italics in the original). See also PADILLA, ‘Integral Mission’, 51-53. STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, xix, speaks of ‘an unofficial “Statement of Concerns” which had been circulated during the Consultation’ of Pattaya.

²¹³ For the Grand Rapids Meeting, see TIZON, ‘Evangelism and Social Responsibility’, 175-176; SUGDEN, ‘Evangelicals and wholistic evangelism’; PADILLA, *Mission Between the Times*, 9-13; REID, ‘Evangelism and Social Responsibility’; SCHERER, *Gospel, Church & Kingdom*, 182-184; STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, xix-xx.

²¹⁴ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 170 (Grand Rapids Report).

²¹⁵ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 176 (Grand Rapids Report 2).

²¹⁶ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 178 (Grand Rapids Report 3).

²¹⁷ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 181-182 (Grand Rapids Report 4c), (italics in the original).

²¹⁸ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 183 (Grand Rapids Report 4d), (italics in the original).

both to be preached and to be lived.²¹⁹ Therefore, ‘evangelism and social responsibility’ are ‘indissolubly united.’²²⁰

Grand Rapids seemed to offer a way to reach ‘an important level of consensus.’²²¹ The discussion, however, did not stop. During the international conference on The Nature and Mission of the Church in Wheaton (1983), a consultation studied on The Church in Response to Human Need²²² and stated in its report that ‘evangelism’ is no ‘separate theme,’ for it is ‘an integral part of our total Christian response to human need.’²²³ The followers of Christ are ‘not to conform to the values of society but to transform them.’ This implies that ‘non-involvement lends tacit support to the existing order.’ The gospel aims at a transformation in which life can be lived according to ‘God’s purpose,’ i.e., the ‘fullness of life in harmony with God.’ Such a transformation necessitates ‘obedience of individuals and communities to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.’²²⁴ These values must be demonstrated by the church, whereas at the same time ‘issues of evil and of social injustice in the local community and the wider society’ are addressed.²²⁵

At the 1989 Second International Congress on World Evangelization in Manila,²²⁶ a provisional conclusion in the discussion was reached. The *Manifesto* stated that ‘the whole gospel has to be proclaimed by the whole church.’²²⁷ In this proclamation, word and deeds are to be integrated. The ‘authentic gospel’ must be made visible in ‘the transformed lives of men and women,’ who ‘proclaim the love of God,’ in their involvement ‘in loving service,’ and in their commitment to the ‘demands of justice and peace.’ This is no ‘confusion of the kingdom of God with a Christianized society,’ but ‘a recognition that the biblical gospel has inescapable social implications.’ Mission must always be ‘incarnational,’ which ‘necessitates entering humbly into other people’s worlds, identifying with their social reality, their sorrow and suffering, and their struggles for justice against oppressive powers.’²²⁸

²¹⁹ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 185 (Grand Rapids Report 5).

²²⁰ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 188 (Grand Rapids Report 5c).

²²¹ TIZON, ‘Evangelism and Social Responsibility’, 176.

²²² For the Wheaton consultation, see TIZON, ‘Evangelism and Social Responsibility’, 178; SCHERER, *Gospel, Church & Kingdom*, 193-194.

²²³ SCHERER & BEVANS, *New Directions*, 282 (Church in Response to Human Need, introduction); For this consultation, see PADILLA, *Mission Between the Times*, 13-15.

²²⁴ SCHERER & BEVANS, *New Directions*, 283-284 (Church in Response to Human Need I and II).

²²⁵ SCHERER & BEVANS, *New Directions*, 288 (Church in Response to Human Need VI).

²²⁶ See for Lausanne II, NICHOLS, *The Whole Gospel*; CLAYDON, ‘The Lausanne Story’; COOTE, ‘Lausanne II and World Evangelization’; ENGELSVIKEN, ‘Role of Lausanne’.

²²⁷ DOUGLAS, *Proclaim Christ*, 31 (Manila Manifesto, Introduction Part B).

²²⁸ DOUGLAS, *Proclaim Christ*, 30 (Manila Manifesto 4).

The 2004 Forum for World Evangelization in Pattaya²²⁹ stressed in one of its papers the holistic character of mission, because in mission ‘the whole of life’ is brought ‘under the lordship of Jesus Christ.’²³⁰ Mission is both proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. The ‘proclamation has social consequences’ and the ‘social involvement has evangelistic consequences.’ The proclamation calls for a life of ‘love and repentance’ and the demonstration of the gospel asks for ‘witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ.’²³¹ The church, next to being one, holy, and catholic, must also be a ‘true agent of transformation in its own context.’ Holistic mission is ‘a priestly service in which the whole church, not just a sector, is involved,’ combining ‘the sacrifice of praise with the sacrifice of good deeds that alleviate human suffering.’

Pattaya 2004 formed ‘the runway on which the third Lausanne Congress could be launched.’²³² It was held in Cape Town in 2010.²³³ The Congress reaffirmed the statements of Lausanne I and II, stating that these congresses not only led to a new awareness ‘of the number of unreached groups’ but also to ‘a fresh discovery of the holistic nature of the biblical gospel and of Christian mission.’²³⁴ Sharing in ‘God’s passion for his world,’²³⁵ has direct implications for the mission of the church. It calls for integral mission, ‘discerning, proclaiming, and living out, the biblical truth that the gospel is God’s good news,’ for individuals, for ‘society, and for all creation.’ All three ‘are included in the redeeming love and mission of God,’ and must, therefore, ‘be part of the comprehensive mission of God’s people.’²³⁶ In mission, integrity is needed, in which at the same time ‘evangelism and committed engagement in the world’ are practiced. It is both proclamation and demonstration. Where the world is ignored, the Word of God that ‘sends us out to serve the world’ is betrayed, but where the Word of God is ignored, ‘we have nothing to bring to the world.’²³⁷

²²⁹ For Pattaya 2004, see JØRGENSEN, ‘The Lausanne Story’, 18.

²³⁰ CLAYDON, *A New Vision* I, 214.

²³¹ CLAYDON, *A New Vision* I, 219-220; for the quote, see *Micah Declaration*, 19.

²³² CAMERON & DAHLE, ‘Communicating Lausanne’, 103.

²³³ For a description of the background, preparations and proceedings of the 2010 Cape Town Congress, see CARLSON, ‘The Cape Town Congress’. See also in general DAHLE, *Lausanne Movement*; CAMERON, *Christ our Reconciler*, WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 155-156. See further, DAHLE, ‘Mission in 3D’.

²³⁴ *Cape Town Commitment*, 6 (Preamble).

²³⁵ *Cape Town Commitment*, 19 (Part I,7).

²³⁶ *Cape Town Commitment*, 20 (Part I,7A).

²³⁷ *Cape Town Commitment*, 28-29 (Part I,10B); for the quote, see *Micah Declaration*, 19.

2.5. Kingdom and Mission in Their Eschatological Significance

In thinking about the aim of mission, the relation of this aim to eschatology is important. This relation touches not only the question of whether the Kingdom of God is a future, a present, or a present as well as a future reality, it touches also the question of the significance of mission. As was the case in studying the aim of mission, a development took place regarding this subject. This development is the topic of this section.

2.5.1 Before Willingen

Although not denying the eschatological element completely,²³⁸ the focus in Edinburgh 1910 was mainly on the present. There was a widespread agreement that the aim of mission was the Christianization of the world in this generation (see previous section).²³⁹ The Kingship of Christ was to be realized, not only in the individual life of the believer and of Christian families, but also in the social and national life, and even in all international relations. To accomplish this, planting the church throughout the world was needed. The planted church would show the people around ‘what Christianity really means.’²⁴⁰ This would facilitate the ultimate aim, bringing the ‘nations as nations to Christ,’²⁴¹ and thus, into His Kingdom. Related to this, mission was primarily a matter of conquering the present world for Christ, a ‘unified spiritual campaign’ to serve this aim.²⁴²

This line of thought started to shift in Jerusalem where, understandably because of the immense impact of World War I, the make-ability of the Kingdom became a serious issue. As mentioned, the thought pattern of the Anglo-Saxons that pointed out the need to be actively involved socially as part of Christian mission, played a more prominent

²³⁸ VAN 'T HOF, *Geheim*, 48: ‘It is too much to say that Edinburgh was completely unaware of the eschatological aspect,’ but ‘it ran the risk of reducing the eschatological element to a worldly (diesseitige) reality.’

²³⁹ Cf. KAWERAU, *Reich Gottes und Mission*, 4-9, who describes that the relationship between mission and Kingdom in missionary thinking was generally explained as ‘the completion of the Kingdom of God in the “Diesseitigkeit”.’ He refers in the first pages to the announcement of the Edinburgh Conference that the time has come to ‘make the body of Christ complete by Christianizing the peoples of the world.’ As an example of this ‘this-worldly’ interpretation, he refers to the opinion that the British Empire was seen as ‘forecourt of God’s Kingdom,’ called to prepare the nations for Christianity, and more specifically ‘as the instrument to carry the Kingdom of God to the peoples of the world.’

²⁴⁰ *WMC*, I, 324-325.

²⁴¹ *WMC*, I, 424.

²⁴² *WMC*, I, 190.

role. This resulted in statements in which the aspect of anticipation²⁴³ of what is to come at Jesus' return was not negated, but in which was emphasized that mission creates 'a real Kingdom of God in this natural human grouping that we call the community.'²⁴⁴ This, immediately, characterized mission's focus in categories of this world. Over against this, the Continentals stressed that bringing 'about the Kingdom of God is not our business; we can only wait for the Lord to bring it about in his coming.'²⁴⁵ This thought pattern was less outspokenly present in the reports of the Meeting. The discussion was not settled as also became clear when the unifying message about mission as preparation for the establishment of the Kingdom, proved to be multi-interpretable.

The eschatological aspect played a more theological role at Tambaram. Both the future and the present manifestation of the Kingdom were brought forward in their interrelatedness. The Kingdom is 'eternal,' to which God offers 'even now participation in its triumph, in time and in eternity.'²⁴⁶ Mission has to do with this double reality. Tambaram, therefore, speaks on the one hand in the mentioned terminology of realization, establishment, extension, and advancement, for it 'is God's purpose' that the Kingdom comes 'within time and within this world.' On the other hand, the Kingdom is also 'beyond history.'²⁴⁷ It is 'both within and beyond this world.' The Kingdom will only be complete 'in the final establishment' of God's 'glorious reign of love and righteousness, when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth where death and sin shall be no more.'²⁴⁸

As already mentioned, the theological elaboration of the eschatological aspect increased in the preparations toward Willingen. Without explicitly using the exact words, Hartenstein obviously speaks in Kingdom terms when he points to the period that started with the ascension of Christ and states that at 'the beginning of this period, Jesus Christ's hidden seizure of power took place.' Christ was 'exalted to the right hand of God' and rules 'heaven and earth, His community and the world of nations.' His rule is 'hidden but real.'²⁴⁹ The present period, therefore, 'is determined by the hidden rulership of Christ,' which becomes 'visible to the world' in the church. The last 'act is still

²⁴³ *RJM*, V, 114: The Kingdom is present 'by anticipation, the earnest of what shall be.'

²⁴⁴ *RJM*, VI, 289.

²⁴⁵ HEIM, 'Tagung', 163, who also states that 'some Americans would have liked to formulate as follows: we should consume ourselves in selfless service for others in order to bring about the Kingdom of God in its fulness.' Cf. ANDERSON, *Theology of Mission*, 50-51.

²⁴⁶ *World Mission of the Church*, 20.

²⁴⁷ *World Mission of the Church*, 126.

²⁴⁸ *World Mission of the Church*, 17.

²⁴⁹ HARTENSTEIN, 'Neubesinnung', 12.

pending: The visible establishment of Christ's rule on a renewed earth.²⁵⁰ Until that moment, He holds the 'history of nations in His hands,' breaking 'its seal' and leading it 'toward the day of judgment.'²⁵¹ Mission gives 'meaning' to this period between the ascension and return of Christ. It is 'the real feature of the interim end phase in which we are.'²⁵² Mission is 'the instrument of the Lord to carry out His plan of salvation.'²⁵³

Freytag speaks in the same way when he stresses that Christ has received all power 'in heaven and on earth.'²⁵⁴ This fact is, however, 'not openly manifest.' It is a 'secret reality which is only to be grasped in faith.' The church lives 'in a time-span between two poles: resurrection and second coming, world reconciliation and world redemption.' The 'Kingdom of God' has come 'invisibly' but there is also 'expectation of its visible coming.' In the 'pause' between 'the Resurrection and the second coming,' God is 'patient,' showing 'mercy and forbearance' with the purpose of 'the gathering of the community which waits for the Lord who will come.'²⁵⁵ Mission is 'the preparatory action which at the same time withholds (II Thess. 2:6) and yet has haste.' Mission 'does not bring the End about,' but it is 'meaningless without the vision of the End.' In mission 'the decisive event takes place which relates to the End.'²⁵⁶

Hoekendijk, as mentioned above, explicitly stresses the reality of the rule of Christ in speaking about the actual beginning of the 'intronization' of Christ in the here and now. He adds that this stage continues 'until this aeon, that started with the exaltation of Christ, will have passed through its final stages.'²⁵⁷ So, the Kingdom of God is not constructed in its definitive form on earth. The definite establishment of the Kingdom is the work of the King of the Kingdom Himself, but until the day of His coming

²⁵⁰ HARTENSTEIN, 'Neubesinnung', 13.

²⁵¹ HARTENSTEIN, 'Neubesinnung', 15.

²⁵² HARTENSTEIN, 'Neubesinnung' 12. Cf. HARTENSTEIN, 'Neubesinnung', 15.

²⁵³ HARTENSTEIN, 'Neubesinnung', 18. Hartenstein already spoke in this way about mission in his 1933 dissertation. See HARTENSTEIN, *Mission als Problem*, 31: Mission 'rests on the perfectum of the realized reconciliation of the world, and aims at the futurum of the coming consummation of the world.' Mission is 'a necessary expression of the reality of Christ.' Mission 'lives by the power and joy of the realized and completed salvation, and at the same time by the burning desire and expectation of the coming Kingdom. Between these two moments of God, mission is necessary and ordered.' See further for Hartenstein and his missionary thinking, SCHWARZ, 'Legacy of Hartenstein'.

²⁵⁴ FREYTAG, 'Meaning and Purpose', 157.

²⁵⁵ FREYTAG, 'Meaning and Purpose', 158.

²⁵⁶ FREYTAG, 'Meaning and Purpose', 159. Cf. FREYTAG, 'Mission im Blick aufs Ende', 188-189, where he states that 'the eschatological "now" in which mission is executed gives it an incomparable weight: In mission the meaning of history is realized.'

²⁵⁷ HOEKENDIJK, *Kerk en volk*, 224.

‘significant tokens are set up,’ teaching ‘what shalom should be.’²⁵⁸ Mission receives its meaning in this context. It is a ‘postulate of eschatology,’ for it has an apocalyptic aspect. It is one of the decisive signs of the time. ‘The end has come imminently-near.’ It also has a salvation-historical aspect: The commissioning of the disciples rests on the messianic proclamation of power of the resurrected Christ. His ‘triumphal entry’ must be proclaimed, in the proclamation of which Christ Himself is ‘present by the Spirit’ until the definite establishment of the Kingdom. The ‘imperative of the apostolate’ rests on the ‘two indicatives of the messianic fulfillment and the promise of the Spirit.’²⁵⁹

The report of the NZR speaks of ‘the *gospel of fulfillment*.’ It is ‘the good news of God’s decisive coming to the world, bringing everything to its final completion.’ The Kingdom has not only come near but is ‘in and with’ Christ a ‘present reality.’²⁶⁰ At the same time, it has a provisional character, for there is an element of a ‘salvation-historical perfectum’ as well as an element of a ‘salvation-historical futurum.’ These elements do not ‘*exclude*’ one another, but they ‘*permeate* and determine one another.’²⁶¹ This implies that the Kingdom has a hidden character, in the same way as Christ, ‘whose Lordship is also hidden and will only become manifest at the end of days.’ This calls for faith that lives in the conviction that ‘already now the powers of the future age are working,’ also when they are not openly manifest. ‘It is not possible to escape the tension between “already” and “not yet”, nor should one withdraw from it.’²⁶² All this determines the ‘authentic-eschatological function’ of mission, showing its ‘foundation in the redemptive-historical past.’ Mission is the proclamation ‘of the fulfilled work of Christ’ that gave life ‘a completely new and surprising perspective.’²⁶³ Mission is not a ‘moratorium in the execution of the saving plan of God.’ It is the *realization of the expected time of salvation*, be it a provisional one.²⁶⁴

2.5.2 Willingen and its First Evaluation

In the formulations of Willingen, the eschatological aspect is clearly present. The Kingdom is a reality in the here and now, although there is a hidden element to it. It will become manifest in its totality in the end,²⁶⁵ for it rests on ‘what God has done, is doing,

²⁵⁸ HOEKENDIJK, ‘Call’, 175.

²⁵⁹ See extensively HOEKENDIJK, *Kerk en volk*, 223-228. Cf. also HOEKENDIJK, ‘Call’, 168.

²⁶⁰ BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 202 (italics in the original).

²⁶¹ BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 204-205 (italics in the original).

²⁶² BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 206.

²⁶³ BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 203.

²⁶⁴ BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 204 (italics in the original).

²⁶⁵ Cf. again ‘Missionary Calling’, 2-3.

and will do in Christ.²⁶⁶ The ‘day of His coming’²⁶⁷ is nearing for ‘God will complete what He has set His hand to in the sending of His Son.’²⁶⁸ Mission, because of all this, is proclaiming the coming of this future Kingdom, but also proclaiming the reality of it in the present time, verbally and practically. Mission is proclaiming the Kingship of Christ to the end of the earth,²⁶⁹ but it is also assuming the responsibility that is directly connected to His Kingship in the concrete situation. It is about ‘bringing all things into captivity’ to Christ, and ‘preparing the whole earth for the day of His coming.’²⁷⁰

The eschatological tension to which Willingen testified is elaborated further in the following years. Hartenstein assesses the results and states that Willingen formulates a ‘theology that fully takes into account the realism of the biblical history of salvation,’ in the context of which history is understood ‘as a battle between God and his Christ against the powers of apostasy until the final victory.’ In this battle, the ‘*theologia crucis*’ and the ‘*theologia gloriae*’ form a peculiar unity: The ‘Cross of Christ is a sign, that God victoriously rules the powers of history that oppose Him.’ His rule may be hidden, but is ‘very real.’²⁷¹ So, the Cross is at the same time a ‘sign of the hiddenness of the kingship of God’ and ‘of the coming victory of God.’ The Cross is ‘the key to understanding history.’²⁷² All this shapes the contours of the new theology of the Kingdom, putting it in the biblical perspective. It is all ‘embedded in the great plan of salvation of God,’ which aims at making ‘the fallen world to the theater of [God’s] kingdom and kingship,’ in all of which Christ is ‘the Mediator’ of the completion of this plan.²⁷³

Andersen states that God in the death and resurrection of Christ has actively ‘brought in His sovereign rule,’ and adds a few lines later that ‘this sovereignty is hidden; the hour in which it will be made manifest to all creation is still in the future and is the object of the Church’s expectancy.’²⁷⁴ In this context, the sending of the Spirit is important, for it is in His coming that ‘God declares that the work of reconciliation is already accomplished, but that the manifestation of the Kingdom’ is yet to come.²⁷⁵ It

²⁶⁶ ‘Missionary Calling’, 4.

²⁶⁷ ‘Missionary Calling’, 5.

²⁶⁸ ‘Theological Basis Report’, 241. ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 259, observes that the official statement of Willingen was ‘patterned after the Interim Report’ (referred to in this study as ‘Theological Basis Report’).

²⁶⁹ Cf. ‘Missionary Calling’, 3-4.

²⁷⁰ ‘Missionary Calling’, 5.

²⁷¹ HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 61.

²⁷² HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 62.

²⁷³ HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 67.

²⁷⁴ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 43.

²⁷⁵ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 44.

is necessary to lay ‘equal stress’ on both ‘the aspect of fulfillment, and the aspect of expectation.’ Affirming the report of the NZR, Andersen states that the eschatological tension between the “already” and “not yet” is ‘inescapable,’ for this ‘corresponds to the testimony of Holy Scripture.’²⁷⁶ This also determines the meaning of mission. It belongs to ‘God’s saving action in history and of God’s plan of salvation,’²⁷⁷ in that it ‘proclaims the “already” to the world,’ in view of the ‘perfect fulfilment of redemption’ that ‘still awaits.’²⁷⁸

Vicedom stresses that the Kingdom that has come in Christ does not exist ‘in earthly forms,’ but that it ‘possesses an eschatological character.’²⁷⁹ The Kingdom is ‘ushered in by God alone by means of the proclamation of the Word and the dispensation of the sacraments,’ which is the ‘method of propagation proper to the Kingdom.’ The rule of God, ‘in contrast to the rule of the world, develops in secret.’ This also is because of its ‘eschatological character.’ It is a future Kingdom ‘in a double sense,’ for Christ will at His return ‘erect the kingdom of God in such a way that God will be all in all.’ Until He returns, He ‘will have His kingdom proclaimed (Matt. 24:14),’ gathering Himself ‘the members of the Kingdom.’ This immediately characterizes mission. It is the ‘decisive power,’ through which Christ Himself leads ‘history to its goal.’ Because of this, ‘mission’ shapes ‘history in the reign of God.’²⁸⁰

Blauw points out that when Christ rose from the dead, a ‘new period in world history’ dawned. Christ ‘received the dominion of the world.’²⁸¹ The Kingdom started. This implies that the new world is already a present reality, and that mission is a direct consequence but also, and especially, the ‘*actualization*’ of this dominion of Christ over the world. ‘The proclamation of the gospel is the *form* of the Kingdom of God.’ The ‘new world already *is*,’ albeit just ‘for him who sees the actuality of Christ’s dominion in the proclamation of the gospel in the world,’²⁸² for there is still an aspect of ‘*tentativeness*’ and also of ‘*hiddenness*’ in it.²⁸³ This does not diminish the significance of mission. In the ‘time between resurrection and the Second Coming of Christ,’ it has ‘*heilsgeschichtlich*’ meaning in connection with Christ’s present dominion.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁶ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 57.

²⁷⁷ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 41.

²⁷⁸ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 57.

²⁷⁹ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 22.

²⁸⁰ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 24-26.

²⁸¹ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 104-105.

²⁸² BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 105 (italics in the original).

²⁸³ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 106 (italics in the original).

²⁸⁴ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 106, (italics in the original). Blauw quotes CULLMANN, *Christus und die Zeit*, 138.

2.5.3 Continuation of the Discussion in Ecumenical Circles

Mexico, in this regard, speaks about ‘God’s purpose for his whole creation,’²⁸⁵ and about ‘the new heaven and new earth’ toward which the church as ‘the pilgrim people of God is moving’²⁸⁶ but applies this directly in its discussion of the consequences for the present time.²⁸⁷ ‘The future impacts today. There is a test of faith in it. Where faith really builds on ‘the “happenedness” of the great deeds of God in Christ,’²⁸⁸ it ‘produces hope.’ It knows that what happened in Christ goes on ‘happening and will lead to the ultimate event of the manifest glory of Christ’²⁸⁹ and thus to the final establishment of God’s ‘redeeming purpose for his whole creation.’²⁹⁰ It is this future hope that motivates conscious attention to what is going on today. The motives for Bangkok to stress the struggle for just structures in society are also related to the prospect of the re-creation of man in the image of God and the fact that the church is ‘an eschatological community.’²⁹¹ In Melbourne it was stated in one of the addresses that the Kingdom ‘is not merely imminent but has already begun in Jesus’ message and ministry.’²⁹² This led to formulations in which both elements appear. It is impossible to pray “Your Kingdom come” without being active in seeking the justice of the Kingdom today, especially where this justice is absent.²⁹³ The ‘ultimate hope of the kingdom of God’ inspires to establish today ‘such visible signs of the kingdom of God’ that will ‘offer new hope to all who long for a more human world.’²⁹⁴

This line of thought is continued in the *Ecumenical Affirmation*. The immense contrast between the promise of the new heaven and earth on the one hand and the reality of today with the widespread lack of love, peace, and justice on the other hand ‘invites our actions as Christians in history.’²⁹⁵ This is the needed witnessing ‘to the full realization of God’s kingdom in Jesus Christ’²⁹⁶ that ‘inaugurated in Jesus the Lord, crucified and risen.’²⁹⁷ San Antonio affirms the formulations of the *Ecumenical Affirmation*, stating

²⁸⁵ *Minutes Mexico City*, 122.

²⁸⁶ *Minutes Mexico City*, 123.

²⁸⁷ *Minutes Mexico City*, 122-124.

²⁸⁸ VISSER ‘T HOOFT, ‘Test of Faith’, 23.

²⁸⁹ VISSER ‘T HOOFT, ‘Test of Faith’, 28.

²⁹⁰ *Minutes Mexico City*, 123.

²⁹¹ *Bangkok Assembly*, 67.

²⁹² KÄSEMANN, ‘Eschatological Reign’, 62.

²⁹³ MATTHEY, *Your Kingdom Come*, 235.

²⁹⁴ MATTHEY, *Your Kingdom Come*, 180-181.

²⁹⁵ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 4.

²⁹⁶ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 7.

²⁹⁷ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 8.

that the Kingdom has ‘inaugurated’ in Christ, and that it is ‘made present among us by the Holy Spirit.’²⁹⁸ In its message, however, the focus is mainly on the present situation. “Mission in Christ’s Way” calls for active involvement in the here and now, doing the will of God in this world.²⁹⁹ The gospel must be lived out as a ‘prophetic sign and foretaste of the unity and renewal of the human family as envisioned in God’s promised reign.’³⁰⁰

The following meetings of the CWME continued to affirm the thoughts formulated in the *Ecumenical Affirmation* of 1982, updating its content to the situation in which they convened. The stress on the situation in the present time became more dominant. At the Conference in Salvador (1996),³⁰¹ specific attention was given to the catholicity of the church in its relation to the diversity in cultural contextuality. The Spirit connects the church throughout the world, and in all its cultural expressions, to Christ and therein to one another. After all, all cultures are ‘worthy vehicles of the love of God’ and ‘no culture is the exclusive norm for God’s relationship with humans.’³⁰² The stressing of these elements of catholicity and contextuality did not negate the future aspect of the gospel. The theme of the Conference, “Called to One Hope”, made that visible. The mentioned elements, however, called for special attention for the contemporary situation, in which the implications and consequences of the gospel had taken such different forms in the same world, where both extraordinary wealth and dire poverty are found, and in which rich Christian nations had repeatedly enriched themselves over the backs of poor nations.³⁰³

In the run-up to the Athens Conference, the stress on the contemporary situation increased because of the consequences of the holistic approach to mission. The different themes that were studied all implied a quest to embody the values of the Kingdom in a concrete way in the here and now. This applied to *Towards Common Witness* (1997),³⁰⁴ the document that stresses the ‘intrinsic relation between the credibility of the mission of the church and the unity among Christians.’³⁰⁵ A common witness is needed in which the churches, ‘even while separated,’ join their efforts despite ‘the many barriers’ which

²⁹⁸ WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 25.

²⁹⁹ Cf. WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 20-24.

³⁰⁰ WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 28.

³⁰¹ For a description of the background, preparations and proceedings of the Salvador Conference of the CWME, see ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 132-137; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 144-148.

³⁰² DURASINGH, *Called to One Hope*, 20.

³⁰³ See the Message of the Conference; see DURASINGH, *Called to One Hope*, 20-25.

³⁰⁴ See ‘Towards Common Witness’, 39-41, for the history and development of this statement.

³⁰⁵ ‘Towards Common Witness’, 46.

keep them apart, recognizing ‘a certain degree of ecclesial communion among themselves, imperfect though that may yet be.’³⁰⁶ It also applied to *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today* (2000).³⁰⁷ It points to the Trinity as ‘the source and image of our existence,’ manifesting not only that there is ‘diversity’ and ‘otherness’ but also that there are ‘intrinsic relationships’ that constitute a real ‘community,’ in which diversity and otherness are ‘complementary to one another.’³⁰⁸ It further applied to *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation* (2004),³⁰⁹ where reconciliation is defined as ‘the heart of Christian faith,’ because of which the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ must be expressed ‘in both the spirituality and strategies of our mission and evangelism.’³¹⁰ This will lead the church to ‘continue’ Christ’s ‘liberating and healing mission,’ which ‘involves bold proclamation of the liberating gospel to people bound by sin, a healing ministry to the sick and suffering, and the struggle for justice on the side of the oppressed and marginalized.’³¹¹ And it applied to *The Healing Mission of the Church* (2005),³¹² where the healing of sickness and diseases as one of the aspects of holistic mission is discussed extensively.³¹³ Being ‘a reconciling and healing community’ is ‘an essential expression of the mission of the church to create and renew relationships in the perspective of the kingdom of God.’³¹⁴

The theme of Athens 2004 brought all this together. The Conference aimed at empowering ‘participants to continue in their call to be in mission together and work towards reconciliation and healing in Christ, in God’s world today.’³¹⁵ The *Letter from Athens* points to the ‘new creation heralded by Christ and enabled by the Holy Spirit’ as the ‘goal’ of the ‘missionary endeavor.’ This goal is to be reached by a process of ‘reconciliation and healing,’ building on ‘the restoration of right relations with God’ as ‘source of reconciliation with oneself, with other people and with the whole of creation.’ The *Letter* states that ‘the road to reconciliation and healing is not an easy one,’ for it involves life in all its aspects, ‘and it shares the tension of the coming of God’s reign as

³⁰⁶ ‘Towards Common Witness’, 47.

³⁰⁷ See ‘Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today’, 59-61, for the history and development of this document.

³⁰⁸ ‘Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today’, 75.

³⁰⁹ See ‘Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation’, 90-91, for the history and development of this document.

³¹⁰ ‘Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation’, 92.

³¹¹ ‘Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation’, 95.

³¹² See ‘Healing Mission of the Church’, 127-128, for the history and development of this document.

³¹³ See ‘Healing Mission of the Church’, 129-147.

³¹⁴ ‘Healing Mission of the Church’, 147.

³¹⁵ MATTHEY, ‘Descriptive Introduction’, 327-328.

“already here” and “yet to come”.’ In that tension, however, ‘true healing’ is a ‘living sign of God’s new creation’³¹⁶ in the middle of the ‘troubled and confusing present.’³¹⁷

At the Centenary World Conference in Edinburgh 2010, the theme, ‘Witnessing to Christ Today,’ connected directly with the contemporary situation. The language used shows both realities. After all, the terminology that designates the church as ‘sign and symbol’³¹⁸ as well as ‘foretaste’³¹⁹ points in the situation of the here and now to what will become reality in the future. This does, however, happen in a very concrete sense, as a ‘living demonstration of the love and justice that God intends for all the world.’³²⁰ It is about holding ‘together the continuum of service, witness, conversion, nurture, disciple formation and ministry,’ to fully and faithfully express, ‘both locally and globally,’ the ‘total mission of God’ in its significance for today.³²¹ *Together Towards Life* affirms all this, in that it seeks ‘vision, concepts and directions for a renewed understanding and practice of mission and evangelism,’ in the ‘changing landscapes’ of the world. In the present time, life is to be celebrated in a total way by resisting and transforming ‘all life-destroying forces.’ In this, the power of the Holy Spirit, and His actual and direct involvement in mission, will lead to a re-envisioning of God’s mission in this ‘changing and diverse world.’ Living ‘in the Holy Spirit’ as the ‘essence of mission’ not only inspires but ‘gives the deepest meaning’ to life and ‘motivates’ to actions that have ‘a dynamic of transformation’ which is ‘capable of transforming the world in God’s grace.’³²² All of this is embodying ‘God’s salvation in this world.’³²³

2.5.4 Continuation of the Discussion in Evangelical Circles

As already noted, the Lausanne Congresses did not convene to wander ‘in the labyrinths of theological dispute,’³²⁴ but to promote actual involvement in the work of mission. As a result, there are no direct theological references to the present and future aspect of the Kingdom of God in the official statements of the *Lausanne Movement*. However, this does not mean that this theme is absent. It is present within the contours of the theological concepts that obviously form the point of departure of the Lausanne statements.

³¹⁶ ‘Letter from Athens’, 325.

³¹⁷ ‘Letter from Athens’, 326.

³¹⁸ KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 120.

³¹⁹ KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 121.

³²⁰ KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 120.

³²¹ KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 150-151.

³²² KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 3-5.

³²³ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 22.

³²⁴ See again STOTT, *Covenant*, 6.

As observed above, these statements are ‘compatible’ with the general ‘understanding of the *missio Dei*,’³²⁵ albeit without using the exact terminology.

This compatibility applies to the biblical basis of mission and therefore also to the biblical understanding of Kingdom and mission in their relationship to eschatology. Motives of the development that emerged in Willingen and its follow-up are reflected in the formulations of Lausanne. Both the element of the present and the future reality of the Kingdom are present in the *Lausanne Covenant*, not in a very direct and outspoken way, but it shimmers through in several of the statements. The main tone seems to focus on the eternal perspective of salvation,³²⁶ but it is not denied that the ‘results of evangelism,’ next to ‘incorporation’ in the church, include ‘obedience to Christ’ and ‘responsible service in the world.’ This is explicitly formulated in the statement on ‘Christian Social Responsibility,’ where the focus clearly is on the contemporary situation in which ‘alienation, oppression and discrimination,’ and other forms of ‘evil and injustice’ exist. The ‘righteousness’ of the Kingdom must be spread ‘in the midst of an unrighteous world.’³²⁷ All this belongs to mission, which stands under the tension-filled promise of the coming of Christ, who ‘will return’ to ‘consummate his salvation and his judgment.’ This promise is a ‘spur’ to evangelism. The ‘interim period between Christ’s ascension and return,’ must be ‘filled with the mission of the people of God,’ without any ‘liberty to stop before the end.’³²⁸

In the years following the first Lausanne Congress, these basic lines continued to evolve, in parallel with the growing awareness that mission requires active involvement in the social context alongside evangelistic efforts. The 1977 consultation of Pasadena³²⁹ connected future and present elements. It states that the church is ‘an eschatological community,’ or, ‘the new society of the new age,’ that is ‘called to anticipate’ the ‘life of heaven’ on earth.³³⁰ The 1980 consultation in Hoddesdon did the same in pointing out that the new life, received in Christ, cannot be separated from social matters today. The church today should act as the early church did.³³¹ Active involvement in seeking peace and justice ‘as God commands,’³³² obviously directs the lens to the here and now. The

³²⁵ ENGELSVIKEN, ‘Role of Lausanne’, 34.

³²⁶ Cf. DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 5 (Lausanne Covenant 6): ‘In the church’s mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary.’

³²⁷ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 4-5 (Lausanne Covenant 4 and 5).

³²⁸ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 8 (Lausanne Covenant 15).

³²⁹ See for the Pasadena consultation SCHERER, *Gospel, Church & Kingdom*, 177-178; STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, xvii.

³³⁰ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 67 (Pasadena 8).

³³¹ Cf. STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 145 (Evangelical Commitment 4).

³³² STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 147 (Evangelical Commitment 7).

1980 Pattaya Consultation went on in this way. It stressed the need of the integration of evangelism and social action, although the alienation from God was to be seen as the greatest of all human needs.³³³ The critical response to Pattaya by a number of representatives, formulated in the ‘Statement of Concerns’, only emphasized even more the need to pay attention to the contemporary situation.³³⁴ The attempt of the 1982 consultation of Grand Rapids to describe the relationship between evangelism and social action, in which the logical primacy of evangelism was formulated,³³⁵ shows a growing consensus, fitting the ‘uneasy tension between the “already” and the “not yet”, between the present reality and the future expectation of the kingdom.’³³⁶ The Wheaton consultation on The Church in Response to Human Need (1983) affirmed this, stating ‘that the Kingdom of God is both present and future, both societal and individual, both physical and spiritual.’ It has ‘broken into human history’ in Christ. Because of the double reality, the ‘church is called to infuse the world with hope, for both this age and the next.’ In witnessing to the gospel ‘of present salvation and future hope,’ the church identifies ‘with the awesome birthpangs of God’s new creation (Rom. 8:22),’ and prepares ‘for the ultimate by getting involved in the penultimate (Matt. 24:36-25:46).’³³⁷

The second Lausanne Congress (Manila 1989) affirmed, first of all, the *Lausanne Covenant*, but added in its *Manifesto* some elements that reveal the awareness of the double reality of the Kingdom. It has come when Jesus came, but ‘one day, as we know from his promises, he will come again in unimaginable splendor to perfect his kingdom.’ The ‘gap between his two comings is to be filled with the Christian missionary enterprise,’³³⁸ and an essential part of this mission is being actively involved in showing signs of ‘his kingdom,’ which reveal ‘what human community looks like when it comes under his rule of righteousness and peace.’³³⁹ This implies direct, active, and continuing social ‘commitment,’ not as ‘a confusion of the kingdom of God with a Christianized society’ but as ‘a recognition that the biblical gospel has inescapable social implications,’ for Christ ‘not only proclaimed the kingdom of God, he also demonstrated its arrival by works of mercy and power.’³⁴⁰

³³³ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 159 (Thailand Statement 2).

³³⁴ Cf. KIRK, *A New World Coming*, 148 (Statement of Concerns).

³³⁵ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 183 (Grand Rapids Report 4d).

³³⁶ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 187 (Grand Rapids Report 5b).

³³⁷ SCHERER & BEVANS, *New Directions*, 290 (Church in Response to Human Need, VIII).

³³⁸ DOUGLAS, *Proclaim Christ*, 38 (Manila Manifesto, Conclusion).

³³⁹ DOUGLAS, *Proclaim Christ*, 34 (Manila Manifesto 8).

³⁴⁰ DOUGLAS, *Proclaim Christ*, 30 (Manila Manifesto 4).

The third Lausanne Congress (Cape Town 2010) continued this line of thought, bringing in even more focus. Mission is, ‘in the name of God who holds all history in his hands,’ always related to the future in which the Kingdom of God will come. Until then, ‘the Church’s participation in God’s mission continues.’³⁴¹ This implies sharing in God’s love for the world, in all its dimensions.³⁴² God’s people, who are ‘to share in the glory of Christ as citizens of the new creation,’ are ‘to live a life of love’ today, not only as ‘evidence of obedience to the gospel,’ but also as ‘a potent engine of world mission,’³⁴³ being in this world ‘the most vivid expression of the kingdom of God’ that is still to come.³⁴⁴

2.6 Mission and Church – the Missionary Identity of the Church

The theological discourse regarding the church in its direct relationship with mission has evolved markedly in the period examined in this study. In this period, a fundamental change has taken place, in which the formulations of Willingen, again, were of fundamental importance. This development in its significance for the relationship between church and mission is the topic of this section.

2.6.1 Before Willingen

The conferences and meetings before Willingen did not formulate their statements concerning the relation between mission and the church in any theological way. This does, however, not imply that theological thoughts are absent. Edinburgh 1910 stated that the ‘missionary activities of the Church are the circulation of its blood.’³⁴⁵ This is put in a situation in which mission in many ways had been separated from the church.³⁴⁶ The Conference did not negate the *raison d’être* of the missionary societies but designated

³⁴¹ *Cape Town Commitment*, 7-8 (Preamble).

³⁴² Cf. *Cape Town Commitment*, 19 (Part I,7).

³⁴³ *Cape Town Commitment*, 25 (Part I,9).

³⁴⁴ *Cape Town Commitment*, 27 (Part I,9C).

³⁴⁵ *WMC*, I, 47.

³⁴⁶ See SUNQUIST, *Understanding*, 120-121: ‘A theological misperception had developed in the nineteenth century, as missionary societies were developing as structures separate from the church; mission was therefore seen as an extracurricular or even extraecclesial activity.’ Missionary societies were fully involved in the missionary endeavor, whereas the mainline churches were clearly less active in overseas mission. This situation started to change at the wake of the 20th century. See for all this also NEILL, *History*, 382; GOHEEN, *Introducing*, 149; BOSCH, *Transforming Mission*, 286 and 334-341; SUNQUIST, *Understanding*, 88-94 and 396-399; and extensively FIEDLER, *Ganz auf Vertrauen*, and FIEDLER, *Faith Missions*.

the church as ‘one of the key figures in the economy of the sending God.’³⁴⁷ This thought is found many times in the reports. The church is ‘fundamentally a Missionary Society.’³⁴⁸ The church, however, needed a ‘new and resolute awakening’ to the ‘richness of its heritage in the Gospel and to the *duty* of an ardent, universal, and untiring effort to make disciples of all nations.’³⁴⁹ After all, the church was given ‘the great charter of Missions.’³⁵⁰ God entrusted the ‘missionary responsibility’³⁵¹ to the church, because of which ‘a deeper sense of responsibility to Almighty God’³⁵² was needed. All this shows the fundamental position in which the discussion on the relation between mission and the church was at the beginning of the 20th century: The church is a ‘missionary organisation’³⁵³ that has to do its job, for it is shameful that the work of mission had not progressed further after almost twenty centuries.³⁵⁴

Jerusalem affirmed that all churches needed to ‘whole-heartedly accept’ their ‘missionary obligations.’³⁵⁵ In this, both the older and the younger churches were addressed, because all churches, worldwide, old and young, are ‘appointed by God to witness to Him, and to labour for the establishment of His Kingdom.’³⁵⁶ A ‘church-centric’ concept of mission evolved, with the church as ‘the centre,’ directing the ‘whole missionary enterprise of the area.’³⁵⁷ The church exists to declare the good news, and to help people ‘experience’³⁵⁸ the saving and redemptive power of the gospel, in an attitude of ‘humility and penitence and love.’³⁵⁹ This makes the church an instrument in the ‘advancement’ of the ‘Kingdom.’³⁶⁰ It is a ‘brotherhood in which the Kingdom is present’ by ‘anticipation, the earnest of what shall be,’³⁶¹ demonstrating in its life ‘the practical and social application of the Gospel.’³⁶² In actualizing the Christian fellowship to be ‘faithful to

³⁴⁷ VAN ’T HOF, *Gebeim*, 35-36.

³⁴⁸ *WMC*, VI, 17. See also *WMC*, II, 225.

³⁴⁹ *WMC*, I, 370 (italics JvtS).

³⁵⁰ *WMC*, III, 16.

³⁵¹ *WMC*, I, 11. See also *WMC*, I, 13, 297, 363.

³⁵² *WMC*, IX, 109.

³⁵³ See again *WMC*, II, 225, and *WMC*, VI, 17.

³⁵⁴ Cf. *WMC*, I, 1.

³⁵⁵ *RJM*, I, 489.

³⁵⁶ *RJM*, III, 207.

³⁵⁷ *RJM*, III, 209.

³⁵⁸ *RJM*, II, 7. See also *RJM*, I, 482.

³⁵⁹ *RJM*, I, 486-487.

³⁶⁰ *RJM*, V, 193.

³⁶¹ *RJM*, V, 114.

³⁶² *RJM*, I, 324-325.

the Master and to the holiness and catholicity and apostolic character of the Church,³⁶³ this fellowship will extend itself.

Tambaram saw mission as a result of the Divine initiative³⁶⁴ that became manifest in the sending of Christ into the world and in the sending of the Spirit to the church, enabling it to 'continue Christ's saving work in the world.'³⁶⁵ There is the awareness of the double reality of the Kingdom in a present as well as in a future form.³⁶⁶ This implies that the church is to be seen as 'the assembly of the citizens of the Kingdom of God,' called by God to be 'herald, exemplar and builder'³⁶⁷ of the Kingdom. The church is 'ambassador of Christ, proclaiming His Kingdom,' not just in a verbal way, but also in practice. The activities of the church are 'signposts' that point to the 'Saviour of men and of human society.'³⁶⁸ Proclamation and demonstration occur simultaneously. The church is 'the actualisation among men of its own message.'³⁶⁹ This makes the church into 'the missionary to the world.'³⁷⁰ This apostolic character of the church is its 'propulsive quality' and belongs to the 'essence' of the church.³⁷¹

The missiological discourse that started when Whitby put the missionary obligation of the church on the theological agenda,³⁷² resulted in a more theological approach of ecclesiology in relation to mission. In pointing to the meaning of mission within the framework of salvation history,³⁷³ in which mission is the 'eschatological act of God,' Hartenstein described the church as the 'instrument of the Lord in the execution of his plan of salvation.' The church must first and foremost be seen as 'the body of Christ,' in which He rules and through which He gathers His people. Because of this, mission and church belong together unmistakably, for the body of Christ is always active, because Christ Himself is active.³⁷⁴

Freytag emphasized that the presence of Christ through His Spirit in the church³⁷⁵ makes the church into the community that lives in the permanent tension between this

³⁶³ *RJM*, III, 136.

³⁶⁴ Cf. *World Mission of the Church*, 33.

³⁶⁵ Cf. *World Mission of the Church*, 17.

³⁶⁶ Cf. *World Mission of the Church*, 126.

³⁶⁷ *World Mission of the Church*, 27.

³⁶⁸ *World Mission of the Church*, 32.

³⁶⁹ *World Mission of the Church*, 19.

³⁷⁰ *World Mission of the Church*, 41; cf. *Tam*, III, 117.

³⁷¹ *Tam*, VII, 35.

³⁷² Cf. again GOODALL, 'First Principles', 257.

³⁷³ Cf. HARTENSTEIN, 'Neubesinnung', 15.

³⁷⁴ Cf. HARTENSTEIN, 'Neubesinnung', 18-21.

³⁷⁵ See FREYTAG, 'Meaning and Purpose', 157.

world's reality and the reality of faith. There is an element of fulfillment and of expectation³⁷⁶ until Christ returns. Until His coming, mission is the decisive event in which the 'meaning of history, the line of salvation in history, takes place.'³⁷⁷ The church plays an important role in this, for it is 'baptized into' the death of Christ, and it 'lives in Him a new and different life,' serving the furthering of the 'message of the Lord who is to come' as a 'witness of the Kingdom which has come to that which is still to come.'³⁷⁸ Mission is not an 'add-on' to the church, but it is its very nature. The life of the church is missionary.³⁷⁹

Based on his conviction that the 'intronization' of Christ has started in the here and now,³⁸⁰ and that mission as the proclamation of the provisional arrival of the future shalom of the Kingdom takes place in this context,³⁸¹ Hoekendijk called the church to rethink its relation to mission. The apostolate is not to be understood as a function of the church. It is the other way around, the church 'is a function of the Apostolate.' It is 'an instrument of God's redemptive action in this world,' to 'establish shalom in this world.'³⁸² This happens by proclaiming the *kerygma*, by living the *koinonia* and by demonstrating the *diakonia*.³⁸³ The church exists for this '*diakonia* to the world.' Being church implies 'participation (= *koinonia*) in Christ's apostolic ministry.'³⁸⁴ The church '*happens* in so far as it actually proclaims the kingdom to the world,' thus executing its '*opus proprium*.'³⁸⁵ The church can 'never be "more" than the Mission,'³⁸⁶ but is 'only the church to the extent that [it] lets [itself] be used as a part of God's dealings with the oikoumene.' The church, therefore, is per definition, 'oriented' to 'the whole world'.³⁸⁷

The report of the NZR states that the church, living in the time in between the ascension of Christ and His return, is to be understood 'as the "new people of God",' gathered from all the nations. The church, as "'the Body of Christ",' is 'everywhere where Christ is,' and 'is "heir of the kingdom".' This defines the church in its

³⁷⁶ See FREYTAG, 'Meaning and Purpose', 158.

³⁷⁷ FREYTAG, 'Mission im Blick aufs Ende', 188-189.

³⁷⁸ FREYTAG, 'Meaning and Purpose', 159.

³⁷⁹ Cf. WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 55.

³⁸⁰ See again HOEKENDIJK, *Kerk en volk*, 223-228.

³⁸¹ Cf. HOEKENDIJK, 'Call', 169.

³⁸² HOEKENDIJK, 'Call', 170.

³⁸³ See again HOEKENDIJK, 'Call', 171.

³⁸⁴ HOEKENDIJK, 'Missionary Thinking', 331 (italics in the original).

³⁸⁵ HOEKENDIJK, 'Missionary Thinking', 334 (italics in the original).

³⁸⁶ HOEKENDIJK, 'Missionary Thinking', 335.

³⁸⁷ HOEKENDIJK, *Church Inside Out*, 38; originally in HOEKENDIJK, 'Mission und Oekumene', 154.

‘redemptive-historical, Christological and eschatological perspective’³⁸⁸ as missionary. The embodying of this nature of the church ‘takes place in word and deed,’ with the aim that ‘hearts be enlightened,’ and ‘life may be renewed,’ namely in the restoration of all relations of human life.³⁸⁹

The emphasis in *Why Missions?* on the lordship of Christ as the point of departure for the missionary activity of the church, calls the church to respond ‘to what the triune God has done and is doing in the world.’³⁹⁰ This responding is a matter of words and deeds. It is discipleship.³⁹¹ This becomes visible and tangible in the church, because the ‘total corporate life of the congregation’ is to be seen as ‘a sign of the transformation of the world,’³⁹² thus giving witness ‘to what God has done, will do, and is now doing.’³⁹³

2.6.2 *Willingen and its First Evaluation*

When Willigen stated that Christ created ‘in Himself one new humanity’³⁹⁴ that already lives today, awaiting the eternal manifestation, the implications for the being of the church are obvious. It is formulated in the paradigmatic phrase that ‘there is no participation in Christ without participation in His mission.’ The new humanity becomes part of Christ’s ongoing mission. The Spirit, sent to gather all who believe in Christ ‘in one Body,’ empowers the church ‘for the continuance of His mission as His witnesses,’ making it ‘the first fruits and earnest’ of what is to come. The church must be God’s ambassador ‘to the people in its immediate neighbourhood,’ and even further, to the world’s end,³⁹⁵ proclaiming the reign of Christ that touches life in all its aspects. The words and the works of the church, ‘its whole life of mission’ must be ‘a witness to what God has done, is doing, and will do in Christ.’³⁹⁶ Being in the world, the church must do what Christ did, also in the social context and in societal matters. Christians ‘are God’s people in the world,’ practicing solidarity with it. Where the church fails to do so, the ‘possibility of communicating the Gospel’ is destroyed, presenting the world ‘an offence which is not the genuine offence of the Cross.’³⁹⁷ Because God will complete

³⁸⁸ BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 209.

³⁸⁹ BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 220-221.

³⁹⁰ LEHMANN, ‘Obligation’, 22.

³⁹¹ Cf. LEHMANN, ‘Obligation’, 36.

³⁹² LEHMANN, ‘Obligation’, 28.

³⁹³ LEHMANN, ‘Obligation’, 29.

³⁹⁴ ‘Missionary Calling’, 2-3.

³⁹⁵ ‘Missionary Calling’, 3.

³⁹⁶ ‘Missionary Calling’, 4.

³⁹⁷ ‘Missionary Calling’, 4-5.

‘what He has set His hand to in the sending of His Son,’ the church can ‘look forward to the goal of its existence, which in fact sets the Church marching onwards.’ Mission ‘belongs to the purpose,’ to ‘the life,’ to ‘the basis structure,’ and to the ‘royal charter (covenant) to be the Church.’³⁹⁸

In assessing Willingen, Hartenstein directly connects the being of the church to the new theological understanding of the *missio Dei*. Out of the “*Missio Dei*” comes the “*Missio ecclesiae*”. The ‘essence of the church’ is, hence, the ‘participation in the plan of salvation of God.’ The ‘deepest significance of the church’ is that it is sent by God ‘as the new humanity, the first fruit of salvation.’ The church ‘exists in its mission.’³⁹⁹ Andersen pointed to the significance of the sending of the Spirit, meant to guarantee and continue the missionary enterprise. This gives the church its proper place in the mission of God. The church is empowered by the Spirit ‘for the continuance’ of God’s mission, not in the sense that it is actively carrying ‘on the missionary enterprise,’ but in that it is the ‘first fruit and earnest’ of the completion of God’s mission. The existence of the church is in itself proof that God is continuing His mission. The church is the “bridgehead” of the Kingdom of God,’ be it in all ‘its wretchedness and inadequacy.’ The existence of the church is also proof that God continues His mission, for the church is the ‘bearer of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God before the kingdoms of the world.’ The church, thus, is missionary in ‘its very essence,’ and is only alive when it is ‘engaged in missionary activity,’⁴⁰⁰ for missionary activity belongs ‘to the *esse*, to the nature’ of the church. This means that church and mission ‘form an indissoluble unity.’ They are both ‘alike founded on the same self-impartment of the triune God.’ The church is that ‘fellowship of men, in the midst of whom Jesus Christ is at work through the Holy Spirit.’ It is, further, ‘the place in which God attests His presence,’ and it is ‘at the same time God’s instrument for bearing witness to Himself in the world.’ Because of this, the church should manifest itself in this missionary way in the world,⁴⁰¹ in the permanent awareness of the eschatological tension between the “already” and the “not yet”.⁴⁰²

Vicedom stressed that mission is God’s work, and that both mission and the church are part of that work of God. Mission and church, both founded in the ‘loving will of God,’ are no ‘independent entities’ but ‘tools of God, instruments through which God carries out His mission.’ If the church ‘dissociates’ itself from God’s mission, it is

³⁹⁸ ‘Missionary Obligation Report’, 88-89.

³⁹⁹ HARTENSTEIN, ‘Theologische Besinnung’, 61-63.

⁴⁰⁰ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 47-49.

⁴⁰¹ ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 54 (italics in the original).

⁴⁰² ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 57.

no longer a church ‘in the divine sense.’⁴⁰³ In all this, the ‘intra-divine sending’ is paradigmatic: ‘The church’s commission is prefigured in the divine.’ The work of the church is ‘determined’ and ‘assigned’ in ‘the *missio Dei*.’⁴⁰⁴ This links the church ‘to the historical saving activity of God.’⁴⁰⁵ It is assigned ‘to carry forward the history of salvation’ in its proclamation of ‘the Perfect One’ and in announcing ‘His kingdom’⁴⁰⁶ until the coming of Christ. Mission is in ‘itself a sign of the coming’⁴⁰⁷ of the Kingdom. The church, as ‘an eschatological entity,’ is the ‘distinguished mark of the new age,’ through the service of which the ‘*missio Dei* is achieved.’⁴⁰⁸ All this determines the relation between church and mission. The church, being itself the result of the *missio Dei*, exists because ‘Jesus Christ permitted His Word to be proclaimed’ and because ‘men have been called out of the world through the message of redemption.’⁴⁰⁹ The church is God’s new people, completely placed ‘through the *missio*’ on the ‘side of God,’ and at the same time ‘fully directed to the world.’ In its life and attitude, the church is a visible and legible ‘epistle of Christ to the world.’ It is ‘either a congregation for witness, ministry, and doxology,’ or it is ‘no church of Jesus Christ.’⁴¹⁰

Blauw points out that the way in which God works is consistent. The Old Testament shows that God ‘converts the nations, acting in the midst of His people.’ Israel is ‘the light of the world.’ The ‘evangelization of the world’ is a matter of ‘*the presence of the people of God in the midst of humanity, the presence of God among His people*.’⁴¹¹ This also applies to the church. It is the ‘new community of the Messiah,’ gathered ‘around Christ and gathered by Christ.’ The church is not the Kingdom, but it is ‘its manifestation and its form.’ It shows that the future ‘has broken in for the world.’⁴¹² The church, therefore,

⁴⁰³ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 5-6.

⁴⁰⁴ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 8 (italics in the original).

⁴⁰⁵ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 36.

⁴⁰⁶ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 42. Vicedom refers to CULLMANN, *Christ and Time*, 165-174. The difference between the German original and the English translation is remarkable. Whereas in the German version the task of the church is defined as the proclamation of the ‘Perfectum’ (‘die Verkündigung des Perfektums’), the English version changes that to ‘the Perfect One.’ The German version refers to the proclamation of a situation, whereas the English version speaks of the proclamation of a person.

⁴⁰⁷ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 42.

⁴⁰⁸ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 44 (italics in the original).

⁴⁰⁹ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 82.

⁴¹⁰ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 89 (italics in the original).

⁴¹¹ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 42-43, quoting MARTIN-ACHARD, *Israël et les Nations*, 72 (italics in the original).

⁴¹² BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 79.

has an ‘eschatological nature.’ It lives in ‘eschatological circumstances’ in all its ‘actions and responsibilities,’ for ‘the end of the ages has come.’ It lives ‘for the world,’ as ‘community of Jesus Christ.’ It is the ‘servant of the world, sent forth into the world’⁴¹³ as ‘community of the Kingdom.’ Ecclesiology is not ‘static’ but ‘dynamic’ because of this ‘eschatological and missionary’ character. There is ‘no other Church than the Church *sent* into the world.’⁴¹⁴ Missionary work is ‘the criterion’ for all the church’s activities, reflecting ‘the very essence’ of the church. In mission, the church returns ‘to its origin,’ and is kept free ‘from becoming introspective and introverted, from becoming narrow-minded and small-minded.’ Mission brings the church ‘into contact with the complete life of the world.’ In this world, the church is present ‘as a sign and a summons to the *world to come*.’⁴¹⁵ A “‘theology of mission,’” therefore, is ‘a “theology of the Church” as the people of God called *out* of the world, placed *in* the world, and sent *to* the world.’⁴¹⁶

2.6.3 Continuation of the Discussion in Ecumenical Circles

The Accra Meeting (1957/1958)⁴¹⁷ decided to the merger of the IMC with the WCC,⁴¹⁸ a development that was not supported at all sides with the same enthusiasm. It was feared that the new situation would end up in ‘mammoth organizations,’ that would paralyze missionary activities,⁴¹⁹ because of the “churchification” of mission.⁴²⁰ The merger, however, took place, in the process of which an argument was that it was an

⁴¹³ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 107-108. Blauw refers to BARTH, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, IV/3, 874-878. In the endnote that corresponds with this quote, Blauw states that, in his opinion, Karl Barth is the first and up to then the only ‘systematic theologian who sees the existence and the task of the Christian lie in witness.’

⁴¹⁴ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 120-121 (italics in the original).

⁴¹⁵ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 122-123 (italics in the original).

⁴¹⁶ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 126 (italics in the original).

⁴¹⁷ For a description of the background, preparations and proceedings of the Meeting in Accra of the IMC in 1957/1958, see ANDERSON, *Theology of Missions*, 326-334; NEWBIGIN, ‘Mission to Six Continents’, 184-185; VAN ’T HOF, *Geheim*, 178-194; GÜNTHER, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico*, 115-120; WIND, *Zending en Oecumene IIa*, 7-42; WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 70-72; ROSS, *Ecumenical Missiology*, 69-73. See also ORCHARD, *The Ghana Assembly*, for the papers related to the Ghana Assembly.

⁴¹⁸ See for an overview of the history of the process of integration among other sources, FEY, *Ecumenical Advance* - published on behalf of the Committee on Ecumenical History of the WCC. The chapter written by NEWBIGIN, ‘Mission to Six Continents’, gives a good first introduction. For an extensive discussion of the whole process, see WIND, *Zending en Oecumene I*, and WIND, *Zending en Oecumene IIa*.

⁴¹⁹ *Minutes Ghana*, 131-132.

⁴²⁰ Cf. NISSEN, ‘Mission and Unity’, 542.

opportunity to bring the 'missionary movement' into the heart of the 'ecclesiastical or church movement' and its structures.⁴²¹ The decision shows, on one hand, a form of acceptance of the missionary character and essence of the church,⁴²² whereas it at the same time raised the question as to how to integrate mission into the total existence and life of the church.

Mexico called the church to take the actual context in which it is called to live fully seriously. In the secularized world, in which 'it is easy to forget God,' the gospel is to be 'an antidote' to the 'disillusionment.'⁴²³ The church must be in a 'constant encounter with the real needs of our age.' A 'dialogue using contemporary language' is needed, learning 'from the scientific and sociological categories and meeting people in their own situations.'⁴²⁴ It is in 'the nature of the Church' to be open to 'new forms of church life' as they are needed. The church 'should be ready for the required changes,' trusting in the 'renewing power of the Holy Spirit.'⁴²⁵

The discussions in Bangkok about Salvation Today had direct ecclesiological implications. Since salvation in Christ is comprehensive, touching soul and body, both of the individual and of society,⁴²⁶ every church 'should be an expression of the impulse' to 'further the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,' with all its implications. Healing and liberation must be brought to 'the community in which' the church lives. A local church 'that lives to itself sabotages the saving action of God' in the neighborhood. A church that shares 'in the needs and aspirations' of its neighborhood, joining 'in relevant action,' is an 'instrument of God's salvation.' The church needs a conversion from 'parochial self-absorption' to openness to 'what God is doing for the salvation of men in the life of the world,'⁴²⁷ understanding 'the call of Christ to participate with him in liberating society.'⁴²⁸

Melbourne continued this line. Without losing the eschatological perspective, the church must dare to be present 'in the midst of human struggles for penultimate

⁴²¹ *Minutes Ghana*, 124.

⁴²² GOHEEN, *Newbegin*, 50-51, points to the need to address many issues as a consequence of the new framework for mission as it was 'provided' by Willigen. 'Not least of these issues was the institutional expression of the older paradigm. The separation of the IMC and WCC embodied the separation of church and mission. This was the chief matter on the agenda of the IMC meeting in Ghana in 1958.'

⁴²³ *Minutes Mexico City*, 119.

⁴²⁴ *Minutes Mexico City*, 121.

⁴²⁵ *Minutes Mexico City*, 123.

⁴²⁶ Cf. *Bangkok Assembly*, 88.

⁴²⁷ *Bangkok Assembly*, 99-100.

⁴²⁸ *Bangkok Assembly*, 102.

solutions.’ It must ‘establish such visible signs of the kingdom of God’ that will ‘offer new hope to all who long for a more human world.’⁴²⁹ The church must be a ‘sacrament’ and a ‘sign of the kingdom’ in that it carries the ‘marks of Christ himself.’⁴³⁰ It is needed to come to ‘alternatives to parish life’ that focus ‘on particular aspects of the demands of the kingdom,’ although this must not lead to the rejection of the ‘institutional church,’ in which ‘renewal can occur.’ The church must orient its life toward its witness ‘in its total sacramental life – in prayer, proclamation, service and liturgy,’ emphasizing what is needed in each context in which the church lives as ‘foretaste of the kingdom life.’⁴³¹ In all this, the church must follow the example of Jesus, who was ‘constantly in movement from the centre towards the periphery.’ The church needs to follow Him “‘outside the city”” and become the church of the poor, for who ‘but the church of the poor can preach with integrity to the poor of the world?’⁴³²

The *Ecumenical Affirmation* points out apostolicity as ‘constitutive mark’ of the church: It is ‘sent into the world.’⁴³³ The ‘nature of the Church as the Body of Christ’ propels to mission, sharing in Christ’s ministry ‘as Mediator between God and His creation.’ Christ identified with ‘humanity,’ and ‘in that same identification’ the church brings the struggles and pain of humanity to God ‘in intercessory prayer and eucharistic worship.’ This is directly connected to ‘the very heart of the Church’s vocation,’ namely the ‘proclamation of the kingdom of God’ that ‘inaugurated’ in Christ.⁴³⁴ Because many people are not ‘attracted to the concrete reality of the Church,’ the church is challenged to seek such a renewal in life and thought that it becomes ‘a living witness to the integrity of the Gospel,’⁴³⁵ a ‘cell of the kingdom,’ confessing Jesus Christ and in his name serving his people.⁴³⁶ The church must be ‘willing to be marked with the stigmata (nail marks) of the crucified and risen Lord,’ which will show that the church is part of the ‘movement of God’s love shown in Christ.’⁴³⁷ The ‘missionary frontier’ is at ‘the doorstep of every parish,’⁴³⁸ where the church must be ‘present’ to proclaim and demonstrate

⁴²⁹ MATTHEY, *Your Kingdom Come*, 180-181.

⁴³⁰ MATTHEY, *Your Kingdom Come*, 193.

⁴³¹ MATTHEY, *Your Kingdom Come*, 197-198.

⁴³² MATTHEY, *Your Kingdom Come*, 219.

⁴³³ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 6.

⁴³⁴ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 8.

⁴³⁵ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 16, quoting from Philip Potter’s speech to the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops in Rome, 1974 (see also ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 33).

⁴³⁶ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 18.

⁴³⁷ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 21.

⁴³⁸ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 25.

‘God’s love in Jesus Christ for every person and for every situation,’ trusting in Christ, ‘who assures: “I am with you always, to the close of the age”’.⁴³⁹

San Antonio endorsed the *Ecumenical Affirmation* and emphasized that the church, in the secular world where people want to ‘relate to some “ultimate reality”,’ and in which they look for ‘meaning and coherence,’ must be aware that it is itself ‘part of society and exposed to the same seemingly irresistible advance of the forces of secularism in the world.’ The church must not ‘succumb to the spirit of the age’ nor ‘withdraw into a ghetto existence.’⁴⁴⁰ It must be the ‘fountainhead’ of the ‘resistance to the dominant ethos’ and of the ‘witness to secular society.’⁴⁴¹ This calls the churches to ‘rethink and renew’ the ‘traditional ecclesiological concepts,’ regarding ‘the value of the church’s presence in the form of a community’ as shown in the New Testament. Since mission ‘is the essential task of every local community,’ many frontiers ‘must be bridged’ across the various divides in human community such as race, class, sex and ideology.’ In this process ‘profound sensitivity to the culture and values of others’⁴⁴² is needed.

Salvador called the church to hold on to both ‘its distinctiveness from, and its commitment to, the culture in which it is set,’ to prevent that either the gospel becomes ‘captive to a culture’ or ‘alienated from it.’⁴⁴³ In a pluralist society, the local congregation is essential, for it lives ‘in joy the presence of the risen Christ’ and embodies ‘the priorities set by Jesus in his own life.’⁴⁴⁴ There is a ‘creative tension (particularly in worship) between the preservation of traditions and their meaning, and the renewal of liturgy relevant to the context.’⁴⁴⁵ The diversity of all cultural realities is to be seen as a gift for ‘mutual enrichment’ that somehow reflects the ‘fellowship’ that is found in the ‘inner life’ of the Trinity. Contextuality and catholicity do not exclude one another, ‘but are complementary.’ Cultural ‘contextuality in the Christian sense’ is an ‘affirmation of the gifts of each culture for the proclamation of the gospel in communion with other contexts,’ whereas catholicity is ‘the expression of the fullness of truth that can be experienced in each particular context.’⁴⁴⁶

In the preparational papers for Athens, *Towards Common Witness* points to the ‘intrinsic relation between the credibility of the mission of the church and the unity among

⁴³⁹ ‘Mission and Evangelism’, 30.

⁴⁴⁰ WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 30.

⁴⁴¹ WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 31.

⁴⁴² WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 72-74.

⁴⁴³ DURASINGH, *Called to One Hope*, 24.

⁴⁴⁴ DURASINGH, *Called to One Hope*, 53.

⁴⁴⁵ DURASINGH, *Called to One Hope*, 56.

⁴⁴⁶ DURASINGH, *Called to One Hope*, 64-66.

Christians.⁴⁴⁷ The churches should aim at building ‘responsible relationships in mission’ to ‘promote genuine Christian common witness.’ This calls for ‘further dialogue, reflection and study in a number of important ecclesiological, theological and other areas.’⁴⁴⁸ The aim must be ‘to share more fully in the divine plan of salvation for the reconciliation and gathering up of all peoples and all things in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:9-10).’⁴⁴⁹ *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today* states that over against the growing individualism, that affects ‘the very fabric of human society,’ also within the ‘Christian community,’ the church is ‘called to proclaim God’s will and intention for the world.’ Being created ‘in the image of the triune God – who is by definition an eternal communion of life and love – human beings are by nature relational.’ The Trinity is ‘the source and image of our existence,’ showing ‘the importance of diversity, otherness and intrinsic relationships in constituting a community,’ in which diversity and otherness are ‘complementary to one another.’⁴⁵⁰ *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation* points out that the church must seek to ‘continue’ Christ’s ‘liberating and healing mission’⁴⁵¹ in the ‘context of brokenness,’ grasping ‘more deeply the gift of God’s reconciliation in its life and ministry on behalf of the whole created order.’⁴⁵² The church must be ‘a *bridge-builder* between the poor and the rich, women and men, black and white, and so on.’ It has a ““go-between” or “in-between” position,’ which can be ‘a rather risky and costly position.’ Its mission empowers ‘the powerless by accompanying them,’ and challenges ‘the perpetrators of hurt to repent.’⁴⁵³ *The Healing Mission of the Church* articulates that the church needs ‘to proclaim Christ’s grace and forgiveness, to heal bodies, minds, souls and to reconcile broken communities in the perspective of fullness of life (John 10:10).’⁴⁵⁴ This reconciling and healing is necessary because of the sad history of the church and its mission with its many struggles and conflicts, which ‘left deep marks and wounds in many parts of the one body of Christ,’ having still ‘a harmful impact on interdenominational relationships.’ The way in which the church welcomes people, is of the greatest importance in its ‘healing dimension also for the wider community.’⁴⁵⁵ In bringing all this together, Athens wrote that the church is called to be living ‘in the Holy Spirit, anticipating the reign of

⁴⁴⁷ ‘Towards Common Witness’, 46.

⁴⁴⁸ ‘Towards Common Witness’, 51.

⁴⁴⁹ ‘Towards Common Witness’, 53.

⁴⁵⁰ ‘Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today’, 74-75.

⁴⁵¹ ‘Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation’, 70.

⁴⁵² ‘Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation’, 82.

⁴⁵³ ‘Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation’, 83 (italics in the original).

⁴⁵⁴ ‘Healing Mission of the Church’, 103.

⁴⁵⁵ ‘Healing Mission of the Church’, 104.

God,' as 'children of God's new Creation.' It must 'be a community of hope,' bearing 'witness to the Gospel in word and deed,' welcoming 'strangers' and 'marginalized.' It must engage with 'those who suffer, and with those who struggle for justice and peace,' providing 'services to all who are in need,' recognizing 'its own vulnerability and need for healing,' faithfully committed 'to the wider Creation.'⁴⁵⁶

Edinburgh 2010 designated the church as 'a sign and symbol of the Kingdom of God.' The church must be a 'living demonstration of the love and justice that God intends for all the world.'⁴⁵⁷ It is 'the vehicle for the Kingdom of God,' for it is 'sign and foretaste' and also 'herald of the good news,' carrying 'the story of Christ.'⁴⁵⁸ Mission brings 'many challenges' to the church but also energizes 'the very life of the church.'⁴⁵⁹ Mission is the 'life-blood of the church' which calls the churches to 're-imagine their ecclesial life as local and global expressions of the mission of God.'⁴⁶⁰ The total mission of God must find 'full and faithful expression.'⁴⁶¹ The church, therefore, permanently needs theological reflection on its relationship 'with and to the World.'⁴⁶²

The 2012 ecumenical mission affirmation *Together Towards Life* calls all the churches in the world 'to be vibrant messengers of the gospel of Jesus Christ,' sharing their 'faith and conviction' as 'a gift to others,' announcing 'the love, grace, and mercy of God in Christ.' The church must 'renew its commitment to evangelism as an essential part of the way' to 'convey God's love to the world.'⁴⁶³ The church is God's gift 'to the world for its transformation towards the kingdom of God,' bringing 'new life' and announcing 'the loving presence of God in our world.' Being 'the communion of Christ's disciples,' the church 'must become an inclusive community,' existing 'to bring healing and reconciliation to the world.'⁴⁶⁴ The church came 'into being for the sake of mission,' and therefore, church and mission cannot be separated 'in terms of their origin or purpose.' There is a 'very intimate' relation 'between church and mission,' for the same Spirit through whom it lives, also 'empowers the church in mission.'⁴⁶⁵ If a church 'does not engage in mission, it ceases to be church.' The church does not have a mission, but the mission 'has a church.' Mission is not to be seen as 'a project of expanding churches

⁴⁵⁶ 'Letter from Athens', 326.

⁴⁵⁷ KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 120.

⁴⁵⁸ KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 121.

⁴⁵⁹ KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 126.

⁴⁶⁰ KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 150.

⁴⁶¹ KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 150-151.

⁴⁶² KIM & ANDERSON, *Mission Today and Tomorrow*, 175.

⁴⁶³ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 6.

⁴⁶⁴ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 7.

⁴⁶⁵ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 21.

but of the church embodying God's salvation in this world.' For that reason, the apostolicity of the church is to be understood dynamically. It is 'not only safeguarding the faith of the church through the ages but also participating in the apostolate.'⁴⁶⁶

2.6.4 Continuation of the Discussion in Evangelical Circles

The *Lausanne Movement* permanently emphasizes the missionary involvement of the church. Referring to God's missionary purpose, the *Lausanne Covenant* states that He calls 'out from the world a people for himself,' sending it 'back into the world to be his servants and his witnesses.'⁴⁶⁷ God's people must 'spread the good news' of Jesus Christ as 'the reigning Lord.' In this process, the 'Christian presence in the world is indispensable.'⁴⁶⁸ As Christ was sent by His Father, so He 'sends his redeemed people into the world,' to penetrate and 'permeate non-Christian society.' The 'church is at the very center of God's cosmic purpose,' for being 'his appointed means of spreading the Gospel.' To preach the Cross, the church 'must itself be marked by the Cross.' It must not be a 'stumbling block' because of lack of 'living faith in God, a genuine love for people, or scrupulous honesty in all things including promotion and finance.'⁴⁶⁹ Evangelism 'should arise spontaneously from a Spirit-filled church.' A church that is not missionary contradicts itself and quenches 'the Spirit.' All Christians must pray for the Spirit to endow His gifts to the church to enable it to 'become a fit instrument' in the hands of God, 'that the whole earth may hear his voice.'⁴⁷⁰

In the run-up to Manila (*Lausanne II*), the different consultations affirmed and broadened this fundamental point of view. Hoddesdon pointed out that the early church was 'characterized by a quality of fellowship unknown before,' which should inspire the church today to present the most radical 'attractive alternative' to the world.⁴⁷¹ The 'credibility' of the message must not be 'diminished' or contradicted 'by our lives.'⁴⁷² At Pattaya, one of the consultations pointed out that secular society challenges the church 'to be evidence to the world of the reality of God and the salvation made possible by Christ.'⁴⁷³ In this context, especially the aspect of *koinonia* is 'good

⁴⁶⁶ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 22.

⁴⁶⁷ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 3 (*Lausanne Covenant* 1).

⁴⁶⁸ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 4 (*Lausanne Covenant* 4).

⁴⁶⁹ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 5 (*Lausanne Covenant* 6).

⁴⁷⁰ DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 8 (*Lausanne Covenant* 14).

⁴⁷¹ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 145-146 (*Evangelical Commitment* 4).

⁴⁷² STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 148 (*Evangelical Commitment* 8).

⁴⁷³ ATHYAL, SAPHIR P., *How Shall They Hear? Report on Secularists*, 15.

news⁴⁷⁴ to countless people, who ‘are socially alienated or isolated’ and in need of ‘an opportunity “to be loved” or “to be known”’.⁴⁷⁵ This calls the church to ‘return in spirit and life to the power and practices of the first-century church,⁴⁷⁶ willing to adapt ‘approaches and methodology,’ being prepared ‘to tread new and untried ways.’⁴⁷⁷

In all this, the element of anticipation of the future Kingdom-life appears more and more. Grand Rapids emphasized that the church as the new community lives in the hope of the new world ‘which God will one day make.’⁴⁷⁸ It witnesses ‘to the divine rule,’ which is the Kingdom of God as a ‘present reality’ and a ‘future expectation.’ The church is the ‘first fruits of the redeemed humanity’ living ‘by new values and standards, and its relationships have been transformed by love.’⁴⁷⁹ This ‘new community’ constitutes ‘a challenge to the old,’ presenting ‘the world with a radically alternative society.’⁴⁸⁰ Wheaton stressed that this also implies social involvement. The ‘local church’ is the ‘basic unit of Christian society’ and must demonstrate ‘the values of the Kingdom both personally and in community,’ inside the church and in all its relations in the ‘the local community and the wider society.’⁴⁸¹ The church is to be a beacon of hope for all people, both in its proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. This calls for evangelization, responding ‘to immediate human needs,’ and pressing ‘for social transformation.’⁴⁸² Manila affirmed the position of the local church as an ‘expression of the body of Christ,’ that is ‘both a worshipping and a witnessing community, gathered and scattered, called and sent.’ God wants the church ‘to be a sign of his kingdom,’ to show what ‘human community looks like’ under God’s rule of ‘righteousness and peace.’ The ‘gospel has to be embodied if it is to be communicated effectively.’⁴⁸³ The church is challenged ‘to resist the secular pressures of modernity’ and ‘to relate the lordship of Christ to the whole of modern culture.’⁴⁸⁴

The 2004 Pattaya meeting called all churches to become ‘missional congregations.’ The church is ‘the people of God’ that is ‘sent on a mission,’⁴⁸⁵ and must ‘discern’ its

⁴⁷⁴ ATHYAL, SAPHIR P., *How Shall They Hear? Report on Secularists*, 18.

⁴⁷⁵ ATHYAL, SAPHIR P., *How Shall They Hear? Report on Secularists*, 17.

⁴⁷⁶ ATHYAL, SAPHIR P., *How Shall They Hear? Report on Secularists*, 20.

⁴⁷⁷ ATHYAL, SAPHIR P., *How Shall They Hear? Report on Secularists*, 22.

⁴⁷⁸ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 185 (Grand Rapids Report 5a).

⁴⁷⁹ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 187 (Grand Rapids Report 5b).

⁴⁸⁰ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 189-190 (Grand Rapids Report 5d).

⁴⁸¹ SCHERER & BEVANS, *New Directions*, 287-288 (Church in Response to Human Need VI).

⁴⁸² SCHERER & BEVANS, *New Directions*, 287 (Church in Response to Human Need V).

⁴⁸³ DOUGLAS, *Proclaim Christ*, 33-34 (Manila Manifesto 8).

⁴⁸⁴ DOUGLAS, *Proclaim Christ*, 35 (Manila Manifesto 10).

⁴⁸⁵ CLAYDON, *A New Vision I*, 568.

‘special identity as Christ’s body designed and equipped by the Holy Spirit for God’s mission in the world’ and ‘be faithful’ to this. A church that ‘fails to “go” and instead waits for others to “come”’ is ‘disobedient.’⁴⁸⁶ One of the things, needed to answer to this missionary identity, is abandoning the Constantinian model. The church must ‘leave its “safe” building and move into the world of those they are trying to serve,’ in ‘words and deeds of love,’ adapting ‘to the culture rather than ask those outside the church to change cultures to find God.’⁴⁸⁷ Missional churches build relationships, addressing different cultures, meeting the needs of people, in long-term involvement. They create structures ‘that integrate the concepts of “loving the neighbour” combined with “making disciples”’.⁴⁸⁸

The *Cape Town Confession of Faith* stated that the church, in its mission, must respond to the present ‘realities,’ learning from the mistakes and successes of the past, and engaging ‘with the future, in the name of the God who holds all history in his hands.’⁴⁸⁹ The church must commit itself to a ‘bold but humble witness’ in the ‘midst of a world that rejects or distorts’ God.⁴⁹⁰ The church must ‘bear witness to Jesus Christ and all his teaching, in all the world,’ knowing that such witness is only possible ‘if we are living in obedience to his teaching ourselves.’⁴⁹¹ This implies dependency on the ‘missionary Spirit’ who is ‘sent by the missionary Father and the missionary Son,’ to breath ‘life and power into God’s missionary Church.’⁴⁹² Since the gospel is commended in the most eloquent way in ‘a transformed life,’ it is needed to prove the ‘love for God’s Word by believing and obeying it.’⁴⁹³ God’s people must live ‘a life of love,’ not only as ‘evidence of obedience to the gospel,’ but also as ‘a potent engine of world mission.’⁴⁹⁴ The church ‘exists to worship and glorify God for all eternity and to participate in the transforming mission of God within history.’⁴⁹⁵ This mission needs integrity, in that it integrates both ‘evangelism and committed engagement in the world.’⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁸⁶ CLAYDON, *A New Vision* I, 569.

⁴⁸⁷ CLAYDON, *A New Vision* I, 570.

⁴⁸⁸ CLAYDON, *A New Vision* I, 574.

⁴⁸⁹ *Cape Town Commitment*, 7 (Preamble).

⁴⁹⁰ *Cape Town Commitment*, 12 (Part I,2B).

⁴⁹¹ *Cape Town Commitment*, 15 (Part I,4C).

⁴⁹² *Cape Town Commitment*, 15 (Part I,5).

⁴⁹³ *Cape Town Commitment*, 18 (Part I,6D).

⁴⁹⁴ *Cape Town Commitment*, 25 (Part I,9).

⁴⁹⁵ *Cape Town Commitment*, 28 (Part I,10A).

⁴⁹⁶ *Cape Town Commitment*, 28-29 (Part I,10B); for the quote, see *Micah Declaration*, 19.

2.7 The Missionary Involvement of the Whole Church

The awareness that mission is a matter of the whole church and not just of some specialized people is present throughout the years in the missiological discourse. Nevertheless, there is some sort of development in the way in which this involvement has been described. This development is the topic of this section.

2.7.1 Before Willingen

The involvement of the whole church in mission is a logical consequence of the description of Edinburgh of the church as missionary society.⁴⁹⁷ In order to activate the members of the church, one of the reports of Edinburgh elaborates all kinds of suggestions to promote the ‘missionary intelligence’ within the church as home base for mission. In seven subsequent chapters, all kinds of activities are propagated, aiming at the building up of the church in such a way that there will live ‘a true missionary spirit among its members.’⁴⁹⁸ Jerusalem points in the same way to the responsibility of the members of the church. All followers of Christ must ‘take their full share’ as members of the body of Christ,⁴⁹⁹ and therefore, continuous training is needed within the churches to equip them ‘for active service for the good of their fellow-men and for the propagation of the Christian message of love.’⁵⁰⁰ Christians ‘are the agents, and should be the pioneers through whom’ the worldwide work of mission ‘is accomplished and God’s Kingdom comes.’⁵⁰¹ Tambaram continues this line in stating that all members of the church are called to take their responsibility, because to be ‘a disciple, a learner confessing Christ, is to be an apostle, to stand under a special commission.’⁵⁰² The love and zeal of the congregation finds ‘expression in definite efforts to bring Christ to the man outside the brotherhood, efforts in which every member should be enlisted and actively engaged.’⁵⁰³ In the documents of Whitby, this is affirmed when it is said that

⁴⁹⁷ Cf. *WMC*, VI, 17. See also *WMC*, II, 225.

⁴⁹⁸ See *WMC*, VI, under the title ‘The Home Base of Missions’. The subsequent chapters deal with the promotion of missionary intelligence through regular church services and agencies (chapter 2), through newspapers and periodicals (chapter 3), through special literature (chapter 4), through mission study classes (chapter 5), through instruction in educational institutions (chapter 6), through visits to mission fields (chapter 7), and through conferences, exhibitions, and other methods (chapter 8).

⁴⁹⁹ *RJM*, I, 489-490.

⁵⁰⁰ *RJM*, III, 165.

⁵⁰¹ *RJM*, II, 242.

⁵⁰² See *Tam*, VII, 33-35. This idea of every Christian being a witness was taken for granted throughout the Tambaram Meeting. Cf. e.g. *Tam*, III, 59; and also *Tam*, VII, 41.

⁵⁰³ *World Mission of the Church*, 43.

the whole church is called to fulfil the ‘prophetic and priestly ministry’ of ‘the Body of Christ.’ The ‘evangelistic task’ is too ‘large and varied to be the prerogative of one order or one privileged class in the Church.’⁵⁰⁴ The local congregation is not only ‘the place of divine encounter,’ and ‘the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit,’ but also ‘the spearhead of evangelism,’ for the fulfilling of which ‘the co-operation of every single Christian’⁵⁰⁵ is demanded.

In the preparational discussion toward Willingen, the focus starts to shift toward a somewhat different understanding of the involvement of the whole church in mission, in that the emphasis is put on the church as provisional manifestation of the Kingdom of God. Without explicitly elaborating the engagement of the individual members of the church, it is clear that the thought of their being involved plays an important part in the respective contributions to the preparational discussion. It shimmers through when Freytag speaks of the life of the Christian community that lives today in the reality of the Kingdom of God, no matter how invisible that still is.⁵⁰⁶ This is also the case when Hoekendijk stresses that the shalom of the Kingdom must be made visible and tangible in the *kerygma*, in the *koinonia*, and in the *diakonia* of the church,⁵⁰⁷ because this directly relates to the actual life and actions of the church and its members of the church.⁵⁰⁸ The life of the church in all its relations, within the church and beyond, shows what the shalom of the Kingdom is all about. Tokens of the Kingdom are set up.⁵⁰⁹ In the report of the NZR the thought also is implicitly present when is referred to the church as to be understood as the new people of God⁵¹⁰ that lives in the present time, where the provisional but actual ‘realization of the expected time of salvation’ is found.⁵¹¹ The American report *Why Missions?* also points this out. All members of the church are involved in the Christian response that is to be given to the Great Commission when the total life of the congregation is designated as sign of the renewal of the world. Each member ‘becomes a part of the Gospel,’ linked in ‘into that chain of events through which a gracious God is reconciling the world to himself.’⁵¹² The motivation for mission is ‘man’s inevitable response to the whole revelation of God in Christ.’ The missionary

⁵⁰⁴ *Witness of a Revolutionary Church*, 14.

⁵⁰⁵ *Witness of a Revolutionary Church*, 18.

⁵⁰⁶ Cf. FREYTAG, ‘Meaning and Purpose’, 158.

⁵⁰⁷ HOEKENDIJK, ‘Call’, 171 (italics in the original).

⁵⁰⁸ Cf. HOEKENDIJK, ‘Call’, 171.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. HOEKENDIJK, ‘Call’, 175.

⁵¹⁰ Cf. BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 209.

⁵¹¹ Cf. BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 204.

⁵¹² LEHMANN, ‘Obligation’, 28.

obligation is ‘a reflex of faith.’ It is ‘the missionary response as discipleship.’ It is no ‘*formulation* but a *relation*.’⁵¹³ Missionary Christians are ‘the only kind of’⁵¹⁴ Christians that exist.

2.7.2 *Willingen and its First Evaluation*

In the statements of Willigen, the involvement of the whole church is implied when the church is referred to as the new humanity, created in Christ. The Spirit gathers all who believe and empowers them as ‘witnesses and ambassadors’ of Christ. They are the ‘first fruits and earnest’ of the completion of the Kingdom. This implies commitment ‘to full participation in His redeeming mission.’ What applies to the church as a whole, applies to its individual members: Who participates in Christ, participates in His mission. When every group of Christians is to be ‘God’s ambassadors to the people in its immediate neighbourhood,’ every individual Christian is involved.⁵¹⁵ This thought-pattern of Willigen is affirmed by Andersen who also speaks of the church as ‘first fruit and earnest,’ adding to this the element of bridgehead of the Kingdom.⁵¹⁶ Vicedom expresses it more explicitly when he also speaks of the church as God’s new people, that in its life and attitude, is a readable letter of Christ to the world.⁵¹⁷ All Christians are called to this ‘witnessing role.’ They can ‘transmit the conviction made alive in them by faith as the truth that happened in Jesus Christ and witness it before the world.’⁵¹⁸ Blauw refers to the church as ‘new people’ that is ‘only the beginning of both the new manhood and the whole new creation.’⁵¹⁹ It is a ‘community of the Kingdom,’ that witnesses to and serves the world in all its activities, reflecting its missionary nature.⁵²⁰ This, of course, implies the involvement of all its members.

2.7.3 *Continuation of the Discussion in Ecumenical Circles*

Mexico discussed the consequences of the ongoing process of secularization with regard to mission and pointed out that the church in that situation needs to get involved in the ‘real needs’ of people. This requires finding ways to enter in a true ‘dialogue’ with people in their own context and in their own language. This implies that a ‘fuller participation

⁵¹³ LEHMANN, ‘Obligation’, 36 (italics in the original).

⁵¹⁴ LEHMANN, ‘Obligation’, 38.

⁵¹⁵ Cf. ‘Missionary Calling’, 3.

⁵¹⁶ Cf. ANDERSEN, *Theology of Mission*, 47-49.

⁵¹⁷ Cf. VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 89.

⁵¹⁸ VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 135.

⁵¹⁹ BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 93.

⁵²⁰ Cf. BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 120.

of the laity' is needed. Taking seriously the 'situation of man in a secular world,' and understanding 'that mission has to take place from *within this world*,' church and mission 'need to undergo radical change' in their structures.⁵²¹ The church needs to go and join its 'laity where they are, *inside* the secular world.'⁵²² At the same time, the church must equip its members 'to be God's servants in the world,' and it needs 'new forms of congregational life' for 'the fulfillment of this calling.'⁵²³

Bangkok emphasized that the church, in order to be relevant in its context, needs to change to a form that corresponds with the all-encompassing salvation in Christ. This requires the full involvement of the membership of the church. Because of this, it is necessary to focus on equipping the whole church for the purpose for which the 'gifts of the Spirit' were bestowed, through which 'the participation of all in ministry and mission' would be made possible. The church members need to be animated in 'their potential for mission.'⁵²⁴

Melbourne stated that the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom is 'the responsibility of the whole church and of every member,' although there are 'some members with special gifts to be evangelists, and a great diversity of witness is found.' Those who proclaim are 'themselves part of the message they proclaim.' The credibility 'rests upon the authenticity of the total witness of the church.' This 'authentic proclamation' becomes manifest when the church is 'a truly worshipping community,' that is 'able to welcome outsiders,' and 'whose members offer their service in both church and society,' and that 'is ready to move like a pilgrim.'⁵²⁵

San Antonio discussed the need to form new communities for mission, pointing out that this requires the church 'to rethink and renew' the 'traditional ecclesiological concepts,' regarding 'the value of the church's presence in the form of a community' in line with the New Testament; regarding 'the importance and development of lay participation' as 'active agents' in evangelism; and regarding the 'relation between ecclesiology (forms of the church) and pneumatology (experiences of the Holy Spirit),' in which not only attention is to be given to 'conversion and personal sanctification,' but also 'to recognition of the Spirit as the motive power of a living church.'⁵²⁶ This will lead to a new attitude in which many frontiers are crossed, of which the first ones 'are often at our very doorsteps' in the encounter with 'our neighbours and friends in a spirit of love,

⁵²¹ *Minutes Mexico City*, 121 (italics in the original).

⁵²² *Minutes Mexico City*, 119 (italics in the original).

⁵²³ *Minutes Mexico City*, 124.

⁵²⁴ *Bangkok Assembly*, 100.

⁵²⁵ MATTHEY, *Your Kingdom Come*, 195 (Report of Section III, 6 and 7).

⁵²⁶ WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 72 (Section IV, 9).

service' and 'identification,⁵²⁷ in the process of which 'profound sensitivity to the culture and values of others⁵²⁸ is needed.

When *Together Towards Life* calls all churches to be vibrant messengers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, it is stressed that this call is also addressed to all 'Christians.⁵²⁹ Related to this, the work of the Spirit is especially stressed. His role in mission is 'fully dependent on Christ.' The Spirit continues 'the presence of Christ,' as 'his agent to fulfill the task of mission.' In this, there is a 'pneumatological focus' on 'sending out and going forth' that is 'christologically based' and related 'to the salvation through Jesus Christ.' There is, however, also another 'perspective,' emphasizing that the Spirit leads to 'the "whole truth" (John 16:13),' blows wherever He wills, and embraces 'the whole of the cosmos.' The 'faithful go forth in peace (in mission) after they have experienced in their eucharistic gathering the eschatological kingdom of God as a glimpse and foretaste of it.' In this perspective, mission 'as going forth,' rather 'than the origin of the church,' is the 'outcome,' being 'called "liturgy after the Liturgy".' In all this, it is clear that all Christians, by the Spirit, 'participate in the mission of love that is at the heart of the life of the Trinity.'⁵³⁰

2.7.4 Continuation of the Discussion in Evangelical Circles

The documents of the *Lausanne Movement* also point to the responsibility of all the members of the church in mission. Implicitly this happens when the *Lausanne Covenant* states that God calls a people 'out from the world' which He sends back into it as His witnesses,⁵³¹ to penetrate and pervade the whole world.⁵³² When Hoddesdon called for a commitment to a simple lifestyle 'in relation to evangelism relief and justice,⁵³³ it is clear that this implied the life of the whole Christian community. Pattaya stressed that the local church is the 'principal agency for evangelism.' Therefore, the total membership must be 'mobilized and trained.'⁵³⁴ Another element stressed at Pattaya is the emphasis on 'an authentic commitment to Christ based on personal faith.'⁵³⁵ To reach nominal Christians, the church 'must be equipped and empowered by God's Holy Spirit,' in

⁵²⁷ WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 73-74 (Section IV, 13).

⁵²⁸ WILSON, *San Antonio Report*, 74 (Section IV, 14).

⁵²⁹ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 6.

⁵³⁰ KEUM, *Together Towards Life*, 8-9 (italics in the original).

⁵³¹ Cf. DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 3 (Lausanne Covenant 1).

⁵³² Cf. DOUGLAS, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, 5 (Lausanne Covenant 6).

⁵³³ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 142 (Evangelical Commitment, Introduction).

⁵³⁴ STOTT, *Making Christ Known*, 160 (Thailand Statement 3).

⁵³⁵ ATHYAL, SAPHIR P., *How Shall They Hear? Witness to Nominal Christians*, 5.

order to be better, not only ‘at talking,’ but especially to ‘be more Christlike’ in living. The early church was ‘marked’ by confidence in God, ‘close fellowship, sacrificial sharing,’ and ‘an attitude toward those outside its membership which gave rise to much goodwill in return.’ They followed Christ, who ‘set the pattern.’ The churches today must do the same, gathering ‘their members together in the presence of their heavenly Father,’ and releasing ‘them to be the salt of the earth.’⁵³⁶ True ‘church-based evangelism’ is ‘every-day evangelism,’ that exists in the witness of the individual Christian, of Christian family life, and of the congregation.⁵³⁷

The *Manila Manifesto* explicitly points to the priesthood of all believers, because of which there is a ‘ministry of all believers.’ That ministry functions ‘through friendships in the home and at work,’ where ‘most Christians spend half their waking hours.’⁵³⁸ The integrity of this witness is of the greatest importance, because ‘personal inconsistency’ brings the gospel ‘into disrepute.’ It ‘deprives our witness of credibility.’⁵³⁹

When the 2004 Pattaya Forum stressed the need for the church to change into missionary communities, it pointed out that this implies the equipping and assisting of individual believers to enable them ‘to serve as missionaries through their personal and collective testimonies in a pluralistic, multi-religious, multicultural, and often multiethnic society.’ The church is challenged ‘to be what the church was always meant to be: people of flesh and blood carrying the reality of the gospel within them through their being and action.’ The ‘priesthood of all believers’ is ‘the basic structure for the local church and for mission in the future.’⁵⁴⁰

In speaking of the priesthood of all believers, reference was made to a distinction used by Ralph D. Winter, ‘between modality and sodality, between “come” and “go” structures,’ stating that ‘the church needs both the inviting, centripetal structure and the dynamic, centrifugal “go” mission structure.’ The local church, ‘the traditional “come-structure”’, is urged ‘to break out of this pattern by creating “go-structures”’, aiming at evangelism and church planting as well as diaconal involvement in the neighborhood, if necessary, in an intercultural setting. The church needs to ‘create new pathways to the unreached in our midst and in Samaria and beyond.’⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁶ ATHYAL, SAPHIR P., *How Shall They Hear? Witness to Nominal Christians*, 7.

⁵³⁷ ATHYAL, SAPHIR P., *How Shall They Hear? Witness to Nominal Christians*, 8.

⁵³⁸ DOUGLAS, *Proclaim Christ*, 31-32 (Manila Manifesto 6).

⁵³⁹ DOUGLAS, *Proclaim Christ*, 32-33 (Manila Manifesto 7).

⁵⁴⁰ CLAYDON, *A New Vision I*, 577.

⁵⁴¹ CLAYDON, *A New Vision I*, 576-577. For the distinction used by Winter, see WINTER, ‘Two Structures’.

The traditional ‘essential marks’ of the church – the church is one, holy, and catholic – must ‘be supplemented by others if the church is to be a true agent of transformation in its own context.’ Holistic mission is ‘a priestly service in which the whole church, not just a sector, is involved,’ combining ‘the sacrifice of praise with the sacrifice of good deeds that alleviate human suffering.’ The leadership of the church has to set the example in all this, serving and enabling the ‘others to develop and to use their own gifts,’ releasing them ‘for service.’⁵⁴² They should ‘equip each saint to demonstrate and proclaim God’s whole concern for the restoration of all that was broken in the fall,’ mobilizing all ‘individual members to purposefully represent God’s holistic agenda in their respective worlds.’⁵⁴³

All this is affirmed in Cape Town, where the *Call to Action* points to the ‘enormous evangelistic and transformational opportunity’ of the encounters of Christians with non-Christians in their daily life. Only a few churches ‘have the vision to equip their people to seize this.’⁵⁴⁴

2.8 Results

Summarizing the results of the research of this chapter, the following observations can be made:

1. The starting point in all the documents studied is that the origin of mission lies in the Triune God. Mission begins with God and is also completely dependent on Him. This applies even when mission is primarily seen as a task of the church or when the church is designated as the center from which mission is to be executed. In the discussions on the way to and since Willingen, a shift takes place from a church-centric to a more theocentric view in which God’s direct involvement in mission is recognized and taken into consideration, because of the source of mission in the ‘total counsel of God.’⁵⁴⁵ The theocentric view also includes a processing of the eschatological aspect of mission. Mission is part of the plan of salvation of God, in which the Triune God is active from the first beginning to the eternal end. Mission is a divine work, in which humans are invited and called to participate. Continuing the line of thought of Willingen, the trinitarian origin of mission, the *missio Dei* concept, is foundational for all the further meetings in ecumenical circles. It is implicitly affirmed as the basis for all further statements. This also applies to

⁵⁴² CLAYDON, *A New Vision* I, 227-229.

⁵⁴³ CLAYDON, *A New Vision* I, 277.

⁵⁴⁴ *Cape Town Commitment*, 59 (Part IIA, 3).

⁵⁴⁵ WARD, ‘Towards a Theology of Missions’, 17.

the *Lausanne Movement* as is implicitly affirmed in the *Lausanne Covenant* and the *Manila Manifesto* and more explicitly formulated in the *Cape Town Commitment*. God's mission continues and therefore the participation in His mission continues until the coming of Christ.⁵⁴⁶ The conclusion at the end of this chapter, therefore, is that the *missio Dei* concept is recognizably present in the worldwide missiological discourse. The concept 'has been embraced by all churches and movements,' indicating that 'the starting point' for the 'understanding of mission is the same.'⁵⁴⁷

2. The development regarding the aim of mission shows that the establishment of the Kingdom of God is the central theme. What this establishment means, and how it is to be accomplished is, however, an issue that was discussed through the years. This discussion shows a development from mission as Christianizing the world to mission as proclaiming the Kingdom that has come in Christ. In this discussion the understanding of the holistic character of the Kingdom increased over the years. The Kingdom not only concerns the restored relation with God because of the reconciliation brought by Christ, but it also concerns the restoration of life toward the values of God's Kingdom rule. The discussion regarding the relation between the spiritual and the physical aspect of the Kingdom (and the salvation of the Kingdom) developed in the direction of an understanding in which both elements are to be seen as inseparable. They complement each other and form the 'two focal points of mission.'⁵⁴⁸ In this, they correspond completely to the *missio Dei*, in and through which God works at the (eternal) establishment of His Kingdom.
3. When it comes to the relationship between mission and eschatology, the missiological discourse also underwent a clear development. Whereas Edinburgh 1910 mainly focused on the expansion of Christianity around the world, this focus shifted over the years. The Kingdom of God as it came in Christ and as it will come at His second coming started to determine the theological discussion about mission in its relationship to the present and to the future. The developments around Willingen, and the formulations of the *missio Dei* theology in particular, played a decisive role in this. Christ is King today, albeit in a hidden way. The Kingdom of God is "already" a reality, also when it has "not yet" come in its glory. The latter element keeps the missionary tension alive: Mission is that decisive event that takes place in the interim between the ascension and the return of Christ; the former element calls for a life that is shaped by the Kingdom, according to the norms of the Kingdom, in all dimensions, both spiritual, physical and societal.

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. *Cape Town Commitment*, 8 (Preamble) and *Cape Town Commitment*, 27 (Part I,10).

⁵⁴⁷ JØRGENSEN, 'Edinburgh, Tokyo And Cape Town', 356.

⁵⁴⁸ WROGEMANN, *Theologies*, 127.

4. In the relationship between mission and church, a significant shift took place over the years. At the beginning, the church was primarily seen as being entrusted with the fulfillment of the task of mission. To this end the church had received the great charter of mission. In the theocentric view of mission, the church itself is primarily the fruit of the *missio Dei*. The church came into being on the basis of the cross and resurrection of Christ, who brought forth the Kingdom of God in the “already” of this era. However, the church is not only the fruit of God’s mission, but it also participates in it, because the *missio Dei* is still going on. It is the Spirit that continues the work of Christ on earth until the ultimate breakthrough of the Kingdom, and He engages the church in this. He works in and through the church. The church lives in the expectation of what is to come in the present as the community of the Kingdom. The church is indeed, in this dispensation, the most vivid expression of the Kingdom that “already” exists but that in its glorious form has “not yet” come. In this era, the church proclaims and demonstrates in the world the gospel of the King of the Kingdom, Jesus Christ. This proclamation takes place both in word and deed, proclaiming and demonstrating the fullness of life that Jesus promised to give. All this fully justifies the conclusion that the church is missionary in its deepest nature. The church exists, because the Triune God is still working on the execution of His mission to bring all things together under Christ.
5. From the outset, the awareness exists that mission is not only a matter of a number of specialized people, but that all members of the church are involved. Edinburgh designated the church as a missionary society. Therefore, constant attention is paid to the motivation and equipping of individual members. There are only missionary Christians,⁵⁴⁹ who, especially in the place where they live and work, can witness in their life and work. The leadership of the church must lead the members in this process and also provide them with the needed equipping and equipment. All this does not imply that there is no gradation of the missionary involvement within the church. The missionary witness indeed is the responsibility of all the members in their daily life and context, but there are also members with specific missionary gifts. In this context, the point of view of Winter is helpful, distinguishing between modality and sodality, in the combination of which both the involvement of all the members and of specially gifted people can find expression and realization.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. LEHMANN, ‘Obligation’, 38.

3. MISSIONARY ECCLESIOLOGICAL THINKING IN THE REFORMED CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction and Aim

“There is no participation in Christ without participation in His mission to the world. That by which the Church receives its existence is that by which it is also given its world mission.”¹ This statement, formulated at the Willingen Meeting of the IMC in 1952, brings together the result of the theological discussion about the relationship of mission and church: Mission and church belong together in an inextricable and inseparable connection. This awareness pervaded ever since Willingen the international missiological theological discourse. Echoes of it are found in both ecumenical and evangelical circles.² The agenda for the missiological theological discourse was set.

The aim of this chapter is determined by the central question of this research. Both existing and “mission congregations” within the CGKN are dealing with the quest for a newly understood ecclesial identity to be able to be a witnessing body of Christ in a post-Christian and secular society. Whereas in the previous chapter the lens was pointed at the international missiological discourse, this chapter zooms in on the reformed context, because of the particular context in which this study is being executed. The CGKN position themselves explicitly within the reformed context, and the questions that gave the impetus to this study still are the object of internal discussion within this denomination. The question in this chapter is, therefore, how the contribution of reformed missiologists relates to the international missiological ecclesiological discourse? Do they differ or do they show convergence? Is it possible to distinguish characteristic elements that define the identity of the church in its relation to mission? The results of both this chapter and the previous one will make it possible to continue with the question of the next chapter to what extent these characteristic elements play a role in existing “mission congregations” within the CGKN in the embodiment of their contextual, ecclesial identity.

¹ ‘Missionary Calling’, 3.

² See the previous chapter.

3.2 Procedure, Method, and Sources

In section 3.4 to 3.7, the main points of view regarding the relation between mission and church from a selection of reformed missiologists will be studied.³ It concerns missiologists that were both professionally and theologically involved in the missiological discourse, because of their personal and active involvement in mission and because of their academic activities in areas directly related to missiology. As mentioned in Chapter One, it is commonly agreed upon that the church after World War II was confronted, more than before that time, with the necessity of reorientation on its nature, because of the many changes that had taken place. New ways had to be found.

In this chapter, the focus is on authors whose main theological activity concerning the missionary nature of the church is related to the post-World War II process of finding and formulating this new theological foundation for mission. A further criterion is that authors are chosen that contributed actively and in a substantial way to the discourse regarding the missionary ecclesiology, impacting and influencing directly the development of the practical application of it in the west-European context of the Netherlands. Each one of them, in his own context, confronted the church with its missionary nature and as a result of that with the associated responsibility in the changing situation in society. A third criterion, as already referred to, is the confessional context to which they belong, namely the reformed family of churches. Deliberately, authors are chosen whose contribution can be considered complete. For that reason, authors who are still actively involved in the ongoing and still developing discourse, are not discussed. This brings us to the following list of authors: Johan Herman Bavinck, Hendrik

³ See VAN DER BORGHT, 'Reformed Ecclesiology', 187: "“Reformed” refers to the churches and theological tradition, as an expression of Christian faith of all times and places, that began with the sixteenth-century Reformation in Zurich, Strasbourg and Geneva.’ Within the reformed family, there is a broad spectrum of churches varying from churches that have much in common with other mainline Protestant churches rooting in the historic Reformation to churches that are more related to the pietist and separation movements in the 18th and 19th century in Europe and America, strongly linking themselves to the confessional formulations of the historic reformed confessions. See again for all this VAN DER BORGHT, 'Reformed Ecclesiology', 190-193. Next to the *Apostles' Creed*, the *Nicene Creed*, and the *Athanasian Creed*, that connect the reformed churches to the universal Christian church, the *Belgic Confession* (1561), the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), the *Canons of Dordt* (1618-19), and the *Westminster Confession* (1646) are among the most well-known reformed confessional documents. See for an extensive introduction of the reformed confessions FAULENBACH & BUSCH, *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften*; see also DENNISON, *Reformed Confessions*. See for a discussion of reformed characteristics amongst others VISCHER, 'The Reformed tradition in its multiple facets'; see also VAN DER BORGHT, 'Reformed Ecclesiology', who refers to Vischer.

Kraemer, Johannes Verkuyl, and James Edward Lesslie Newbigin. As a matter of course, the influence of Karl Barth's theology on missiology has been extensive.⁴ His influence on the authors studied in this research is, however, not discussed extensively. In a short section (3.3) a summary will be given of his key thoughts regarding the main subject of this study. This section will function somewhat as a prelude to the thoughts of the main authors to be studied. Their thoughts will be discussed specifically with regard to the five central themes that proved to be important in the development of missionary ecclesiological theology within the international missiological discourse. Following these themes will bring the necessary focus and order to the research. This directly clarifies the further division and structure in this chapter. After the discussion of the contribution of the main authors, section 3.8 will bring together the results. This section will provide an overview of the most important aspects in missionary ecclesiological thinking within the reformed context, bringing forward the typical and characteristic elements that are essential in the quest for a newly understood ecclesial identity for the church in a 21st-century context. The chapter closes in a conclusion (3.9), containing some brief remarks about the further development of missionary ecclesiology in an international context, because the discourse still continues.

The main sources in this chapter are the publications of the diverse authors in which they discuss the relation between mission and church in its significance and implications. The material will be brought together in a descriptive synthetical way, using as much as possible the primary (their own) voices of the different authors. Secondary literature will be used in the introductory parts, and also in the last section in evaluating and assessing the result of scrutinizing the points of view of the diverse authors.

3.3 A Prelude: Karl Barth and Missiological Theology

The theological thinking of Karl Barth (1886-1968) has been influential in the development of missionary theology.⁵ His importance was acknowledged as early as 1928 by

⁴ See extensively FLETT, *Witness*; BENDER, *Barth's Ecclesiology*; and BENTLEY, *Mission in Barth's Ecclesiology*.

⁵ Many reformed missiologists acknowledge the influence of Barth in their missiological thinking. To name just two examples: The well-known David J. Bosch did his doctoral studies at the university at Basel, where he majored in New Testament under the supervision of Oscar Cullmann and minored under Karl Barth in Theology and under Johannes Dürr in Missiology. In his dissertation, traces of the influence of Barth are found in his explanation of Matthew 28: 16-20, while in his later work Barth's thoughts are more substantially having an impact on Bosch's theological thinking. See BOSCH, *Heidenmission*, 187-189. Cf. further LIVINGSTON, *Missiology*, 46-

Karl Hartenstein, one of the prominent participants in the theological missiological discussion toward Willingen and its conceptual result.⁶ Barth's influence 'reached a peak at the Willingen Conference of the IMC. It was here that the idea (not the exact term) *missio Dei* first surfaced clearly.⁷ How this influence is to be defined exactly is, however, an issue of debate. Johannes Aagaard on the one hand maintains that the idea of the *missio Dei* must be traced back to a lecture of Barth in 1932 at a missionary conference in Brandenburg.⁸ In this lecture, Barth made the remark that it is necessary to 'be aware of the fact that the concept "missio" in the early church was a concept from the doctrine of the Trinity, namely as designation of the divine self-sending, the sending of the Son and of the holy Spirit into the world.⁹ Hartenstein is said to have been 'the link between Barth's 1932 lecture and Willingen.'¹⁰ Aagaard therefore concludes that the 'Willingen conference in 1952 as a whole meant that the approach advocated by Barth in 1932 was now generally acknowledged. The ground for mission was found in the triune God and His mission.'¹¹ John Flett, on the other hand, claims that regarding 'the concept's

47, and also 70-72. Darrell L. Guder acknowledges the importance of Barth in the development of missiological theology. GUDER, *Conversion*, 17-18, for instance, points to the influence of the publication of Barth's commentary on Romans, where he 'provided a major example of the growing unease with the complacency, security, and captivity of Western Christendom.' The theological world was 'electrified' by Barth's strong 'rejection of nineteenth-century liberal Christianity's cherished optimism about the human condition and the future of human civilization.' Guder states that Barth's 'critique' is to be understood 'against the backdrop of cultural Christianity as it evolved in Western Christendom.' See further also GUDER, *Conversion*, 121-131, where he discusses extensively, and with approval, Karl Barth's interpretation of Christian Witness. In the USA, Guder is known as one of the editors of Karl Barth's publications in English. He is chair of the Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary.

⁶ See his contribution to Willingen as described in the previous chapter. HARTENSTEIN, *Theologie Barth's*, 3, points to the significance of Barth, notwithstanding the fact that Barth stood 'at a distance of the whole missionary endeavor,' and did not 'belong to the circle of direct supporters of mission.' Hartenstein discusses what mission has to learn from Barth's theology, and especially points to his thoughts regarding the revelation of God (see HARTENSTEIN, *Theologie Barth's*, 9), the eschatological biblical dualism (see HARTENSTEIN, *Theologie Barth's*, 11-13), and faith (see HARTENSTEIN, *Theologie Barth's*, 20-23). Cf. ROSSEL, 'Theology of Crisis', 204: Hartenstein 'understood that the mission of the Church needed radical rethinking, and foresaw that Barth's new emphasis contained the seed of this renewal.'

⁷ BOSCH, *Transforming Mission*, 399 (italics in the original).

⁸ AAGAARD, 'Some Main Trends', 239.

⁹ BARTH, 'Theologie und Mission', 115.

¹⁰ FLETT, *Witness*, 12.

¹¹ AAGAARD, 'Some Main Trends', 251-252. See also 239, where Aagaard puts 'that practically all aspects of modern Protestant missiology have some relation to the theology of Barth.'

origins, the received connection between Willingen, Hartenstein, and Barth can no longer be sustained.’ The 1932 lecture of Barth ‘had no immediate impact on the conference.’ There are no references to this lecture in ‘the preparatory material, in the findings, or in the aftermath of the conference.’ Besides that, Newbiggin, who drafted the statement of Willingen, ‘had no experience’¹² yet with the work of Barth at that time.¹³

Nevertheless, postulates Flett, Barth’s theology did contribute to the understanding of the *missio Dei* concept, but in a different way. Mission is grounded in the Trinity, because God’s moving into the world is grounded ‘in his being from and to all eternity.’¹⁴ God has ‘determined himself to be for and with the human,’ and therefore, He is a ‘missionary God.’ Flett describes Barth’s thoughts: ‘The Father’s begetting the Son is a deliberate act, not a second step alongside who God is in and for himself, but the determination of His own life. This act belongs to God’s life from and to all eternity, for it is the nature of His perfect splendor that he is this *living* God.’¹⁵ Consequently, the identity of the church is missionary per se, for the church responds ‘as an immediate consequence of the perfection’ of God’s act. The church ‘exists in service’ to the mission of God, the implication of which is that the ‘concrete form’ is that ‘of the missionary community intentionally moving into the world proclaiming the kingdom of God.’ Since God exists for the world, the community must ‘exist for the world’ also.¹⁶ Barth writes: ‘Called out of the world, the community is genuinely called into it.’ This being called out of and called into the world, takes ‘place in one single movement.’¹⁷ The church ‘does not exist before or apart from this commission.’¹⁸ This theological position determines the way in which the church manifests itself in the world,¹⁹ for it has not been sent ‘haphazardly or at random, but with a very definite task.’ The Christian community, the church, ‘exists for the world,’ and its task ‘constitutes and fashions it from the very outset.’²⁰ Kimlyn J. Bender observes that Barth’s ecclesiology is defined

¹² FLETT, *Witness*, 161.

¹³ Cf. Newbiggin, *Unfinished Agenda*, 228.

¹⁴ FLETT, *Witness*, 199-200.

¹⁵ FLETT, *Witness*, 287-288 (italics in the original). See further extensively FLETT, *Witness*; FLETT, ‘Trinitarian Envisioning’, and also FLETT, ‘A Theology of *missio Dei*’.

¹⁶ FLETT, *Witness*, 290-293.

¹⁷ BARTH, *CD IV/3.2*, 764, quoted by FLETT, *Witness*, 293, who gives his own translation.

¹⁸ FLETT, *Witness*, 293.

¹⁹ Cf. *CD IV/3.2*, 722: ‘The ‘consideration of the nature of the Christian community in world-occurrence must be strictly theological.’ Barth puts this over against a phenomenological and sociological approach.

²⁰ *CD IV/3.2*, 795-796. Barth even says: If this task ‘had not been given,’ the church ‘would not have come into being. If it were to lose it, it would not continue.’

‘according to its missionary activity,’ and that ‘it must be said that this emphasis on the missionary task of the church is one of the most central and distinguishing features of Barth’s own ecclesiology.’²¹ Barth can even state: ‘The church is either a missionary Church or it is no church at all.’²²

This brief sketch of Barth’s thinking regarding the theme of this study suffices to show the importance of his theology for the development of essential missiological concepts.²³

3.4 Johan Herman Bavinck

In this section, the contribution of Johan Herman Bavinck (1895-1964),²⁴ the first professor of missiology at both the Theological Seminary of Kampen and the Free University of Amsterdam (now called the VU University Amsterdam),²⁵ is studied. He was theologically active in the decades before and also after World War II,²⁶ the period in which the war, with its far-reaching impact politically as well as theologically formed a decisive caesura, necessitating a fundamental missiological reorientation regarding the

²¹ BENDER, *Barth’s Ecclesiology*, 243.

²² CD III/3, 64.

²³ BENDER, *Barth’s Ecclesiology*, 284-285, points to the need to study Barth’s ‘critical yet undeniable retrieval of themes most generally associated with (though not in every case exclusive to) the free church tradition and shaped by his own Swiss Reformed context.’ Bender lists seven ‘strands’ that are ‘part of Barth’s ecclesiological tapestry,’ that should be studied: Barth’s ‘emphasis upon *the local community of believers*,’ his articulating ‘to a *non-hierarchical form of order*,’ the ‘church’s mandate of *mission*, so central to Barth’s very conception of the church and its task,’ the ‘*relation of church and state*,’ his ‘rejection of infant baptism and espousal of *believer’s baptism*,’ his ‘*typological reading of Scripture*, coupled with his *refusal to absolutize confessional standards*,’ and his ‘assessment of *congregationalism*.’ All these strands are of importance for the further development of missionary ecclesiology, as is shown in the ongoing discussion within e.g., the circles of the GOCN.

²⁴ For an extensive biography of Bavinck, see VISSER, *Heart*, 1-43. See also VISSER, ‘Introduction’, and VAN DEN BERG, ‘Johan Herman Bavinck’.

²⁵ The Theological Seminary of the GKN in Kampen became a university in 1988. In 2004 the GKN merged with the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (ELK), into the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PKN). This led to the merger in 2006 of the Theological University Kampen of the GKN with other theological universities within the PKN into the Protestant Theological University (PThU). Since 2010 the PthU is no longer located in Kampen but joined the Rijksuniversiteit (State University) in Groningen, and the VU University in Amsterdam. The Theological University of the Reformed Churches Liberated, dating from 1944, is still located in Kampen.

²⁶ See VISSER, *Heart*, 324, Bavinck’s bibliography: His publications date from the early twenties of the 20th century until the end of his life in 1964.

church and its mission.²⁷ Bavinck's thinking developed during a period of over 40 years, culminating in his *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* (1954),²⁸ the first 'complete Reformed missiology.'²⁹ Bavinck took his own position on the ecumenical developments of his day. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) to which he belonged, officially took a negative stand toward the ecumenical movement in the first decades of the existence of the WCC and only joined the Council at the general assembly of 1971 in Addis Ababa.³⁰ Bavinck understood and recognized the concerns regarding the WCC but regretted the official distancing by the GKN. He advocated participation in the worldwide ecumenical movement,³¹ for staying outside would imply that the reformed voice would not be heard in the discussions.³² Although not officially engaged in the NZR (Netherlands Missionary Council),³³ Bavinck participated as "consulting member" in a meeting of the IMC in Oegstgeest in 1948,³⁴ where the study 'on the theological basis of missions'³⁵ was put on the agenda, thus inaugurating the preparatory discussions for the Willingen Meeting of the IMC in 1952. Bavinck also became personally involved in this process. The NZR appointed him as member of a theological study-group that was installed at a Mission-Congress in 1949.³⁶ The report of this study-group, published in August 1951 in the periodical of the NZR, played a substantial role in the preparatory process and also in the final discussions at the Willingen Meeting.³⁷

²⁷ Cf. the previous chapter.

²⁸ Originally *Inleiding in de Zendingwetenschap*; English translation in 1960.

²⁹ VISSER, 'Introduction', 30.

³⁰ During the 1930s the subsequent synods of the GKN did not favor the ecumenical endeavor, out of fear that the unity within the WCC would harm the truth. See for all this WIND, *Zending en Oecumene I*, 208-210. Cf. also VISSER, 'Introduction', 28. Notwithstanding this, the GKN joined in 1946 the NZR, and thereby de facto affiliated with the IMC (see RUNIA, 'Gereformeerde kerken en de Wereldraad', 58-59; *Acta GKN 1946*, 63 [article 210], and 192-194).

³¹ PAAS, 'Johan Herman Bavinck', 143: 'He urged his own denomination, in vain, to become a member of the WCC.'

³² BAVINCK, 'De vergadering', 277: It 'does hurt me, that our voice is not being heard.'

³³ Bavinck was, however, from the first issue in Volume 1 in 1948 until the fourth issue of Volume 16 in 1963 member of the editorial board of the official periodical of the NZR, *De Heerbaan*.

³⁴ See *HZB 46/7* (1948), 109.

³⁵ See GOODALL, 'Willingen—Milestone', 10.

³⁶ See footnote 39 on page 31. Bavinck presented a paper on the foundation of mission at the 1949 Mission-Congress. See HOEKENDIJK, 'Deelgenoten,' 211, for a summary of the main thoughts of Bavinck's paper.

³⁷ See the previous chapter.

3.4.1 *Fundamental Thoughts and Themes*

Bavinck brought together his most fundamental thoughts in his *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, to which other publications provide further specification and/or addition. In his thinking, there is resemblance with the international developments.

3.4.2 *Missio Dei*

This resemblance exists first of all regarding the theological foundation of mission. Because of his participation in the study-group of the NZR, Willingen's final formulations were not a new way of thinking for Bavinck. They dovetailed with his own theology, especially because of the trinitarian foundation, which he stressed consequently throughout the years.³⁸ The 'missionary enterprise is, in the deepest sense of the word, the work of Jesus Christ,' who 'in His church and through His Church fulfills the task with which the Father has charged Him.' Mission is to be understood in a theological way 'as the work of Jesus Christ.'³⁹ Christ 'builds' His church, 'incorporating it' and using it as 'an active, responsible instrument in' the execution of 'the plan of salvation.' Thus, Christ is the proper 'subject of mission,'⁴⁰ and the church, as 'the body of Christ,' forms 'the organ through which and in which the glorified Christ will reveal his great work of salvation to the world.'⁴¹ The church 'is made mobile' and made into 'an instrument of the world-conquering hold of Christ,' who 'stretches out His strong hands to the world that belongs to Him because of His victory', engaging, through the Spirit, the church 'in God's saving plan for the world.'⁴²

3.4.3 *Mission and Kingdom*

There is also a likeness with the international discourse when it comes to the purpose of mission. The establishment of the Kingdom of God, as set forth in the *missio Dei* theology, also is no foreign element in Bavinck's thinking. The Kingdom of God belongs to the center of his missiological concept. He describes the coming of it in its

³⁸ VISSER, *Heart*, 97: Bavinck 'subscribed wholeheartedly' to the formulations of Willingen. Visser remarks that Bavinck was not directly influenced by Willingen 'since the Trinitarian foundation of mission' had already been officially 'affirmed to by the Synod of Middelburg in 1896.'

³⁹ BAVINCK, *Impact*, 14-15. Cf. also BAVINCK, *Onze Kerk*, 10: Mission 'is no more than the human side of the great divine activity' in which God calls all of humanity to come to Him.

⁴⁰ HOEKENDIJK, 'Deelgenoten', 211.

⁴¹ BAVINCK, *Introduction*, 59. See also 62: Mission is an activity of the church, but this activity of the church, in essence, is 'nothing else than an activity of Christ, exercised through the church.'

⁴² BAVINCK, *Heilige Geest*, 27.

eternal form as ‘the final purpose’ of God ‘for the world.’⁴³ In the ‘coming and extension of the kingdom of God,’ the three purposes mentioned by Voetius, namely ‘the conversion of the heathen, the establishment of the church, and the glorification and manifestation of divine grace,’ come together. They are ‘in fact three aspects’ of the final aim.⁴⁴ This thought directs Bavinck’s thinking regarding the public manifestation of the life of the church. This life must be formed by the gospel of the Kingdom, for Christ ‘places His hand on every aspect of our life, both of our individual existence and of our social relationship.’ The gospel is not just about grace for sinners, but ‘presents norms for the reordering of all human relationships,’ containing ‘the seed of a new society.’⁴⁵ Bavinck promotes a ‘comprehensive approach,’ in which both word and deed are to be seen as ‘preaching.’ Deeds are not just ‘auxiliary services,’ to be seen as preparation for the proper message of the gospel. Deeds are also words, revealing the message of the gospel in a direct and tangible way. Words and deeds, therefore, are both part of the proclamation of the gospel, because the gospel affects ‘man in all his aspects and relationships.’⁴⁶ The proclamation of the gospel, thus, ‘always necessarily implies certain kingdom-elements.’⁴⁷ It ‘builds a community that is incomparable with any existing community of people,’ namely ‘the “new people,” separated from the world and at the same time with a missionary openness to the world, “in discussion with those outside” (Col. 4:5-6).’⁴⁸ This separate and missionary position characterizes the church and gives it ‘a mysterious attractional power.’⁴⁹

⁴³ BAVINCK, *Introduction*, 158.

⁴⁴ BAVINCK, *Introduction*, 155. For Voetius, see JONGENEEL, ‘Voetius’, 63; and VAN ’T SPIJKER, *Plantatione*.

⁴⁵ BAVINCK, *Impact*, 19. Bavinck’s statement shows a remarkable correspondence with Abraham Kuyper’s statement at the opening ceremony of the Free University of Amsterdam in 1880, ‘there is no square inch of the world, of which Christ does not say: it is mine.’ Bavinck does, however, not mention Abraham Kuyper.

⁴⁶ BAVINCK, *Introduction*, 113, where he adds that the misunderstanding of the relation between word and deed exists because ‘people think too narrowly and one-sidedly of preaching as speaking, and understand too little the fact that a person very frequently can speak much more clearly and more directly through deeds.’

⁴⁷ BAVINCK, ‘Theology and mission’, 65.

⁴⁸ HOEKENDIJK, ‘Deelgenoten’, 211. Cf. BAVINCK, *Beginning and End*, 140.

⁴⁹ BAVINCK, *Inleiding*, 51: ‘The church in Jerusalem had a mysterious attractional power, and this will undoubtedly also have been the case elsewhere.’ This phrase was left out in the English translation. Cf. BAVINCK, *Introduction*, 40.

3.4.4 *Kingdom and Salvation-History*

The phase within salvation-history in which mission and church find themselves is a substantial element in Bavinck's thinking. The Kingdom has, in Christ, an "already" element, but there is also the "not yet", for it will only become complete on the return of Christ. The growing awareness of this salvation-historical situation, as it developed in the aftermath of World War II,⁵⁰ led to a more emphatic accentuation of the position of the church in the world. There is 'separation': The church does not belong to the world. There must, however, also be 'compassion': The church 'may never be indifferent to the plight of the world.' The church 'can never abandon the world.'⁵¹ This directly touches the interrelatedness of church and Kingdom. Although there is no identification, the Kingdom comes in 'this dispensation,' as long as the "not yet" is the reality, 'to manifestation only as a Church.' It is 'a community in expectation,' looking forward to the city that God is building, having 'the inextinguishable urge to become the Kingdom of God.' The church already belongs to the future, in the perspective of which it must find its way in the world, aware of the 'danger either to overemphasize the "already" or to lay too much stress upon the "not yet".' All missionary activity is done 'in the strong desire to "unite all things in Christ",' knowing that everything that is achieved is 'but a beginning.' The final manifestation 'is still behind the horizon of our capacities.' God Himself 'will take care of that in that Day when He will show his majesty.'⁵²

3.4.5 *Mission and Church*

Bavinck stated in 1947 that the emerging awareness that mission 'belongs to the very essence of the Church' may 'be regarded as one of the greatest discoveries of the previous century.' In the direct context of that remark, he even says that a 'Church which ceases to be missionary in character no longer corresponds' to what Christ 'expects' it to be and 'sooner or later' will 'experience the consequences' of this 'neglect.'⁵³ Mission

⁵⁰ Cf. BAVINCK, *Impact*, 36, where Bavinck describes the situation after the devastation of World War II. The Kingdom seems 'farther away than ever.' At the same time, it is 'remarkable' that 'in a world of strain and stress, of rubble and misery,' the church remembers 'the message of the Kingdom of God and is beginning to ask itself what Christ meant by it.'

⁵¹ BAVINCK, *Beginning and End*, 139-140.

⁵² BAVINCK, 'Theology and mission', 66. When the "already" is stressed too much, 'we forget that the whole of life, "all things" are to be united "in Him",' and exists the danger that 'we act as if this world' is the 'final goal.' When the "not yet" is emphasized, the danger is 'to do the work in an eschatological hurry,' forgetting 'that the new day has already begun and that the whole of life has to be put under the renewing power of the victorious Christ.'

⁵³ BAVINCK, *Impact*, 11.

and church really belong together.⁵⁴ The church is ‘the body of Christ,’ in which the ‘exalted Saviour continues His work of saving the world.’ Bavinck quotes a remark of the bishop of Dornakal at the IMC Meeting in Whitby in 1947, who said that it is the duty of the church ‘to concentrate’ all its ‘energies to do the work of Christ. The church exists not to save itself but to save others.’⁵⁵ This does, however, not mean identification,⁵⁶ but signifies that being church means being involved in mission. In his formulations, Bavinck approximates the paradigmatic phrase of the Willigen Meeting: The church ‘shares in the salvation of Christ,’ and therefore also ‘partakes in His saving work.’ Being the object of God’s saving work implies being made to be a co-subject of it.⁵⁷

3.4.6 *The Involvement of the Whole Church*

Where mission and church are inseparably connected, it is apparent that, for Bavinck, the whole church is involved in its missionary engagement. Bavinck sees a growing awareness regarding this significant element in ecclesiology. The church is becoming more and more aware ‘that it is called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in the midst of the world in which it lives,’ and especially ‘in its direct vicinity,’ because of the growing ‘alienation from God’ as it takes place within society.⁵⁸ The missionary responsibility cannot be ‘reserved’ only for officially ordained people. Each and every member of the church is to be involved. They have all kinds of possibilities to share the gospel, in all

⁵⁴ Cf. BAVINCK, *Introduction*, 300, where he describes that the churches especially since World War I started to realize that the call for mission, ‘is an essential element of the church.’ Cf. further BAVINCK, *Introduction*, 69: Mission is ‘a part of the very essence of the church.’

⁵⁵ BAVINCK, *Impact*, 15, quoting A.B. Elliot, bishop of Dornakal.

⁵⁶ Referring to the statement of Hendrik Kraemer that ‘the *raison d’être* for the church is to satisfy and to meet the need of the world,’ Bavinck comments that there is biblical truth in it but adds that there is more to say about the activities of the church. The church exists first of all for the praise of God; secondly, it has to bear God’s Word through the times and generations; and then thirdly, it ‘also exists to satisfy the need of the world. Missionary activity is not incidental, but is a part of the very essence of the church.’ All these reasons belong together, because in a church ‘faithful to Scripture the apostolate can never be hostile to the simple and uninterrupted care of its own members.’ See BAVINCK, *Introduction*, 68-69 (italics in the original; the quote of Kraemer in KRAEMER, *Kerk en zending*, 15). Cf. also VISSER, *Heart*, 212; and VISSER, ‘Introduction’, 74.

⁵⁷ BAVINCK, *Heilige Geest*, 27-28. Bavinck states: ‘Just as God in His work of creation made every *object* from the beginning to *co-subject*, so He now also does in His work of redemption’ (italics JvtS).

⁵⁸ BAVINCK, *Woord*, 5.

the networks, relations, and organizations they are part of.⁵⁹ Bavinck points in this regard to the missionary effectiveness of small house churches, in which the first Christians came together. Because of their ‘intimacy,’ they formed welcoming stations on the way in for new believers.⁶⁰

3.4.7 Results

Summarizing the discussion of Bavinck, the following conclusions can be formulated.

1. Bavinck’s theology shows that he has not only taken note of the fundamental developments in the international missiological discourse but also that he recognized the correspondence of the essential foundations of this missiological discourse with the framework of reformed theologizing.⁶¹ He does not altogether use the formulations of the newly emerging *missio Dei* theology, but some of his expressions show theological agreement with the main thoughts of this theology, especially where they point to the trinitarian foundation of mission. Ergo, the basic content of the *missio Dei* concept is no alien body within the reformed context.
2. Bavinck’s thoughts also show similarities to the *missio Dei* theology with regard to the aim of mission. The Kingdom of God is an important element in his theology and directs the way in which he expresses his thoughts regarding the essence of the church and its life. There is a direct link to the Kingdom. The gospel of the Kingdom is not just proclaimed but is to be formative for the life of the church: God’s new people in this world. This new people lives simultaneously in separation from and in missionary openness to the world. In all this, similarities with the fundamental theological thoughts of the *missio Dei* concept can be distinguished: The church

⁵⁹ BAVINCK, *Woord*, 219-221, where he remarks that the members of the church meet with all kinds of people: in their families, in the circles of their friends, neighbors and colleagues, when they attend festivities, meetings of organizations et cetera. Cf. also BAVINCK, *Woord*, 77: The ‘whole church should be involved in the moving forward of the gospel.’ See further BAVINCK, *Introduction*, 67, where he also points to the activities of ‘ordinary men’, including ‘honest conversation with those with whom we come into contact in everyday life.’

⁶⁰ See for all this BAVINCK, *Woord*, 222-223: ‘House-churches, living cells, home circles in which a real community of faith and fraternal love is found, are the best outposts, to be pushed forward, where all those who are lonely and lost can be received and welcomed.’

⁶¹ This conclusion is supported by the fact that the study-group of the NZR that contributed fundamentally to the outcome of the Willigen Meeting (where the initial stage of the *missio Dei* concept can be located) consisted, next to Bavinck, of theologians who, except for one, belonged to the reformed tradition. P. Boendermaker belonged to the Lutheran Church, the other members either belonged to the GKN and the NHK. Cf. BAVINCK, ‘Rapport’, 221.

- is the instrument in the hands of Christ through which He continues His saving work in the world, proclaiming and establishing His Kingdom.
3. The emerging awareness of the salvation-historical determined situation of the church positions it in its proper theological context. The church is a manifestation of the Kingdom but is not itself establishing the Kingdom in and through its actions. This defines the church as a community that has an alternative character: It lives in the world in the present, living out the reality of the future to which it already belongs. The church is the, still imperfect, beginning of the Kingdom-community that awaits the final and complete establishment of God's Kingdom at the Day of the Lord.
 4. Bavinck's conviction that the proclamation of the gospel creates a new community in which the characteristics of the Kingdom become manifest, has immediate missiological-ecclesiological implications. The manifestation of the new life in this new community attracts people. The existence and the life of the church, therefore, has missionary impact: The church is a missionary community.
 5. Bavinck emphasizes the direct theological connection between mission and church, in which mission is decisive for ecclesiological thinking. Mission, to a great extent, defines the church. Mission is part of the defining essence of the church. The church exists to save others. Although there is no identification, there is an essential and unresolvable relatedness: Where there is no mission, the church ceases to be church.
 6. This applies to the whole church. It is as a whole missionary in its existence. In all of the life of its members, there are moments in which the gospel can be shown and shared, since the Kingdom touches the whole of life. The missionary 'activity takes place in life in its entirety.'⁶² Especially do small house-churches prove to be of particular importance in the missionary encounter of the (members of the) church with its vicinity.

3.5 Hendrik Kraemer

Hendrik Kraemer (1888-1965),⁶³ one of the most influential lay theologians in the missionary field, 'dominated the scene in mission theology' from 1938 to 1961.⁶⁴ He

⁶² BAVINCK, *Introduction*, 68.

⁶³ For an extensive biography, see VAN LEEUWEN, *Hendrik Kraemer*; see also GRIFFIOEN, *Christelijke zending*, 145-178; HOEDEMAEKER, 'Kraemer'; JANSEN SCHOONHOVEN, 'Inleiding'; JANSEN SCHOONHOVEN, 'Kraemer', and JONGENEEL, 'Kraemer', 375.

⁶⁴ JONGENEEL, 'Kraemer', 375.

attended the 1928 Jerusalem Meeting, where he attracted attention because of his contribution to the discussions.⁶⁵ He provided important preparatory material for the 1938 Tambaram Meeting in his *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*.⁶⁶ He was invited to attend the IMC Meeting in Whitby (1947) as a consultant but was not able to accept that invitation.⁶⁷ From 1948-1955 he was the first director of the Ecumenical Institute of the WCC at Château de Bossey (near Geneva).⁶⁸ He was present at the IMC Willingen Meeting in 1952 as a member of the so-called Steering Committee, and served as one of the vice-chairmen.⁶⁹

After his years in Indonesia, 'Kraemer involved himself in Dutch church and mission work.'⁷⁰ In the context of this study, two activities of this period are important. Already before World War II, he designated the loss of the sense of apostolic responsibility as a hindrance to the recovery of the church.⁷¹ Mission is 'a matter of life and death for the Christian church'.⁷² In order to bring this to the fore, Kraemer organized, in 1936, a conference at Hemmen castle, where a group of some 100 persons came together, discussing the situation of mission in the Netherlands. The conference pointed out that mission is not a special feature but naturally belongs to the church, and further studied the question how mission could fertilize ecclesiastical life in the Netherlands.⁷³ These activities were a prelude to a next phase in what is termed as *Gemeente-opbouw* (the building up of the congregation), in which Kraemer, together with others,⁷⁴ stressed the

⁶⁵ JANSEN SCHOONHOVEN, 'Inleiding', 9. Cf. also HOGG, *Foundations*, 252.

⁶⁶ See KRAEMER, *The Christian Message*, v-vii. Kraemer was asked to write this book by the IMC 'to serve as material for the World Missionary Conference in 1938.'

⁶⁷ See *Minutes Whitby*, 24 (minute 2).

⁶⁸ See for all this JONGENEEL, 'Kraemer', 374.

⁶⁹ *Minutes Willingen*, 7 (minute 1), 8 (minute 3).

⁷⁰ JONGENEEL, 'Kraemer', 375.

⁷¹ Cf. KRAEMER, *Waarom zending*, 41-47, where he describes the change in attitude toward mission. Whereas in the period of the Early Church, the Middle-Ages, and the Reformation mission was considered as obvious and naturally belonging to the Christian faith, in the period of Modernity the 'absence of certainty in religious matters' becomes ruling. This led to a situation in which not only outside the church, but also within the church, the question 'why mission' came to the surface, demanding an answer. The result is an 'absence of the apostolic spirit,' and even stronger, a sense that 'there is nothing as annoying and inappropriate as an apostolic spirit.' See also VAN LEEUWEN, *Hendrik Kraemer*, 123.

⁷² KRAEMER, *Waarom zending*, 48.

⁷³ See VAN LEEUWEN, *Hendrik Kraemer*, 124-125. Publications that belong to this period are *Kerk en zending* (1936); *Waarom zending* (1938); and *Blijvende opdracht* (1941).

⁷⁴ See VAN LEEUWEN, *Hendrik Kraemer*, 126-157; Kraemer worked closely together with W. Banning and K.H.E. Gravemeyer; see also HOEDEMAKER, 'Kraemer', 510.

significance of mobilizing the congregation as the strategic weapon in overcoming the paralysis of the church.⁷⁵ The ‘frozen credits’ of the church, as Kraemer called the lay-people in the church, need to be activated.⁷⁶ They are the instruments that Christ wants to use in His *diakonia* toward the world. During Kraemer’s years as director of the Ecumenical Institute at Château de Bossey, the ‘guiding directive’ for his activities was the ‘mobilization of the laity’ in the church.⁷⁷

3.5.1 *Fundamental Thoughts and Themes of Kraemer*

The starting point in discussing Kraemer’s thoughts is taken in his *A theology of the Laity* (1956).⁷⁸ This publication is the fruit and result of his work at the Ecumenical Institute of the WCC. However, it also provides a summary overview of his thinking regarding the theme of this study. His missiological-ecclesiological insights are brought together and expressed in the most extensive way.⁷⁹

3.5.2 *Missio Dei*

Because of his presence at the Willingen Meeting, Kraemer was familiar with the theological formulations which came out of this Meeting, although he hardly uses the exact formulas in his expositions, and even expresses some reservations with them. He supposes that the new theological line lacks the aspect of a proper theology of the apostolate.⁸⁰ This critique is connected to Kraemer’s specific understanding of revelation as dynamic. Revelation ‘proclaims and asserts realities,’ not to ‘present a “world-view”;

⁷⁵ See VAN LEEUWEN, *Hendrik Kraemer*, 142.

⁷⁶ Cf. KRAEMER, *Laity*, 34, and 176-177. Cf. also Hoedemaker, ‘Kraemer’, 510, who uses the term ‘frozen assets.’

⁷⁷ VAN LEEUWEN, *Hendrik Kraemer*, 167. KRAEMER, *Laity*, 43, notes that the ‘Ecumenical Institute at Bossey was even originally conceived as a conscious attempt by the then “World Council of Churches in process of formation” to strengthen and develop the lay contribution, awakened during the War, and to give it deeper bases and wider horizons.’

⁷⁸ KRAEMER, *Laity*. The book was written in English (1958) and translated into Dutch in 1960.

⁷⁹ It has been acknowledged that ‘many of the emphases’ that are characteristic for Kraemer’s ecclesiological thinking are to ‘be found in his *Theology of the Laity*.’ Cf. HOEDEMAKER, ‘Kraemer’, 514, footnote 7.

⁸⁰ See KRAEMER, ‘Mission im Wandel der Völkerwelt’, 295. He discusses the crisis in which mission has come after World War II. One ‘of the signs of the crisis’ is the ‘renewed effort to find a new foundation of mission that is both biblical and contemporary.’ According to Kraemer, this attempt should lead to ‘a proper theology of apostolate,’ because the ‘apostolate is *the* essential characteristic of the church at home and abroad. It is not the only essential characteristic, but the dominant one.’

but to challenge ‘man in his *total* being to confront himself with these realities and accordingly take decisions.’⁸¹ Kraemer coined the term “biblical realism” for this conviction: The Bible is to be understood as that revelation in which God Himself testifies to His saving acts in Christ.⁸² Revelation, therefore, is not an ‘object,’ but an ‘action, a divine movement.’ God is active, ‘continuously occupying Himself and wrestling with man, in all ages and with all peoples.’ He does this, ‘to lay bare the dialectical condition not only of the non-Christian religions but of *all* the human attempts towards apprehension of the totality of existence.’⁸³ This understanding of revelation complements the line of thought of the *missio Dei* concept, and underscores the foundational principle of it. The *missio Dei* reveals God’s ‘inner urge’ toward the world, as it became a reality in the coming of Jesus Christ, and as it is continued by God. In and through the church, God continues His saving embrace to the world.⁸⁴ Kraemer brings this together when he stresses the ‘divine apostolic succession.’ God was apostolic in that He sent His Son to be ‘His Apostle.’ In the same way, Christ was apostolic in that He sent the church to be ‘as a whole necessarily apostolic.’⁸⁵ The church is in its ministry ‘correlative to and rooted in Christ’s ministry (diakonia),’ although there is no identification because of the uniqueness of Christ’s ministry. The church is planted in and participates in Christ’s ‘ministry, the diakonia to the world.’⁸⁶

⁸¹ Kraemer, *Christian Message*, 64-65 (italics in the original).

⁸² See KRAEMER, ‘Continuity or Discontinuity’, 1-2. Christian revelation is ‘the record of God’s self-disclosing revelation in Jesus Christ,’ and therefore it ‘is absolutely *sui generis*.’ It is ‘the story of God’s sovereign redeeming acts’ as they have become ‘decisively and finally manifest in Jesus Christ.’ In Him, ‘God became flesh and revealed His grace and truth.’ The term “Biblical realism” expresses ‘the idea that the Bible, the human and in many ways historically conditioned document of God’s acts of revelation, consistently testifies to divine acts and plans in regard to the salvation of mankind and the world, and not to religious experience or ideas.’ HOGG, *Foundations*, 295, remarks that Scripture for Kraemer solely is ‘a record of God’s thinking and action in reference to mankind’ and not ‘a story of religious pilgrimage by part of the human race.’ See further PERRY, *Radical Difference*, 87-110; ANDERSEN, ‘Kraemer’s Contribution’.

⁸³ Kraemer, *Christian Message*, 118-125 (italics in the original). Cf. KRAEMER, *Christian Message*, 299: revelation is about ‘God’s self-disclosure’ and ‘the disclosure of the genuine condition of man and the world in the light of the divine Self-disclosure.’ Cf. PERRY, *Radical Difference*, 89-90.

⁸⁴ Cf. KRAEMER, *Laiety*, 131-133.

⁸⁵ KRAEMER, *Laiety*, 134. Cf. already KRAEMER, *Kerk en zending*, 16: Mission ‘is the direct expression of the essential apostolic characteristic of the church.’

⁸⁶ KRAEMER, *Laiety*, 142-148; Kraemer refers to TORRANCE, *Royal Priesthood*, 35: Because Christ ‘is pleased to use the Church as His Body and to use it in His ministry of reconciliation, we must think of the ministry of the Church as correlative to the ministry of Christ.’

3.5.3 Mission and Kingdom

The concept of the Kingdom is an important element in Kraemer's expositions regarding mission. God aims at the 'restoration of his Kingdom,' in which His 'rule' becomes manifest,⁸⁷ in and through Christ. When Kraemer speaks about this, he links it directly to the church, for the church is a manifestation of the Kingdom. The church is to be 'the Reign of God's vivifying grace, of the power of Christ's hidden kingship and of the working of the Holy Spirit.'⁸⁸ This implies that the church is an 'alien body.' It represents a 'seemingly foolish and naïve "alienism".' The new reality in Christ 'has to find embodiment in a peculiar and new order of existence.'⁸⁹ In the community of believers who belong to Christ, and who are 'in Christ,' this actually happens for it is the 'sphere of God's salvation, redemption and reconciliation and of Christ's rulership.'⁹⁰ The church shows forth 'the powers of the Kingdom of God.' It is the 'body in which the Lordship of Christ is an experienced and demonstrated reality.'⁹¹ In all this, there is a permanent and direct connection between Christ as Lord and as the *Diakonos*. In this dispensation, Christ Kingship is 'hidden in His "Servant"-ship.' He reigns 'from the cross,' and His reign can only be experienced 'to the measure of the faith, the hope, the love, the courage and the endurance, which live in the Church.'⁹²

3.5.4 Kingdom and Salvation-History

The element of the hidden Kingship of Christ immediately expresses the eschatological tension in which the church as manifestation of the Kingdom exists. The Kingdom is both a present and a future reality. Until its full manifestation in eternity, it is only visible for the eye of faith. This has implications for the existence of the church in the present, making it into 'a witnessing body of expectant pilgrims through history to God's End

⁸⁷ KRAEMER, *Kerk en zending*, 34-36.

⁸⁸ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 84.

⁸⁹ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 89.

⁹⁰ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 100.

⁹¹ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 101: The 'Lordship of Christ in the Church is in a number of our ecclesiologies an avowed *principle of Church-government* pointing towards the true dimension of the Church, but in practice not a motive force' (italics in the original).

⁹² KRAEMER, *Laity*, 150 (italics in the original). Cf. also KRAEMER, *Christian Message*, 416-417: The church differs from any other organization in society. The church is 'the community and fellowship of those who are united in common faith, common love and common worship of Him who is their Life and Head, bound in loyalty towards Him, permeated, inspired and chastened by His Spirit.' The '*sui generis* character' of the church 'consists in the fact that Jesus Christ is its primal and ultimate King and Lord, whose authority transcends all mundane relations by its loyalty to its Head and Lord' (italics in the original).

and Purpose.’ The church on earth ‘is essentially “a colony of heaven” (Philippians 3:2), a divine new beginning on the earth and in the reality of the world, a “trek” and not an established institution.’⁹³ When God called the church into being, He did not plan an institute that would exist forever. The church ‘is provisional, not definitive.’⁹⁴ For Christ, indeed, still rules ‘from the cross.’ He is ‘not yet the King of Glory.’⁹⁵ Because of this ‘eschatological’ reality, the church is to be seen as ‘an interim, an intermediate phenomenon between the time of Christ in His flesh, and the time of Christ in incorruptibility and glory.’⁹⁶ Christ’s first coming marked ‘the inauguration of the first term in God’s work’ of the restoration of the ‘divine order of life.’ The ‘integral realization of this new order, of the Kingdom of God, is the object of expectation.’ The church waits ‘with longing expectation’ for its coming.⁹⁷ When the church loses the awareness of this ‘eschatological nature,’ it loses ‘one of its most essential characteristics.’⁹⁸

3.5.5 *Mission and Church*

The above-mentioned theological principles imply that mission and church are inextricably connected. Kraemer continuously points out that the church is to be missionary in its whole existence. At the same time, he is aware that it is needed to distinguish ‘between the “empirical” and the “ideal” Church.’ However, the ‘divine indicatives and imperatives’ cannot be put aside. Scripture constantly stresses the ‘*being* and *calling* of the Church.’ Without drawing ‘an ideal picture or ideal purpose,’ Scripture points to the ‘reality in Christ which has to find embodiment in a peculiar and new order of existence.’⁹⁹ The church in its ‘archetypical reality’ is ‘a dynamic for unremitting witness and action.’¹⁰⁰ The church cannot be introvert but must be extravert. It exists not ‘on behalf of itself, but on behalf of the world.’¹⁰¹ To be ‘really the Church,’ it must be ‘*world-centred* in the image of the divine example.’¹⁰² The church’s ‘nature’ and ‘calling’ are ‘expressed’

⁹³ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 83-84.

⁹⁴ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 127.

⁹⁵ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 150.

⁹⁶ KRAEMER, *Kerk en zending*, 25-26.

⁹⁷ KRAEMER, *Christian Message*, 81-82.

⁹⁸ KRAEMER, *Christian Message*, 418.

⁹⁹ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 88-89 (italics in the original).

¹⁰⁰ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 100-101.

¹⁰¹ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 127, where he observes: ‘This ‘elementary truth, which finds ready intellectual assent, is nevertheless absent in the Church.’ See also KRAEMER, *Laity*, 130; cf. further already KRAEMER, *Christian Message*, 28.

¹⁰² KRAEMER, *Laity*, 130 (italics in the original), where he adds: ‘Being church-centered, regarding the church as ‘the safe refuge from the world, is a betrayal of its nature and calling.’

in ‘the true notae ecclesiae,’ namely in the missionary and ministerial being of the church. These notae ‘hold it within the bounds of being above all an instrument, a chosen vessel, for God’s purposes.’ The ‘Church *is* Mission.’ Mission is ‘its very essence,’¹⁰³ because in and through the church, God continues His reaching out to the world in His love. The church is the ‘community of the “sent”,’ to and into the world as ‘the community of the witnesses.’¹⁰⁴ They proclaim Christ ‘in word and deed,’¹⁰⁵ in which the cultural, social, and political implications are ‘not *accessories*’ but ‘*expressions*’ of this proclamation.¹⁰⁶ This becomes even more emphatic when seen in the context of the eschatological tension of the Kingdom. The ‘characteristic mode of the church,’ living in the ‘awareness’ of its place in the period of the ‘interim’ between Christ’s first and final coming, can only be missionary.¹⁰⁷

3.5.6 *The Involvement of the Whole Church*

Kraemer stresses in his *A theology of the Laity* that the whole church in all its life and activities is involved in the missionary essence of the being of the church. This involvement changed over the years from natural (and logical) into a situation in which the distinction between clergy and laity became the ruling structure.¹⁰⁸ The laity became the flock, the object of the activities in the church, and was no longer ‘subject in its own calling and responsibility.’ The significance of the laity ‘in the divine economy of salvation of the world and in the economy of the Church’ was not given serious consideration.¹⁰⁹ A theology of the laity, however, should be ‘an *organic part* of a total ecclesiology.’ The church must return to its original form, in which the laity is taken seriously in its ‘responsible participation’ in the ‘discharge’ of the ‘divine calling’ of the church, corresponding to ‘God’s redemptive purpose with man and with the world, in the past, the present, and the future.’¹¹⁰ The most fundamental reason for all this is that ‘through and

¹⁰³ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 130-132. Cf. also KRAEMER, *Blijvende opdracht*, 6-7: The church ‘lives from an apostolic commission and therefore always has an apostolic urge.’ This commission and urge ‘are the sources of the life’ of ‘every empirical church.’

¹⁰⁴ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 133. Cf. also KRAEMER, *Kerk en zending*, 25-26: the church ‘exists *because of* the need of the world and *to be present in* the need of the world.’ In the church, ‘as in the body of Christ, the divine movement of mercy continues towards the world’ (italics in the original).

¹⁰⁵ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 137.

¹⁰⁶ KRAEMER, *Christian Message*, 433 (italics in the original).

¹⁰⁷ KRAEMER, *Kerk en zending*, 24-26.

¹⁰⁸ See for this KRAEMER, *Laity*, 17-73.

¹⁰⁹ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 72.

¹¹⁰ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 91 (italics in the original).

in' the church, 'God's out-reach to the world,' as it has become 'flesh and blood' in Christ, 'has to become manifest.' The church reflects the apostleship of Christ. In the encounter with the surrounding world, the presence of the laity is 'indispensable' since they form a 'self-evident aspect of the totality of the Church.' After all, the church is the 'people of God called out from the world through Christ,' being at the same time 'the prophetic, priestly, royal people sent forth into the world by Christ.'¹¹¹ The majority of this people that is sent forth into the world lives in a very special missionary position. It is in the laity, dispersed as they are 'in and through the world, its institutions, enterprises, relationships and pursuits,'¹¹² that the constant dialogue with the world takes place.

3.5.7 Results

Bringing together the thoughts of Kraemer, the following conclusions can be drawn.

1. There is an understandable correspondence and affinity in Kraemer's thinking with the theological development as it took place in the international discourse. He did, however, take his own stand in the discussions in connection to his specific view on revelation, which colored his understanding of the *missio Dei* concept in a specific sense. Revelation is a dynamic process in which God testifies in and to the world of His saving acts in Christ. In Christ, God has revealed His will and His heart, wrestling with man, confronting him with the dialectical condition in which he lives, appealing to him and challenging him, calling him to respond. This calling to respond is the aim of revelation and, consequently of mission, for this "biblical realism" directs also the whole understanding of mission. In mission God continues His wrestling with man. He is actually calling man to respond. This line of thought consequently leads to an extra emphasis on (the aspect of) the apostolate in the being of the church. The church is the vessel God uses for His purposes, through which He continues His inner urge toward the world, in the execution of the plan of salvation. He sent His Son into the world. This sending of the Son as the divine Apostle is being continued in the sending of the Church by this divine Apostle. This defines the church as 'necessarily apostolic.'¹¹³ Apostolicity is, although not being the only one, the dominant characteristic of the church.

¹¹¹ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 162-163, quoting with some slight alterations SCHLINK, 'Christus und die Kirche', 209-210.

¹¹² KRAEMER, *Laity*, 170.

¹¹³ KRAEMER, *Laity*, 134.

2. There is a direct connection between Kraemer's thinking about the apostolicity of the church and the essential form of existence of the church in the world. The church is a manifestation of the Kingdom of God. It is a body of expectant pilgrims living as an alien entity in this world, in which the Lordship of Christ that embraces all of life is experienced and demonstrated. This defines the church as an organization of a completely different order than any other organization or society. In living according to Christ's order, which is the order of the Kingdom of God, the church is herald of the new reality in Christ, showing the new hope for the world. The church is apostolic in its very being.
3. In all this, the church shows in its being and life the essential connection between the Kingship and the Servanthood of Christ: His Lordship is, until His return, hidden in His Servanthood. The church, therefore, is both missionary and ministerial. It is 'the embrace of the world, in and to which it is sent.'¹¹⁴ This is essential to its nature and calling, because of which it is impossible for the church to leave the world be. Existing on behalf of the world, the church is being ministerial in that it serves the world, following the example of Christ, the *Diakonos*. Serving is the key-principle in the church. Christ, who is hidden in His Servant-ship, rules from the cross, and the church manifests this Kingship in its life, visible and tangible for the surrounding world.
4. This reality reflects the eschatological situation in which the church exists and is called to exist. The church is a colony of heaven in which the divine new beginning receives its first and provisional form. It is an intermediate phenomenon connecting in its existence the two fundamental moments in the history of salvation. In the awareness of both the "already" and the "not yet" aspect of the reality of salvation, the church lives between the inauguration of the Kingdom in Christ (His life, death and resurrection), and its full and eternal implementation (Christ's coming in glory), having mission (apostolicity) as its characteristic mode. The church is a preview of what is still to come.
5. The existing tension between the "already" and the "not yet" aspect makes it necessary to keep the indicative of the existence and the imperative of the calling of the church together. The church is on the one hand the community of those who belong to Christ and who are in Christ. It is the community that embodies the reality of God's salvation and of Christ's Kingship. On the other hand, and at the same time, it is the community that is sent into the world, proclaiming and witnessing in word and deed to Christ. The dominant essence of the church *is* its mission. The

¹¹⁴ KRAEMER, *Laité*, 132.

church exists both in and for the sake of the world, embodying in its life and witness the *diakonia* of Christ in both its ministerial and apostolic significance.

6. The members of the church are completely involved in the embodying of the missionary (apostolic) essence of the church. They all belong to the people of God that is called to participate in the divine economy of salvation of the world. Through the responsible participation of the whole membership of the church in its witnessing existence and life, the powers of the Kingdom of God will be shown. The involvement of the laity is stressed because of their peculiar position in the day-to-day world in which they fully live and function. They are called out of the world through Christ, but at the same time they are sent into the world as His prophetic, priestly, and royal people. Their position in the world, while not belonging to the world, has all kinds of missionary implications, for in the laity the church daily encounters the world and is in permanent dialogue with the world.

3.6 Johannes Verkuyl

Although the GKN to which he belonged officially kept a deliberate distance from the WCC because of theological motives,¹¹⁵ Johannes Verkuyl (1908-2001)¹¹⁶ warmly welcomed the founding of the WCC in 1948 and pleaded for active participation.¹¹⁷ When he, in 1963, returned to the Netherlands after almost a quarter of a century as a missionary in Indonesia,¹¹⁸ he became general secretary of the NZR, occupying this post from 1963 until 1968.¹¹⁹ In 1965 he was appointed, first part-time and from 1968 full-time professor of missiology at the Free University. He retired in 1978. As secretary of the NZR, Verkuyl attended the IMC Mexico-Meeting of 1963 and the 1968 WCC Assembly of Uppsala.¹²⁰ After the GKN joined the WCC in 1971, he was one of the Dutch delegates at the 1972/73 IMC Conference of Bangkok.¹²¹ The issues that were on the agenda at these meetings of the IMC and the WCC in the midst of the troubled 1960s

¹¹⁵ See above section 3.4, and also WIND, *Zending en Oecumene I*, 208-210.

¹¹⁶ For an extensive biography, see STIEMER, *Johannes Verkuyl*; see further GORT, 'Verkuyl'; STIEMER, 'Johannes Verkuyl'; WESSELS, 'In Memoriam Johannes Verkuyl'. For an autobiographical sketch, see VERKUYL, *Gedenken*; and also VERKUYL, 'My Pilgrimage in Mission', which is an adaptation and translation of the last chapter of VERKUYL, *Gedenken*, 325-337.

¹¹⁷ STIEMER, *Verkuyl: een leven lang*, 63.

¹¹⁸ See for all the functions and positions that Verkuyl held during all these years STIEMER, *Verkuyl: een leven lang*, 45-66.

¹¹⁹ See footnote 30 above.

¹²⁰ STIEMER, *Verkuyl: een leven lang*, 68-72.

¹²¹ STIEMER, *Verkuyl: een leven lang*, 80-82.

and 1970s matched his view of the totality of the gospel and also his personal engagement in political issues. He was known for his contrarian views which gave rise to admiration as well as critique, although both friends and enemies were aware of 'his rock-solid faith in God and his deep compassion for people who were wronged.'¹²² For Verkuyl, the gospel is to be dealt with in its totality, with all its implications.

3.6.1 *Fundamental Thoughts and Themes of Verkuyl*

Regarding the views of Verkuyl, the starting point is taken in the two textbooks he wrote on mission and evangelism, his *Contemporary Missiology*,¹²³ and his *Inleiding in de evangelistiek (Introduction to Evangelism)*,¹²⁴ published in 1978. Both books reveal his central thought and observations concerning the theme of this study, because 'mission and evangelism are interwoven *everywhere*, and thus *synchronization* is needed.'¹²⁵ Within the context of this study, it is important to note that Verkuyl did not intend 'to present an elaborate ecclesiology.'¹²⁶ Nevertheless, his thoughts manifest his deep conviction that the church needs to be fully engaged in mission. He wrote his *Inleiding in de evangelistiek* 'in the conviction that the churches in the Netherlands have a twofold missionary task. They must break the closedness of the congregations and build up missionary churches,' that will 'bear witness' in their own context 'to the crucified and risen Lord and to the Messianic Kingdom, that came in and is coming through Him.'¹²⁷

3.6.2 *Missio Dei*

Verkuyl fully agrees with the theological approach of the *missio Dei* concept, as it had been formulated within missiological circles since Willingen 1952.¹²⁸ Willingen 'revived

¹²² STIEMER, 'Johannes Verkuyl', 185. In his article, Stiemer points to the active engagement of Verkuyl in political issues such as the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, the critique on the Vietnam War, and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, all of which were seen as "hot issues".

¹²³ Originally *Inleiding in de nieuwere zendingswetenschap* (1975); English translation in 1978.

¹²⁴ VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*.

¹²⁵ Cf. VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 11 (italics in the original).

¹²⁶ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 201.

¹²⁷ VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 272-273.

¹²⁸ Cf. VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 89-90, where he discusses the situation in which mission found itself, necessitating a return to a true biblical foundation. He refers to formulations of W.A. Visser 't Hooft, who in an address at the 1963 IMC Meeting in Mexico stated that mission is 'in a "time of testing";' because 'the modern world' puts 'the mission enterprise to the test in a variety of ways.' What is necessary is a thorough study of the 'basic structure of the biblical

a very ancient term which stemmed from the time of the Trinitarian discussions: *missio Dei*.' He quotes with approval from the final report of Willigen: The 'missionary movement of which we are a part has its source in *the triune God Himself*,' and describes the concept: 'God the Father sent the Son, and the Son is both the Sent One and the Sender. Together with the Father the Son sends the Holy Spirit, who in turn sends the church, congregations, apostles, servants, laying them under the obligation in discharging his work.' The *missio Dei* implies the *missio ecclesiae*. "There is no participation in Christ without participation in his mission".¹²⁹ Verkuyl points to the analogy with the formulations in the letter to the Hebrews where it is stated that those who belong to Christ, His partakers (*metochoi* – cf. Hebrews 1:9 and 3:1), 'also *participate* in His apostolic and high-priestly calling.' It is impossible 'to be "metochos" to Christ without being "metochos" to His apostolic calling (klèsis).' Partaking in Christ's 'liberating grace' implies 'being engaged in the calling of Christ.'¹³⁰

3.6.3 Mission and Kingdom

The focus of Christ's work is the realization of the Kingdom, which is the goal of the *missio Dei*.¹³¹ This Kingdom is not limited 'to the spiritual side of man,' but involves 'total salvation.' It is the 'new order of affairs begun in Christ' which in its final completion involves 'a proper restoration' of all relationships in which man lives: With God, with each other, with all generations, races, and even with nature. Mission, therefore, must 'receive its focus and orientation in this kingdom perspective,' and implies that people are brought to 'the Messiah' of the 'kingdom,' and to confess Him 'in word and deed.'¹³² This leads to 'a continual process of renewing one's life,' in which it is oriented

message in all its nuances as it relates to the mission mandate.' The result of this scrutiny of Scripture must be brought in rapport to the contemporary situation, 'by providing hermeneutical pointers in addition to the exegetical material.' Verkuyl points to BLAUW, *Missionary Nature* and DE GROOT, *Heil der volken* as examples that 'are of invaluable assistance' in this respect. For the address of Visser 't Hooft, see VISSER 'T HOOFT, 'Test of Faith'.

¹²⁹ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 3 (italics in the original), where he refers to Karl Hartenstein's and George Vicedom's specific publications regarding the *missio Dei* concept. Cf. HARTENSTEIN, 'Theologische Besinnung,' and VICEDOM, *Missio Dei*.

¹³⁰ VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 43.

¹³¹ Cf. VERKUYL, 'The Kingdom of God as the Goal of the Missio Dei'. This article was published in *IRM* as preparatory material for the CWME Melbourne Meeting in 1980. It is an extract of VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 197-204.

¹³² VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 197-198. Verkuyl warns against the approach in which is spoken 'of peace without mentioning him who himself is peace.' He observes that there is a quest for righteousness 'in a way that completely skirts him.'

‘to the kingdom’ in its totality. The proclamation of the message of the Kingdom, thus, must have the aspect of ‘gathering, preserving and adding to the people of God.’ Jesus did not aim at converting ‘individuals’ but at forming ‘a new people.’ He calls people ‘to join a community and become members of the people of God,’ depending on Him as their ‘shepherd and king.’¹³³ The church is the messianic community, ‘on route to the full manifestation of the Kingdom of God,’¹³⁴ and shows in its life the interwovenness of the four dimensions of the communication of the gospel, ‘witness, *koinonia*, *diakonia* and the promotion of justice.’ The context determines which aspect needs priority, but in every situation, ‘the inner coherence between the four elements cannot be denied.’¹³⁵ Jesus Christ ‘did not speak deedless words,’ but ‘He also did not act world-less.’¹³⁶ All this resonates in the biblical word *diakonia*. All ‘services of the church,’ both ‘missionary’ and ‘pastoral’ and ‘diaconal’ form an ‘unbreakable unity.’ They are all ‘part of the continuation of the work of Christos Diakonos in the world.’¹³⁷ When they are done in Christ, ‘diaconal acts are “*sèmeia*”, “signs” in the Johannine sense,’ pointing ‘to Jesus Christ as the image of the invisible God, as the bringer of a new order of things, as a manifestation of glory of that God, who gives Himself to the people.’¹³⁸

3.6.4 Kingdom and Salvation-History

Verkuyl stresses the salvation-historical situation, in which the Kingdom is on the one hand a reality and on the other hand is still to come, as an important element. The New Testament ‘speaks the language of fulfillment,’ but also points to the ‘final appearing of

¹³³ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 199-200.

¹³⁴ VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 90.

¹³⁵ VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 44. See further VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 201: ‘The church, seen ‘within the wider perspective of the kingdom,’ exists to ‘serve the Messiah who is making his way “to the ends of the earth”.’ See already VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 188: ‘The Bible always relates the building up of the church to something much deeper and broader, namely, the kingdom of God. In the Bible the kingdom stands central, not the church.’ In the original Dutch version, Verkuyl argues that this kingdom-perspective aspect is many times missing in ecclesio-centric missionary theories. See VERKUYL, *Nieuwere zendingwetenschap*, 257.

¹³⁶ VERKUYL, *Gods initiatief en ons mandaat*, 14.

¹³⁷ VERKUYL, ‘Werelddiakonaat’, 110.

¹³⁸ VERKUYL, ‘Werelddiakonaat’, 112. Verkuyl refers to the discussions on this theme at the so-called Swanwick Consultation on Inter-Church Aid of 1966 and quotes Leslie E. Cooke, who, at this consultation, pointed at the *sèmeia*-aspect of diaconal deeds. See WCC, *Digest of the 1966 World Consultation*, 42. See for this also MURRAY, ‘Joint Service’, 229-230.

the kingdom' that is yet to come. These motifs 'switch back and forth.'¹³⁹ The relation between Kingdom and the church is determined by this eschatological position. The 'New Testament ties *ekklesia* ("church") and *basileia* ("kingdom") firmly together.' People out of all groups in society join together in the church, awaiting the 'coming kingdom of God.'¹⁴⁰ This eschatological position also defines and determines the significance of mission: The 'apostolic work of the church throughout the world is the very reason for the interim period between Jesus' ascension and his return as the Son of Man.'¹⁴¹ In this interim period, the church, as 'the Messianic congregation,' is at the same time a 'community of hope that sees the horizon enlightened by the resurrection,' and it is 'a community that is called to bring something of the messianic lifestyle to the light in the middle of this world.'¹⁴² The church must manifest in its being and actions the message of the King, who did come and who will come. The church represents Him, who 'is enroute to the final revealing of his kingdom.'¹⁴³

3.6.5 *Mission and Church*

In the situation in which the 'European churches are gradually being shaken out of the ideological intoxication of the *Corpus Christianum*,' and in which it has become clear that Europe is a '*Pays de Mission*' again,¹⁴⁴ it is necessary for the churches to learn to understand that mission and church are not only inseparable, but also that mission defines the church. The church is 'God's bridge to the world.'¹⁴⁵ God gathers His new people 'to become a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation",' that He wants to use as an 'instrument' to present 'the message of his liberating work to other peoples and nations.'¹⁴⁶ The church, thus, exists for the discharge of God's 'missionary purposes.' That is the proper '*raison d'être*' of the church as is also obvious from the different images of the church in the New Testament. These images are 'various self-portraits' in which the church's 'existence and calling' is expressed. As such, they are 'the criteria' to test the churches today, asking whether or not they really are the salt of the earth, the light of

¹³⁹ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 102-103. Verkuyl refers to Titus 2:11, Eph. 1:10, Gal. 4:4-5, and Heb. 1:1-4.

¹⁴⁰ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 360 (italics in the original).

¹⁴¹ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 103. This phrase is a direct quote from the Report of the NZR on *The Biblical Foundation of Mission*. See BAVINCK, 'Rapport', 203.

¹⁴² VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 18. Verkuyl also here refers to MOLTSMANN, *Church*, 206-226.

¹⁴³ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 199.

¹⁴⁴ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 309 (italics in the original).

¹⁴⁵ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 165.

¹⁴⁶ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 187 with a reference to 1 Peter 1,9.

the world, ambassadors of reconciliation et cetera.¹⁴⁷ The church ‘is called to be church in and for the world of the nations,’¹⁴⁸ and may never forget its ‘*mediating* function between Christ and the world.’ It ‘stands between Christ and the world,’ and has to organize and structure its existence ‘in view of that function of communication.’¹⁴⁹ The presence of the church in the world implies both ‘*communication*,’ and ‘*confrontation*.’ The people around the church are called ‘to make a decision.’¹⁵⁰

3.6.6 *The Involvement of the Whole Church*

The missionary character of the church implies the involvement of its whole membership. When Christ invites people ‘to become his disciples,’ He calls them ‘to join a community and become members of the people of God.’ It is this people that Christ wants to use as ‘the means of realizing his world-embracing plans.’¹⁵¹ In this regard, the previously discussed Greek term *metochos tou Christou* plays an important role. Partaking in Christ implies participating in His apostolic and high-priestly calling. This applies to the whole church, for according to the New Testament, ‘the ecclesia is an open community, focused on the whole neighborhood, flexible and beckoning participation.’ The ‘communication of the Christian faith’ is ‘the total influencing by the total Christian community on the total environment,’ in the process of which the members of the church are ‘the servants and footmen of God and of the risen Apostle Jesus.’¹⁵² The witness of the early church happened ‘everywhere’ where the daily life was lived, at work as well as in the area where they lived. They formed ‘open communities,’ recognizable ‘because of their way of life,’ and especially ‘because their testimony of Jesus and their celebration of the agape- and eucharist community and their diakonia.’¹⁵³ The early church understood the reason of its existence as being witnesses to and servants in the world. The

¹⁴⁷ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 232 (italics in the original). Verkuyl refers to MINEAR, *Images of the Church in the New Testament*. For a more recent study, see DRIVER, *Images of the Church in Mission*.

¹⁴⁸ VERKUYL, *Nieuwere zendingswetenschap*, 133. This sentence is missing in the English version.

¹⁴⁹ VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 53-54. Verkuyl discusses the place of the theological discipline of evangelism in the area of practical theology, ‘the “doctrine of ecclesiastical functioning,”’ and observes that, when this area is limited to homiletics, liturgics, catechesis and pastoral theology, the risk is that the church will forget its ‘*mediating* function between Christ and the world’ (italics in the original).

¹⁵⁰ VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 178 (italics in the original).

¹⁵¹ VERKUYL, *Contemporary Missiology*, 200.

¹⁵² VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 43-44.

¹⁵³ VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 94.

people ‘outside of the church’ were seen as ‘point of reference to test the church.’¹⁵⁴ Today, it must be the same. The church must test and, if necessary, correct and adapt its structures ‘for the sake of those who are foreign to’ or ‘alienated from the gospel.’¹⁵⁵ The structures of the church must serve the existence of the church ‘for the sake of the world.’¹⁵⁶

3.6.7 Results

Verkuyl’s missiological thoughts regarding the object of this study can be summarized in the following conclusions.

1. Verkuyl recognizes in the formulations of Willigen a revival of the biblical foundation of mission with which he fully agrees. The triune God is the source and the principal subject of mission. He engages the church in the discharge of His mission. For this reason, the *missio Dei* is directly related to the *missio ecclesia*. Partaking in Christ implies partaking in His mission.
2. Verkuyl endorses the emphasis on the Kingdom which he describes as the goal of the *missio Dei*. The Kingdom is more than just a spiritual reality; it touches the totality of life. Mission, therefore, must be defined from the perspective of the Kingdom in all its aspects. Mission gathers people into the community of the Messiah (the people of God), in which the new life and the new order of the Kingdom becomes manifest in all its dimensions and relations. As a consequence, the church is to be defined as the community in which Jesus the Messiah is confessed and followed in the totality of its existence, namely in its witness, *koinonia*, *diakonia* and in the promotion of justice. The life and witness of the church are “signs” (*sèmeia*) that point to Jesus Christ who, in and through this living witness of the church, continues His *diakonia* to and in the world. The church must therefore orient all of

¹⁵⁴ VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 95. Verkuyl refers to I Corinthians 14:16 and 23-25.

¹⁵⁵ VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 96. Verkuyl discusses several models. Open community churches have ‘a positive impact and radiation’ on the ‘neighborhood.’ House-churches, although running the risk of developing an in-group mentality, can be ‘living nuclei of a community of faith, radiating warmth, cordiality, and love, by which outsiders are invited to join them.’ They have an ‘appropriate structure for the missionary church.’ Verkuyl, therefore, promotes the ‘building up of house-churches, connecting them in a transverse bond’ as a means for ‘the further fulfillment of the missionary task of the church.’ The same applies to the forming of basic-communities in cities where there is ‘almost no contact between the local church and the surrounding society.’ Basic-communities can be the nuclei of criticism toward the existing churches, but they can also be the start of ‘a new beginning in small nuclei,’ formed by local people who, ‘together form some sort of ecclesial basic-community in that area, with a specific missionary and diaconal aim.’

¹⁵⁶ VERKUYL, *Evangelistiek*, 106. Cf. also VERKUYL, *Boodschap der bevrijding*, 129.

its existence in light of this Kingdom perspective. It permanently needs to ask whether and to what extent its existence serves Christ in the continuation of His *diakonia* to and into the world.

3. The eschatological tension in the existence of the Kingdom (it already exists, and it will come) determines and characterizes the meaning and existence of the church as missionary. The church is the messianic community in whose existence the first signs of the new life and lifestyle of the Kingdom become visible; at the same time, it is the community of hope in the perspective of the future coming of the Kingdom. The church exists to spread hope in this world, until Christ's coming in eternity, manifesting in all of its being the message of Him who did come, and who will come. The church is the instrument through which God presents the message of His liberating grace. The *raison d'être* for the church is not its own existence, but its function in the execution and discharge of God's missionary purposes. The church has a mediating function between Christ and the world.
4. In the way in which Christ communicated the decisive arrival and presence of God among His people, calling it to decide, the church in its presence in the world communicates and confronts the world with the call to come to a decision. The existence and presence of the church in the world, therefore, has decisive significance for the world. The church exists for the sake of the world. It is (to be) the light for the world.
5. The concept of *metochos* in its double sense implies the direct involvement of the whole church with all its members: Christ invites people to become disciples, who He enlists in His service and uses in the realization of His world-embracing plans. Partaking in the salvation of Christ's implies partaking in His calling. This applies to all members of the church, which is to be an open community that is focused on the whole neighborhood. The ecclesial structures need to be formed with a view to the missionary essence of the church, enabling it to live its life for the sake of the world.

3.7 James Edward Lesslie Newbigin

James Edward Lesslie Newbigin (1909-1998) has been characterized as 'probably the most influential British theologian of the twentieth century.'¹⁵⁷ Already during his missionary years in India, Newbigin was actively engaged in the ecumenical movement. He

¹⁵⁷ WALLS, 'Newbigin', 615. For an extensive (auto)biography, see NEWBIGIN, *Unfinished Agenda*, see further GOHEEN, *As the Father Has Sent Me*; WAINWRIGHT, *Newbigin: A Theological Life*; see further also STULTS, *Grasping Truth*, 1-20.

was involved in the founding assembly of the WCC in Amsterdam in 1948, contributing to the final drafting (and typing) of the Assembly message, in which the missionary responsibility of the church is fully mentioned: 'The church should be stirred up by God 'to make' the Gospel 'known to the whole world, and to call on all men to believe in Christ, to live in His love and to hope for His coming.'¹⁵⁸ He participated in the IMC Meeting in Willingen, where he gave a plenary address on Christian hope in the light of eschatology,¹⁵⁹ and where he played a leading role in drafting the final statement that the missionary calling is based 'on the doctrine of the Trinity,' and that uses words that became well-known since Willingen: 'There is no participation in Christ without participation in his mission to the world.'¹⁶⁰ Since then, Newbigin attended all meetings of both the IMC and the WCC, being involved as general secretary of the IMC (since 1959) in the preparation of the merging of both organizations in 1961. After this merger, he became chairman of the CWME within the WCC until 1965.¹⁶¹ From 1965 on, Newbigin served again in India as bishop of Madras, from where he retired in 1974. Coming back to Europe, he was confronted with the results of modernization that had fully penetrated western culture. The 'acids of modernity' had dissolved 'the most enduring of religious beliefs including the beliefs of Christians.' The question that arose for Newbigin was 'Can the West be Converted?'¹⁶² Regarding this pressing question, Newbigin wanted to contribute to the discussion as to 'why the Church has to be missionary.'¹⁶³ In his many publications, he stressed the need to develop a missionary ecclesiology, and to enable the church to witness to Christ in the permanent encounter with the contemporary culture.

¹⁵⁸ NEWBIGIN, *Unfinished Agenda*, 105-113. See for the Message of the Assembly VISSER 'T HOOFT, *First Assembly*, 9-11.

¹⁵⁹ See GOODALL, *Missions*, 107-116.

¹⁶⁰ NEWBIGIN, *Unfinished Agenda*, 130. See also *Minutes Willingen*, 19 (minute 40). Cf. further the previous chapter on Willingen.

¹⁶¹ NEWBIGIN, *Unfinished Agenda*, 147-157.

¹⁶² NEWBIGIN, 'Can the West be Converted?', 2. See also NEWBIGIN, *Unfinished Agenda*, 229-232. Newbigin describes his experience after arriving in Birmingham. The theological atmosphere of that day was permeated with 'timidity in commending the Gospel to the unconverted people of Britain,' because of the 'feeling that "the modern scientific world-view" had made it impossible to believe much of the traditional Christian teaching.' The gospel had to be tailored 'to the alleged requirements of "modern thought".'

¹⁶³ NEWBIGIN, *Unfinished Agenda*, 229. Cf. GOHEEN, *Church and Its Vocation*, 2: 'For Newbigin, ecclesiology was thus a pressing imperative, an urgent task that might enable the church to extract itself from captivity to the powers of Western culture.'

3.7.1 *Fundamental Thoughts and Themes*

The historical context in which Newbigin worked had a ‘formative impact on the development of his missionary ecclesiology.’ His thinking paralleled the changing of this context.¹⁶⁴ The most definitive form of Newbigin’s ecclesiology is discussed in this study. The main sources, therefore, are Newbigin’s later publications. Earlier publications are used where they are relevant for providing fundamental elements in the development of Newbigin’s ecclesiological thinking.

3.7.2 *Missio Dei*

The formulations of Willigen’s final statement on *The missionary calling of the Church*,¹⁶⁵ in the drafting of which Newbigin played a direct role, correspond with his own thinking. His discussion of mission in trinitarian terms¹⁶⁶ demonstrates his affinity to the concept.¹⁶⁷ Newbigin relates it to the biblical story as a whole. The *missio Dei* concept is not just a theological formulation, but must be seen in its ‘narrative shape.’ It must be discussed within the ‘primary context’ of ‘redemptive history.’¹⁶⁸ It all starts where the gospel starts, namely in the fact that Christ was sent into the world by the Father. The gospel is, thus, directly linked to the universal reign of God. It is all about ‘what God is doing for mankind as a whole’ as the undeniable implication of the ‘doctrine that God created all things in Christ and will sum up all things in him’ (cf. Colossians 1:16-20 and

¹⁶⁴ GOHEEN, *As the Father Has Sent Me*, 7. Newbigin’s ‘experience as a churchman’ varied ‘from district missionary and evangelist in India, bishop in the Church of South India, ecumenical administrator in The International Missionary Council (IMC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC), member of a house church in Geneva, professor of missions at Selly Oak, to pastor in an inner city church in Britain.’ For the development in Newbigin’s thinking, see GOHEEN, *As the Father Has Sent Me*, chapters 2 and 3. Goheen’s study provides a good introduction to Newbigin’s thoughts. Goheen published another, shorter book about the missionary ecclesiology of Newbigin, in which he again systematically brings together Newbigin’s thoughts, meant to be ‘a more popular summary for a wide readership.’ See GOHEEN, *The Church and Its Vocation*, xiv. This book also helped in rendering Newbigin’s thoughts.

¹⁶⁵ NEWBIGIN, *Unfinished Agenda*, 130. Cf. FLETT, *Witness*, 154: ‘The ‘final report appears to have been of Newbigin’s own invention.’ See also WAINWRIGHT, *Newbigin: A Theological Life*, 165.

¹⁶⁶ See NEWBIGIN, ‘The Trinity as Public Truth’, 2, where he describes his own discovery of the significance of the doctrine of the Trinity for missionary theology. Cf. also DODDS, *Mission of the Triune God*, 164-166, who contends that ‘Newbigin’s usage of *missio Dei* ... draws on the doctrine of the Trinity and is determined by that doctrine’ (italics in the original).

¹⁶⁷ Cf. GOHEEN, *As the Father Has Sent Me*, 115.

¹⁶⁸ GOHEEN, *Church and Its Vocation*, 70: ‘Any trinitarian understanding of the *missio Dei* that does not make redemptive history the primary context for the word “participation” or “sending” is not in line with Newbigin’s understanding’ (italics in the original).

Ephesians 1:10).¹⁶⁹ The history of ‘redemption’ cannot be separated from the ‘whole story of mankind.’ Mission is witnessing ‘to him who is sovereign over history,’ who revealed His character and will in Christ, who in His work precipitated ‘the final issue for all mankind.’ The new order of God’s reign has come in Christ. In Him, God presents humanity ‘with the possibility of receiving or rejecting the end for which he created all things.’¹⁷⁰ The New Testament presents Jesus as the beloved Son of the Father, whose ‘coming’ was the event, chosen by the Father, ‘to bring all things to the point of decision, to the issue of judgment and salvation.’ The ‘Son and those whom he has made his brethren are sent into the world not as the agents of the Father’s rule, but as the witnesses of it.’¹⁷¹

Jesus announced the ‘coming of the reign of God,’¹⁷² both as a present reality and as a future event. The ‘powers’ of the Kingdom were ‘at work’ in the midst of the people whom Jesus addressed (cf. Matthew 12:28), although it was still hidden from the naked eye.¹⁷³ All this did not end when Jesus returned to heaven. He intended the church to continue His work,¹⁷⁴ because of which He sent the disciples in the same way as He was

¹⁶⁹ NEWBIGIN, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 21.

¹⁷⁰ NEWBIGIN, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 26-27. The gospel ‘refers to the beginning and end of all things and therefore to the real meaning of all that happens. It follows that there cannot be an absolute separation between the history of our redemption, and the sacred history of the Old and New Testaments, the story of the Church and the whole story of mankind.’

¹⁷¹ NEWBIGIN, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 40. NEWBIGIN, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 42-45, discusses the positioning of the church in the framework of the *missio Dei* in the context of the tumultuous 1960s, the period in which the worldwide church was confronted with all kinds of questions related to the revolutionary movements that were active in several parts of the world. Newbiggin points to the difficulty to discern whether or not these movements and their actions can be interpreted as related to the Kingdom of God. They ‘are potentially bearers both of good and of evil.’ Cf. NEWBIGIN, *Open Secret*, 89, where the context is no longer the tumultuous time of the 1960s. Here he points out that the ‘Christian faith is a faith regarding the meaning and end of the human story as a whole,’ and that therefore, ‘this faith cannot be confessed except in the context of the actual secular history of the present hour.’ This calls for ‘a provisional interpretation of the meaning of contemporary secular events.’ GOHEEN, *As the Father Has Sent Me*, 132-134, observes that Newbiggin unfortunately did ‘not enlarge’ all issues related to this subject. He did not ‘provide direction for understanding how the good and evil can be discerned.’ He did not ‘offer concrete criteria’ for the needed interpretation of the actual history.

¹⁷² NEWBIGIN, *Open Secret*, 21.

¹⁷³ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 105.

¹⁷⁴ NEWBIGIN, *Open Secret*, 46: Over against the widely held view that Jesus expected the end to come soon, and that He thus could never have intended to form an institution that would continue to exist, Newbiggin states that the earliest New Testament documents, written even before

sent by the Father. Jesus took them up ‘into that saving mission for which [He] was anointed and sent in the power of the Spirit.’¹⁷⁵ The same Spirit is given to the disciples as a gift and guarantee of the last days. He ‘makes His presence known by unmistakable signs, of which the greatest is that charity which builds up the Body,’ thus founding the fellowship of the church. This fellowship is ‘a prolepsis into history of the perfect fellowship of the Kingdom of God.’ It is ‘a foretaste of the perfect life’ that is to come.¹⁷⁶ The Spirit, then, is ‘the active,’ the ‘real agent of mission,’ going ‘before the church in its missionary journey.’ In the Spirit, the disciples receive the ‘advance installment that will make them the living evidences of the reality that is promised.’ Therefore, what is given to the church ‘is not a command, but a promise. The presence of the Spirit will make them witnesses.’¹⁷⁷ This also reveals the proper relation between mission and the Spirit: His witness is primary; the part of the church ‘is a secondary instrumental part.’¹⁷⁸

3.7.3 *Mission and Kingdom*

Mission, as already mentioned above, has its place in the context of the rule of God, and connects to ‘the whole of what God is doing in the secular history of the world.’¹⁷⁹ At the beginning of the gospel, the Son of God came ‘forth to announce that the long-awaited reign of God is at hand.’ The Kingdom of God was ‘both revealed and hidden in the words and works of Jesus,’ specifically ‘in his cross and resurrection.’ Ever since, it must be ‘proclaimed to all the nations by those to whom its secret has been entrusted.’ They are to be witnesses of the Kingdom in the power of the Spirit, ‘who bears this witness in and through’ them. Mission, therefore, is ‘faith in action,’ in that it is lived in

the gospels, attest to the existence of the church that knows that its foundation is Christ. The earliest letters show no traces at all of ‘the idea that the existence of this church is the result of an improvisation undertaken to repair the breach made by the collapse of the original expectation.’ On the contrary, it is important to take account of the fact that Jesus instituted Holy Supper (the eucharist), ordering His disciples to use it until He Himself would use it again with them in the Kingdom of His Father (see Matthew 26:17-30, parallel texts and also I Corinthians 11:23-26). Newbigin refers also to the great prayer in John 17, where Jesus, ‘in consecrating himself to the Father, consecrates his disciples to be sent out into the world to continue his mission.’

¹⁷⁵ NEWBIGIN, *Open Secret*, 48.

¹⁷⁶ NEWBIGIN, *The Reunion of the Church*, 98-100.

¹⁷⁷ NEWBIGIN, *Open Secret*, 56-58. Newbigin refers here to the biblical word “arrābon” that designates ‘a cash deposit paid as a pledge of the full amount to be paid later.’ He uses this term regularly.

¹⁷⁸ NEWBIGIN, ‘Missions and the Work of the Holy Spirit’, 21-22.

¹⁷⁹ NEWBIGIN, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 21.

all circumstances, showing that the Kingdom indeed ‘has drawn near.’¹⁸⁰ This nearness ‘is the presence of its foretaste, its firstfruit, its pledge (*arrabôn*) in the Spirit,’ showing both its present reality and the promise of what is still to come.¹⁸¹ In the church, the ‘idea of what it means to be saved’ is made apprehensible. A ‘foretaste of what Jesus is offering to the world’ is made visible, and ‘available to others.’¹⁸² This includes the social aspects of the gospel as well. The church ‘is to be the humble servant of Jesus for the sake of the neighbours,’¹⁸³ not as ‘a sort of optional extra – or even as an inferior substitute for the work of passing on the good news of salvation.’ It is clear for Newbigin: ‘Action for justice is salvation in action.’¹⁸⁴ This way to stress the connection between mission and Kingdom is complemented in Newbigin’s designation of the church as the hermeneutic of the gospel. The message of the Kingdom is not a matter of ‘abstract nouns’ (for example social progress, liberation, justice) or a mere concept. It is a reality, made visible and tangible ‘in a community in which the first fruits of the Kingdom are already being enjoyed and shared.’ The church is to be ‘the living hermeneutic of the message of the Kingdom which it preaches.’¹⁸⁵ Only by being such a hermeneutic of the gospel, will the church’s message ‘become credible for those whose entire mental training has conditioned them to believe that the real world is the world that can be satisfactorily explained and managed without the hypothesis of God.’¹⁸⁶

3.7.4 Kingdom and Salvation-History

The triad of foretaste, firstfruit and sign used by Newbigin sheds light on the eschatological place and role of the mission of the church in the establishment of the

¹⁸⁰ NEWBIGIN, *Open Secret*, 31-39.

¹⁸¹ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 118-120 (italics in the original). Newbigin remarks that the church is ‘not the source of the witness; rather, it is the locus of witness.’ Throughout his writings, Newbigin uses regularly the triad of foretaste, firstfruit, and sign (or instrument), sometimes in a slightly different form, to stress the missionary nature of the church. The other words he uses are agent instead of instrument, and first fruits instead of foretaste; also the word *arrabon* and deposit are used instead of foretaste or first fruits.

¹⁸² NEWBIGIN, ‘Jesus, Saviour of the World’, 156-157.

¹⁸³ NEWBIGIN, *Good Shepherd*, 89.

¹⁸⁴ NEWBIGIN, *Good Shepherd*, 109.

¹⁸⁵ NEWBIGIN, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 39-43. For the social implications of being a sign of the Kingdom, see 45-70. Cf. also NEWBIGIN, ‘Does Society Still Need the Parish Church?’, 60.

¹⁸⁶ NEWBIGIN, ‘Pastor’s Opportunities’, 42.

Kingdom.¹⁸⁷ The church is firstfruit in the present, and sign, pointing to the future. Also, the presence and activity of the Spirit is crucial here. As Acts 1:8 points out, the disciples will receive the Spirit as ‘the foretaste, the pledge, the guarantee of the kingdom.’ The Spirit will make them living witnesses of the reality of the gospel ‘to all nations, that the full reality of God’s victorious reign is on the way.’¹⁸⁸ God’s reign of which the Bible speaks ‘in terms of the breaking in of the age to come’ has been revealed into ‘this present age.’ But it is still the age to come; the ‘present age has not ended,’ although ‘the powers of the age to come really are at work.’ The two ages ‘overlap.’ They ‘lie alongside one another,’¹⁸⁹ and this overlap is to be understood in an ‘eschatological’ sense.¹⁹⁰ The ‘end of all things’ is held back ‘until witness has been borne to the whole world’ about Christ and His Kingdom.¹⁹¹ The church lives ‘in the new day’ and knows ‘that Jesus already reigns,’ although in a hidden way, and uses the time until the coming of Christ to bear witness to Him. The ‘delay’ is ‘a sign of God’s patience.’¹⁹²

3.7.5 Mission and Church

It is ‘theologically indefensible’ to separate mission and church from one another. A ‘church that is not “the church in mission” is no church at all.’¹⁹³ The church exists by mission.¹⁹⁴ It is its being, and it loses its *esse* and not just its *bene esse* when it ceases ‘to be a mission.’¹⁹⁵ The church must acknowledge that it is ‘sent into the world’ as an

¹⁸⁷ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 86-87: The church is chosen by God ‘to be the bearer of God’s saving purpose for his whole world, to be the sign and agent and the firstfruits of his blessed kingdom which is for all.’

¹⁸⁸ NEWBIGIN, *Open Secret*, 58.

¹⁸⁹ NEWBIGIN, *Household*, 119.

¹⁹⁰ NEWBIGIN, *Household*, 125.

¹⁹¹ NEWBIGIN, *Household*, 135.

¹⁹² NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 111.

¹⁹³ NEWBIGIN, *Open Secret*, 1-2.

¹⁹⁴ In his publications, Newbigan quotes regularly the saying of Emil Brunner that ‘the Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning.’ The quote of Brunner is part of an impressive paragraph: ‘Mission work does not arise from any arrogance in the Christian Church; mission is its cause and its life. The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission, there is no Church; and where there is neither Church nor mission, there is no faith. [...] Mission, Gospel preaching, is the spreading out of the fire which Christ has thrown upon the earth. He who does not propagate this fire shows that he is not burning. He who burns propagates the fire’ (BRUNNER, *The Word and the World*, 108). For the quote by Newbigan, see amongst other places, NEWBIGIN, *Household*, 142; NEWBIGIN, *One Body*, 42; and NEWBIGIN, ‘Sermon Anniversary Tambaram’, 329.

¹⁹⁵ NEWBIGIN, *Household*, 143.

‘expedition sent to the ends of the earth in Christ’s name.’¹⁹⁶ It is the *ecclesia tou Theou*, the ‘assembly of God,’ to which God draws all peoples ‘by the power of the Spirit in the allegiance of Christ.’¹⁹⁷ At the background of this lays the doctrine of election, the ‘very heart of Newbigin’s ecclesiology.’¹⁹⁸ God chooses ‘certain individuals and groups’ for His purposes. Being chosen does not mean ‘privilege,’¹⁹⁹ but ‘missionary responsibility.’²⁰⁰ It means ‘to be the means of bringing salvation to men,’ to be God’s ‘witnesses to the world.’ God ‘works by this method of election, of choosing one to be the means of bringing in the next.’ He establishes ‘a bridgehead within the human race from which He can work.’²⁰¹ The church is that chosen people of God, to be ‘the bearer of God’s saving purpose for his whole world.’²⁰² This understanding of election is fundamental for the understanding of the relation between church and mission.

Ecclesiology and missiology belong together,²⁰³ also because the nature of the church is determined by its eschatological perspective. The church is the ‘provisional incorporation of mankind into Jesus Christ.’ Christians abide in Christ, ‘as branches abide in the vine,’ but at the same time they are ‘being sent as the continuation of the sending of Jesus into the world,’ to ‘prepare the world for His coming.’²⁰⁴ A true understanding

¹⁹⁶ NEWBIGIN, *Trinitarian Doctrine*, 12.

¹⁹⁷ NEWBIGIN, ‘Basis and Forms of Unity’, 7-8, where Newbigin points out that the ‘noun’ *ecclesia* can never be used ‘in isolation from the action of God which is the source of it.’ The subjective genitive describes who is active.

Newbigin refers repeatedly to this, following the exposition of Karl Schmidt about *εκκλησια* in *TDNT*. See e.g., NEWBIGIN, *The Household of God*, 26-28; NEWBIGIN, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 46; NEWBIGIN, *Open Secret*, 16.

¹⁹⁸ NIKOLAJSEN, *Distinctive Identity*, 33. Newbigin was constantly aware of the danger of misunderstanding the doctrine of election. It was incorrectly seen as a special privilege of the elect. Cf. NEWBIGIN, *Household*, 100; and also NEWBIGIN, *Open Secret*, 17-18, and NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 84.

¹⁹⁹ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 84.

²⁰⁰ Cf. NEWBIGIN, *Household*, 132: When the church thinks of its ‘election in terms of spiritual privilege rather than missionary responsibility,’ it will come under God’s ‘merciful judgment as Israel did.’

²⁰¹ NEWBIGIN, ‘Why Study the Old Testament’, 72-73.

²⁰² NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 86-87. For a further discussion on Newbigin’s thoughts on election and mission, see extensively GOHEEN, *As the Father Has Sent Me*, 167-170; HUNSBERGER, *Bearing the Witness*, 82-112; and NIKOLAJSEN, *Distinctive Identity*, 33-41.

²⁰³ See already NEWBIGIN, *Faith for this World*, 82. Cf. NIKOLAJSEN, *Distinctive Identity*, 40.

²⁰⁴ NEWBIGIN, ‘Form and Structure’, 129 (italics in the original). Cf. already NEWBIGIN, *Household*, 148. See also NEWBIGIN, ‘On Being the Church for the World’, 30-31.

of the 'eschatological perspective' leads to 'missionary obedience.'²⁰⁵ This obedience 'is rooted in the gospel itself,'²⁰⁶ for there is a 'profound inner necessity which leads Christians to bear witness to Jesus.'²⁰⁷ There is a 'logic of mission.'²⁰⁸ Becoming 'a participant' in Christ's 'risen life' implies 'to share his ongoing mission to the world. It is to be baptized into his mission.'²⁰⁹ In all this, the Spirit 'gives Christ's people the word to speak,' granting 'signs and wonders to accompany the ministry of the apostles, as that of Jesus Himself.'²¹⁰ Christ's mission is the model.²¹¹ The church is to continue the ministry that Jesus began in His life,²¹² both in its way of life, and in its words and deeds, to prevent the notion that the proclamation of the Kingdom is 'empty verbiage' and to make it 'credible.'²¹³ Also in this respect, the church is a 'sign, instrument and foretaste of the reign of God present in Christ for that place' whereas it at the same time points 'to the future which God has promised.' The church is an 'instrument' in God's hand, doing 'his will for that place,' manifesting in today's hard reality 'a genuine foretaste of the peace and joy of God's reign.'²¹⁴

When the Spirit equips the church 'to continue the work of Jesus,'²¹⁵ this is to be understood theologically: The church 'is not the author of the witness.' The Church 'is the place where the Spirit is present as witness.' Witnessing is not 'an accomplishment of the Church.' It is 'a promise to the Church.' Mission does not start because of a

²⁰⁵ NEWBIGIN, *Household*, 135: The 'Church can be rightly understood only in an eschatological perspective.'

²⁰⁶ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 116. Newbigin does not deny that speaking of 'obedience to a command' and answering to 'the missionary mandate' has its 'justification.' But that understanding 'tends to make mission a burden rather than a joy.' The New Testament shows that mission 'begins with a kind of explosion of joy.' It was 'inconceivable' for Paul 'that he should keep silent. "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1Cor. 9:16).' And nowhere do the apostles tell their readers 'that they have a duty' to proclaim the gospel.

²⁰⁷ NEWBIGIN, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 37.

²⁰⁸ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 116, chapter-title.

²⁰⁹ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 117.

²¹⁰ NEWBIGIN, *Household*, 138. Cf. also NEWBIGIN, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 33-40; NEWBIGIN, *Foolishness*, 127-128.

²¹¹ NEWBIGIN, *Mission in Christ's Way*, 1.

²¹² Cf. NEWBIGIN, *Journey into Joy*, 36: 'The thing which Jesus began to do must go on.'

²¹³ NEWBIGIN, 'Henry Martyn Lectures', 99. Cf. also NEWBIGIN, *Mission in Christ's Way*, 12-13.

²¹⁴ NEWBIGIN, 'What is a local church truly united?', 118.

²¹⁵ NEWBIGIN, *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, 12-13. Cf. NEWBIGIN, *Journey into Joy*, 46.

‘decision *by* the Church,’ but because of what happened ‘*to* the Church.’²¹⁶ The Spirit ‘goes before the church in its missionary journey,’ and the church follows Him.²¹⁷ The church is ‘the locus of the mission.’ Through the power of the Spirit, God draws people to Christ, making them ‘part of a community’ that bears ‘witness to the real meaning and goal of history.’ This witnessing is accomplished by their life, in which ‘the presence of a new reality’ becomes manifest.²¹⁸ All this shows the missionary identity of the church that is defined in both its relation to God and to the world. It ‘does not exist for itself but for God and for the world that Jesus came to save.’²¹⁹

3.7.6 *The Involvement of the Whole Church*

The whole life of the church in all its dimensions is determined by this missionary identity: It witnesses to the new reality that has broken in because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The church, the ‘community’ of people who ‘are deeply rooted in Christ as their absolute Lord and Savior,’ reflects in its life the ‘new reality’ in Christ, and challenges ‘by word and behavior’ its surroundings.²²⁰ The distinct way of life that corresponds with the proclamation of the gospel raises all kinds of questions among the people around the church, opening up possibilities to explain and proclaim the message of the gospel. ‘The words explain the deeds, and the deeds validate the words.’²²¹ This implies that a church that is not living ‘a life which corresponds with’ the proclaimed message ‘closes’ by its life ‘the doors which its preaching would open.’²²²

²¹⁶ NEWBIGIN, *Sign of the Kingdom*, 38 (italics in the original). Newbigin used several characterizations to elucidate the dynamic relation between the (work of the) Spirit and mission. See e.g., NEWBIGIN, *Context and Conversion*, 6: Mission is ‘a spin-off from Pentecost’; NEWBIGIN, ‘Future of Missions’, 218: Mission is ‘the over-spill’ of the victory of Christ, the agent of which is ‘the Holy Spirit who is the living presence of the Kingdom in foretaste’; NEWBIGIN, ‘Cross-currents’, 148: ‘Evangelism is an overflow from Pentecost’; NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 116: ‘The mission of the Church in the pages of the New Testament is more like the fallout from a vast explosion, a radioactive fallout which is not lethal but life-giving.’

²¹⁷ NEWBIGIN, *Open Secret*, 61.

²¹⁸ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 119. Cf. NEWBIGIN, ‘Toespraak’, 99: The initiative and strategy for mission ‘are not in the hands of the church. The Spirit is the witness and the strategy is in His hands. The church is only the locus of His gracious work.’

²¹⁹ NEWBIGIN, ‘Does Society Still Need the Parish Church’, 53.

²²⁰ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 136. Cf. NEWBIGIN, *Unfinished Agenda*, 203: The ‘entire membership of the Church in their secular occupations are called to be signs of his lordship in every area of life.’

²²¹ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 137.

²²² NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 140.

The local church is the hermeneutic of the gospel. Its message will be credible when it is lived by a ‘congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.’ Jesus ‘did not write a book but formed a community.’ This community is ‘the place where men and women and children find that the gospel gives them the framework of understanding, the “lenses” through which they are able to understand and cope with the world.’ It is a community of praise and of truth that is involved in the concerns of the neighborhood, where the members exercise their priesthood (cf. I Peter 2:5 and 9). As the community of the new social order in Christ, it is a community of hope. It exists ‘for the sake of those who are not members, as sign, instrument, and foretaste of God’s redeeming grace for the whole life of society.’²²³ The ‘whole life of the Church’ is, thus, ‘the visible means through which the Holy Spirit carries on His mission to the world.’ All of the life of the church has a ‘missionary *dimension*, though not all of it has mission as its primary *intention*.’²²⁴

This missionary dimension applies not only to the communal life of the church. The most important missionary encounter with secular society takes place in the daily life of the membership of the church. The primary role of the church in this encounter is not ‘in the corporate action of the churches as organized bodies in the political or cultural fields,’ but it is exercised ‘through the action of Christian lay people, playing their roles as citizens,’ who are ‘deeply involved in the secular world.’²²⁵ The church, therefore, ‘must equip its members for active and informed participation in the public life of society in such a way that the Christian faith shapes that participation.’²²⁶ Newbigin emphatically points to this, because the ‘entire membership of the Church in their secular occupations are called to be signs of [Christ’s] lordship in every area of life.’²²⁷

3.7.7 Results

Summarizing Newbigin’s thoughts regarding the object of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Newbigin’s thoughts about the theological foundation of mission correspond with the conceptual trinitarian thinking as it was formulated at the Willingen Meeting, afterwards termed as the *missio Dei* concept. The direct connection of this concept to the history of redemption points to the universal purpose of God with the whole

²²³ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 222-233. Cf. also NEWBIGIN, ‘Vision for the City’, 40-41.

²²⁴ NEWBIGIN, *One Body*, 21 (italics in the original).

²²⁵ NEWBIGIN, ‘Baptism, the Church and koinonia’, 127.

²²⁶ NEWBIGIN, *Truth to Tell*, 81.

²²⁷ NEWBIGIN, *Unfinished Agenda*, 203.

world and the whole of mankind as it became manifest in the coming of Christ. There is a Christocentric focus: In sending His Son, God confronted the world with the final issue of judgment and salvation, presenting the possibility to either accept or reject His final purpose with all things, namely to sum up all things in Christ. Christ fulfilled His mission throughout His life and in His death and resurrection, and still continues it: He sent His disciples in the same way as He was sent by the Father.

2. The Christocentric focus of the *missio Dei* concept is directly linked to its final purpose, namely the Kingdom of God: Christ came to announce it and to witness to it. In Him it came near and became a reality, be it still hidden. He founded it in the fulfillment of His mission, and rules, after His ascension, from the right hand of the Father, until His coming back in glory. This ruling until His return also implies that His mission did not stop when He returned to His Father. When He sent His disciples, He empowered them with the Spirit, the active and real agent of mission, to be able to continue His mission in the time between His ascension and His return.
3. The Kingdom as the final goal of the *missio Dei* concept exists both as a present reality and as a future promise. This has direct ecclesiological implications, defining the place and function of the church that manifests in its existence both the “already” and the “not yet” element: The church is on the one hand firstfruit and foretaste in the present, and on the other hand it is sign, pointing to the future. The church witnesses to the Kingdom, not only in proclaiming it but first of all by living it. The church is the community where the love of God in Christ is shown in the practice of daily life, and where it is made available to others in all its aspects, including all social implications.
4. The Spirit has been given to the church as the *arrabôn*, the foretaste, the firstfruit and pledge of the Kingdom, constituting the witness of the church. The church, therefore, is not the agent, but the locus of mission. It is God Himself, who is present and active in the church, in and through the Spirit, making the church to what it is in the overlap of time. Its existence is proof of the real beginning of the new age (the Kingdom), and simultaneously it is the promise of the definite and eternal coming of this new age.
5. The period between the first and second coming of Christ is, seen within the context of the *missio Dei* concept, to be understood as time given to the church to witness to the real meaning of history, as revealed in Christ’s life, death, resurrection and ascension, and as it will come to completion at His return. The church, in its existence between the times is the proper hermeneutic of the gospel, being the

congregation where the gospel is believed and lived, challenging public life with the gospel. It is a community of praise and truth, priestly involvement in the concerns of the neighborhood, living in a mutual responsibility, showing the reality and the hope of the Kingdom.

6. The church's identity, therefore, is missionary. It does not exist for itself but for the sake of those outside (the non members), as foretaste and sign and as such as the instrument of God's Kingdom. The identity of the church is founded in God Himself. The church and its mission are part of and participating in God's mission. The *missio Dei* concept provides the missionary identity of the church with a solid theological foundation.
7. Mission belongs to the proper being (the *esse*) of the church, because the source of the existence of the church lays in God's missionary action on behalf of the world. Therefore, there is no church where there is no mission. The church is *ecclesia tou Theou*. The public assembly to which God draws all peoples. The church is incorporated into God's mission, chosen and called (i.e. elected) to be the bearer of God's purpose for the world. In this, the church is a continuation of the mission of Christ. It is the provisional incorporation of mankind in Christ.
8. In the church, people experience communion with the Triune God, but they are at the same time being sent into the world. That is where they live, and where the permanent encounter with the secular world takes place. The primary role of the church in the encounter with the world, therefore, is exercised through the life and actions of Christian lay people, who have to deal with society on a daily basis. The whole life of the church, in all its aspects, both in the common and singular existence of its members, cannot be viewed separately from the missionary identity of the church. The church embodies and lives the message of the gospel, thus providing its witness with credibility. The whole life of the church and its members has a missionary dimension.

3.8 Theological Results and Evaluation – Founding the Missionary Identity of the Church

In this section, the results of the investigation so far are brought together, returning to the central question of this chapter, i.e., how the contribution of reformed missiologists relates to the international missiological ecclesiological discourse? Do they differ or do they show coherence with that international discourse? In view of the necessary assessment of the development in missionary ecclesiological thinking, it is important to identify and evaluate their theological position with regard to the central themes that came forward in the previous chapter.

3.8.1 *Missio Dei*

The breakdown of Western superiority in civilization and science, with its negative implications on theology because of its indebtedness to the thoughts of the Enlightenment, necessitated a new theological framework for mission. This was provided in the concept of the *missio Dei*. All authors discussed elaborate, each in their own way, the understanding of this new concept that substituted the former foundation of mission. Bavinck was active in a period in which the last rays of Christendom were still present. He was fully aware of the changes that were taking place, both politically and theologically and he acknowledged the need for the development of a new paradigm. His theology forms a bridge between the previous and the new paradigm. Assessing the foundational formulations of Willigen, he recognizes their correspondence with the trinitarian line of thought that was essential for the reformed approach of missiology. Without using the direct formulations, and also without internalizing the concept in its totality into his theology, he incorporates the foundational theological thinking. His contribution is important: It not only reveals his ability to constantly update his own thinking in incorporating new developments, but it also shows the flexibility that is characteristic and inherent to reformed theology. Bavinck connected the new foundational lines of thought to his missionary theology.²²⁸

The connection in Kraemer's thoughts between the *missio Dei* concept and his specific dialectical understanding of revelation, shows that Kraemer has processed the essential *missio Dei* thinking in an independent way, in which the emphasis on the salvific initiative of God is supplemented with God's salvific activity. Both in His revelation and in the execution of His mission, God is the first Actor, actively confronting the world with His saving acts in Christ. This implies that revelation cannot exist without apostolic activity. Revelation is not a solidified document, but a dynamic act in which God calls humanity to respond. Through the direct connection with the dynamic revelation of God's saving acts in Christ, Kraemer gives the fundamental and supplemented *missio Dei* concept its proper place and function in theology, identifying all theology in its deepest sense as missionary.

²²⁸ Reformed theology is, after all, not static, but always theology in development, seeking to translate its fundamentals into the dynamic contemporary context. The missionary and ecumenical experience made Bavinck to the theologian he was. See VISSER, *Heart*, 102: Bavinck brought reformed missiology 'into dialogical encounter with other missiological schools of thought.' He 'developed his missiology not only in a spirit of deep loyalty to and gratitude for the riches and resources of his own tradition but also in a mood of constructive criticism and ecumenical commitment and openness.'

Verkuyl's missiological thoughts reveal his search for a translation of the *missio Dei* concept, to which he fully agrees, fitting to the contemporary context. His involvement in the social and political developments in his days, plays a clear role in this. He welcomes the attention for these matters on the agenda of ecclesial meetings, for they touch substantial aspects of the gospel itself. It is impossible to divide the gospel into a spiritual and worldly component, or, even worse, to see them as counterparts of one another. God's aim in the *missio Dei* is not a partial but a complete recreation of life in all its aspects. Therefore, the four dimensions of the communication of the gospel (witness, *koinonia*, *diakonia* and the promotion of justice) cannot be separated from one another. Either the gospel is communicated in its totality, or it is violated in its essence. Verkuyl gives the *missio Dei* an undeniable holistic color, emphatically stressing within the reformed framework of theologizing not just a single aspect but the total width of the gospel.

In Newbigin's elaboration, the *missio Dei* concept becomes a tangible reality in that he connects it directly to God's actions in the history of salvation as they became manifest in Christ. The *missio Dei* concept is not an abstract theological formulation but the key to understand God's acting in history, in its total salvific significance. Because of this Christocentric focus, the concept is more than just the theological source, background and foundation of the entire history of redemption: It is at the same time the explanation of the continuation of it, for Christ continues His mission until the end of days in sending His disciples in the same way as He was sent by His Father.

All this leads to the conclusion that the foundational thoughts that constitute the *missio Dei* concept, are basic to all of them. They acknowledge them as foundational for the whole of missionary theology. This shows that this way of theologizing is no *Fremdkörper* in the reformed context. It fits in well and corresponds with the reformed view in which a trinitarian foundation and approach of mission is characteristic.²²⁹

3.8.2 Mission and Kingdom

The apparent inability to build a better future, as had become obvious in the atrocities of two World Wars, also forced theology to reorient itself to the question of the future. What would the future look like, and – above all – how would it come about? The newly formulated *missio Dei* points to the Kingdom of God as the purpose of God's mission. This theme is determinative for all authors. They discuss it in their elaboration of the essence and direction in which mission is to be understood. It is clear for all of them that this Kingdom does not become a reality because of human endeavors but because

²²⁹ Cf. section 3.4.2 above, footnote 38.

God acts. He builds His Kingdom, in Christ, and through the Spirit. This implies that the focus of mission, as the continuation of the mission of God, is also the Kingdom. All authors describe the Kingdom in terms of the new people of God, living today out of the future reality of the Kingdom, or, even more directly: It is the people that today lives the future Kingdom. The future determines life in the present. This is the leading thought in the expositions of all authors, when they discuss the relation of the Kingdom with the church. Bavinck sees the church as a manifestation of the Kingdom. Kraemer speaks of a colony of heaven in which the new beginning manifests itself in a provisional form. Verkuyl calls the church the messianic community that shows the first signs of the coming Kingdom. Newbigin uses his well-known triad when he describes the church as firstfruit, foretaste and sign of the Kingdom. There is, thus, a general understanding. The starting point is the same. The church as the provisional form of the Kingdom has in its being and life an alternative character, determined by the standards of the Kingdom. It is a strange body of new people, living out in the present the future reality of the Kingdom.

The actual context in which the respective authors are active determines the way in which they explain the content and the different implications of the Kingdom, but there is a basic agreement about the comprehensiveness of the gospel. Word and deed belong together. They do not replace each other, but they complement one another. Deeds are also words and are not to be interpreted as mere preparatory acts to pave the way for the real work, namely the verbal proclamation of the gospel. It is important to state this, for it shows that a comprehensive approach is part and parcel of the reformed perspective on the Kingdom of God, and because of that, of the reformed understanding of mission. When compared to one another, Bavinck and Kraemer, do stress the need for a comprehensive approach, pointing to the importance of both words and deeds as aspects of the proclamation of the gospel. They were, however, not directly confronted with the tension-full situations that put so many political and social issues on the agenda of society, politics and the church as was the case in the 1960s and 1970s. Verkuyl found himself in the middle of these issues when he attended the successive international missionary meetings during this impactful period. This explains his strong emphasis on the totality of the gospel of the Kingdom, in the proclamation of which he distinguishes the four dimensions of witness, *koinonia*, *diakonia*, and the promotion of justice. Prioritizing one of the aspects because of the actual context may be needed, but this may not result in neglecting or denying the other dimensions. The omission of either one of the dimensions violates and compromises the total gospel. The Kingdom cannot be limited to just one of the different dimensions. Within the international ecumenical movement as it developed in the 1960s and 1970s, where different voices

demanded a radical and sometimes even revolutionary approach,²³⁰ Verkuyl maintains a comprehensive approach in which the reformed perspective of the totality of salvation is decisive. In his distinction of the four dimensions of (the proclamation of) the gospel of the Kingdom, he brings essential components into the discourse on missionary ecclesiology, thus helping the discourse in the search for compatibility in changing contexts. For Newbiggin, all these elements are also essential. The gospel of the Kingdom points to the reality of the Kingdom in all its aspects. The social component of the Kingdom is not an optional extra next to, or a substitute for the proclamation of the gospel. It belongs to the essence of the Kingdom. The church, in being the hermeneutic of the gospel, makes this new reality visible and tangible in its daily life and actions in the actual context in which it exists.

The ecclesiological implication of all this is that the church is to be understood in its Kingdom-significance. As a visible and tangible manifestation of the totality of the Kingdom, the church exists in the world, showing the new reality that is grounded in the death and resurrection of Christ. The church is, seen through this Kingdom-lens, God's new people that lives today, embodying the future. This is made visible and tangible in that the church seeks to live according to the rules of the Kingdom. It gives shape to the new life that is given by Christ and to which He calls. The life of the church in this Kingdom-manner is, in the contemporary context, a sign (*sèmeion*) of the total and final reality of the eternal Kingdom. The church shows today what tomorrow will bring, in all the Kingdom dimensions. The church exists in and for the (sake of the) world, serving the world, both missionarily and ministerially. It proclaims in word and deed the new reality in Christ. It shows that this new reality in Christ is constitutive of an alternative community (*koinonia*) in which the love of Christ is the uniting dynamic. It lives in the world as servant, continuing the *diakonia* of Christ. It seeks the welfare of the people outside as well in its endeavor to promote justice. All this underscores the fact that the church is, indeed, the hermeneutic of the gospel.

3.8.3 Kingdom and Salvation-History

As a direct consequence of the collapse of optimistic thinking that had not only dominated society and science, but also theological thinking with regard to the "last things", the call for a new approach to eschatology became urgent. Here also, the *missio Dei* concept, with its emphasis on God's direct involvement, helps to find directions that bring the discussion back to solid ground. All authors discussed point in their own way

²³⁰ Cf. e.g., the contribution of Hoekendijk; see Chapter Two, sections 2.4.1, 2.5.1, 2.6.1, and 2.7.1.

to the eschatological situation in which the church in its Kingdom-perspective exists. The congruence is clear: The church is a manifestation of the Kingdom, albeit in an imperfect state, because the final and complete manifestation awaits the definite return of Christ. The already mentioned terms evidently reveal this line of thought. When Bavinck speaks of the manifestation of the Kingdom, the elements of the “already” and the “not yet” are clearly present. The same applies to Kraemer’s designation of the church as the colony of heaven with its provisional shape, to Verkuyl’s definition of the church as messianic community showing the first signs (*sèmeia*) of the coming Kingdom, and to Newbigin’s well-known triad of the church as firstfruit, foretaste and sign of the Kingdom. This eschatological perspective positions the church in its proper place within salvation-history and provides the missiological ecclesiological discourse with important elements. The church lives in its missionary involvement in the developing progress of the *missio Dei*, between the provisional inauguration of the Kingdom in Christ’s fulfilled work (His life, death, resurrection and ascension), and the full and eternal implementation of the Kingdom, as it will be established at Christ’s return. The church exists in this “in between” period. In this existing between the times, it is important to stress both the indicative and the imperative of the existence of the church. The indicative underscores the reality in the present: The church is the community of those who belong to the Kingdom, because they belong to Christ. This community experiences “already” the reality of the Kingdom, i.e. the reality of the salvation in Christ in all its aspects. The existence of the church is proof of the real beginning of the Kingdom. The church is indeed, in the present, firstfruit and foretaste of the future. The imperative of the existence of the church, however, applies also completely. There is also the “not yet”. The purpose of the *missio Dei* has as its perspective the eternal and definite establishment of the Kingdom. God is working toward that definite and final moment and in this acting of God, the church has its place. In and through the church God continues and extends His movement of love toward the world. The “not yet” element puts the existence and the life, words and deeds of the church under the right tension, pointing to its place in this ongoing work of God. The existence of the church is not only proof of the reality of the Kingdom. It is also a witness to the Kingdom. The existence of the church is (to be) a visible and tangible proclamation of the Kingdom. The statement of Willigen applies undeniably in its full sense: “There is no participation in Christ, without participation in His mission to the world. That by which the Church receives its existence is that by which it is also given its world mission.”²³¹ This fundamental connection of the church with the *missio Dei*, in which God really is the first and

²³¹ ‘Missionary Calling’, 3.

primal Actor, keeps the church in its relation to the world in the right perspective, and under the right tension. Building the Kingdom is not the responsibility of the church. Or, to put it differently, it is not the church's task to save the world. That is what God does. The church is not the agent but the locus of mission. God founded the Kingdom, in Christ, and He will finalize it at the Day of the Lord. Within the perspective of the *missio Dei* the church witnesses to this gospel-reality, by living its belief in its Lord. The church is indeed the hermeneutic of the gospel, challenging public life by living the gospel.

3.8.4 Mission and Church

The above-mentioned theological principles imply unmistakably that there is a direct and inseparable connection between mission and church. All authors point that out in their respective contributions. Because of the fundamental position of the church within the *missio Dei*, mission is a determinative and even decisive factor for ecclesiological thinking. The existence of the church is not an end in itself. The church is part of God's mission, chosen and called to life by Him, and at the same time being sent into the world, proclaiming and witnessing in word and deed to Christ, through the Spirit, the *arrabōn*. The church, thus, exists to serve the purpose of God in His mission, which is the definite establishment of His Kingdom. In and through the church, God continues His mission to the world. The church is the instrument in God's hand to reach out to the world with the message of His vivifying and liberating grace in Christ. It is God's bridge to the world. The church makes visible and tangible what the vivifying and liberating grace of God brings forth: A new people that lives a new life through and in Christ, in the power of the Spirit. The church lives for the eyes of the world, manifesting the new life and witnessing to it. The conclusion, therefore, is unavoidable: Because the church, both in its existence and in the manifestation of its life (the new life of the Kingdom with its "already" and "not yet" elements), is part of and participating in the *missio Dei*, the identity of the church is determined by and defined within the *missio Dei*. The identity of the church is missionary. Mission is (to be) part of the proper being (the *esse*) of the church. Where there is no mission, there is no church.

3.8.5 The Involvement of the Whole Church

When the identity of the church is missionary, it follows that being involved in this identity is not just a responsibility for a select group of people, specially entrusted with this task because of a special calling. The whole church is actively involved because missionary activity takes place in life in its entirety. The life of the church is a permanent

and living witness of the reality of the gospel in all its aspects. In living the faith, the church, in all its members, shows forth the power of the Kingdom, making visible to the world what it means to live as members of that Kingdom. A preview (foretaste), the firstfruit and the sign of the Kingdom are shown to the world in the life of the church as a whole. The church is, indeed, the hermeneutic of the gospel, and this cannot but apply to all its members and to all of the life of the church. Even when the activities of the church do not have specific missionary intentions, they have missionary dimensions. The entire life of (all the members of) the church, whether in an organized group or in an individual form, is lived before the eyes of the world and has, as such, missionary significance. In the daily encounter with people outside the church, the total membership of the church, both in its communal form as in the daily life of the individual members, embodies the identity of the church.

3.9 Conclusion – Connection to the International Continuing Discourse

Clearly, the contributions of the authors discussed in this chapter are not the only ones within the worldwide church, nor within the reformed family of churches, who were engaged in the theological discourse regarding the missionary identity of the church. The international discourse as presented in the previous chapter shows clearly that the discussion of the missionary identity of the church was and is a theme to which is contributed by a vast number of theologians from all kinds of denominations within the worldwide church. The same fact applies when the focus is more on churches of reformed origin. In the slipstream of the theologizing of Newbigin, several initiatives can be mentioned in which the theological reflection on all kinds of questions related to the missionary encounter of the church with its surrounding culture is continued. Two organizations actually mention his thoughts as inspirational for the start of their existence and for the direction of their thoughts. Both in Great Britain and in the United States of America the *Gospel and Our Culture Network* (GOCN) focused in particular on the theological reflection of all questions related to the missionary identity of the church. In Great Britain, the Network started in the 1980s when Newbigin was asked to organize a major conference pursuing Christian engagement with contemporary Western culture. Newbigin wrote *The Other Side of 1984: Questions to the Churches*, which inaugurated this network. A number of publications followed.²³² Currently, the GOCN in Great Britain is dormant. In the USA the Network started in the same period of time. It

²³² For a further description of this network, see NEWBIGIN, *Unfinished Agenda*, 252-255. See also VAN GELDER & ZSCHEILE, *Missional Church in Perspective*, 38-39. The network apparently ‘floundered during the early 1990s.’

published several volumes in the *Gospel and Our Culture Series*, with a focus on the church in its missionary encounter with the surrounding culture. Authors to be mentioned in this regard are Darrell L. Guder, George R. Hunsberger, Michael W. Goheen, Craig van Gelder, and Stefan Paas. The GOCN recently started a new series of books: *Missiological Engagements*, in which the first volume is a study in which the significance of Newbigin is reassessed.²³³ Regarding all this, the name of David Jacobus Bosch can also be mentioned. His contributions to the development of reformed missiology, also in its ecclesiological implications, were of pivotal significance.²³⁴ Bosch was familiar with the western-European situation because of his roots in the Dutch reformed context of South Africa. Toward the end of his—unfortunately rather short—life,²³⁵ he expressly paid attention to the necessary ‘response of the church in the West to the malaise of the moment,’ sketching the first contours *Toward a Missiology of Western Culture*.²³⁶ In the purview of this study it is not possible to discuss the content of the contributions of these important missionary sources. Mentioning the existence of these other voices, however, shows that the discussion as presented in this chapter is embedded in a wider, international, and still ongoing discourse, that continues to state that the church—in order to be what it in its deepest essence is—must live out its missionary identity.

²³³ For a further description of this network, see www.gocn.org.

²³⁴ Cf. his magnum opus, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*.

²³⁵ David Bosch died in a car accident on April 15, 1992, at the age of 62.

²³⁶ BOSCH, *Believing in the Future*, 4; *Toward a Missiology of Western Culture* is the subtitle of this publication.

4. DREAM OR REALITY – A TESTCASE FOR THEOLOGY

4.1 Introduction and Aim

The research so far shows that it is impossible to speak about the church without at the same time speaking of mission. God's mission, the *missio Dei*, in which He works towards the definitive establishment of His Kingdom, is the framework within which the church receives its identity. Mission is, therefore, a crucial factor in the development of ecclesiology. This missionary understanding of the church is a general adopted paradigm within the international missionary movement.¹ It is also widely accepted within the wider reformed context² within which the CGKN position themselves explicitly.

The aim of this chapter is to examine to what extent the results of the previous research can be linked to the missionary developments within the CGKN during the last 100 years. This examination is a key moment in this study. The churches within the CGKN find themselves faced with the question how to shape the church in the present, post-Christian and secular context, especially when it comes to be a witnessing body of Christ. Naturally, the self-understanding of the church plays a major role in this search, but how does this self-understanding of the church interact with the thoughts that have developed in the missiological ecclesiological discourse? To what extent and in what way did this discourse influence the development of missiological ecclesiological thinking and practice within the CGKN during the last 100 years, and in particular in the decades immediately before and after the turn of the century? Did it match or did it clash with current patterns of thinking and structuring within the CGKN? Examining and theologically assessing this relationship will provide the fundamental elements needed to answer the central research question 'what both existing and "mission congregations" within the CGKN can learn from the theological missiological discussion that has taken place within the international missionary world and within the reformed context?'

4.2 Method and Sources

The first part of this chapter (section 4.3) presents a theological reflection on the missiological themes that have been brought together as a result of the previous research and which, in their mutual connection, prove to be essential factors in defining the place and the significance of the church. This reflection will serve the aim of this chapter, providing a heuristic lens to zoom in on the situation within the CGKN, making it

¹ See Chapter Two.

² See Chapter Three.

possible to examine and determine to what extent the missiological themes relate to the developments within the CGKN, and to draw conclusions on the basis of this examination. Prior to assessing the developments within the CGKN, this reflection is also needed to establish how the themes that came to the surface are understood in the context of this study, for they are not interpreted in the same way within the global spectrum of theological views. This applies especially to the foundational *missio Dei* concept, that has been referred to as ‘an elastic concept capable of accommodating an ever-expanding range of meanings.’³ It is a ‘container term’ that blurs more than that it clarifies.⁴ As a result of this, the interpretation of the derivative themes also differs considerably. It is therefore necessary to describe in what sense the themes are understood by the author of this study, to prevent that the lens that is used in assessing the situation within the CGKN is itself vague, due to ambiguity. This approach is, of course, not free of subjectivism, but this is justified within the context of this study with its focus on the CGKN. Moreover, there is no such thing as non-contextual theology, nor is it possible to find non-contextual theologians.

The next two sections contain an overview of the ecclesiological missiological discourse within the CGKN during the studied period. With regard to this discourse, the difference in voices that participated is to be taken into account. The English practical theologian Helen Cameron describes that in studying ecclesial practices (theological action research),⁵ four different streams (or voices) of theology are interrelated with one another, all having their own value and essence. *Operant theology* goes ‘unnoticed,’ but is ‘evident’ in the daily practice in which the lived faith becomes manifest.⁶ It is generally ‘aligned to an articulated theology,’⁷ the so-called *espoused theology*, which is ‘embedded within a group’s articulation of its beliefs.’⁸ The relation between the espoused theology and ‘the actions carried out is not always clear or coherent.’ The espoused theology also comes ‘from somewhere,’ whether its ‘sense of things’ is drawn ‘from Scripture,’ from a certain ‘church tradition, or liturgy,’ or from a theological direction.⁹ The next voice to be considered is the *normative theology*. It is ‘what the practicing group names as its

³ FLETT, *Witness*, 5.

⁴ GÜNTHER, ‘Gott selbst treibt Mission’, 56.

⁵ Cf. CAMERON, *Talking about God*, chapter 4, especially 52-55.

⁶ WARD, *Liquid Ecclesiology*, 95. Ward quotes John Swinton and Harriet Mowat who argued that practices ‘contain values, beliefs, theologies and other assumptions which, for the most part, go unnoticed until they are complexified and brought to our notice through the process of theological reflection’; quote from SWINTON & MOWAT, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 20.

⁷ CAMERON, *Talking About God*, 52-53.

⁸ CAMERON, *Talking About God*, 54 (italics in the original).

⁹ CAMERON, *Talking About God*, 53.

theological authority.’ This normative voice ‘is often related to the ecclesial identities and relationships of the group,¹⁰ in the context of which also *formal theology* has its place, viz, as the ‘theology of the academy, of the “professional” theologian’ who articulates intellectually, through the process in which ‘critical and historically and philosophically informed enquiry’ is used.¹¹ Each stream of theology (or voice) has its own rightful place in the ‘contemporary church.’¹² They are distinct from each other, but at the same time related to each other. They are always in some ways intertwined. ‘We can never hear one voice without there being echoes of the other three.’¹³

In this chapter, the distinction made by Cameron is used in an adapted form, for the following reasons. First of all, in this study no specific practices are examined. This implies that the *operant voice* is not directly present, although it, of course, echoes in the contribution of the workers in the field. Secondly, the research is not executed in a single congregation but in the more complex institutional context of a denomination. This implies that within the same category of voices a certain layering is found.

The following voices are to be distinguished. The first voice can be characterized as *normative*. It is made up of statements and decisions published in the synodal reports (the so-called Acta). These statements often directly relate to the practice of ecclesial life and are not made to establish theological points of view, but they contain elements that make the generally accepted theological thinking of the church transparent. The statements and decisions result, when needed, in official adaptations and changes in the *Church Order*. These voices are discussed in section 4.4.

A second group of voices is to be seen as *formal*. This group consists of two categories that are discussed in section 4.5. The first category has played (and plays) a formal and recognized role in the processes of decision making at the synod. These voices are found in the reports of the Deputies for Evangelism (the national denominational committee for home missions) in which proposals are made to the synod. It is the task of these Deputies to support the local churches in their ‘calling to promote the expansion of God’s Kingdom by bringing the gospel, either by preaching, or by spreading literature, or by other means, where it is not or very impure.’ One of the main elements in fulfilling this task is ‘to reflect on the nature and methods of evangelism.’¹⁴ In this process of reflecting, special expertise is brought in by consulting missionary theologians,

¹⁰ CAMERON, *Talking About God*, 54.

¹¹ CAMERON, *Talking About God*, 55.

¹² Cf. WARD, ‘Seeing and Believing’, 161. The same in WARD, *Liquid Ecclesiology*, 94.

¹³ CAMERON, *Talking About God*, 54.

¹⁴ *Kerkorde*, 114-115 (appendix 18, article 1 and 5). Article 1 dates from a synodal decision of 1947, article 5 was added in 1971.

missionary consultants, church planters and other missionary workers. They contribute in several ways to the work of Deputies. Their input in e.g. the reports of Deputies can be traced. This implies that missionary theology and practice resonates directly in the reports of the Deputies, and as a consequence, in the proposals submitted to the synod. However, in the process in which these proposals are discussed at the synod, amendments can be made (as indeed happens many times), resulting in either leaving out or adding elements in the final decision-making. Consequently, the reports of the Deputies contain many missiological thoughts, but they do not automatically represent the adopted thoughts of the CGKN. They are, therefore, not normative. They are brought together in 4.5.1, under the heading *Documents Used in Decision-Making*.

The second category within this group of *formal* voices consists of the contributions of experts that play a role in the debate on church and mission within the CGKN, although not directly in the processes of decision making. These voices are found in the official ecclesial periodicals, in which people bring in their expertise and experience in the discussion, and thus contribute to it. These contributions are not given on an individual initiative of the respective experts, but on the request of the board of the periodical in question, thus authorizing the publication of this voice. The authors that contribute with their articles to these periodicals can be seen as opinion leaders within the churches. Although their writings do not have the same weight as officially adopted ecclesial statements, their voice is important and has directional significance within the context of the denomination. These voices are brought together in 4.5.2, under the heading *Periodicals Contributing to the Conversation*.

The next group of voices consists of the *espoused* ones. They come from workers in the field, pioneers, evangelists, and church-planters, who are actively involved in starting and shaping missionary initiatives. These voices are not written down in official statements. They were gathered in a common conversation and written down in a verbatim of that conversation. They are based on the actual experience and thoughts and reflections of the workers. This qualifies them in their value for the ecclesiological missiological discourse. They are brought together in section 4.6, under the heading *Espoused Voices*.

In the proposed evaluative examination, following in section 4.7, it is again the *formal voice* of theology that comes in. The lens of section 4.3 is used to assess the situation within the CGKN in its relation to the missiological ecclesiological developments. All different voices will be brought together in a dialogue that will lead to an overall evaluation of the actual situation within the CGKN. This final evaluative examination of the situation within the CGKN in its relation to the missiological ecclesiological discourse presented in the previous chapters, as brought together in the heuristic lens, will

provide the necessary criteria and needed guidelines in the quest of this study to come to a contemporary ecclesial identity that will enable the CGKN to be a witnessing body of Christ in the post-Christian and secular society of today.

4.3 A Heuristic Lens

The respective themes that emerged from the research so far, each for themselves but especially in their mutual connection, offer insight into the elementary thoughts that are fundamental for understanding the essence of the church with a view to its meaning and place in the post-Christian and secularized society. Because of the diversity in interpretation within the global discourse, it is important to establish how the themes that came to the surface in the research of the previous chapters are understood in the context of this study. In this section, therefore, a point-wise reflection is given on these themes from the perspective of the author (in his reformed context). The reflection on the fundamental themes describes the elements (or parts) that together form a heuristic lens that will serve as the basis for the theological evaluation of the practice within the CGKN.

4.3.1 *Missio Dei*

- a. The *missio Dei* is the deepest foundation of mission. Mission is first and foremost an activity of the Triune God, and only as such an action of the church. The obedient response to the “great commission” given by Christ is result of the direct involvement of the Triune God.
- b. The *missio Dei* is directly connected to the plan of salvation of the Triune God in that it materializes how the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are inseparably connected to one another in the execution of the plan of salvation. The *missio Dei* is the dynamic expression of the plan of salvation.
- c. In this materialization of the plan of salvation, the keyword is “mission” (sending). The Son was “sent” by the Father and equipped by the Spirit to establish the work of salvation in His life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Sitting at the right hand of God, Christ continues the work of salvation by the Spirit that was “sent” by the Father and the Son. The Spirit is poured out in the church, activating the church in its being “sent” by Christ into the world.
- d. The Spirit is active within the church but also beyond the church until the end of time. The *missio Dei* concept in this most basic content points unambiguously to the Triune God as Initiator, First Actor, Activator, and Fulfiller of His mission.

- e. There is no participation in Christ, without participation in His mission. In participating in Christ's mission, it is experienced that He indeed gives what He accomplished. It is received in the life of faith in which the Spirit appropriates to the believer what Christ has done, so that he/she actually appropriates it,¹⁵ and lives a new life. Consequently, participating in Christ's mission is part of the participation in Him. Mission is not a task to be fulfilled, but is part of the gospel that proclaims and brings to the experience of the new life, given by Christ and breathed in by the Spirit.
- f. The content and focus of the *missio Dei* is the all-encompassing plan of salvation. God's work of salvation not just aims at saving souls, but at the coming of a new heaven and earth, the establishment of His Kingdom. God makes all things – and not just all people – new.¹⁶ The plan of salvation cannot be divided, let alone separated in a spiritual and a material aspect. The *missio Dei* concept points to the one gospel in its entirety, as it became manifest in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, who, ascended to the right hand of God, rules from the throne, working toward the moment when all things in heaven and on earth are brought together under Him.¹⁷

4.3.2 Mission and Kingdom

- a. The Kingdom is the goal of the *missio Dei*. It is 'the realization of the great drama of the history of salvation,' not only as a reality beyond the horizon of eternity, but God, by sending His Son, has ushered it in and brought it near in the here and now. 'It has started.'¹⁸
- b. The aim of the *missio Dei* implies that salvation is to be understood in Kingdom terms. It is life to the full, given by Christ, taking shape in the restoration of humanity in all its relationships, with God, with people, with creation, with itself, in all areas, spiritual, social, ethnic, economic. It is characterized by reconciliation, healing and renewal in all these relations. It is life that can be referred to by the Old Testament term shalom.

¹⁵ The prescribed form for the baptism of little children within the CGKN uses the verb "to appropriate", describing the work of the Spirit. The same verb indicates also the act of faith of the believer, who accepts and receives in faith what God gives. Cf. VERSTEEG, *De Geest en de gelovige*, further also QUIST, 'Toeëigening', 17-19; VAN 'T SPIJKER, *Toeëigening*, 26-34.

¹⁶ Revelation 21:5 speaks of "panta" – all things.

¹⁷ Ephesians 1:10 also renders "panta".

¹⁸ RIDDERBOS, *Kingdom*, xxviii.

- c. The Kingdom-perspective of salvation helps to overcome ‘a predominantly individualized and vertical understanding of salvation.’¹⁹ It opens up the way to take the holistic character of salvation fully into account.
- d. The Kingdom is not built by human endeavor, nor is it a program or social project to be realized by people. God builds the Kingdom. He gives it. The New Testament ‘grammar for the reign of God’ speaks of receiving and entering the Kingdom. It is given to those who, through the Spirit, commit themselves in faith and repentance to Christ, in response to His call. The Kingdom ‘calls for the simple, trusting act of receiving.’²⁰
- e. Receiving the Kingdom is experienced in the life of faith, or more explicitly, in living the faith. The Spirit brings to this faith and obedient life, and thus, to this living the faith.²¹ He sets the believer free to live. In this living the faith, the reality of salvation is continuously received and experienced. Hence, it is correct to say that by participating in Christ’s mission (4.3.1.e), there is also participating in Christ.
- f. Christ has received all power in heaven and on earth. He is King and His Kingdom becomes manifest where people, responding to His call and guided by the Spirit, entrust themselves to Christ, and where they live according to His word. In the life with Christ, the all-encompassing reality of the Kingdom becomes visible and tangible, be it provisional.
- g. People can remain outside the Kingdom, but being outside the Kingdom does not mean being outside of the rule of God. Even those who do not know Him live in the world which is administered and ruled in its entirety by God and by Christ as Lord. Christ seeks to bring all of creation, including all of humankind, under His rule. He is, in and through the Spirit, active in the world to accomplish that. He does not wait for the church to do it for Him, but He engages the church and works through it.

¹⁹ GLASSER, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 12.

²⁰ GUDER, *Missional Church*, 93-94. Cf. also VAN DEN BRINK & VAN DER KOOL, *Christelijke dogmatiek*, 649: ‘People cannot organize the Kingdom of God.’ ‘In the coming of the Kingdom, we are only recipients.’

²¹ Cf. VERSTEEG, *De Geest en de gelovige*, 20-26: The Spirit does not do that, however, by eliminating the individuality of the believer. It is the person himself who believes, although the work of the Spirit cannot be ignored. The relation that functions here ‘is almost impossible to express.’ There is a ‘wonderful “in-each other”, “with-each other”, and “inter-each other” of the work of the Spirit and the work of the believer.’ The work of the Spirit has qualitative and not temporal priority.

4.3.3 Kingdom and Salvation-History

- a. The Kingdom has an eschatological character. It has come in and with Christ. At the same time, it is also still to come. There is an “already” and a “not yet”. Mission theologically finds its principal location and definition in this eschatological framework. It is the decisive event that takes place and receives its significance in the process of the unfolding of God’s plan of salvation between the provisional and the final realization of the Kingdom.
- b. The “not yet” element of the Kingdom implies the provisional character of the “already” element. There is a foretaste, a sign of what is to come. This provisional character puts the life that is lived with Christ under the tension of the expectation of what will ultimately be given by God. It stretches toward that moment.
- c. The Spirit is given as the first “down payment” (*arrabōn*) of the final fulfillment. He renews people and transforms them into the image of Christ, preparing them for the encounter with Christ on the day of His coming. Because of this work of the Spirit, the Kingdom is in a constant process of development. This does not mean that the Kingdom grows into a stage of perfectness, but the work of Christ in and through the Spirit cannot and may not be ignored. In faith, the coming of the Kingdom may be expected and anticipated, be it, until the coming of Christ, only in a provisional form.
- d. The Kingdom life is lived in the middle of the world (before the eyes of the world). It reveals at the same time the experience of the reality of the “already”, as well as the imperfectness of the “not yet” with all the pain of it. Be this as it may, this life manifests that there is hope and expectation, for Christ is Lord, and the Spirit is indeed given as the “down payment”. The full realization of the Kingdom will come, and witness is given of that hope.
- e. The Spirit leads all those who belong to Christ in their life. He renews people, frees them to real creativity, leading them to and teaching them a life in which the new life in Christ becomes visible and tangible, not just at certain moments, but in their entire life. They show the image of Christ. All this is still fraught with weakness and human shortcomings until the return of Christ, but nevertheless it is living the “imitation of Christ” (Thomas à Kempis), not in proudness but in humility, because of the constant awareness that the Spirit’s work of renewal and teaching is necessary.
- f. This applies not only to the personal life, but also to the relationship with each other, and with the people around, in all life contexts, open-eyed for what is going on in the social, economic and societal situation. It is an anticipation of what will come, brought actively into practice already in the here and now. As such it is a life that testifies of Him. It is participation in His mission.

4.3.4 Mission and Church

- a. The church is located within, and its essence (identity) is determined by the framework of the *missio Dei*. The church itself is first and foremost fruit of the *missio Dei* and participates in it. The church is not the agent of mission, but the locus of God's mission.²² In and through the church, God continues and applies His work of salvation in Christ, and through the Spirit.
- b. The church is God's people, called to proclaim in the world the saving works of God in Christ. The church is elected to this. Election 'is not only and not even in the first place to be understood as a privilege, but as a calling.'²³ Being called out by God, as *ekklesia* indicates, is for the purpose of 'being engaged in the *missio Dei*,' and is thus, 'for the good of mankind.'²⁴ Election implies 'missionary responsibility.'²⁵
- c. The Spirit is constantly active, leading and stimulating, motivating and inspiring the church, so that the church fully participates in His work. There is a 'wonderful unity in the relation between the work of the Spirit and the work of the [church]. The [church] is allowed to work the work of the Spirit.' The church has its own responsibility in planning and considering the possibilities and best forms and methods to be used. 'The guidance of the Spirit is not something that works outside the [church] and therefore outside human considerations and arguments.'²⁶
- d. The *missio ecclesiae* stems from the *missio Dei* and fully corresponds with it. The church's existence is not an end in itself but is part of the outworking of God's

²² Cf. NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 119. Cf. also BAUCKHAM, *Bible and Mission*, 17: 'The church in its missionary vocation is not so much the agent of the process as the product of the process on the way to its God-given goal.'

²³ VERSTEEG, 'Bijbelse fundering', 17: 'It was precisely in being chosen from the nations that Israel was called to the service of God and thus also to the nations.' Cf. also BLAUW, *Missionary Nature*, 28: 'The election implies being called 'to be preacher and example, prophet and priest for the nations.'

²⁴ Cf. GRAAFLAND, 'Theologische Hoofdlijnen', 82.

²⁵ NEWBIGIN, *Household*, 132. Cf. also *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 86-87: 'To be chosen, to be elect, therefore does not mean that the elect are the saved and the rest are the lost. To be elect in Christ Jesus, and there is no other election, means to be incorporated into his mission to the world, to be the bearer of God's saving purpose for his whole world, to be the sign and agent and the firstfruit of his blessed kingdom which is for all.'

²⁶ Cf. again VERSTEEG, *De Geest en de gelovige*, 21-26. Where in the text above [church] is used, Versteeg refers to the believer.

- missionary intention, and only within that framework, the church can speak of its own mission.²⁷ It is participation in God's mission.
- e. The mission of the church takes shape in that the church is the provisional manifestation of the Kingdom in the world, brought to life, inspired, guided and empowered by God, who called the church in Christ, and by the Spirit. The church proclaims and demonstrates in its existence and life, the reality of the coming Kingdom that is built on the accomplished work of Christ, with all its implications in the contemporary spiritual, cultural, social, political and economic context.
 - f. The church, enabled by the Spirit, lives the gospel, both in its inner relations as well as in its life within the world. It is God's new people, a community of hope, showing that the hope of the coming of the Kingdom gives life, strength, and endurance for today's life. In living its faith, the church is the 'hermeneutic of the gospel.'²⁸ It manifests itself as an instrument, example, sign and foretaste of the Kingdom that is near, for Christ is coming soon. Until that moment, the church is the most "vivid expression" of the Kingdom.
 - g. The church, "being called out", does not live opposite to the world. The church lives in the world, and is sent into the world, to make visible what the content of the gospel of God's love is and to what it brings when people respond to it. The world, and not just the church, is the object of God's love. The church is God's royal priesthood in the world, to proclaim God's redemptive works. This implies a life in the middle of the world, in loving concern for the world, following the example of Jesus who came to save people when they were still enemies of God.
 - h. The Spirit is active in the church, and fully engages it in His work, but He is also active outside the church. He does not leave the world to the church. The Spirit is like the wind that blows wherever it pleases. 'Even outside the circle of light of the gospel, institutions or patterns of action can come about that reflect God's intentions for human coexistence.' Discernment is necessary, but it is clear that the things Paul refers to when he speaks of whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy (cf. Phil. 4:8) are found both in and outside the church. The church must keep its eyes and ears open 'to new situations in which the work of the Spirit may come to light,'²⁹ to which the church receives opportunities to learn from, to connect to, or even to join in.

²⁷ Cf. VICEDOM, *Mission of God*, 6: 'The church must first in obedience fulfill *His* missionary intention. Only then can she speak of *her* mission, since her mission is then included in the *missio Dei*' (italics in the original).

²⁸ NEWBIGIN, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 222-233.

²⁹ VAN DEN BRINK & VAN DER KOOL, *Christelijke dogmatiek*, 474.

4.3.5 *Involvement of the Whole Church*

- a. The whole church is involved in the participation in God's mission. The Spirit engages all who are in Christ in such a way that they seek to fully live the gospel, in all its implications both with regard to the indicative and to the imperative. The new life lived makes the new life given evident.³⁰
- b. The manifestation of the new life of the members of the church has a missionary dimension, because of the constant encounter with the people around them, in all circles and networks in which they themselves live. Of course, the awareness of the provisional character is important. Scripture, however, frankly speaks about putting on a new self that is renewed in knowledge in the image of God, because of the renewing work by the Spirit who transforms the disciples of Christ into the image of Christ. The Spirit makes believers 'heartily willing and ready to live for Christ.'³¹
- c. The Christian life, lived in all the contexts in which Christians find themselves, reveals the reality of the new life in Christ, be it provisional. The congregation makes visible what the gospel is all about. The life of the members of the congregation can be characterized as firstfruit and foretaste, and also as a sign of the Kingdom that today is still present in an imperfect way, but that will break through in its full glory at the day when Christ returns.
- d. All this reveals the missionary meaning of Christian life. The life of the members of the church forms the permanent link between the message of the gospel and the people in the midst of whom they live. The members of the church are letters from Christ, written with the Spirit of the living God, known and read by everyone. As Christians they live in an open attitude toward the world, fully living in that world and not withdrawn from it, in a life that raises questions in a positive sense. The hope that is in them becomes transparent in their words and deeds, in their whole demeanor. It is hope they are more than happy to share with their fellow humans, not in an aggressive way, but with gentleness and respect.
- e. Next to the missionary dimension of Christian life in general, there are some manifestations of Christian life that are intentionally missionary. This can be the case in specific relations in which Christian life is lived. Where life is shared with colleagues and neighbors in an open and honest way, faith will not remain hidden, and possibilities to witness can arise.

³⁰ Cf. RIDDERBOS, *Paul*, 256: 'The 'reality described by the indicative . . . exists in the way of faith.' 'Indicative and imperative are both the objects of faith, on the one hand in its receptivity, on the other in its activity.' The 'connection between the two is so close and indissoluble. They represent two "sides" of the same matter and cannot exist separated from each other.'

³¹ Catechism of Heidelberg, Lord's Day 1. Cf. Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10 and 2 Cor. 3:18.

- f. There are sodalities and modalities within the church. Paul apparently worked with a missionary band (a sodality) that was accountable to the church of Antioch (the modality), the church that sent them out.³² Modalities and sodalities coexist and complement each other. Sodalities arise from modalities. Together they belong to the one church. There are people who actively devote themselves to the specific and intentional missionary activities of the congregation (as a sodality) and there are people who are less actively involved in specific missionary activities, but whose Christian life is still – be it more implicitly – a proclamation and demonstration of the new life in Christ.³³

4.4 Normative Voices

The question to be answered in this chapter is how the CGKN relate to the missiological ecclesiological discourse in the actual missionary situation in which they find themselves. This section takes a look at the normative voices within the CGKN, which can be found in official church documents.

4.4.1 Church Documents

The reports of the synods of the CGKN show an awareness of missionary responsibility, both with regard to foreign and home mission. Only thirteen years after the moment that the present denomination came into existence,³⁴ the 1905 synod decided to set up Deputies for Foreign Mission. The synod acknowledged: ‘The mission order of our Lord and Savior is too obvious and makes it impossible for us to withdraw from it.’³⁵ With regard to home mission, the 1918 synod renewed a statement of 1872, recognizing

³² Cf. Acts 13:2-3. Initially this band apparently existed of two members: Paul and Barnabas, but obviously Mark soon joined them (cf. Acts 15:37-39), and later Luke accompanies Paul (cf. the ‘we’ in e.g. Acts 16:10 et passim).

³³ Cf. WINTER, ‘The Two Structures of God’s Redemptive Mission.’ Cf. also TENNENT, *World Missions*, 438-443, who discusses this theme in the third part of his book, about God the Holy Spirit as the empowering presence of the *missio Dei*.

³⁴ The year of 1892 marks the “beginning” of the current CGKN; in that year the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk, stemming from the “Afscheiding” of 1834 and the Nederduitsch Gereformeerde Kerken, stemming from the “Doleantie” of 1886, merged in the then-called “Gereformeerde Kerken”. Three churches did not join this merger and formed together the current Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk (since 1947 the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken).

³⁵ See JONGELEEN, *Geschiedenis van de buitenlandse zending*, 42.

that the church 'is a missionary church in our home country.'³⁶ This applies, in the opinion of the synod, first and above all to the local churches. They must take up their responsibility in the work of evangelization. The 1944 synod decided to install Deputies for Evangelism, to be appointed by the regional synods. These new Deputies were instructed to submit a draft order for their work at the next synod.³⁷ The 1947 synod adopted the proposed evangelization-order that stated in the first article that the church, 'as required by God's Word,' is 'missionary, also in its own country.' It further stated that 'the work of evangelization must in principle be taken up by the local churches.' If necessary, the local church 'can and must count on the support of all the churches.'³⁸ In assessing the statements and decisions of the synod throughout the years, three elements can be distinguished.

The first one is, that the synod emphasizes throughout the years the responsibility of the local church. Apparently, there is a gap between the expression that the church is missionary, also in its own country, and what is actually happening at the local level. Regularly, it is observed that the churches fall short in their actual involvement in the work of evangelization. The reports discussed at the synod even refer to resistance. The 'sense of calling in the churches' is not alive. The synod time and again urged Deputies to 'do their utmost to activate and wake-up the local churches,' based on the conviction that there is a 'holy calling of God for the work of evangelization.'³⁹ The churches need to be vitalized and activated to take up their responsibility, because, as is commented, the church obviously does not stand on the level of the first century anymore.⁴⁰ The concern about the lack of involvement continued to demand attention. The churches need to be built up and equipped, because the missionary motivation and energy are missing.⁴¹ The synod recognizes this and increasingly emphasizes it. The most recent synod (2019/2020) still stated that the churches need help 'to become more attuned to the mission situation that has arisen in the Netherlands than has been the case to date,' and instructs Deputies to 'put together a church-wide task force to reflect on the questions that this missionary situation entails,' using all available 'expertise from all ecclesial

³⁶ *Handelingen 1918*, 21. This statement was already adopted at the synod of 1872 of the then Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk (see *Handelingen 1872*, 40).

³⁷ See for all this *Acta 1941 & 1944*, 1944: 16-17 and 81-82. Each regional synod was to appoint two delegates to participate in these Deputies for Evangelism.

³⁸ See *Acta 1947*, 19-20, and 79. Cf. *Kerkorde*, 114-115 (appendix 18, article 2 and 3) for the current regulations.

³⁹ See *Acta 1956*, 43-44.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Acta 1965*, 42.

⁴¹ See *Acta 1998*, 28 and 43.

committees relevant to the assignment,' with the aim to come to 'a coherent vision document describing what the churches need in view of the mission situation.'⁴²

A second element is the increasing emphasis on theological reflection on the missionary responsibility. At the 1971/1972 synod, the request was made by Deputies to be authorized to appoint an exempt person who could focus on a substantive reflection on the nature and methods of evangelization. The synod refused to give this authorization but changed the instruction of Deputies and put reflection on the essence and appropriate methods of evangelization in the first place.⁴³ As a result, the discussions at the successive synods began to show more theological components, aiming at an articulation of foundational principles of a theology of evangelization in reformed perspective. This, however, proved to be arduous. The first substantial theological report of Deputies, submitted to the 1983 synod, was critically received and discussed, particularly with regard to the relation between word and deed. The synod was concerned that a 'view, that is not reformed' would become influential. The background of this concern was the apparent distrust of developments within the WCC in which social and political issues seemed to dominate the theological discussions.⁴⁴ Because of this, the question became urgent what the relation is between word and deed? Is there equivalence? This question was difficult to answer for it was felt that it is impossible to deny the relation between the message of the gospel and its social implications. The synod recognized that word and deed are inextricably linked in the preaching of the gospel, but the verbal proclamation was to have priority. The social actions of the church get their meaning

⁴² The 2019/2020 synod decides 'to instruct Deputies for Foreign Mission, together with the Deputies for Evangelism, Deputies for Diaconate, the youth work organizations and the TUA, to develop a program to equip the churches in the field of mission consciousness.' This information was received from the respective church committees mentioned.

⁴³ For the change in the instruction, see *Acta 1971/1972*, 59.

The change in instruction coincides with another development within the CGKN. The turbulent times of the 1960s and 1970s force the church to reflect on the relation between the message of the gospel and society. The 1974 synod, therefore, appoints Deputies for Church and Society, to study 'those matters that concern the position that the church and the Christians should take in society.' The topics to be studied by this new committee logically relate to the work of evangelization, thus underlining the need for a principal reflection on the nature and methods of evangelization.

⁴⁴ At the synod a critical discussion is held regarding the question whether or not a church that is member of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod can also be member of the WCC. See *Acta 1983*, 53-54. See further also *Acta 1977*, 55-59, the discussion about leaving the ICCC, the organization of which the CGKN had been a member since 1950. See for this, *Acta 1950*, 44-45, where formulations are found stating that the ICCC 'is jointly standing up against the modernism in the WCC,' and that the WCC 'is humanistic and has no biblical basis.'

within the framework of the gospel and point to the preaching of the gospel.⁴⁵ The prioritization of the verbal proclamation of the gospel remained the main line in the statements of the synod. From that time on, however, the comprehensiveness of the gospel was an essential part in the discussions. The salvation of which the gospel speaks is to be understood as comprehensive. The church witnesses to this message, in its proclamation and in its life. This element in which the connection between word and deed was recognized, proved to be of importance in the changing context in which postmodernism appeared as ruling atmosphere in society. The Christian lifestyle became more and more important. Christians are not so much blamed for their views, but for the fact that they do not live by those views.⁴⁶

A third element is related to the recognition that the Netherlands returned to a missionary situation again, because of the increasing impact of the process of secularization, and also because of the encounter with all kinds of different cultures within the Dutch context.⁴⁷ The central question was which approach is needed? Should initiatives that start up “mission congregations” be given space? Simultaneously the position of the evangelist in such a “missionary” congregation was to be considered.⁴⁸ At the 2004 synod, all this became urgent because of some actual initiatives in the churches.⁴⁹ The synod had to take decisions. Confronted with the question ‘how the Christian congregation must function in a missionary situation,’ the synod stated after intensive deliberations, that ‘a means to proclaim the gospel is to establish “mission congregations”.’ Such a “missionary” congregation was defined as ‘a community of believers, born of missionary work, that develops into an independent functioning congregation and that again dedicates itself to missionary work.’ The synod further articulated that, ‘when it is

⁴⁵ For the discussions at the 1983 synod, see *Acta 1983*, 67-68, 82-83, 327.

⁴⁶ Deputies write about this in their report to the 1998 synod. See *Acta 1998*, 280.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Acta 2001*, 100, decision 2 where Deputies for Evangelism are instructed to reflect on the specific requirements for missionary work in the Netherlands, in cooperation with Deputies for Foreign Mission and Deputies for Diaconate. See also decision 5.1, where the statement is made that the Netherlands are more and more becoming a “zendingsland” (a country in a missionary situation, or: a mission-field). This decision, prepared in the preparatory report of the synodal committee, was based on the report of Deputies for Evangelism, where the impact of secularism was described. Cf. *Acta 2001*, especially 316-318, for the report of Deputies on this, and 330-333, for the report of the preparatory committee.

⁴⁸ *Acta 2001*, 101.

⁴⁹ The initiatives in Rotterdam, resulting in the congregation of the ICF, and in Almere, where André Meulmeester was active and sought to connect to the congregation of the CGKN forced the intensification of the deliberations at the synod. See extensively the report of Deputies for Evangelism in *Acta 2001*, 318-319, and *Acta 2004*, 289 and 303-304.

capable of functioning independently,’ a “missionary” congregation can be constituted as an independent congregation within the denomination. The synod also stated that an evangelist in a “missionary” congregation ‘may be granted the right to do all things pertaining to his specific task and arising from his position as special minister of the Word.’⁵⁰ These decisions were taken full heartedly and with enthusiasm, in the conviction that the new initiatives were a God-given missionary chance. In the years following these decisions, however, the new developments within the CGKN led to all kinds of questions, mostly regarding the relation between the newly instituted “mission congregations” and the already existing churches. A clear marker in this process was the synod of 2010, where some members of the synod suggested that it would perhaps be better for the “mission congregations” to start a separate new denomination. The CGKN could then relate to this new denomination in the same way as the CGKN relates to a church on a foreign mission field. In such a relation the CGKN would be the mother church and the new denomination of “mission congregations” would be the daughter churches. This suggestion, however, did not receive the support of the synod.⁵¹ It stated as its firm conviction that the “mission congregations” are part of the denomination of the CGKN.⁵² A strong statement was made, declaring that the creation of a separate denomination of “mission congregations” would manifestly demonstrate the inability of the CGKN to be a church.⁵³ It was said that the existence of the “mission congregations” challenges the whole denomination to find ways to put the belonging together into practice. In this regard, the instruction, given by the 2010 synod, to ‘study on the relation between existing and “mission congregations” within the CGKN,’ was a positive stimulus. It showed the willingness to ‘learn reciprocally from one another and to be church together.’⁵⁴ Mission and church, church and mission belong inextricably together.

The three elements in the approach of the synod show a development in the official thinking of the CGKN. The conviction that was pronounced from the beginning – the church is a missionary church also in its own country – gradually materialized and changed from a theory into a first form of an approach focused on practice in the current context, notwithstanding the remaining questions.

⁵⁰ *Acta 2004*, 165.

⁵¹ See already Chapter One, section 1.2, footnote 16 on page 14, with the remarks on the formulation of the relation between the CGKN and its “mission congregations” in terms of mother- and daughter-churches.

⁵² See *Acta 2010*, 97, where the discussion on this subject at the synod is reported.

⁵³ *Acta 2010*, 97.

⁵⁴ *Acta 2010*, 102.

4.5 Formal Voices

This section takes a look at the formal voices within the CGKN, which can be found in the documents of Deputies for Evangelism and in ecclesial periodicals.

4.5.1 Documents Used in Decision-Making

Because of their instruction, Deputies have been active throughout the years in activating and encouraging the local churches regarding the work of evangelization. However, Deputies regularly found very little or no actual involvement at all. They encountered the resistance that is mentioned at the 1956 synod.⁵⁵ Although it was acknowledged that the work of evangelization is a holy calling of God, the practice proved to be unruly. Deputies did their utmost to stimulate and motivate the churches, but they noticed many times that churches focus on specially equipped evangelization workers, who are entrusted with the work. This approach had the unintended and undesirable side effect that the churches themselves were less and less involved in the evangelizing work. At the 1971 synod, Deputies pointed out that this development leads away from the principal point of departure: The entire local church must be involved in the work of evangelization. At the same time, they report a sometimes ‘manifest’ longing within the churches ‘for information and instruction in the work of evangelization, also when it comes to personal witnessing.’⁵⁶ The request of Deputies to appoint an exempt person who could serve the churches in all this, was – as already mentioned – denied.⁵⁷ At the 1977 synod, however, a new request was received positively, resulting in the appointing of the first missionary consultant that was to serve the local churches with advice and instruction in all areas of the work of evangelization. He was also tasked to serve Deputies with theological reflection.⁵⁸ The change of the instruction of Deputies in 1971/1972 had already incited a more theological approach in their activities, but this was still enhanced by the work of the exempt person and that of his successors. The results were detectable in the reports of Deputies. They started to contain parts with thorough theological thinking and reflection on the actual situation as found in the churches. The following lines can be distinguished in this reflection.

⁵⁵ See again *Acta 1956*, 43.

⁵⁶ See *Acta 1971/1972*, 226.

⁵⁷ See again *Acta 1971/1972*, 59.

⁵⁸ *Acta 1977*, 38. The first exempt person was Jaap Kievit, who served from 1978 until 1994. After him came Stefan Paas (1999-2004); Bram Dingemanse (2002-2015); Jeanette de Waard (2006-2013); Michael Mulder (2006-2014); Petra de Jong-Heins (2013 until now); and Peter Visser (2014 until now).

First of all, it is pointed out that God is the subject of the work of evangelization. It all starts with Him. He has come with His Word, which is at the same time word and deed. The Kingdom has drawn near in His Son, in His redemptive words and deeds. And it still continues, for Christ uses the church in the continuation of His redemptive work.⁵⁹ The church is sent into the world and is called to be ‘fellow workers of God.’ This calling is ‘inescapably connected to the being of the church.’ Being involved in the work of evangelization, therefore, cannot be an object of discussion. It is ‘the essence of church’s being.’⁶⁰ Evangelization ‘is not just the cream on top of the cake, but one of the main ingredients that determines the flavor of the entire cake.’⁶¹ The church, therefore, must take its missionary character into account in all aspects of its life and activities,⁶² looking for the best methods to reach people today. It is necessary to understand the present time, for the gospel must be delivered in ‘an intelligible way,’ with methods that are ‘in tune with this age,’ without affecting its content.⁶³ This is brought forward permanently, for Deputies are certain: A church without mission is no longer a church. The New Testament obviously shows that the church is missionary, grasped by Christ’s command to bring the Gospel,⁶⁴ and also because the Spirit is active. He provides the gifts needed ‘to be a “missionary” congregation.’⁶⁵

Secondly, the comprehensive nature of the gospel is increasingly emphasized. This aspect became urgent during the 1960s and 1970s because of the developments in society. The 1974 synod decided to install a specific denominational committee *Kerk en samenleving* (church and society) to study on the question, ‘whether salvation in Christ can and should take shape in the societies of this world?’⁶⁶ This committee published a report in 1976⁶⁷ in which is stated that salvation ‘above all’ is aimed at restoring the relationship between God and man that has been disturbed by sin, but that it also

⁵⁹ Cf. *Acta 2001*, 315.

⁶⁰ *Acta 1983*, 318.

⁶¹ *Acta 2004*, 297. The quote stems from the input of Stefan Paas in the report.

⁶² Cf. *Acta 2001*, 313. See also 315: ‘Evangelization is a matter of the being a church, whereby the witnessing character of the church is reflected in all its activities. Just as everything in the congregation has a pastoral, proclaiming, teaching, or community aspect, so everything in the congregation also has to do with its missionary calling.’

⁶³ Cf. *Acta 1998*, 280.

⁶⁴ See *Acta 2004*, 308-309.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Acta 1998*, 279.

⁶⁶ See *Acta 1974*, 49-52 and 75.

⁶⁷ The report was published in one of the official ecclesial periodicals, *Ambtelijk Contact*, the issue of February 1976. This publication is mentioned in the official report to the 1977 synod, see *Acta 1977*, 318.

concerns creation. Salvation ‘aims at no less than the renewal of all things (Rev. 21:5), of heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1).’ It can be referred to as ‘the coming of the Kingdom,’ for God aims at the ‘full restoration of his Kingship over all that He created.’ It is, therefore, ‘impossible to consider salvation in Christ on the one hand, and the world on the other hand as fundamentally incompatible.’ The salvation that God brings ‘takes shape in the created world.’⁶⁸ This theme is, of course, directly related to the theological reflection regarding the work of evangelization. It is therefore understandable that Deputies in their reports also speak of the comprehensive nature of salvation. The ‘redemptive action’ of God relates ‘to the entirety of the created reality and therefore also to the totality of human life.’ This has become visible ‘in the breakthrough of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ,’ in His redemptive words and deeds that concern the totality of human life. Salvation is not only about restoring the relationship with God – saving the sinner – but also about restoring the relationship from man to man and, even wider, about the salvation of the world in its present and future manifestation. The eschatological tension in which the Kingdom exists, calls the church to its witness. Knowing that ‘in Christ the Kingdom is already there (Matt. 12:28),’ and in the awareness that it is ‘at the same time a matter of the future (Rev. 11:15),’ the church in its witness invites people to turn to Christ and enter the Kingdom. The words are confirmed by the deeds, showing that the reality of the Kingdom touches the totality of life.⁶⁹

A third line, directly connected to the previous one, emphasizes that evangelism is not only a matter of words and deeds, but that it is a witness that becomes visible in faith that is lived. In 1980, Deputies again noted that local churches have little or no involvement in the work of evangelization. There is little attention for ‘the propagation of the church,’ because the main focus in many congregations is on ‘preservation.’ They also observed that in many churches evangelization is mainly seen as an obligation. They point out that Scripture describes evangelization in the first place as ‘a result of the new life,’ worked by and given by the Spirit. The new life is, in fact, a powerful witness, and the challenge is to ‘show the gospel in a Christian way of life’ in the midst of the post-Christian and secularized society.⁷⁰ The whole life of the church is to be understood as missionary,⁷¹ as the book of Acts already shows. The new life of the people that receive the gospel is a living proclamation, also because of the way they interact together. Luke

⁶⁸ *Ambtelijk Contact*, February 1976, 16-17.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Acta 1983*, 318 and *Acta 1986*, 182-183 Cf. also the publication of parts of the 1986 report in a slightly adapted form in *Ga 18*, 4/5 (1987). Cf. further *Acta 1998*, 283: ‘Every believer is called to pass on the gospel of Christ in his environment and confirm it with his way of life.’

⁷⁰ *Acta 1980*, 182.

⁷¹ Cf. *Acta 1983*, 318.

notes that the Christians of the church in Jerusalem enjoyed ‘the favor of all the people,’ and that ‘the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved’ (Acts 2:47).⁷² This line of thought grows even stronger toward the end of the century. The need to prevent a gap ‘between what is proclaimed and the daily life of the members of the church,’ is emphasized more and more, which is understandable in light of the upcoming of postmodernism. As a result, much more attention is given to the ‘veracity of the Christian lifestyle’ than before.⁷³ In the postmodern climate ‘people are more attracted to the community of the faithful than to the faith of the community.’⁷⁴ This may seem an ‘undogmatic order,’ but it functions in that way. ‘People learn to know Christ within the context of a Christian community,’ where they see ‘how it works.’⁷⁵ Because of this, belonging many times comes before believing. Deputies note this and therefore urge the churches to be courageous and ‘open up to others and surprise them with attention, care and life, with the good news of the gospel in words and deeds.’ The proclamation of the gospel cannot be neglected, but also ‘not isolated from the practice of life.’⁷⁶ It is the Christian life that demonstrates the veracity of the message. The life of the congregation in its inner relations and in its relation to the people around, must therefore fit in with the message that is proclaimed. The medium is the message.

Finally, a fourth line developed when founding new congregations became a missionary strategy. At the turn of the century, serious attention was given to missionary church-planting. Because of the strong process of secularization, the Netherlands had to be viewed again ‘from a missionary perspective.’ It was observed that existing churches are ‘insufficiently capable’ of reaching new people with the gospel, because their ‘missionary character’ is often too weak, or ‘because the churches are no longer present in many places.’ In this situation, starting missionary communities is a good option, not only where the church is no longer present, but also ‘among populations that are hardly reached by the current churches,’ such as foreigners, but also higher

⁷² Cf. *Acta 1986*, 183.

⁷³ *Acta 1998*, 280.

⁷⁴ *Acta 2004*, 297.

⁷⁵ PAAS, *Thuiskomen*, 53, where he adds that ‘most times evangelism first aims at bringing people to a sense of guilt, after which the gospel can be communicated, and when a person comes to faith, he can join the church. Practice, however, shows more and more that it is the other way around. People feel welcome in a community of people and get to know the gospel there. Because of this, churches should welcome seekers in the ecclesial community, where they come under the Word and can see in the lives of Christians “how it works”. After all, the Christian community is pre-eminently the workplace of the Spirit.’

⁷⁶ Again, *Acta 2004*, 297.

educated people.⁷⁷ It offers ‘new opportunities in our secularized society.’⁷⁸ A detailed report was submitted to the 2004 synod, in which a “missionary” congregation was defined as a congregation ‘that has arisen from recent missionary work and that, dependent on the Holy Spirit, devotes itself to missionary work again.’ A “missionary” congregation should be given ‘a full place’ among the churches within the CGKN amongst whom it could grow toward independency.⁷⁹ It was stated: “mission congregations” ‘truly’ belong to the CGKN but at the same time, they may be ‘differently’ shaped. In the interrelation within the denomination, ‘existing churches have a lot to offer to “mission congregations”, but the reverse is also true.’ It was acknowledged: There is equality because both the existing and the “mission congregations” recognize the work of God in each other. They can learn from one another what it means to be incorporated in the work of God in which He builds His Kingdom.⁸⁰

The four above-mentioned lines show the conviction of the Deputies that in the execution and continuation of His mission, God directly uses the church as an instrument. The church is fully missionary in its existence and witnesses both in its words and life to the gospel in its comprehensiveness. The new life in Christ bears witness to the

⁷⁷ *Acta 2001*, 316. The input of the then active missionary consultant, Stefan Paas, was substantial in the reports and as a result in the proposals of Deputies that were submitted to the synod. Next to that, Deputies built on the insights of Siebrand Wierda who was actively involved in planting Via Nova, a missionary initiative in Amsterdam. His master thesis on the theological basis of church planting proved to be influential. See WIERDA, *Gezonden met perspectief*. Cf. also his thesis on the Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York, where church planting belongs to the theological vision and strategy. See WIERDA, *Naar binnen en naar buiten*, 24-26. Stefan Paas wrote a brochure on the basis of this thesis of Wierda to make the main thoughts available for the churches. See PAAS, *Naar binnen en naar buiten*.

⁷⁸ *Acta 2004*, 304. Deputies had become involved in two ‘surprising developments’ in the area of missionary church-planting: The start of the *International Christian Fellowship* in Rotterdam that, because of the cultural background, should be ‘approached as a “missionary” congregation.’ Next to this, Deputies also got involved in the development of the Christian community *De Wegwijzer* in the city of Almere, that was looking for a denominational embedding. The attempts to incorporate *De Wegwijzer* in the CGKN failed, upon which *De Wegwijzer* continued as an independent ecclesial community. See for all this *Acta 2001*, 318-319 and *Acta 2004*, 114 and 304.

⁷⁹ It is important to note that Deputies point out that the use of the term “mission congregation” is not to be understood in the sense of ‘second-rate congregation’ next to other congregations within the CGKN. ‘The name “mission congregation” indicates like no other term that there is a strong relationship between the missionary blessings given by God and the creation of a new church. Not a second-rate congregation ... but a new, yet slightly different petal on the tree of Christ’s church.’ See *Acta 2004*, 303.

⁸⁰ See *Acta 2004*, 279, 303, 305, 311-312 and 322-323.

reality of the Kingdom of God – albeit in the constant tension of the “already” and the “not yet”. In the missionary situation within the Netherlands, the founding of “mission congregations” offers new opportunities to give shape to this missionary nature of the church.

4.5.2 *Periodicals Contributing to the Conversation*

Within the CGKN, *De Wekker* is the only official national ecclesial periodical.⁸¹ Its aim is to give spiritual leadership to the ecclesial life, and to equip the church members for the service of God, also in view of the questions that arise within the churches and society. In addition, *Ambtelijk Contact* is also a national periodical with the aim to support ecclesial life in all its aspects. It is published by the national committee for the preparation of conferences for elders and deacons. Both periodicals are important for the purpose of this study, because the articles that are published can be seen as formative and opinion-forming. Over the years, several authors have written about the church’s involvement in mission and evangelism. A number of thoughts can be distinguished in this.

A first and fundamental thought is that the work of evangelization is the responsibility of the church. It cannot be delegated to parachurch organizations or associations for evangelization, who sometimes act in ways that encourage a form of non-ecclesiastical Christianity.⁸² It also cannot be left out because of fear that engaging in the work of evangelism would shift the center of gravity too much from the inner upbuilding of the congregation to its outer extension.⁸³ The church must take its responsibility, because when it does not, it ceases to be a prophet of Christ⁸⁴ and loses its right to exist.⁸⁵ The observation is, however, made regularly that the involvement in evangelism is weak, or even completely absent. Evangelism is in many ways the stepchild of the church.⁸⁶ One of the reasons for this is seen in the absence of personal security of salvation. How

⁸¹ The board of redactors of *De Wekker* is appointed by the synod, to which they report.

⁸² G. SALOMONS, ‘Inwendige zending’ (*De Wekker* 1925, December 11), discusses the so-called “inner mission” of the church and speaks of groups that reject the church. They either aim to be an independent and permanent organization next to the church or even opposite the church, pointing respectively to *Het Zoeklicht* of Johannes de Heer as an example of the former, and to the Salvation Army as an example of the latter.

⁸³ Cf. SALOMONS, ‘Inwendige zending’ (*De Wekker* 1925, November 27).

⁸⁴ J.J. VAN DER SCHUUR, ‘Evangelisatie’ (*De Wekker* 1947, August 29).

⁸⁵ J.H. VELEMA, ‘Om het isolement’ (*De Wekker* 1964, June 26).

⁸⁶ J.H. VELEMA, ‘De roep om een reveil’ (*De Wekker* 1966, January 7).

is it possible to pass something on to someone else if you don't have it yourself?⁸⁷ As a result, the churches are mainly oriented inwardly, and give little or no attention to the work of evangelism. This applies not only to the congregations, but also to the ministers in the church. As early as 1926, it is observed that the ministers generally are not apt for the work of evangelization. They do not know the field of evangelizing work. They are not familiar with the language of the people and are not able to adapt to the thoughts of the people that are to be reached. They largely lack the needed psychological or human insight. In their sermons, they are able to describe the life of experience of the saints, but they are unable to bring the gospel in an evangelizing way.⁸⁸ This clashes with the essence of the church, which is characterized by its 'openness' to the outside. The church must be a 'witnessing church.'⁸⁹ Without evangelism, the church has 'a heart disease.'⁹⁰ An inward-looking church is 'barren,' and is 'going to die, slowly but surely.'⁹¹ All this emphasizes the awareness that the responsibility for the work of evangelization lies with the church. In clear words, it is expressed: where the work of evangelization is not taken up, 'the proper being of the church is at stake.'⁹² The missionary calling 'gives meaning to the existence of the church in the world.' Its mission 'justifies its existence.'⁹³

A second thought, which is essentially a deepening of the first, is that the church in itself is to be characterized as missionary. Against the background of the ongoing process of secularization and the increasing emergence of postmodernism, the focus shifts from the missionary responsibility of the church to the missionary character of the church per se. This development is reflected in articles written roughly from the beginning of the 1970s. The 'missionary dimension belongs to the essence of the church,' for the church 'has been seized by the mercy of God and is taken by Him on His way to the world and to all peoples and to the extreme of the earth.'⁹⁴ In pointing to this, reference is frequently made to the church of the New Testament, 'which was characterized by its missionary attitude.' The church today needs to learn again what that means, because it has lost that essential element in many ways. 'A church that is

⁸⁷ B.J. OOSTERHOFF, 'De open kerk' (*De Wekker* 1950, June 16).

⁸⁸ G. SALOMONS, 'Inwendige zending' (*De Wekker* 1926, March 5).

⁸⁹ B.J. OOSTERHOFF, 'De open kerk' (*De Wekker* 1950, June 16).

⁹⁰ J.J. VAN DER SCHUIT, 'Correspondentie' (*De Wekker* 1956, June 15).

⁹¹ J.H. VELEMA, 'De levende gemeente' (*De Wekker* 1968, March 8).

⁹² J.H. VELEMA 'De Evangelisatie-Ouderling' (*Ambtelijk Contact* 1963, 176).

⁹³ J.H. CARLIER, 'Een eeuwenoude opdracht' (*De Wekker* 1998, July 24).

⁹⁴ J. VAN GENDEREN, 'Apostoliciteit en heiligheid van de kerk' (*De Wekker* 1973, October 26).

not missionary has lost its right to exist; it is “de-missionary”.⁹⁵ The church exists to spread the gospel and to act as a witness. It must stand in the world in an inviting mode. It cannot withdraw its witness and act as if it is ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because if this is the case, it is no longer worth its place on earth. ‘A church that does not witness to the people outside must step down and is destined to disappear.’ This will certainly happen ‘if a church is only concerned with itself and not with others, if the words and actions of its members do not have attractional power.’⁹⁶ Naturally, a church must pay attention to everything related to the life of the church, ‘but first every church must pass on what it received,’ for being church means being sent to proclaim Christ’s name. The first characteristic of the church indeed is that it is missionary.⁹⁷ It is sent into the world by the Father and the Son through the Spirit.⁹⁸ Speaking about the church without referring to its being sent into the world is impossible. The church ‘exists for God, for the fellowship with each other and for the proclamation of the gospel to the world,’⁹⁹ but the elements of internal fellowship and proclamation to the world need one another. ‘It is like inhaling and exhaling that cannot exist without each other. A church that is only inward looking gets inflated and dies. A church that only “exhales” gets bogged down and becomes breathless.’¹⁰⁰ Because of this, being missionary is not just an aspect of the life of the congregation, it belongs to the fundamental ‘DNA of the church’ and permeates the whole of it.¹⁰¹

A third thought elaborates the previous one from another perspective. Where the missionary character of the church is determinative, the actual life of the congregation becomes essential. As early as 1921 it is observed that ‘the world requires more than a word, a treaty or a book.’ What does the world see in ‘the life of the congregation?’ Does it show a ‘different’ life, a ‘walk that excels in honesty and in truthfulness?’ Does the church spread a good fragrance of Christ? In other words, is the church indeed ‘a

⁹⁵ J.P. VERSTEEG, ‘Het missionaire karakter van de gemeente’ (*Ambtelijk Contact* 1975, February). The Dutch “demissionair” stems from the French “démissionnaire”, meaning “resigned” and is used for a government that has resigned and continues to govern until a new government is installed; it only deals with current affairs, but can no longer develop new initiatives. It is a government that in fact, is no longer a real government.

⁹⁶ J.H. VELEMA, ‘Missionair-Demissionair’ (*De Wekker* 1981, August 21).

⁹⁷ W. VAN ’T SPIJKER, ‘Marginaal?’ (*De Wekker* 1988, December 16).

⁹⁸ Cf. J. JONKMAN, ‘Want Hij zal van Zichzelf niet spreken’ (*De Wekker* 1990 Juni 1).

⁹⁹ PAAS, ‘Activisme en activiteit in de kerk’ (*De Wekker* 2002, April 5).

¹⁰⁰ PAAS, ‘Evangelisatie en vernieuwingen’ (*De Wekker* 2001, August 17).

¹⁰¹ S. PAAS & S.J. WIERDA, ‘Gaat evangelisatie ten koste van gemeenteopbouw’ (*Ambtelijk Contact* 2003, April).

shining light, a city, built on a mountain, a salting salt?¹⁰² Over the years, this line of thought is brought forward regularly, in which is pointed frequently to the New Testament that shows ‘that the missionary witness of the church must be borne by a sacred life of the church.’ The love, joy, and sincerity of the congregation is a visible and tangible proclamation of the meaning of the gospel and of the power of the Holy Spirit. Where this life is missing, ‘the congregation has nothing to say to those outside.’¹⁰³ The missionary character of the church becomes visible in the way the church stands in faith and also really lives by faith. It is not primarily about all kinds of techniques or methods, but about a credible lifestyle that shows the world what faith gives and means for life.¹⁰⁴ After all, the congregation is ‘the place where God makes visible His intentions with the world.’ It is the ‘testing ground of the Holy Spirit.’ A new community lights up in which ‘grace takes shape.’ In a world in which the yearning for community and love is so widespread, the church is a wonderful gift. It is indeed a ‘city on a mountain that shows what the gospel is all about.’¹⁰⁵ As such, the existence of the church is in itself a witness.

A final thought is that the missionary character of the Church should not be separated from the eschatological expectation of the definite coming of the Kingdom of God. Pending the return of Christ at the end of time, the church is called and is ‘involved in the church-gathering work of Christ.’¹⁰⁶ The end time is the time of mission. Mission ‘is the signal of the consummation,’¹⁰⁷ when God will establish His Kingdom in its full glory. After all, the gospel is not primarily about the salvation of sinners or about showing solidarity or even about God who descends to be with us in our distress, but it is about the ‘much greater purpose’ that lies behind all that: It is about ‘the establishment of God’s kingdom.’¹⁰⁸ Since the resurrection of Christ, the shadow of the eschaton already falls over the present time. The Church knows that, and that is why ‘everything must be seen in view of that end and determined by that end.’ The eschatological charge of time is ‘a strong stimulus to missionary calling.’¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² F. LENGKEEK, ‘Wat de wereld noodig heeft’ (*De Wekker* 1921, December 16).

¹⁰³ J.P. VERSTEEG, ‘Het missionair karakter van de gemeente’ (*Ambtelijk Contact* 1975, February).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. J.H. VELEMA, ‘Missionair-Demissionair’ (*De Wekker* 1981, August 21).

¹⁰⁵ S. PAAS, ‘Evangelisatie en de gemeente’ (*De Wekker* 2000, January 7).

¹⁰⁶ Report of a meeting of pastors in *De Wekker*, May 21, 1937.

¹⁰⁷ W. KREMER, ‘Israël’ (*De Wekker* 1950, February 24).

¹⁰⁸ J.H. VELEMA, ‘Tussen Christus’ eerste en tweede komst’ (*De Wekker*, 1982, December 17).

¹⁰⁹ J.P. VERSTEEG, ‘Het missionair karakter van de gemeente’ (*Ambtelijk Contact* 1975, February).

4.6 Espoused Voices

4.6.1 Procedure

This section focuses on the contribution of the workers in the field, namely missionary pioneers, evangelists, and church-planters. Their contribution is not derived from written, published sources, but has come about as the result of a focus group discussion of which a verbatim was made. This specific qualitative research method aims at making the widest possible inventory of ideas.¹¹⁰ To that end an open and explorative technique of questioning was applied during the focus group discussion.¹¹¹ The actual discussion was executed in two parts. The first part focused on identifying the motives that prompted the missionary workers to start the initiative in which they were involved. This part of the conversation mainly had an exploratory function. My leading question was: By which sources, examples and ideals had these persons been formed and inspired? Following the answers of the respondents, continuing questions were used to keep the 'flow' in the interview.¹¹² The second part of the discussion was more comparative in nature. The leading question was to what extent the missionary workers in their work relate to the theological elements described in the earlier chapters of this study? To what extent are these theological elements significant in the missionary initiatives? Do they determine the course and structuring of these initiatives? This double semi-structured approach was chosen to make the process of data collection as open as possible. The aim was not to critically discuss the thoughts, convictions and theological concepts of the missionary workers. In both parts, the perspective of the respondents was leading. The only structuring in the second part was the mentioning of the theological themes that emerged from the previous parts of this study, without explicating the themes regarding their content. This structuring also meant that the execution of the research remained feasible in terms of time and effort.

¹¹⁰ See BRYMAN, *Social Research Methods*, 500-524 for a description and discussion of the focus group technique. See also EVERS, *Kwalitatief interviewen*, 107-137.

¹¹¹ See EVERS, *Kwalitatief interviewen*, 38. See also BRYMAN, *Social Research Methods*, 466-467. The open and explorative technique of questioning is almost non-structured because of the 'greater interest in the interviewee's point of view.' See the appendix to this study for the interviewguide that was used.

¹¹² See EVERS, *Kwalitatief interviewen*, 66. See also BRYMAN, *Social Research Methods*, 473-475 for the different types of questions.

The focus group discussion itself took place on October 30, 2019, in two sessions of 90 minutes each.¹¹³ This turned out to be sufficient because of the (expected and proven) generic nature of the thoughts and convictions. A trained researcher in social science methods was present at the interview as assistant. She monitored the conversation process and provided an initial summarizing report. In addition, both audio and video recordings were used to provide detailed material for the preparation of the final verbatim.¹¹⁴ The video recording was used to observe and process non-verbal communication.¹¹⁵ The respondents signed a consent form stating that they agreed with the proposed procedure. With this form they also authorized the use of the collected data to answer the research question central to this study. In the process of selecting and inviting respondents, the aim was to form a group of people that would represent not only the diversity within the CGKN as a denomination, but also the different phases in which the missionary initiatives are in their present situation. Workers were invited out of these group of initiatives, both from initiatives that are still in the pioneering phase, as well as from initiatives that have clearly entered a second phase (of a certain consolidation). In addition, church planters who had been involved in the very first developments within the CGKN were also invited. Next to this, the character of the missionary initiative, related to the social context in which it exists, played a role, as did also the regional spreading of the communities. Taking into account the expectation that not all people who would be invited would actually have the opportunity to attend the focus group, fifteen people were invited.¹¹⁶ Eight of them attended the meeting, but the composition of the group was still representative in view of the criteria as formulated, and also in relation to the total number of about twenty-four missionary initiatives within the CGKN at the time. All target groups that were intended and invited were represented. The number of eight persons is recognized as ‘typical’ for a focus group.¹¹⁷ After

¹¹³ The effective time for the actual discussion was about 75-80 minutes in each session. The introductory moments (personnel introduction of the participants, explanation of the conversation process, administrative elements about reporting, audio- and videorecording, filling in of the forms of consent) took about 15 minutes in part one, and 10 minutes in part two.

¹¹⁴ The verbatim contains an anonymized report of the conversation and is stored on a secure server of the Theological University of Apeldoorn. The original notes of the focus group discussion were deleted after the completion of this research project.

¹¹⁵ The audio and video recordings were stored on a secure server of the Theological University of Apeldoorn until the completion of this research project, after which they have been deleted.

¹¹⁶ BRYMAN, *Social Research Methods*, 506: ‘It is almost impossible to control for “no-shows” other than by consciously over-recruiting.’

¹¹⁷ BRYMAN, *Social Research Methods*, 506: The typical size of a focus group is six to ten members. See also EVERS, *Kwalitatief interviewen*, 125.

the focus group discussion, a verbatim report was drawn up with a summary of the whole. This total document was sent to all respondents as a member check, asking them to respond if they disagreed with the presentation and summary of the interview. No comments were received from any of the respondents, because of which can be stated that the respondents agreed with the documentation. The material was analyzed on the basis of the five themes that continuously proved to be leading throughout this study. The vision of the respondents was summarized using as much as possible their own formulations. Regarding each of the themes the entire document was scrutinized repeatedly, arranging and checking the sub-themes and describing them in a narrative way.

4.6.2 Involvement and Distance

It was not possible to disregard my own biography and frame of reference throughout the process of this study. As a minister within the CGKN and as teacher of missiology at the TUA, I am personally involved in the whole subject of this study. Knowing this beforehand, I participated in several training sessions, organized especially for empirical research, in which the process of a focus group discussion was explained and trained. Special focus in this training was put on how to guarantee as much as possible objectivity in listening in a setting in which personal involvement is unavoidable. In the preparation of the focus group discussion with the assistant, the plan for the conversation was discussed, and arrangements were made. Because of this, I intentionally limited myself in the actual focus group discussion to asking the opening questions and the follow-up questions to only facilitate and not interrupt the natural flow of the conversation. Especially in the second part of the conversation, where the themes were mentioned that had come up in the preceding literature study, it was sometimes tempting to step in into the conversation because the themes that were brought forward (without me explicating them) were not immediately interpreted and consequently discussed in the way they were used in the studied literature. But that problem was solved in the group itself; other respondents brought the conversation back on track. Consequently, I did not intervene nor partake in the course of the conversation. The assistant afterwards commented on this, saying that she had seen me deliberately keeping my tongue at several moments. In the reflection afterwards (the process of formulating the *formal theological voice*), my own frame of reference, of course, was an important factor in the process of analysis and interpretation. In order to ensure as much objectivity as possible, I have discussed my reflections with an independent third researcher who heard a recording of the conversation, read the verbatim of the conversation and compared my reflections with it. At the end of the conversation, one of the respondents made the remark, that he, in looking back at the conversation held, noticed ‘some sort of conflict

of loyalty' toward the churches. An inner critical voice confronted him with the question: 'Did you perhaps speak too much and too quick?' Another respondent reacted and pointed out: 'We are all people who love the church very much, but who would very much like to see the church being as much as possible part of the Kingdom of God. We may have spoken critically, but none of us did it negatively.' This short conversation at the closing of the group discussion brought, in a relaxed way, the question to the table whether the loyalty within the group might have distorted the input into the conversation? The reply given shows that it did not, rather, it contributed to the insight into how missionary workers struggle with their position in the church.

4.6.3 Voices of Workers in the Field

In the following, first an impression is given of the course of the conversation in the focus group discussion. This is necessary to do justice to the chosen approach in the setup, in which the perspective of the respondents was leading. The conversation was in Dutch and had to be translated and was brought together thematically. This explains the way in which the conversation is presented. After this part, a theological reflection will lead to an evaluating assessment, providing the key elements needed for the development of the conclusion of this chapter.

At the start of the discussion, the respondents presented themselves with a short introduction. They were all (male) trained theologians, ranging from a theological (missionary) education at a Christian college for higher education to an academic education at university level. All of them were officially involved and installed, either as evangelist, as church planter, as missionary pastor, or as missionary community worker in a "mission congregation". The age ranged from mid-thirties to early sixties.

In the first part of the focus group the leading question was what (had) prompted them to start the project in which they were or had been actively involved. What were possible sources of inspiration and examples? In the conversation that ensued, the following lines can be distinguished.

At the background of the entire conversation, the respondents share a clear awareness that it is imperative to give substantial attention to the missionary nature of the church. The situation in which the church finds itself is serious. 'How is it possible that the church grows almost everywhere in the world, except in Europe?' This situation causes serious pain in the churches. 'What is going on in Europe?' Newbiggin's well-known question was quoted by one of the respondents: 'Can the West be converted?' This is, unfortunately, no hollow phrase. The church needs to know what is needed to communicate the gospel in a contextual way in the western, post-Christian and

thoroughly secularized society today? ‘Does the church still connect to the lives of the people to whom the gospel must be brought?’

When it comes to personal involvement in their work, all respondents indicate that they are personally ‘touched by the love of God in Christ.’ That is a fundamental and first element that emerges in the conversation. The personal and overwhelming experience of the salvation, found in Christ, makes it impossible to keep it private. ‘God who is so close with His love, wants also to be close to the other.’ This awakens the urge ‘to pass on what was received and to connect people with that love.’ It is the experience of the respondents that the love of Christ compels to move, also, because there is a clear sense of responsibility to those who do not know about Christ and His love. One of the respondents remembers that as a teenager he bicycled to the church asking himself, ‘how is it possible to grumble within the church about the big bad world outside, without actually doing anything for the world?’ A person who lives from the love of Christ, cannot just speak of the world outside of the church in an accusatory and judgmental sense. It is the love of Christ that ‘urges to communicate it in and to the world,’ for Christ seeks the world, to save people that are lost without Him. It is impossible to live from the love of Christ and leave the sinful world to itself.

Another view that is shared by the respondents is that, although ‘the question of redemption and reconciliation remains,’ the concept of salvation ‘has broadened’ over the years, because the conviction has grown that ‘the salvation that Christ brings about is more than just saving souls.’ Salvation touches the full breadth of life, because it is the salvation of the Kingdom of God. In a world in need, the gospel is not a distant and strange reality, but it touches and affects the totality of today’s life. Because of this, it is clear that the church has a specific position in all this. It exists to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel of the Kingdom. ‘The church can play an important role in making the Kingdom visible,’ to show to the world what the Kingdom is about. That is how God works. ‘He makes His mission visible in what people do, by their actions.’ This takes place in a world where the message of the gospel many times sharply contrasts with the harsh reality of life. It is precisely there that the gospel speaks out in the strongest way. This implies, the respondents say, that ‘it is necessary to go beyond the safe frameworks, in a radical devotion to the gospel and with a heart guided by love for the world – following the example of Jesus who preceded the church in this.’ In Him, it has become apparent that God is looking for people to save them and the gospel shows that He looks particularly at those ‘who do not belong to the generally accepted circles’ and sometimes live on the cutting edge of light and darkness. The church, therefore, cannot and should not keep aloof from the world. The church should not, because God does not do that either. The respondents point out that it is necessary ‘to be open and see

what God is doing in the world.’ God is always the first in being missionary active. He leads the way and the church is called to follow Him and partake in what He is doing. The question is, what is God doing, and how can we connect to that, and participate in it?

Consequently, the respondents point out that this implies that the church must be there, ‘where the real questions of life are at stake,’ where it really matters, in the actual contemporary context. In this actual context, the direct confrontation with the life of the people takes place. There, the questions become numerous. Because of this, the encounter with people from “outside” the own safe context is a clear challenge, motivation and inspiration. ‘Meeting with people who are different from the ordinary church people – the icing on the cake – have always triggered me.’ Meeting them makes it possible to get to know how people who have not been brought up with the gospel think and live. It gives insight in the fundamental thoughts about what they see as the meaning and purpose of life, but also in all their questions. ‘What is it, they are building their life on?’ ‘On what do they build their hope?’ ‘What are the values that are important to them?’ In the light of these fundamentals in their life, ‘the question of what the gospel has to say becomes relevant.’ The respondents maintain, therefore, that the encounter with people from “outside” is essential because it forces the church to really think about the proclamation of the content of the gospel. The continuous confrontation with people from “outside” requires continuous reflection: What does the gospel really say and what does that mean for people today, inside and outside the church? How can the gospel be explained, so that people from “outside” understand what it means?

The respondents state that these questions are important because of the actual mismatch between the church and the world. They ask themselves regularly, ‘why is it, that the Church is unable to reach the world?’ ‘Why is it, that all those people were/are not “seen” by the church?’ With regard to this, they emphasize the importance not to start from the position of the church but by listening to the people’s questions. What are they really dealing with in their daily life? And then: ‘What answers can the church give on the basis of the gospel?’ The respondents argue that in looking for an answer to all this, expressing beautiful biblical thoughts is not enough. The gospel needs to be brought into reality; it is to be made tangible. The question, therefore, is how the church can demonstrate ‘in doing what Jesus did’ that ‘it is relevant what is written in the Book.’ This is the challenge for the church, especially in its confrontation with the world where many people ‘are not interested whatsoever in faith.’ The church does no longer play a significant role. That makes all this a matter of the highest urgency. The traditional answers are no longer sufficient. Being an example is important. ‘If I go and live somewhere in the neighborhood and make contact with the people, then some of them,

perhaps because of my example, and especially because of the working of the Spirit, will become inspired to follow Jesus also.’ The lived faith “invites” the people around them to join them in following Jesus.

The respondents are aware that all this causes mixed feelings in the church, because it is difficult for “traditionally oriented believers” to adopt a missionary attitude and to let go of familiar patterns. There is even a certain resistance, which is understandable from the perspective of the people in the church. They can react, saying, ‘we just want to have our church services, without fuss.’ However, the changing position of the church requires that fundamental attention be paid to the missionary element, which is directly connected to the essence of the church. The DNA of the church is that it is missionary. This implies, as the respondents say, that there is a conflict with the fundamental identity where this missionary element is not found. Staying safely inside the walls of the Christian community is not an option for the church. The church is not an end in itself, but the church ‘is the instrument in the hands of God for His mission,’ to draw people and to learn them to be disciples of Christ.

The respondents see a development within the CGKN, where since the beginning of this century actual reflection regarding all this has taken place, leading to several missionary initiatives. The actual developments, however, take time, partly because of the above-mentioned resistance to change processes. One of the respondents remembers what happened when he was still working as a pastor in a local church. He had become specifically involved in missionary activities and encountered resistance, because he was not doing what people expected him to do. He was told to stop doing this ‘because we pay you.’ He should ‘not be involved in the world but take care of his flock.’ This shows, concur the respondents, that there is still a long way to go. The churches need to get to a clear biblical vision of what being church is about. As a result, the churches must learn to understand and practice the implications of this vision, for it is, of course, the vision that must determine the life and actions of the church. This will lead to a missionary attitude, both in the circles of the church-council, in the message proclaimed in Sunday services, and in the way church members are equipped to be Christians in their daily lives. The respondents assert that where the missionary intention of the being of the church becomes fundamental, the missionary dimension of the life and actions of the church may become apparent. It will help church members ‘make intentional friendships with the people they live and work with.’ It is very safe to stay and live mainly in your own circles, but there are many missionary opportunities where there are contacts outside the own circle. ‘Where people openly share all aspects of their life with friends and acquaintances, faith does not have to be hidden. If faith is an essential part of life, it will somehow shine through very naturally in the contacts that exist. This opens up

possibilities to share the meaning of faith in a natural way.’ The church, therefore, aware of the missionary intention of its being, will seek to equip, motivate and encourage its members and ‘help them to be light bearers of Jesus in the place and circles where they live.’

The second part of the focus group discussion focused on the question to what extent the workers relate to the theological concepts that emerge from the previous research. To what extent do these concepts play a role in their work? The following elements emerged in the conversation.

The first theme, the concept of the *missio Dei*, is fundamental in the thinking of all respondents. It shows that God is the beginning of the whole missionary process. ‘It is God Himself who is at work through His Spirit.’ It is His mission. He initiates it. ‘He is going in front.’ What He is doing is leading. The basic principle, therefore, is that it is not the church that has a mission, but that God has a mission. ‘He turns in His mercy to the world.’ That is the start of everything, and it is the supporting ground under all the missionary work. The *missio Dei* concept stresses the activity of God. It is ‘God’s involvement in the world, in which the church participates.’

The respondents point to the direct connection between the *missio Dei* concept and the Kingdom.¹¹⁸ The salvation God wants to bring to people involves much more than just ‘the salvation of people for eternity.’ It is directly ‘connected with the width of the Kingdom.’ God is also concerned with the present, which becomes manifest in the Kingdom that already exists in the here and now, for ‘God is actively involved in the world.’ The present reality of the Kingdom gives a deeper insight into the aim of God’s saving action. He does not save salvation for eternity, but already gives signs of it in today’s life. The ‘renewal that God wants already breaks through,’ but it still is only a preview. The ‘sighing in the expectation of the final renewal remains.’

In the point of view of the respondents it is only logical that mission and church are inextricably linked to one another. ‘We do not think about this anymore, because church is mission, church is *missio Dei*, because of which the distinction between mission and church is no distinction anymore.’ Special emphasis is not needed: ‘The missionary identity of the church speaks for itself, and where the identity is not missionary, there is no church.’ There is an unresolvable reciprocal connection. The church does not exist without mission, but it is also true that mission does not exist where there is no church.

¹¹⁸ The respondents note that speaking of the Kingdom is very clearly colored by the context in which it takes place. People from non-Western cultures have connotations with the Kingdom as miracles and signs of power, while Western thinking is much more based on concepts that are found in the Sermon on the Mount. In the focus group discussion, the perspective was mainly from the Western point of view.

This implies that ‘the church is not just an instrument for mission, but also that mission is not just an instrument of the church,’ namely ‘to fill the church.’ The respondents argue that even ‘when the church is almost empty and very small, there is still mission.’ Its mission continues, because of the principal definition of the being of the church in the light of the *missio Dei* concept. It is impossible to speak about the church without its direct link to the *missio Dei*.

The involvement of the entire congregation is equally self-evident to the respondents. Being a member of the church implies being involved in what the church is all about, and thus also in the missionary character of the church. ‘History shows that this involvement was not always the same.’ In the missionary context in which the respondents work, however, ‘the involvement of the whole congregation is not an issue.’ After all, a Christian is not just a spectator who consumes what is “offered” in church. The church is no theater, ‘where everything happens in the front.’ ‘A Christian is a disciple,’ and ‘a disciple is by definition fully involved’ in what the gospel says and gives. A disciple is ‘able to understand God’s voice,’ and to apply the message in every day’s life, in which he is living his Christian life in all the network-connections in which he finds himself. In this life, ‘the dynamic of the Spirit becomes manifest.’ Of course, not every disciple is called to be an evangelist or a diaconal worker, but the respondents stress that all disciples are expected ‘to show compassion for the people around them using the gifts the Spirit has given to them.’ These gifts are not given to be dead assets on the shelf. They are to be used, and this will happen ‘when the members of the congregation truly learn to focus on God and His Kingdom.’ This will bring forward what being human is all about. The elements of worship, community, discipleship, diakonia and witness will become manifest in a natural way through the Spirit, motivating and inspiring the members of the congregation to participate in various missionary projects, ‘based on the specific gifts the Spirit has endowed them with.’ In this context, of course, the preaching and the content of the preaching is of the utmost importance: ‘Does it emphasize in particular the sinfulness of man and the inability to do any good and the inclination to all evil?’ The respondents argue that there is more to say than this. It is good to confess that we have ‘two empty hands God must fill,’ but God wants to make use of His children, so if people are ‘indeed always broken down,’ they ‘will not jump up, saying: God has given me gifts that I can use and those gifts I offer to Him.’

The next important element is good leadership. The question is if the existing leadership structure as it functions in the churches should be copied? Will it function, or is it better to find a new approach? The experience is that established and formalized structures can hinder or even block new initiatives. The existing ecclesiastical structure within the reformed churches prescribes that office-bearers step down after a certain

period, and that new office-bearers enter into the church council. This change ‘can lead to sometimes fundamental shifts.’ One of the respondents refers to what happened when a change in the composition of the church council took place: ‘The whole missionary vision changed when a new brother came in with a clear more inward-looking vision,’ as a result of which the mission-oriented policy was stopped. The same can happen ‘when a mission-oriented pastor accepts a call from another congregation.’ The whole missionary upbuilding of the congregation can be stopped for ‘it is not automatically so that a new pastor is mission-oriented in the same way and to the same degree.’ Managing a missionary project is, after all, not part of the standard competences of a pastor. He is not trained for it. Over the course of history, the respondents observe, ‘the trained pastor has become an academic,’ matching the profile of a teacher. He is formed and trained to work as a soloist. In many churches, ‘the pastor is the only paid worker,’ called to equip and lead the church, together with the church council. But he is in many cases ‘probably the only person in the entire congregation, who throughout his whole week of work, and in his private time, lives in a purely Christian bubble. So that is very, very counterproductive.’ Partly because of this, the dynamics of being a church can get lost almost completely. The missionary worker, on the other hand, is more like the entrepreneur with creative qualities. Entrepreneurs know how to motivate and activate others. They see opportunities and look for possibilities to use them. They ‘do not give up when things go wrong.’ They know how to live and work with the existing risk of failure, because ‘you have only really failed when you don’t get up anymore.’ The missionary workers are driven by their vision, which is linked to their understanding of the *missio Dei*. They see that God is at work and explore the possibilities to connect to that. This difference in competences is an important factor. The respondents observe that pointing this out within the church can trigger critical reactions: Within the denomination, the conviction is generally held that a pastor must be able to function on an academic level, ‘knowing Greek, Latin and Hebrew, lest the church and the Kingdom be endangered.’ Over against this, the observation and experience of the respondents is that professionally trained theologians are fruitfully active in missionary practice. That raises the tantalizing question, formulated by one of the respondents: ‘What does God see in those professionally trained theologians, what the church apparently does not see?’

In connection to this, the respondents point to the difficulties in staffing missionary initiatives. In the past years, a number of pastors deliberately made the transition and accepted a call from a “missionary” congregation. However, that switch is ‘too big a step for many other pastors’ in the observation of the respondents. The question is what holds them back? Is it perhaps because in a “missionary” congregation there are

fewer familiar patterns, compared to a traditional established church? Is it, that they do not want it? Are they not capable of doing it? It seems it has a lot to do with fear of the unknown, because ‘they do not know what working in a “missionary” congregation implies and if they will feel comfortable.’ This, however, immediately implies that they will not be the initiator of new initiatives in their own congregation either. Fear of the unknown makes it difficult to function in a new situation, whereas many situations in a missionary context demand improvisational talent. Forms and procedures need to be invented: How is this to be done? What does this situation ask for?

This does not imply, so the respondents say, that “mission congregations” and more traditional congregations are mutually exclusive. They are complementary. One of the respondents refers to one of the first pioneering church planters in the CGKN, Theo Visser, who used the ‘example of a field hospital and an academic hospital.’¹¹⁹ The missionary context requires an approach comparable to a field hospital where every effort is made to do what is necessary to heal patients and where improvisation may be required. ‘That is not to say that the academy’s approach is no longer necessary. It is not either-or, but and-and.’ Particular attention should be paid to the special competences needed in a specific context. An outward orientation is not only reserved for mission-oriented people. It is noted that Christian theology is by definition theology in a relationship, but the question is in which relationship is it practiced? The respondents observe that within the church, ‘theology often mainly relates to other existing theological views.’ However, the church is never in a vacuum, but always in relation to the surrounding political, social, and cultural environment, which presents specific challenges for the practice of theological reflection. ‘We need to learn how to practice theology in relation to secular culture.’ How do the theological viewpoints that function within the church sound in the encounter with the context outside the church? Because of this, meeting the outside world is essential to the theological reflection on the missionary practice of the church. However, ‘many pastors rarely meet and talk to people outside their congregation.’ That is disastrous for the church and for the testimony of the church. After all, the spiritual and practical upbuilding of the members of the congregation is seen as one of the main tasks of the pastor. This includes building and equipping them for a faithful witness of Christ in everyday life. However, when he, generally, does not meet with people outside the Christian bubble, the question arises to what extent he will be able to build up and equip his congregation?

All this shows, thus the respondents, that ‘the *missio Dei*, God’s involvement in the world, in which the church is allowed to participate, is not internalized in large parts of

¹¹⁹ See *Reformatorsch Dagblad*, november 19, 2001.

the churches.’ The ‘work, the practical life of the church, the consistory meetings, the agenda, the functioning of circles and associations et cetera, has not been thought through on the basis of the *missio Dei*, so they are very much focused on continuity of existence.’ This implies that the church runs the risk of getting alienated from its essential place in the whole of God’s work, of God’s mission. After all, God’s aim is not to keep the church up and running. In God’s mission, the church is God’s instrument for the continuation of the work of salvation He is executing, inside the church but also to the outside world. The church finds its proper place in between God and the world ‘where it lives and functions in the dynamic of the Spirit,’ who inspires the church in its being the witness of Christ in this world. The church, therefore, has to permanently center its existence, life and activities on this essence, and it has to return to it, even if it is a difficult process. In this it has to follow the guidance of God. What is He doing in the world, and how can the church connect to that? What is His plan regarding the world in which the church exists as His witness? This requires that the *missio Dei* thinking be internalized in the whole of church thinking and activities in such a way that the life and church will be determined by it. Therefore, the respondents insist that a change of attitude and thinking and a new orientation is needed, back to the basics: ‘Why are we church?’

4.7 Evaluation

This section brings to the aim of this chapter. The situation within the CGKN, reflected in the normative, formal and espoused voices (sections 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6), is examined and evaluated by using the heuristic lens, as described in section 4.3. How do both parts relate to one another? What picture arises when the different voices are observed and evaluated through this lens? Where does this picture match? Where does it differ? What developments are discernable? This kind of questions are to be answered, in the process of which special attention is to be given to the ecclesiological implications. This will help in formulating the final answer of the central question of research, what both existing and “mission congregations” within the CGKN can learn from the theological missiological discussion that has taken place within the international missionary world and within the reformed context?

4.7.1 Missio Dei

The CGKN have developed more missionary awareness throughout their existence. The first years show a growing recognition of the missionary responsibility of the church, leading to the fixed formulation (written down in 1947 in the *Church Order*) that

the church, because of the requirement of the Word of God, is a missionary church in its own country. This formulation does not yet speak of the missionary essence of the church, but, starting in the 1970s, a more theological reflection on the missionary responsibility, and consequently, the relation between mission and church, starts to permeate the discussions on the synodal level. This is promoted by the foundational theological reflections in the reports of the Deputies for Evangelism, in which the contributions of the respective missionary consultants prove to be substantial. More and more, the missionary character of the church is emphasized. In the reflection of Deputies, the main thoughts of the *missio Dei* concept can be recognized at the background, also when the concept itself, certainly in the wider ecclesial discussions, is viewed with suspicion because of the alleged relationship with developments within the WCC. Be this as it may, the trinitarian framework of mission, characteristic for the reformed approach of theology in general, and thus also for the approach of missionary theology is basic and directional. This is most certainly the case in the later reports of Deputies in which the fundamentals of this trinitarian missionary theology are constantly formulated, emphasized and elaborated. The same applies for the contributions made in the ecclesial periodicals, in which the basic pattern of the *missio Dei* concept is recognizable, although literal references that point directly in that direction are scarce. The foundational conviction, however, is evident: Mission is the work of the Triune God. It is His mission.

All this takes place against the background of the changing context in the Netherlands (and wider, in the western world) that undeniably developed into a missionary situation. The growing impact of secularization, the emerging postmodern climate, and the constant encounter with people of other cultures permanently confronted and still confronts the churches in general, and thus the CGKN also, demanding to look for a good missionary approach. In light of this, the decisions taken at the 2004 synod, to open up the possibility to plant “mission congregations” in which evangelists are entitled to administer the sacraments, are significant and pivotal steps. They were seen as God-given opportunities to turn to the new context, and the decisions were taken with gratitude toward God and with enthusiasm. They were important, not only within the CGKN themselves, but also in the Dutch context, where these developments were followed with clear interest, especially because of the official ecclesial status given by the synod. The CGKN, considered to belong to the orthodox part of the reformed family of churches, were seen as pioneers in this area in the first decade of the 21st century.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ The developments within the CGKN were influential for the starting of comparable developments in other protestant churches, such as the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PKN), and the Reformed Churches liberated (GKv).

These developments within the CGKN not only show the willingness to seriously look for ways to be missionary involved in the changing context, but also the willingness to give room to missionary initiatives that function “out of the box”. The missionary initiatives generally are welcomed with warmth and sympathy within the CGKN, but the integration of the “mission congregations” with their specific characteristics within the denomination is by no means a smooth process. The developments after the 2004 synod show that the course set out did not lead to a substantial and structural ecclesiological reorientation. The question raised at the 2010 synod – would it not be better for the “mission congregations” to start a separate denomination next to the CGKN? – is a clear illustration of this. Notwithstanding these tensions, however, the respective synods show a willingness to enter into a mutual learning process, in which both existing and “mission congregations” ‘learn reciprocally from one another’ with the aim ‘to be church together.’¹²¹ The awareness exists that mission and church, church and mission belong inextricably together.

This does, however, not (yet) imply recognition throughout the church of its fundamental missionary essence in its being part of the *missio Dei*. To use the characteristic phrase of the *missio Dei* concept: The inner connection between participation in Christ and in His mission is not directional. Participation in Christ leads to participation in His mission. Mission is a necessary consequence of being church. It is still and primarily a responsibility of the church, to which the church is called. Ergo, the *missio Dei* is not considered to be the foundational life-stream of the church. The same applies regarding the pneumatologically founded connection between participation in Christ’s mission and the participation in Christ’s accomplished saving work. Mission is no ingredient of Christian life. It is more an imperative than an indicative. In assessing this, there is a remarkable inner incongruence. Whereas the CGKN on the one hand firmly and consciously build the whole concept of (their) theology on the trinitarian framework given with God’s eternal plan of salvation (or the eternal covenant of redemption¹²²), they do not consider and apply, on the other hand, the logical consequences of it when it comes to mission.

Compared to this, it seems that the way in which the espoused voices speak, corresponds more with the *missio Dei* concept. It functions as theological framework in the thinking and doing of the missionary workers. At the same time, however, it is also the fuel to get them going and to keep them moving. They are driven by their understanding of the *missio Dei*. They see that God is active and they want to “join in” and participate in what He is doing. In this, they link this participation explicitly and directly to the

¹²¹ *Acta 2010*, 102.

¹²² HORTON, *Christian Faith*, 309.

personally experienced redemption as found in Christ and received from Him. This experience urges them to share the gospel with people who do not know about the salvation in Christ. They express themselves in a way that approximates the characteristic statement already mentioned, but the question is also here if what they express indeed is completely consistent with what the indicated expression in its totality implies? Their motivation to begin the missionary work they do contains a recognizable element of “being prompted” by the love of God in Christ. This is, of course, a legitimate element, also within the context of the expression in question. Participation in Christ does bring one to participation in His mission. By the love of Christ, Paul is compelled to preach. Necessity is laid upon him. When he does not preach, woe will be upon him (cf. 1 Cor. 9:16; 2 Cor. 5:14). The missionary workers use expressions that equal this biblical pattern: God urges to pass on what is received. It is impossible to keep private what Christ gives. His love must be communicated to the world, because there is an apparent responsibility toward those who do not know Christ yet. Yet, when they speak like this, and even when they use the word “participation”, the question is if they also touch the other layer in the expression that points at the experience of participation in Christ in the participation in His mission. This seems not to be the case, because of which the conclusion must be that, although they express themselves more in a way that corresponds with the terminology of the *missio Dei*, participating in God’s mission or not is still a matter of doing what must be done because it is expected.

4.7.2 *Mission and Kingdom*

The understanding of salvation in its comprehensive significance also developed throughout the years, as is shown in the different documents and statements of the CGKN. The discussion in the 1970s and 1980s at the synod was critical, emphasizing the primary significance of the verbal proclamation of the gospel in relation to the practical application in social involvement and action. This primacy is still stressed. It is a characteristic and valuable element of the spirituality of the CGKN. However, it does not mean that the comprehensiveness of the gospel is not recognized. On the contrary, it becomes more and more an item on the agenda, especially toward the end of the 20th century. In light of the development of postmodernism and in the context of the ongoing process of secularization, it is acknowledged that an all-encompassing holistic missionary approach is necessary. It is fully recognized that the life that the Christian lives, visible and tangible in the middle of the world, is an essential element of the Christian witness. It is directly connected to the authenticity of Christianity. All this is reflected in the synodal decisions, and it is recognizable in both the reports of Deputies for Evangelism and in the various publications in the ecclesial periodicals. The importance of the

Christian life as witness, in its direct relation to the aim of the *missio Dei*, i.e., the establishment of the Kingdom of God, is brought forward time and again. The missionary witness is built on a life in which the Kingship of Christ is transparently manifested.

This line of thought is evidently present in the practice of missionary work within the CGKN. The notion of the Kingdom that encompasses the totality of life, with the unresolvable connection of word and deed is recognizable in the missionary initiatives within the CGKN. Almost all of them are actively and deliberately involved in social projects in and around the missionary community. In this, contours of the Kingdom lighten up. The desire is felt to be church in this way, a Kingdom-people, manifesting itself as such by going in Christ's footsteps, following His example and joining in in what He is doing through the Spirit within the church and beyond. In all this, the diaconal involvement is a tangible demonstration, and thus a proclamation of the reality of the Kingdom, that is being established by God in the world, inside and outside the church. It is understood that it is important to have an open eye for what God is doing in the whole world, for God does not limit His actions to the church alone. He has not left Himself without testimony in the world. His footsteps are discoverable, and the church may connect to them in dependence on the Spirit.

When put next to one another, it appears, that there is a growing awareness that salvation is not only about saving souls, but that it is to be understood as comprehensive. Nevertheless, the restored relation with God is in all this still and emphatically considered as the center of salvation, with the comprehensive perspective understood as result of this restored relation and not as essential part of it. This raises the question to what extent the fundamental thinking that is basic to this is connected to God's plan of salvation in its full width? It is not to be denied that the restored relation with God is fundamental, but at the same time it is also not to be denied that salvation encompasses more than just the spiritual relation with God. God's aim is the restoration of His Kingship, the establishment of His Kingdom in which all of His creation will flourish in fulness of life.

Logically, the conclusion to be drawn here is in line with the conclusion of the previous section. When the *missio Dei* concept as the dynamic materialization of God's plan of salvation of God in its full width is not consistently regarded as fundamental basis, it is to be expected that the same will apply with regard to directly with the concept related derived themes. Which is indeed the case. A consequent consideration of the *missio Dei* concept will entail that the soteriological implications thereof, as they can be brought together under the theme of the Kingdom, also become clear.

4.7.3 Kingdom and Salvation-History

The eschatological character of the Kingdom, as it has come in Christ and as it will come in its ultimate form at His second coming, is a theme that is present in ecclesiastical thinking, both within the broad denomination of the CGKN as also within the missionary initiatives. It is acknowledged that this element is directly of importance with regard to the missionary responsibility of the church. Knowing of the “already” and “not yet” of the Kingdom incites to missionary witness. This eschatological tension defines the end time as mission time, in which the new life lived has missionary significance, although there is the permanent awareness of the provisional status of this new life as long as the tension between the “already” and the “not yet” remains. God is actively working in the world toward the eternal establishment of His Kingdom. All this is acknowledged.

Regarding all this, it is important to maintain the right balance precisely in view of the tension between the “already” and the “not yet”. The spiritual context of the CGKN which emphasizes the primary significance of the proclamation of the gospel of reconciliation (salvation of sin), carries the risk of overshadowing the material side of salvation. In light of the “already” of the breakthrough of the Kingdom this is untenable. God aims at the salvation of His entire creation. His promise entails a new heaven and earth. He saves people. The Kingdom is not promised as a future reality only, but God ushered it in in the here and now. The “not yet” is real, for the Kingdom is until Christ’s return still present provisionally, but the “already” is also real.

The missionary implications of all this are apparent. Mission aims at bringing people into the realm of the King of the Kingdom, in which the life He gives in all its aspects, both spiritually and materially is no future dream but a present reality, be it still in the broken reality of this world. It is precisely here, where the tension of the “not yet” plays its role. The citizens of the Kingdom seek to live, albeit by trial and error, in the manner of the Kingdom. They experience the peace of the Kingdom, by living in it and by living it out, for Christ is their life. They live like this, not because they were ordered to. They live the new life, in which signs of what real life is become visible, doing good to all people and not just within the own community (cf. Gal. 6:10). The missionary dimension of all this is obvious.

In all this, there is, again, that “impossible to express” relationship with the Spirit, who is actively involved especially when it comes to this. After all, He renews people in the image of Christ. He builds them up in Christ (cf. Col. 2:6 and 3:10). In the missionary approach this may be fully reckoned with. Trusting in the work of the Spirit, who brings people to real life in Christ and teaches them to really live that life, in the missionary approach all possibilities that are available, within the own community and beyond, may

be seized with boldness. Of course, in all this, the apostolic admonition to ‘test the spirits to see whether they are from God’ (1 John 4:1) cannot be ignored. The gift of discernment is important. However, the belief that the Spirit is actively engaged in the work of consummation also outside the Christian community, implies that there are processes and situations in which He is involved in His own way. To these processes and in these situations, He opens up the possibilities to connect and, sometimes, even to join in. God moves in His own way, sometimes openly and many times hidden. But He does it, for He is the King, building His Kingdom. Already today. In the world.

4.7.4 Mission and Church

The unresolvable connection between mission and church is in itself acknowledged within the CGKN, as well as in the missionary initiatives. The development shown in the documents in which the missionary responsibility of the church changed in the direction of the church being missionary in its nature is to be validated as important. In all this, the input from Deputies for Evangelism, the missionary consultants, and the missionary thinking as found in the missionary initiatives, proved to be significant factors. All this reveals that the awareness within the church, that the connection between mission and church needs to be given shape, is definitely present. The decisions at the 2004 synod illustrate this. The CGKN showed their willingness to give space to new “mission congregations”. A first exemplary step was taken, in a way showing a revolutionary ecclesial change. The developments in the following years, however, demonstrate, as already mentioned, that this first step was at the same time something like a stumbling block. The tensions that came to the surface at the 2010 synod display this.

4.7.5 Involvement of the Whole Church

What applies to the church applies also to its individual members. There is an inner logic to this: Being a member of the church implies being involved in the existence of the church in its missionary identity and significance. The characteristic phrase of the *missio Dei* concept also concerns the individual believer. Participation in Christ implies participation in His mission, and thus also, participating in His mission means participation in Him. This fits in well with the metaphor of discipleship, which in turn is directly linked to the reality of the Kingdom. After all, being a member of the church means being a disciple, and disciples are Kingdom-people. They found new life in Christ and they receive and experience this life in living according to the word of Christ. Kingdom-life is living in a living relation with Him and not just following orders (cf. Matt. 28:20). Discipleship is a life-long process in which the disciple follows Christ and learns

from Him. He teaches His disciples to take His yoke upon them and to learn from Him, in the process of which they will find rest for their souls, because He gives what He demands (cf. Matt. 11:29-30). This Kingdom-life takes place in the midst of the world, not behind high walls. In the daily and natural encounter with the people in the midst of whom they live, their life takes on the character of a public testimony. Because of that, it is needed to pay attention to this missionary dimension of every day's life in the forming and equipping of members of the church. The same applies regarding the possibilities to enter into intentional missionary friendships with neighbors and colleagues, in which faith does not have to be hidden. In all this, there may be reliance on the gifts the Spirit gives to each believer, 'just as He determines' (Cf. 1 Cor. 12:11).

This, of course, stresses the importance of good missionary leadership, that knows how to recognize and activate the missionary energy and powers that are present in the congregation because of the gifts the Spirit has given. It is clear that this leadership must be supported by a clear vision that builds on the missionary identity of the church (arising from its principal position in the *missio Dei*), not only in theory but also in practice. The result of this will be that the missionary essence of the church will also affect the ecclesiastical structures, providing a framework within which the involvement in the missionary character of the church of the whole church and of its membership can be developed. In looking for appropriate structures and forms, the apparent distinction between sodalities and modalities, already found in Scripture, is helpful (as it has been throughout the history of mission).

4.8 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, the results of the literature study of Chapter Two and Three were brought together in a heuristic lens, that made it possible to evaluate the actual situation within the CGKN. This evaluation revealed not only that there is differentiation in approach and in practice between the existing and the "mission congregations". There is more: The evaluation shows that the awareness is present within the CGKN that the missionary nature of the church needs to be taken seriously. However, the evaluation also shows that this awareness is not directing the inner ecclesial debate. The CGKN apparently struggle with this missionary nature. This struggling is linked to the fact that the awareness of the missionary nature of the church is not in its essence related to the *missio Dei* concept as the materialization of the implementation of the plan of salvation of the Triune God. This connection is mentioned and acknowledged in the missionary thinking as found in the missionary initiatives, but also here it is not directly understood in the sense of the characteristic phrase of the *missio Dei* concept: The participation in

the mission of Christ still is first and foremost seen as a task to be executed. Mission is still something that the church has to do. The relation with the *missio Dei* concept seems to be present but lacks its inner character. What is needed is to root the discussion regarding the place and significance of the church in the actual context of today more firmly in the saving work of the Triune God.

5. CONCLUSION

In the last decades of the 20th century, it became increasingly clear that the churches in the Netherlands, and therefore also the CGKN, exist in a missionary context. In that situation, the CGKN, like many other denominations, faced the question of what this implies for the existence and life of the church. That question became more urgent around the turn of the century when several “mission congregations” were planted. The establishment of those “mission congregations” was greeted with gratitude. There was no denying that God was at work, executing His mission. At the same time, however, the things that happened in the “mission congregations” were at odds with existing CGKN frameworks and ecclesial organizational patterns. All kinds of questions arose which turned out to be not only organizational in nature. The CGKN were confronted with the fundamental theological question of how to value and elaborate the *missio Dei*? When it comes to this, the conclusions of this study show a clear ambivalence within the CGKN.

This ambivalence, first of all, touches the centrality of the theology of the *missio Dei* as it emerged in the international missiological discourse. Within the CGKN, there seems to be a growing acceptance of the terminology of this theology. It is recognized and being used. There is, however, also reserve and distrust, related to the historical development of the *missio Dei* theology in the context of the WCC in the 1960s and 1970s. Consequently, there is no real internalization of the *missio Dei* theology in the theological discussion within the CGKN. This surprisingly applies, as was shown in the previous chapter, to both the existing and the “mission congregations”. Mission is not yet seen as the fundamental identity of the church, because of its participation in the mission of Christ. It is still and primarily understood as an activity of the church to which it is called and sent. Ergo, the *missio Dei* is not yet the source out of which the DNA of the CGKN originate.

Due to this ambivalence, the two derived themes of the *missio Dei*, namely *mission and Kingdom* and *mission and salvation-history*, also remain unclear in meaning. With regard to salvation, referred to in *missio Dei* theology in categories of the Kingdom, there is again recognition when it comes to the terminology, but here too this does not mean internalization. The spiritual identity of the CGKN, with its strong pietistic slant, plays a role in this. In itself, as history shows, there is a recognizable line from a pietist perspective to social and diaconal involvement. However, this does not imply the existence of a Kingdom-theology, in which salvation is understood in categories of the further elaboration and execution of the *missio Dei* in the reality of the present world. This

absence is related to an overly one-sided perception of the eschatological tension between the “already” and the “not yet”. The pietistic slant leads to an understanding of salvation in mainly individual, spiritual (non-physical), post-mortem categories: It is about justification of sin and entering into eternal glory with God. Related to this, the physical and communal aspects of salvation that are already taking shape in today’s world are only secondary. Their existence is not denied, but the things that happen and the involvement of Christians in these things, e.g. in diaconal actions, are understood and explained as fruits of gratitude. The connection to what God envisions with regard to the recreation of all things within the eschatological framework of the “already” and the “not yet” remains out of sight, let alone that there is attention for the participation of the Christian congregation and of individual believers in that recreational work of God. Here, too, the aforementioned reserve and distrust because of the alleged horizontal interpretations found in the circles of the WCC in the past, play a role in the background.

In light of this ambivalence, it will not suffice to answer the question the CGKN is confronted with – ‘what is the missionary context in which the church lives and what does it require in terms of the existence and life of the church?’ – in a merely practical way, by suggesting and applying some adjustments when it comes to the organization and structure of ecclesial life. A fundamental theological answer is needed. In its first and foremost conclusion, this study shows in which direction that theological answer should be sought. This conclusion unambiguously points to the *missio Dei* as the dynamic expression of the plan of salvation of the Triune God. It is, therefore, foundational for the whole of theology, and thus also for ecclesiology. The *missio Dei* is not only the source of the existence of the church but also the framework in which the life and activities of the church receive their significance. It is the fundamental hermeneutical paradigm in the ecclesiological discourse. Therefore, when asked *what both existing and mission congregations within the CGKN can learn from the missiological discourse and from each other, to be able to be a witnessing church of Christ in the post-Christian and secular society of the 21st century*, the answer is that the church, and thus also the CGKN, needs to learn to understand again that it is rooted in the *missio Dei*. Consequently, the other themes studied – *mission and Kingdom, mission and salvation history, mission and church and the involvement of the whole church* – receive their respective place, directly connected as they are to this fundamental, *missio Dei*-determined, identity of the church. This immediately shapes their significance in the ecclesiological discourse.

In this final chapter, the central themes are discussed one last time, building on their foundational connection to the *missio Dei*. What does this connection imply with regard to the way in which the church organizes and structures its existence, its life and

actions? In this, the primary focus is on the situation within the CGKN, because of the specific context of this research. Still, what is said applies to other churches/denominations as well. The respective themes in their inner coherence provide an ecclesiological framework in which both the identity of the church and its relation to the world, in which it has been called to exist, fall into place, showing a promising perspective for the church as the witnessing body of Christ.

5.1 The *missio Dei* is Foundational to Theology

The *missio Dei* points to God's direct and active involvement in the execution of the plan of salvation. Consequently, the *missio Dei* is a determinative factor in theology. After all, theology studies the self-revelation of the Triune God, i.e., it studies who God is in Christ and through the Spirit, and therefore, it is always about what He has done, is still doing, and will do in the world, to bring His plan of salvation to completion. Because of this, an update of theology to the demands of the current post-modern and secular cultural climate is not sufficient. What is needed is a change of understanding regarding the relationship of the church to the world in which it exists. From a missionary point of view, the world was predominantly defined as being hostile to God. The world had to be conquered for Christ.¹ The world was, at best, the sinking ship out of which people had to be saved.² The *missio Dei* corrects that view. No matter how deep the hostility of the world to God goes, it is still the world He made, and loves. The world will not be put in the trash bin, but it will be made new. God's saving actions, in Christ and through the Spirit, aim at its recreation. God builds His Kingdom and until the day of His coming, He is actively involved in the execution of His plan of salvation, both inside and outside the church. Because of this, a complete and corrective re-orientation of theology is needed, in which the totality of the continuing work of God is decisive. Theology needs to be synchronized to what God is doing in and beyond the church in His recreational and renewing work.

The direct implication of this is that the entire scope of theology must be adapted to the worldwide perspective of the *missio Dei*. If God does not exclusively act within but also outside the church, then theology must develop an openness which reflects on what God is doing in the world, in the existing culture and in society, through the Spirit.

¹ Cf. the discussion of the first international missionary conferences in Chapter Two.

² Cf. the well-known quote of Dwight L. Moody: 'I look on this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a life-boat, and said to me, "Moody, save all you can." God will come in judgment and burn up this world, but the children of God don't belong to this world; they are in it, but not of it, like a ship in the water.' Cited in TIDBALL, *Evangelicals*, 143.

This reflection is not so much about establishing a systematic theological framework that determines what is theologically justified (and what is not); rather, it is a practical theological reflection on what actually happens, eventually followed by a systematic theological evaluation. To put it directly, if the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and who can never be separated from the Father and the Son, is actively working in the world outside the framework of the church, then theology cannot but reflect on that, looking for ways to connect to these activities of the Spirit. The remark of Kähler that mission is the mother of theology touches the heart of the matter in a decisive sense.³ Theology is not only challenged but also activated in the encounter with the world in which the church is called to witness to the gospel. This affects the whole conceptual and dynamic nature of theology. It can result in experimental (forms of) theology, especially when it comes to the field of practical theology, taking seriously the different theological voices that sound next to the academic formal one (such as the espoused and the operant theological voice). When this happens in dependence on the Spirit, steps may be taken trusting that the Spirit indeed leads. Of course, discernment is needed. It is especially the missionary theology that can help here, because of the valuable experience in functioning in areas where God in His own way apparently prepared the way for the gospel to enter. He is already building His Kingdom, even before the people He sends arrive. This unmistakably happened (and still happens) in Africa and Asia. It happens also in the secularized and post-Christian countries in Europe today.

Clearly, the need to calibrate theology in its entirety to what God is doing, both inside and outside the church, is underscored by the missionary context in which theology is called to manifest itself today. This has important implications. To give a single, but specific example from the field of practical theology: Regarding the area of homiletics, it is to be understood that the missionary significance of the Christian life in the world implies that one of the essential aims of preaching lies in urging the members of the church to truly live as Christians in their daily life, because they are the true missionaries in the context of the *missio Dei*. They need not only the exhortation but also the equipment to actually participate, from Monday till Saturday, in what Christ, through His Spirit, is doing in the world. They need to be stimulated and built up to be Christ's representatives, His ambassadors and messengers.

³ KÄHLER, 'Mission - unentbehrlicher Zug', 190: 'It would not be too daring to say that the oldest mission became the mother of theology because it attacked existing culture.'

5.2 The Church Participates in Christ's Ongoing Gathering Work

The necessary reorientation of theology affects ecclesiology in a fundamental way. Applied to the situation within the CGKN, this has important consequences. In the light of the *missio Dei*, the missionary context in which the churches in general, and thus the CGKN, find themselves, reveals a deficiency that nested in ecclesiology in the course of the era of Christendom. This deficiency becomes visible in a remarkable way in the distinction used in the CGKN with regard to the newly created congregations. They are specifically referred to as “mission congregations”, next to existing congregations. This indication gives food to the thought that apparently the missionary element does not belong to the essential characteristics of the existing congregations. The conducted research, however, points out that the missionary element is not an extra-ordinary aspect that can be added as an extra, but that it is essential for the being and identity of the church. It is a deficiency when the church ignores this. Therefore, it is needed to return to what church is all about in view of what God is doing. The church must want to fully be the body of Christ in this. Christ is still actively gathering His congregation from all generations of the earth, and He engages the church in this, not as an independently operating institution, but as His body. He continues in the church, as the Head, by His Spirit, the work the Father sent Him to do. The existence of the church is therefore part of the execution of the *missio Dei*.

The practical implications of this evidently affect the organizational structures and policy of the church. The guiding principle must be that the church indeed has its place in God's ongoing saving actions, in the awareness that these actions are not limited to the inner space of the church, but that they are also carried out in the world. Because of this, the relationship with society in the midst of which the CGKN exists, must seriously be taken into account. The church exists in the world, and must, because of its essential relationship to the saving acts that God executes in the world, have a ‘world-formative’ attitude instead of an ‘avertive’ one (Nicholas Wolterstorff⁴). If God does not turn away from the world, the church cannot and may not do so either. Scripture shows God in His focus on the salvation of the world, in and through Christ. The orientation on the world must therefore be included in the ecclesiological discourse, not as an extra or a supplement, but as essential and fundamental and thus guiding.

In concrete terms this means, to draw some first lines, that in the composition and structuring of the *Church Order* the fundamental place of the church in the *missio Dei* must be the leading principle. What the Triune God intends in His mission has to be the framework that directs the whole organization of the church. The *Church Order* is

⁴ WOLTERSTORFF, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace*, 4-5.

not meant to limit and channel the work of God, but to follow Him in His work, and to facilitate all needed patterns and structures that will promote the furtherance of His saving work.

Within the context of the CGKN, this is appropriate because of the fundamental choice that was made in 2004 to give the “mission congregations” a legitimate place within the denomination. This fundamental choice should be taken into consideration in the practice of church law, because of which no extra stress can be put on ecclesiastical-legal-institutional frameworks established in previous times. On the contrary, such an order must be adopted that ensures, in the sometimes holy chaos within the denomination because of the inclusion of the “mission congregations”, that no harm is done to the missionary processes and above all, that no people are damaged. Where God evidently made use of people in the process of starting new congregations, church law should not exclude those people from staying involved in those congregations, even if they do not quite fit into the ecclesial structures. Church law must follow what God is doing. The *Church Order* must seek ways that offer the most room for the movement of the Spirit to be continued, also when His actions are manifested in the unpredictable way typical to Him. Now that the existence of “mission congregations” within the denomination is recognized, the guiding question in the reflection on church law must be how to stimulate and support the witness of the church in this newly created situation instead of limiting it.

It further implies that starting new initiatives wherever God apparently opens possibilities must be promoted and that the gifts of people who dedicate themselves especially to the work of starting missionary communities must be acknowledged. It is inappropriate when the church on the one hand recognizes that the Spirit gives His gifts, but on the other hand hinders the use of those gifts by classifying what is happening as out of the order of the church. Especially here, the church needs to be aware that the testimony that emanates from all what it does, be it positively or negatively, is always a testimony to Christ. Therefore, when the Spirit incites people by giving the gifts needed to be involved in the execution of His mission, also in experimental initiatives, the church should heed that with gratitude, and do everything in its power so that the Spirit can actually use the gifts He has given by engaging the people He endowed with these gifts. Acknowledging this, the CGKN should, trusting the help and guidance of the Spirit, actively engage in this, joining wherever possible in initiatives in which the values of the Kingdom become manifest, even if those initiatives are not always directly set up from a Christian identity. Working together with people of different faiths, or of no faith in social (diaconal) projects might open up opportunities to bear witness to the motivation that lies in the gospel of the Kingdom. In all this, the church holds in the

proclamation of the gospel the Word that explains what God is doing, on what foundation He is building His Kingdom, and how it will end.

The existing “mission congregations” within the CGKN have pioneered in all this, also in their presence and involvement in the world. They are more than inspirational examples. They can be characterized as “forerunners”, “breeding grounds” and “laboratories” where the process of giving shape to the gospel of the Kingdom in the context of today, in a Christian community, and in various respects also outside such a community, is being exercised and practiced, in many respects in an “out of the box” manner, by trial and error, but in trustful reliance on the Spirit of God. In all this, contours of the distinction between modalities and sodalities come somehow to the surface. The church as a modality, be it local, regional or national, can actively promote and facilitate the planting of missionary communities by sending a missionary band as a form of sodality, in the interrelatedness of which a form of mutual inspiration and motivation can be found. In the sodalities, the modalities receive special opportunities that help them to become more what the church is according to the Scriptures, namely the body of Christ that in this world bears witness to Him in its total existence and in special missionary activities.

These same lines of thought must be operative in the considerations and decisions at the level of the denomination as a whole when it comes to the functioning of the church in mission, evangelism, and diaconal involvement. Given their significance in the context of the *missio Dei*, these themes should be given priority over many of the intra-church matters that now fill the agenda of church meetings. Driven by the question where God is establishing (elements and aspects of) His salvation, within the church, but also and especially in society, the church, be it local, regional or national, should consider where it can connect and even join in? Next to this, the church should be alert on things that so blatantly run counter to what God intends in the coexistence of people, that not pointing out those injustices would just as well be a denial of God. After all, the possibility exists that God specifically addresses the church in what is happening, calling it not to turn away but to take responsibility and take action, verbally or actually in acting, according to the manifest standards of the Kingdom.⁵ The church as

⁵ In 2020, on November 15, many churches in the Netherlands confessed their guilt for not taking a clear enough position during World War II on the persecution of the Jews. Other themes in which the church could be expected to speak are discrimination of certain groups in society on the grounds of race or sexuality, the suffering in refugee camps on the border of Europe in relation to emerging nationalist tendencies, the trafficking of women and the abuse of girls and children, to name just a few. There are many more themes in which the church can proclaim and show the liberating patterns of the Kingdom.

the body of Christ bears witness to what the will is of its Head, thus making the voice of Him who pointed out sin and injustice in the days of His walk on earth audible. It is a witness to the world, given on behalf of Christ, whose will and work aims at bringing people to the fulness of life. As such it has missionary significance. To ignore these obvious missionary dimensions of the existence of the church, would be nothing but a denial of its own fundamental identity.

5.3 God Builds His Kingdom

The *missio Dei* shows that God is concerned with the whole of created reality in the salvation that He brings about. He is making all things new. Theologically speaking, there is continuity, although not without judgment. The implications of this are self-evident. The typical emphasis that within the CGKN is placed on the personal experience of salvation in Christ is not denied, but it must be recognized that this personal experience of salvation needs broadening. Salvation is not just spiritual and individual with an emphasis on its post-mortem reality. It is also a physical and communal reality in the present, pre-mortem life. Salvation is all-encompassing. It is holistic and affects the whole reality of existence in the present, although there is also a constant awareness that it remains imperfect until the day of Christ.

The terminology of the Kingdom used in the *missio Dei* demonstrates that the spiritual and individual cannot be seen separate from the physical and communal aspects of salvation in which both the pre-mortem and the post-mortem are taken into account. With regard to the spiritual-individual aspect, it is clear that the Kingdom is not built or established by human endeavor, but that it is and remains a God-given reality. He builds His Kingdom. In Christ, He invites people to come in and receive it. Faith gives access to the Kingdom. This is experienced personally, not only in the sense that it is received as “credit for the future”, but also in the sense that the reality of it is experienced in the present. At this point, a connection can be made with the pietistic slant of the CGKN aiming at the personal appropriation of salvation through faith, which is a fully biblical element. With regard to the physical and communal aspects, however, it is also clear that the Kingdom is already a reality today, albeit in an imperfect form. The Kingdom is not only a future reality, but is also real in the present. Through the work of the Spirit, signs of the new life become visible in the lives of the believers, in their words and deeds, in their dealings with one another and with those around them. Signs of the Kingdom light up. It is necessary that both these elements are seen in their interconnectedness. This requires serious theological reflection on the signification of salvation, in which the proper approach will be to reflect on the individual and spiritual as well as

on the communal and physical aspects, not in their distinction but in their coherence. This cohesion is found in Christ, who, by His Spirit, not only draws people to Himself, but also makes them new people and who as the Spirit of Christ is also actively involved in the world. Where only one side of the work of Christ, no matter which one, is taken into account, the fullness of salvation is not taken seriously. This would mean a disavowal of Christ with regard to that neglected aspect of salvation.

The reflection on the significance of salvation must also take into account that the Spirit is active outside the church and the circle of believers. He inspires people to all kinds of practices, social, humanitarian, and so on, that show Kingdom-characteristics. The question how this work of the Spirit relates to the work He does in the church requires constant reflection in the light of Scripture, but it often, as already pointed at, opens opportunities to connect and to join.

5.4 The Church as the Missionary Community of the Kingdom

Because salvation is to be understood in terms of the Kingdom, it follows that the church can be characterized as the missionary community of the Kingdom. The church is not the gathering of individual believers, but it is that fellowship of believers who are bound together because they are bound to Christ. ‘Whoever comes to faith, awakens as a citizen of the Kingdom.’⁶ In the Kingdom people live from the reconciliation that Christ gives, and they live the new life, very personally but also together, visible and tangible to the world in the midst of which the church exists, in all relationships in which life is lived. Consequently, the community around Christ is a visible and living testimony in the world. It makes visible that faith in Christ really makes the difference, not only when it comes to crossing the border between life and death, but also in the present life in this world, where elements of the shalom of the Kingdom are experienced and are also shared among one another, both inside the church and beyond. The church manifests in this way that the Kingdom “already” exists today. It lives as a foretaste and a sign of things to come. Believing is living the future in the present, very concretely, giving shape, through the Spirit, to what Christ gives and teaches, however limited by human failures and shortages. This applies not only to the church as a community, but, of course, also to individual believers. Each and every one of them is a witness in their own circle, network and context in society. Being a Christian, i.e., living with Christ and living in society cannot be separated, for living with Christ characterizes all of life, in all relations and contexts. Living with Christ, therefore, unmistakably has a missionary

⁶ Free rendering of ROSCAM ABBING, *Komen als geroepen*, 111: ‘whoever comes to faith, awakens as a member of the congregation.’

dimension. Next to this, individual believers can develop intentional missionary activities, for example by forming friendships with colleagues and neighbors, with whom life is shared without hiding the (life based on) faith.

This aspect of the church as a Kingdom-community should direct the practical organizational structures of the congregations. It is evident that the communal aspects of the Kingdom-community are of the utmost importance in the current individualistic context. Because of that, to point out just that example, the missionary meaning of smaller (home) groups cannot be overestimated. The forming of such groups should, therefore, not only be promoted but also facilitated and supported. They form a natural way to connect to the people nearby. After all, where people can really experience a bond together, where they can share their lives, their joys, their sorrows, their hopes and their fears, it is not difficult to open the door and invite neighbors and friends to join in. In this way, smaller groups are promising missionary cells, where the distinction, used in the missiological context, between “belonging”, “believing” and “behaving” plays a role, without immediately asking a permanent commitment. Smaller groups can be a starting point for entry into new missionary communities, dispersed in society, in diverse forms, such as home- or diaconal groups, or in a more monastic shape (cf. the already mentioned sodalities).

5.5 The Openness of the Kingdom Community

As an extension of the foregoing, it is clear that all questions related to the boundaries of the congregation must be looked at in a new way. Scripture speaks not only of being “in” and being “out”, but also of being “strong” and “weak” in faith. In both pairs of concepts, the “being in Christ” plays an important role. Next to this, the book of Acts shows that there were God-fearing people who lived around the synagogue, and who were involved to some extent in what happened there. The missionary context of today makes it necessary to consider these data in their interconnectedness. The congregation as a Kingdom-community is, after all, a living testimony of the continuation of God’s salvation and has, because of that, a principle openness that elucidates that people are welcome. The combination of the relevant biblical data shows that there is apparently room to interact in a relaxed way with people who are attracted by the loving attention and care of the community, but who are not (yet) ready to fully commit their lives to Christ. These people are allowed to come along. They are welcome, and the community should make that visible.

In this, it is important that the community shows that everything that is done is focused on Christ, because, after all, He is the center. It is all about Him, first and

foremost, and not about boundaries that include or exclude people. If Christ is the center, this implies that whatever is done, there is always an aspect of moving, either toward Him or away from Him. That puts the discussion about possible boundaries in the right place: Boundaries are frayed. Ultimately, the question is not whether people do actually belong or fit in in the congregation but if they are moving, or perhaps growing toward Christ, to whatever extent. The way in which Christ dealt with people, giving them time and room to get to know Him, to walk with Him, to learn from Him, shows an important pattern, especially when it comes to the missionary attitude that is needed (today).

All of this has important implications for dealing with (official) church membership, including all administrative and financial consequences. The missionary significance of the church in God's ongoing acts of salvation makes clear that these issues cannot be settled on the basis of administrative arguments. Where that would happen, the church would degenerate into an association. The missionary context in which the CGKN exists today underscores the urgency of a missionary theological reflection on these questions. In all this, the paradigm of the Kingdom offers the possibility to simultaneously do justice to the identity "in Christ" and to the room that Christ gives to people to come to Him (the process thereof, with all the steps that are part of that process). This necessitates a revision of the articles in the *Church Order* that deal with membership, and in connection with that, also the articles about admission to the sacraments through confession of faith, church discipline, and so on. Whereas the current *Church Order* assumes the congregation as a closed community, it is needed to study on and design models that tie in more with the biblical patterns of coming to and committing to Christ. Whereas Christ Himself was patient in His dealings with people, helping and curing many more people than only those who committed to Him, the church today must be able to find ways to follow His example.

5.6 The Service to the Word of the Kingdom Community

Based on the *missio Dei*, the leading thought in considering the theology, the organization and structure of the offices must be the participation in the ongoing missionary work of God. This directly touches the nature of ministry, which in the reformed view can, in the broadest sense, be summarized as "service to the Word". In this, an important shift in orientation is needed. Whereas the ministerial service within the CGKN mainly focuses on activities inside the church, the line to the outside is almost absent. This absence shows the already mentioned deficiency that nested in ecclesiology and that needs correction. The installation of the ministry of the evangelist in recent years

is a step forward. Nevertheless, the total picture remains inadequate from the perspective of what God envisions the church to be and to do in furthering His plan of salvation. The focus needs to be aligned to the primary function of the different forms of ministry, namely the participation in what God is doing in the furthering of His plan, both inside, but also and especially outside the church. Scripture indicates that Christ has given the necessary diversity to shape all aspects of the ministry of the Word, both inward and outward in relation to the significance of the church in that work of God. The apostle Paul has written about this in several of his letters, sometimes in general regarding the gifts of the Spirit (cf. Rom. 12 and 1 Cor. 12), but also specifically pointing out what functions Christ has installed in the church (cf. Eph. 4). Somehow, though, it seems that some of the specific gifts and functions Christ has given are left unused.

It would be a matter of doing justice to the Word of God for the CGKN to reorientate its theology of the offices on these biblical data, bringing back the whole spectrum of the ministerial work Christ gave to the church. This would provide it with all elements necessary to be the community of the Kingdom, the body of Christ, that participates in Christ's mission until the end of time, both internally and in its relation to the world. The missionary identity of the congregations would be strengthened by such a reorientation, because it would provide the possibility to actually engage more diverse people, including more diverse "ministers of the Word", fit to be active in all different situations and contexts in which the congregation finds itself. A direct result of this reorientation would be that it will also and logically permeate the equipping of the members of the congregation for the works of service fitting their specific gifts and talents, be it internally or in a more intentional missionary mode in their specific daily context. It will help them to align their life to their God-given identity within the framework of what He is doing, as followers and representatives of Christ.

5.7 The Agenda of the Kingdom Community

A final implication touches the so-called assemblies of the church. Whereas the congregation participates in the mission of Christ, engaged in this by God through the Spirit, the church council (consistory) should take that into account and act accordingly in its organization and planning of all ecclesial activities. This has direct implications for the agendas of church meetings at the local, regional, and national levels. In the process of arriving at a vision, and the policies that fulfil that vision, the focus of the consistory cannot neglect the fundamental location and significance of the congregation. The council, therefore, must determine its policy, in terms of positioning, prioritization and budgeting, with the accompanying implications for the classification of all the tasks to

be performed, both in a pastoral, diaconal, and missionary sense. Also this necessitates a calibration of the *Church Order* of the CGKN to the paradigm of the Kingdom, both in its defining and describing the different assemblies and other services in the church. Leaving this be would mean that the church does not want to be what God has called it to be, the body that ministers in the world to the gospel of the Kingdom in all its aspects.

5.8 Conclusion

The above-mentioned considerations together form a framework that builds on the things God Himself is doing, in His mission. The *missio Dei* is indeed the foundation of the church: God sent His Son who gave His life to found the church. The *missio Dei* is the existence of the church: Christ made it His body that participates in the continuation of His mission. The *missio Dei* is the life-blood of the church: The Spirit breathes life into the church, making it into what it is, the community of the Kingdom of God, that lives in the midst of this world, proclaiming and living (demonstrating) what God has done and what He is working on. The *missio Dei* is the future of the church: The Triune God does not rest from His saving work until it is brought to its completion. Everything will be made new.

Until that time, God works in and through the church, making it the witnessing body of Christ, called and inspired and empowered by the Spirit. To this end, the church is missionary, in its innermost essence and being, in its fullest sense, in its daily life, in its conduct and actions, proclaiming and demonstrating in the world the gospel of the Kingdom in which it lives, and to which all people are invited. Living from the mission of God and participating in it. To His glory.

SUMMARY

The emergence of missionary congregations around the turn of the century within the CGKN confronted this denomination in a very direct way with the question of how to give shape to being a church in a missionary context. The 2004 synod took a number of fundamental decisions and gave the emerging mission congregations their own place within the denomination. Evangelists working in missionary congregations were also given the right to administer the sacraments. These developments were initially received with gratitude, but in the years after 2004 all kinds of questions arose about the relationship of the existing congregations to the “mission congregations”. This relationship was discussed at successive synods, whereby the synod instructed the Deputies for Evangelism to study on this relationship and to look for ways in which existing and “mission congregations” could learn how to be church together in the missionary situation.

The research in this study aims at contributing to the execution of this task as given by the synod. It is clear that the question contained in the assignment has everything to do with ecclesiology, specifically in relation to mission. This locates this research in the context of missionary ecclesiology. The central research question is: What can both existing and mission congregations within the CGKN learn from the missiological/theological discourse within the last century, to be able to be a witnessing church of Christ in a post-Christian and secular society?

The first chapter introduced this research question and indicates which sub-questions will be investigated in order to answer the central research question.

The second chapter examined how the missionary ecclesiological debate has developed in the global missionary movement. To this end, the statements of the international mission conferences and mission congresses in both the ecumenical and evangelical world have been scrutinized. The research revealed that a number of themes continuously play a role in this. First of all, this concerns the foundation of the mission. A second theme is the aim of mission. A third theme concerns the meaning of eschatology in relation to mission. A fourth theme is the direct connection between mission and church. Finally, the fifth theme concerns the involvement of the whole of the congregation.

The research shows that the International Missionary Conference held in Willingen in 1952 was of fundamental importance. The thoughts formulated in Willingen, which in the years since became known under the term *missio Dei*, not only largely determined

the further discussion, but they also gave direction to a theological approach to mission. Mission is part of the plan of salvation of the Triune God, and He Himself takes care of its realization. Mission, therefore, is first and foremost God's own work. He carries His work of salvation to its completion. The church is the fruit of that salvific action of God and is included and involved in that ongoing salvific work of God. The salvation of God is about the coming of the Kingdom. People are invited and called to enter that Kingdom and receive it in faith. Here too it is clear that the Kingdom is brought about by God. It is not feasible. In the Kingdom it is about the full salvation that can be indicated by the Biblical concept of *shalom*. That Kingdom does not exist yet in its full glory, but it has broken into the world in Christ, and it will be complete in the future. The fact that the Kingdom is not yet there, gives meaning to the mission. Included in the execution of God's plan of salvation (the *missio Dei*), mission is the decisive event that takes place between the ascension and the return of Christ. In this, the congregation of Christ lives in the present out of the reality of the future, as a community of the Kingdom. The congregation proclaims the gospel and demonstrates it. In the life of the congregation, signs of what it will be like in the future become visible. All of this is worked by the Spirit who engages people, despite all the flaws and defects that are their own. All this makes clear that mission is indeed the essence of the church. God has given the church its place in His plan of salvation. In and through the church He continues His saving work in the world to the end. The entire congregation is involved in this, because there are only missionary Christians.

Chapter Three looked at the contribution to the discussion by reformed missionary theologians. The work of Johan Herman Bavinck, Hendrik Kraemer, Johannes Verkuyl and James Lesslie Newbigin is studied, again taking the themes from Chapter Two as the starting point. The *missio Dei* thoughts appear to have a fundamental place in the thinking of the mentioned missiologists, processing the thoughts in their own way. The *missio Dei* concept links up with the trinitarian basic lines used within reformed theology. This connection shows that the elementary thoughts of the *missio Dei* concept are no Fremdkörper in the reformed context. The concept is in line with the reformed vision in which a trinitarian foundation and approach to mission is characteristic.

This also applies to the other themes. Regarding the aim of mission, all authors speak about the Kingdom that is being built by God, and that must be seen as a reality that affects all of life. The Kingdom is holistic in nature. The congregation is a visible and tangible manifestation of the Kingdom on earth. The congregation is the hermeneutic of the gospel (Newbigin) in showing that the gospel is real. The congregation lives from the gospel and lives the gospel.

In all of this, the elements of the “already” and the “not yet” are emphasized. In the time “in between” the ascension and the return of Christ, the existence of the congregation is proof that the Kingdom has “already” come, while at the same time there is also the element of the “not yet”, because God is still working on the final completion of His plan. He does that in and through the church. The existence of the congregation is not an end in itself but is part of God’s saving act and it exists as a means in the hands of God through which He continues His compassion with the world (Kraemer). The congregation has been chosen and called to be an instrument of God in the world, through which He reaches out to the world. All this determines the identity of the congregation as fully missionary. Mission is part of the nature of the church; where there is no mission, there is no church.

That all this applies not only to the congregation as a whole, but also to the individual members of the congregation, follows naturally from this. In the encounter with people outside the congregation in everyday life, the individual members in all situations embody their Christianity, and thus their being part of the congregation of Christ. The life of the congregation as a whole has a missionary dimension, even if certain activities do not immediately have a specific missionary intention. The same is true of the lives of individual members of the congregation. After all, the most important missionary encounters take place in the daily life of the members of the congregation.

Chapter Four examined the missiological discussion as it has developed within the CGKN. Various theological voices that have participated in the debate have been examined. The acts of the general synods in which the theme was discussed have been discussed. These acts contain statements and decisions that are considered “normative”. The reports of Deputies for Evangelism and the articles of various authors on the subject in the official ecclesiastical periodicals contain statements and thoughts that played a role in or contributed to the decision-making process. This makes them “formal” voices. Finally, there are the statements of people who are or have been directly involved with the “mission congregations”. Their thoughts and statements, brought together in a focus group conversation and processed in an anonymous verbatim, are based on their experiences and on their personal reflection on the subject. This means that they are also theological voices that speak in the whole of the discourse.

Prior to the description of all these voices, a separate section brings together the results of the two previous chapters in a heuristic lens. Theological reflections have been made on the central themes in order to sketch a framework on the basis of which it can be established how (and to what extent) the developments within the CGKN relate to the missiological ecclesiological discourse.

The research described in this chapter shows that within the CGKN there has always been a missionary consciousness, with particular emphasis on the missionary responsibility of the congregations. From the 1970s onwards, the relationship between mission and church has been reflected on in a more theological way, especially within the circle of the Deputies for Evangelism. In this reflection a link was made with the trinitarian approach of mission that is characteristic within the reformed context. Clearly, mission must be seen first and foremost as a work of the Triune God. The fact that this is seen (and acknowledged) within the CGKN does not mean that it ties in with the notions of *missio Dei* that are now widely accepted in missiological discourse. This becomes clear when looking at the developments around the emergence of the “mission congregations” at the beginning of the 21st century. Giving a canonical place to these “mission congregations” shows that the CGKN want to take seriously the missionary situation in which the denomination finds itself. However, the developments of the years that followed make clear that the connection between mission and church has not become an essential part of ecclesiology.

Theological evaluation shows that the development of thoughts within the CGKN is reminiscent of the main lines of the *missio Dei* concept, but that no internalization has taken place. This applies to the normative and formal voices that have (had) their input in the discourse, but it also applies to the voices of the actual workers. This concerns not only the fundamental basis of the *missio Dei* concept, which is typically articulated in the phrase that there is no participation in Christ without participation in His mission. It also becomes manifest regarding the Kingdom as the goal of God’s plan of salvation, and thus of the salvation that God intends. The pietistic slant that is typical of the CGKN leads to verbal proclamation being seen as primary, although this does not mean that the holistic significance of salvation is denied. However, the restored relationship with God is emphatically considered the center of salvation. The holistic perspective is there, but it is mainly seen as a result of the restored relationship with God and not as an essential part of the restoration of the relationship with God. The missionary life is therefore in fact considered to be the fruit of that restorative relationship, and thus as something that the congregation, and therefore the individual believer, is supposed to do.

There is also a certain tension regarding the theme of eschatology. The awareness that the Kingdom has both the elements of the “already” and the “not yet” exists. The element of the “not yet”, however, carries, especially in the light of the pietistic slant within the CGKN, the risk that the material aspect of the Kingdom is underexposed. This can create an imbalance with regard to the understanding of (the content) of salvation. In view of the missionary significance, the proper balance is of the utmost

importance. In the congregation of Christ, the peace of the Kingdom is received and experienced, by living in it and by living it. This does not happen because it has to be done, but because it is given. The new life is lived as a gift from God in Christ through the Spirit. It is truly grace that gives life. That grace – the work of God – is the soil of the Christian congregation, and it is at the same time the strength of the life of the congregation. It goes without saying that this applies to the whole of the congregation.

The evaluation of the situation within the CGKN makes it clear that there is an awareness that the missionary character of the church must be taken seriously. However, so far this realization does not seem to guide the debate within the CGKN. The CGKN is struggling with its missionary nature. This is related to the fact that the awareness of the missionary character of the church is essentially not linked to the concept of the *missio Dei*. That concept, which can be characterized as the dynamic expression of the plan of salvation of God, does not appear to be decisive in the ecclesiological discourse within the CGKN.

In the last chapter, it is established that there is ambivalence within the CGKN. The emergence of “mission congregations” was (and is) seen as a work of God. At the same time, however, the things that are happening within the “mission congregations” are seen as “contrary to” the norms and organizational patterns of the CGKN. The research has shown that this ambivalence does not only exist on the organizational level; it is related to the theological evaluation and the associated processing of the *missio Dei* theology. This implies that an answer to the main question of this research does not lie in the organizational plane, but that it will involve processing the *missio Dei* concept as a basis and as a framework for the ecclesiological discourse. It will be necessary to understand what it means to say that the existence of the Christian congregation (the church) is fully rooted in the *missio Dei*, and that therefore the ecclesiological issues must be addressed in direct relationship to that *missio Dei* concept. After all, it is this *missio Dei* concept that determines the identity of the church and that therefore gives substance and direction to the existence of the church.

Finally, the consequences of this conclusion are elaborated in a number of recommendations. It is thereby established that the *missio Dei* should be the foundation of the whole of theology. The Christian congregation participates in the continuing work of Christ in which He gathers His congregation. It is God who builds and develops His Kingdom. The congregation is a missionary kingdom-community. This community has an open character in which people are welcomed. The congregation is involved in its entire existence, and in all aspects of its existence, in the ongoing missionary work of

God, both inward and outward. The congregation's agenda is therefore determined and directed by this ongoing work of God.

All this defines the missionary identity of the church, because God works with His Spirit in and through the church, making it a witnessing body of Christ in this world. The church lives from the *missio Dei* and participates in it. To the glory of God.

SAMENVATTING

Het ontstaan van zendingsgemeenten rond de eeuwwisseling binnen de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (CGKN) confronteerde dit kerkverband op een heel directe manier met de vraag hoe gestalte te geven aan het kerk zijn in een missionaire context. De generale synode van 2004 nam een aantal fundamentele besluiten en gaf aan de ontstane zendingsgemeenten een eigen plaats binnen het kerkverband. Tevens kregen evangelisten die in zendingsgemeenten werken het recht de sacramenten te bedienen. Deze ontwikkelingen werden aanvankelijk met dankbaarheid ontvangen, maar in de jaren na 2004 kwamen er allerlei vragen op rond de verhouding van de bestaande gemeenten tot de zendingsgemeenten. Op opeenvolgende synodes was deze thematiek aan de orde, waarbij de synode opdracht gaf aan deputaten evangelisatie om op deze verhouding te studeren en naar wegen te zoeken waarin bestaande en zendingsgemeenten samen zouden kunnen leren hoe kerk te zijn met elkaar in de missionaire situatie.

Het onderzoek in deze studie wil een bijdrage leveren aan de uitvoering van deze opdracht van de synode. Duidelijk is dat de vraag die in de opdracht vervat ligt alles te maken heeft met de ecclesiologie, en dan specifiek in relatie tot de zending (het missionaire). Dat plaatst dit onderzoek in het kader van de missionaire ecclesiologie. De centrale onderzoeksvraag is: ‘wat kunnen zowel bestaande als zendingsgemeenten binnen de CGKN leren van het missiologisch theologische discours van de laatste eeuw om een getuigende gemeente van Christus te kunnen zijn in de huidige postchristelijke en seculiere samenleving?’ In het eerste hoofdstuk werd deze onderzoeksvraag ingeleid en aangegeven welke deelvragen onderzocht moesten worden om tot beantwoording van de centrale onderzoeksvraag te komen.

In het tweede hoofdstuk werd onderzocht hoe het missionair ecclesiologische debat zich ontwikkeld heeft in de wereldwijde zendingsbeweging. Daarvoor is gekeken naar de uitspraken van de internationale zendingsconferenties en zendingscongressen in zowel de oecumenische als evangelische wereld. Uit het onderzoek werd duidelijk dat een aantal thema’s daarbij voortdurend een rol spelen. Dat betreft allereerst de fundering van de zending. Een tweede thema is het doel van de zending. Een derde thema raakt de betekenis van de eschatologie in relatie tot de zending. Een vierde thema is de directe verbinding tussen zending en kerk. Het vijfde thema, tenslotte, behelst de betrokkenheid van het geheel van de gemeente.

Uit het onderzoek blijkt dat met name de in 1952 in Willingen gehouden internationale zendingsconferentie van fundamentele betekenis is geweest. De gedachten die in Willingen geformuleerd werden en die in de tijd daarna bekend geworden zijn onder de term *missio Dei*, hebben niet alleen de verdere discussie grotendeels bepaald, maar ze hebben ook richting gegeven aan een theologische benadering van de zending. Zending is onderdeel van het heilsplan van de drie-enige God, en Hij zelf zorgt voor de verwerkelijking daarvan. Zending is daarom in de allereerste plaats Gods eigen werk. Hij zet Zijn heilswerk voort tot aan de voltooiing ervan. De kerk is vrucht van dat heilshandelen van God en wordt in dat voortgaande heilshandelen van God opgenomen en ingeschakeld. In het heilshandelen van God gaat het om de komst van het Koninkrijk. Mensen worden uitgenodigd en geroepen om dat Koninkrijk binnen te gaan en om het in geloof te ontvangen. Ook hier is duidelijk dat het Koninkrijk door God tot stand wordt gebracht. Het is niet maakbaar. In het Koninkrijk gaat het om het volle heil dat met het Bijbelse begrip *shalom* kan worden aangeduid. Dat Koninkrijk is er nog niet in zijn volle heerlijkheid, maar het is in Christus in de wereld ingebroken, en het zal er in de toekomst helemaal zijn. Dat het Koninkrijk er nu nog niet is, geeft aan de zending haar betekenis. Opgenomen in de uitwerking van Gods heilsplan (de *missio Dei*), is zending het beslissende gebeuren dat zich voltrekt tussen de hemelvaart en de wederkomst van Christus. In dat alles leeft de gemeente van Christus, die in het heden in en uit de werkelijkheid van de toekomst leeft, als gemeenschap van het Koninkrijk. Zij proclameert het evangelie en zij demonstreert het. In het leven van de gemeente lichten tekenen op van hoe het in de toekomst zijn zal, waarbij dat alles gewerkt wordt door de Geest. De Geest schakelt mensen in, ondanks alle lek en gebrek die hen eigen is. Dit alles maakt duidelijk dat zending inderdaad tot het wezen van de kerk behoort. God heeft de kerk haar plaats gegeven in zijn heilsplan. In en door de kerk heen continueert Hij in de wereld Zijn reddende werk, tot het einde toe. Daarbij wordt de hele gemeente ingeschakeld, want er zijn alleen maar missionaire christenen.

In hoofdstuk drie werd gekeken naar de bijdrage aan de discussie door gereformeerde zendingstheologen. Gekeken is het werk van Johan Herman Bavinck, Hendrik Kraemer, Johannes Verkuyl en van James Leslie Newbigin doorgenomen, waarbij de thema's uit hoofdstuk twee opnieuw het uitgangspunt waren. De *missio Dei* gedachten blijken op een fundamentele manier een plek te hebben in het denken van de genoemde missiologen. Ze hebben die gedachten elk op eigen wijze verwerkt, waarbij aangesloten kon worden bij de binnen de gereformeerde theologie gehanteerde trinitarische grondlijnen. Deze aansluiting laat zien dat de elementaire gedachten van het *missio Dei*-concept geen Fremdkörper vormen in de gereformeerde context. Het concept past bij de

gereformeerde visie waarin een trinitarische fundering en benadering van de zending kenmerkend is.

Dat geldt eveneens van de verdere thema's. Alle auteurs spreken bij de vraag naar het doel van de zending over het Koninkrijk dat door God gebouwd wordt, en dat gezien moet worden als een werkelijkheid die het totale leven raakt. Het Koninkrijk is holistisch van karakter. De gemeente is op aarde een zichtbare en tastbare manifestatie van het Koninkrijk. De gemeente is de hermeneutiek van het evangelie (Newbiggin) doordat zij laat zien dat het evangelie echt is. De gemeente leeft er uit en leeft het uit.

In dit alles worden de elementen van het "reeds" en het "nog niet" benadrukt. In de "tussentijd" tussen hemelvaart en wederkomst is de gemeente het bewijs dat het Koninkrijk "reeds" gekomen is, terwijl er tegelijk het "nog niet" is omdat God nog voortwerkt aan de uiteindelijke voltooiing van Zijn plan. Dat doet Hij in en door de gemeente heen. Het bestaan van de gemeente is geen doel in zichzelf maar de gemeente is onderdeel van Gods heilshandelen en ze bestaat als middel in Gods hand waardoor Hij Zijn bewogenheid met de wereld voortzet (Kraemer). De gemeente is uitgekozen en geroepen om in de wereld instrument in Gods hand te zijn, waardoor Hij naar de wereld uitreikt. Dit alles bepaalt de identiteit van de gemeente als voluit missionair. Zending maakt deel uit van het wezen van de kerk; waar geen zending is, daar is geen kerk.

Dat dit alles niet alleen voor de gemeente als geheel, maar ook voor de individuele gelovigen geldt, vloeit hier als vanzelf uit voort. In de ontmoeting met mensen buiten de gemeente in het leven van alledag belichamen de individuele leden van de gemeente in alle situaties hun christen-zijn, en daarmee hun deel zijn van de gemeente van Christus. Het leven van de gemeente als geheel heeft een missionaire dimensie, ook als bepaalde activiteiten niet meteen een specifiek missionaire intentie hebben. Datzelfde geldt van het leven van individuele leden van de gemeente. De meest belangrijke missionaire ontmoetingen vinden immers plaats in het dagelijks leven van de leden van de gemeente.

In hoofdstuk vier werd de missiologische discussie zoals die zich binnen de CGKN ontwikkeld heeft onderzocht. Verschillende theologische stemmen die in het debat hebben meegesproken zijn onderzocht. De acta van de generale synodes waarin de thematiek aan de orde kwam, zijn doorgenomen. Deze acta bevatten uitspraken en besluiten die als "normatief" gelden. De rapporten van deputaten evangelisatie en de artikelen van verschillende auteurs in de officiële kerkelijke organen over de betreffende thematiek, bevatten uitspraken en gedachten die een rol gespeeld hebben in of een bijdrage geleverd hebben aan het proces om tot besluitvorming te komen. Daarmee zijn het "formele" stemmen. Tenslotte zijn er de uitspraken van mensen die direct betrokken

zijn (geweest) bij de zendingsgemeenten. Hun gedachten en uitspraken, bijeengebracht in een focusgroep-gesprek en verwerkt in een geanonimiseerd verbatim, zijn gebaseerd op hun ervaringen en op de reflectie die zij in de praktijk plegen. Daarmee zijn het eveneens theologische stemmen die recht van spreken hebben in het geheel van het discours.

Voorafgaand aan de beschrijving van al deze stemmen is in een aparte paragraaf de oogst van de twee voorgaande hoofdstukken bij elkaar gebracht in een heuristische lens. Op de centrale thema's is theologisch gereflecteerd om een kader te schetsen op grond waarvan vastgesteld kan worden hoe (en in hoeverre) de ontwikkelingen binnen de CGKN zich tot het missiologisch ecclesiologische discours verhouden.

Het onderzoek dat in dit hoofdstuk beschreven is, laat zien dat er binnen de CGKN altijd een missionair bewustzijn is geweest, waarbij vooral op de missionaire verantwoordelijkheid van de gemeenten gewezen is. Vanaf de jaren 70 van de 20^e eeuw is op de relatie van zending en kerk op een meer theologische manier gereflecteerd, met name binnen de kring van deputaten evangelisatie. Daarbij werd aangesloten bij de trinitarische benadering van zending die karakteristiek is binnen de gereformeerde context. Duidelijk is dat zending in de allereerste plaats gezien moet worden als een werk van de drie-enige God. Dat dit gezien (en erkend) wordt binnen de CGKN wil nog niet zeggen dat daarmee aangesloten wordt bij de in het missiologische discours inmiddels breed aanvaarde *missio Dei* gedachten. Dat wordt duidelijk als gelet wordt op de ontwikkelingen rond het ontstaan van de zendingsgemeenten aan het begin van de 21^e eeuw. Het geven van een kerkrechtelijke plek aan die zendingsgemeenten laat zien dat de CGKN de missionaire situatie waarin de kerk zich bevindt serieus willen nemen. De ontwikkelingen van de jaren daarna maken echter duidelijk dat de verbinding van zending en kerk geen wezenlijk bestanddeel van de ecclesiologie is (geworden).

De theologische evaluatie laat zien dat de gedachtenontwikkeling binnen de CGKN wel doet denken aan de hoofdlijnen van het *missio Dei* concept, maar dat er geen internalisering heeft plaatsgevonden. Dat geldt van de normatieve en formele stemmen die in dit discours hun inbreng hebben (gehad), maar het geldt ook van de stemmen uit de praktijk. Dit wordt niet alleen duidelijk bij de fundamentele basis van het *missio Dei* concept, die kenmerkend weergegeven wordt met de zin dat er geen deel hebben aan Christus is zonder participatie in Zijn missie. Het wordt ook zichtbaar bij het spreken over het Koninkrijk als doel van Gods heilsplan, en dus van de redding die God beoogt. De piëtistische inslag die eigen is aan de CGKN leidt ertoe dat de verbale verkondiging als primair wordt gezien, al betekent dat niet dat de holistische betekenis van het heil wordt ontkend. De herstelde relatie met God wordt echter nadrukkelijk beschouwd als het centrum van de verlossing. Het holistische perspectief is er wel, maar moet vooral

gezien worden als resultaat van de herstelde relatie met God en niet als een essentieel onderdeel van het herstel van de relatie met God. Het missionaire leven wordt derhalve in feite gezien als vrucht van die herstelde relatie, en dus als iets wat van de gemeente, en dus ook van een individuele gelovige verwacht wordt.

Ook bij het thema van de eschatologie is er een zekere spanning. Er is het besef dat er bij het Koninkrijk sprake is van een “reeds” en een “nog niet”. Juist dit element echter draagt in het licht van de piëtistische inslag van de CGKN het risico in zich dat het materiele aspect van het Koninkrijk onderbelicht blijft, waardoor er een disbalans kan ontstaan met betrekking tot het spreken over (de inhoud van) het heil. Met het oog op de missionaire betekenis is de juiste balans hierbij van het grootste belang. In de gemeente van Christus wordt de vrede van het Koninkrijk ontvangen en beleefd, door erin te leven en door het uit te leven. Dat gebeurt niet omdat het moet, maar omdat het gegeven wordt. Het nieuwe leven wordt geleefd als een gave van God in Christus door de Geest. Het is werkelijk de genade die levend maakt. Die genade – het werk van God – is de bodem van de christelijke gemeente, en is meteen ook de kracht van het leven van de gemeente. Het spreekt voor zich dat dit van toepassing is op het geheel van de gemeente.

De evaluatie van de situatie binnen de CGKN maakt duidelijk dat het besef dat het missionaire karakter van de kerk serieus genomen moet worden aanwezig is. Tot nu toe blijkt dit besef echter niet het debat binnen de CGKN te sturen. De CGKN worstelt met het missionaire karakter. Dit hangt ermee samen dat het besef van het missionaire karakter van de kerk in essentie niet is gerelateerd aan het *missio Dei*-concept. Dat *missio Dei* concept, dat gekarakteriseerd kan worden als de dynamische expressie van het heilsplan van God, blijkt niet bepalend te zijn in het ecclesiologische debat binnen de CGKN.

In het laatste hoofdstuk zijn de lijnen doorgetrokken en wordt vastgesteld dat er een ambivalentie bestaat binnen de CGKN. Het ontstaan van de zendingsgemeenten werd (en wordt) gezien als een werk Gods. Tegelijkertijd echter worden de dingen die gebeuren binnen de zendingsgemeenten gezien als “in strijd met” de binnen de CGKN geldende normen en organisatorische patronen. Uit het onderzoek is gebleken dat deze ambivalentie niet slechts bestaat op het organisatorische vlak, maar dat het gaat om de theologische waardering en daaraan verbonden verwerking van de *missio Dei* theologie. Dat betekent dat een beantwoording van de hoofdvraag van dit onderzoek niet ligt in het organisatorische vlak, maar dat het zal gaan om een verwerken van het *missio Dei* concept als basis en als kader voor het ecclesiologische discours. Het zal erom gaan te verstaan wat het betekent dat het bestaan van de christelijke gemeente (de kerk) voluit

geworteld is in de *missio Dei*, en dat daarom de ecclesiologische vragen beantwoord moeten worden in directe relatie tot dat *missio Dei* concept. Het is immers dit *missio Dei* concept dat de identiteit van de kerk bepaalt en dat daarom het bestaan van de kerk inhoud en richting geeft.

Wat de consequenties daarvan zijn wordt tenslotte in een aantal aanbevelingen uitgewerkt. Daarbij wordt vastgesteld dat de *missio Dei* het geheel van de theologie zou moeten funderen. De christelijke gemeente participeert in het voortgaande werk van Christus waarin Hij Zijn gemeente vergadert. Het is God die Zijn Koninkrijk bouwt en uitbouwt. De gemeente is een missionaire koninkrijks-gemeenschap. Die gemeenschap heeft een open karakter waarin mensen worden welkom geheten. De gemeente is in heel haar bestaan, en in alle aspecten van haar bestaan, betrokken in het voortgaande missionaire werk van God, zowel naar binnen als naar buiten. De agenda van de gemeente wordt daarom bepaald en gestuurd door dit voortgaande werk van God.

Dit alles bepaalt de missionaire identiteit van de kerk, omdat God met Zijn Geest in en door de kerk werkt en haar maakt tot een getuigend lichaam van Christus in deze wereld. De kerk leeft van de *missio Dei* en participeert erin. Tot eer van God.

APPENDIX: PLAN OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

	The missionary identity of the church
Introduction and procedure	<p>A global introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - of the purpose of the research in general; - of the specific goal of this focus group discussion; - of the planned procedure. <p>In the introduction, the following elements will be used:</p> <p>‘Thank you for accepting the invitation. Your presence and participation in this meeting are important factors in the process of my research.’</p> <p>Personal introduction of the participants: ‘Who are you? What is it what you do? What do you expect from this meeting?’</p> <p>Explanation: ‘What do I envision in the conversation of this afternoon? It is all about you! It is important to discover what your motives and thoughts are, when it is about the work you do.’</p> <p>Why a group discussion, and no personal interviews? ‘I deliberately opted for a group discussion, because it gives the opportunity to explore the theme broadly in a short period of time. What is said by one of the participants can be taken up by some else, affirming or complementing what is said. Brought together, this will provide a wide picture.’</p> <p>Method: ‘Several tools are used. First, there is the assistant, mrs. NN, a trained social researcher who will act as my “second”. She will observe the process and – if necessary – she will intervene to prevent one-sidedness. She will also monitor the objective of the process (Does everyone gets the possibility to speak? What non-verbal communication takes place?). She will help to summarize the conversation, for the purpose of which she takes notes. She will help compiling the definitive report. This definitive report will be anonymized, which is also a requirement for its scientific processing.’</p> <p>‘The first draft of the verbatim will be sent to you for approval, to ensure that it reflects the interview as conducted.’</p> <p>A next tool is that an audio- and video recording will be used to arrive at a true representation of the conversation held. This material will be kept at a secure place during the progress of this research and will be destroyed afterwards. ‘I ask your permission to record the conversation and to use the material as explained.’</p> <p>‘A following step is that the reflections on the basis of the material of this afternoon will be discussed with an independent researcher, to check them.’</p>
Exploratory part	Aim: the perspective of the respondents is leading. The aim is not to discuss their thoughts or to measure them somehow.

	<p>The first question to start the conversation is: <i>'What prompted you to start the project you are associated with?'</i></p> <p>Follow-up questions to keep the flow in the conversation might be:</p> <p><i>'Were you inspired by something/someone?'</i> <i>'Did you have any examples?'</i> <i>'What did you envision?'</i> <i>'Did you have any ideals, and if so, what triggered those ideals?'</i> <i>'What beautiful things have you experienced?'</i> <i>'What difficult things did you encounter?'</i></p>
<p>Transition to part 2 of the conversation</p>	<p>The themes that came up as result of the study of literature will be mentioned, without explicating them. The themes are, respectively: <i>Missio Dei; Mission and Kingdom; Kingdom and salvation history; mission and church; involvement of the whole church.</i></p>
<p>Relating part</p>	<p>The purpose of this part is to see whether and to what extent the missionary workers in their thinking and in their work relate to the themes that emerged from the literature studied. The aim is not to discuss their thoughts and work in relation to these themes, but to see whether the themes prove to be of importance in their thinking and working. And if so, how do they interpret them?</p> <p>In view of this, the following open questions are asked:</p> <p><i>'What do the themes mentioned mean to you?'</i> <i>'Do you relate to them, and if so, what does that imply?'</i> <i>'Are there any issues that are very important and why?'</i> <i>'Do they affect you?'</i> <i>'What are you doing with it?'</i> <i>'How do you process them?'</i></p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>A first indication of what is heard in the conversation. A friendly "thank you". Scripture and prayer.</p>

LITERATURE

ABBREVIATIONS in this list (if not mentioned in SIEGFRIED M. SCHWERTNER, *Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017³).

- DHB *De Heerbaan. Algemeen Zendingstijdschrift*
DNK *Documentatieblad voor de Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis na 1800*
Exch *Exchange: Journal of Contemporary Christianities in Context*
HZB *Het zendingsblad van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*
RJM *Report of the Jerusalem Meeting of the IMC, 1928, Vols. I-VIII* (see list of literature)
Sot *Soteria: evangelische theologische bezinning*
Tam *Tamaram Series, Vols. I-VII* (see list of literature)
WMC *World Missionary Conference, 1910, Reports, Vols. I-IX* (see list of literature)

A: ECCLESIASTICAL DOCUMENTS AND DOCUMENTS OF THE ECUMENICAL AND MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS (PUBLICATIONS WITHOUT AUTHOR OR EDITOR):

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS OF THE CHRISTELIJKE GEREFORMEERDE KERK IN NEDERLAND (before 1892):

Handelingen 1872 van de Synode der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland, gehouden van 5 tot 20 Junij 1872, te Groningen ('s Gravenhage: S. van Velzen, 1872).

OFFICIAL CHURCH DOCUMENTS OF THE CGKN (IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER):

Handelingen 1918 van de synode der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland (Utrecht 1918).

Acta 1941 & 1944 van de Generale Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland (Apeldoorn 1941 & 1944).

Acta 1947 van de Generale Synode der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Utrecht 1947).

Acta 1956 van de Generale Synode der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Apeldoorn 1956).

Acta 1965/1966 van de Generale Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Zwolle-Apeldoorn 1965-1966).

Acta 1971/1972 van de Generale Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Rotterdam 1971-1972).

Acta 1974 van de Generale Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Amsterdam-Nieuw West 1974).

- Acta 1977 van de Generale Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Hoogeveen 1977).*
- Acta 1980 van de Generale Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Amersfoort 1980).*
- Acta 1983 van de Generale Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Rotterdam-Centrum 1983).*
- Acta 1986 van de Generale Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland ('s Gravenhage 1986).*
- Acta 1998 van de Generale Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Haarlem Noord/Nunspeet 1998).*
- Acta 2001 van de Generale Synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Leeuwarden/Nunspeet 2001).*
- Acta 2004 van de generale synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Utrecht-West/Nunspeet 2004).*
- Acta 2010 van de generale synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Huiszen/Nunspeet 2010).*
- Acta 2013 van de generale synode van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Urk/Nunspeet 2013).*
- Kerkorde van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn Motief, 2011).*

OFFICIAL CHURCH DOCUMENTS OF THE NEDERDUITSCH GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN:

- Acta van het Zending-congres gehouden te Amsterdam, volgens opdracht der Voorloopige Synode van Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Kerken, op den 28sten, 29sten en 30sten Januari 1890, waarin zijn opgenomen eene Bijdrage van Dr. W. van den Bergh; de Referaten van Dr. A. Kuyper, Ds. A.O. Schaafsma, Dr. Th.C.L. Wijmalen, Ds. F. Lion Cachet, dr. L.H. Wagenaar, Ds. N.A. de Gaay Fortman; en de Zendingrede van Ds. J.C. Sikkkel (Amsterdam: J.A. Wormser, 1890).*

OFFICIAL CHURCH DOCUMENTS OF THE GKN:

- Acta van de generale synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, gehouden te Zwolle van 27 augustus – 2 oktober 1946 (Kampen: Kok, 1947).*

WCC-DOCUMENTS:

- Salvation Today, Bangkok, 29th December 1972-8th January 1973 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, Programme Unit on Faith and Witness, 1972).*

PRE-IMC-DOCUMENTS:

World Missionary Conference, 1910, Reports of Commissions I-VIII and History and Records of the Conference. Vols. I-IX (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910) (abbr. WMC).

IMC-DOCUMENTS (CHRONOLOGICALLY ORDERED):

Jerusalem 1928:

Report of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, March 24th-April 8th, 1928, Vols. I-VIII (London: Oxford UP, 1928) (abbr. RJM).

Tamparam 1938:

The Tamparam Series: Following the Meeting of the International Missionary Council at Tamparam, Madras, Christmas 1938, Vols. I-VII (London: Oxford UP, 1939) (abbr. Tam).

The World Mission of the Church: Findings and Recommendations of the Meeting of the International Missionary Council, Tamparam, Madras, India, Dec. 12-29, 1938 (London: International Missionary Council, 1939).

Whitby 1947:

Minutes of the Enlarged Meeting of the International Missionary Council and of the Committee of the Council, Whitby, Ontario, Canada, July 5—24, 1947 (London: International Missionary Council, n.y.).

The Witness of a Revolutionary Church: Statements issued by the Committee of the International Missionary Council, Whitby, Ontario, Canada, July 5—24, 1947 (London: International Missionary Council, 1947).

Willingen 1952:

Minutes of the Enlarged Meeting and the Committee of the International Missionary Council, Willingen, Germany, July 5th to 21st, 1952 (London: International Missionary Council, n.y.).

‘A Statement on the Missionary Calling of the Church’, in: *The Missionary Obligation of the Church, Willingen, Germany, July 5-17, 1952* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1952), 1-5.

‘The Theological Basis of the Missionary Obligation: An Interim Report’, in: *Minutes of the Enlarged Meeting and the Committee of the International Missionary Council, Willingen, Germany, July 5th to 21st, 1952* (London: International Missionary Council, n.y.), 86-92 (also in: GOODALL, NORMAN (ed.), *Missions under the Cross: Addresses delivered at the Enlarged Meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Willingen, in Germany, 1952; with Statements issued by the Meeting* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1953), 238-245).

Ghana 1957/58:

Minutes of the Assembly of the International Missionary Council, Ghana, December 28th, 1957 to January 8th, 1958 (London: International Missionary Council, n.y.).

CWME-DOCUMENTS (CHRONOLOGICALLY ORDERED):

Mexico 1963:

Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, Mexico City, December 8th-19th, 1963 (London: World Council of Churches, n.y.).

Bangkok 1973:

From Mexico City to Bangkok: Report of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism 1963-1972 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, Programme Unit on Faith and Witness, Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, 1972).

Bangkok Assembly 1973: Minutes and Report of the Assembly of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, December 31, 1972 and January 9-12, 1973 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1973).

Melbourne 1980:

‘Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation’, in: MATTHEY, JACQUES (ed.), *“You Are the Light of the World”: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 1-38.

Toward Athens 2005:

‘Towards Common Witness: A Call to Adopt Responsible Relationships in Mission and to renounce Proselytism’, in: MATTHEY, JACQUES (ed.), *“You Are the Light of the World”: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 39-58.

‘Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today’, in: MATTHEY, JACQUES (ed.), *“You Are the Light of the World”: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 59-89.

‘Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation’, in: MATTHEY, JACQUES (ed.), *“You Are the Light of the World”: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 90-126 (also in: MATTHEY, JACQUES (ed.), *Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile!: Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities – Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 9-16, 2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2008), 67-90).

‘The Healing Mission of the Church’, in: MATTHEY, JACQUES (ed.), *“You Are the Light of the World”: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 127-162 (also in: MATTHEY, JACQUES (ed.), *Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile!: Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities – Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 9-16, 2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2008), 91-112).

Athens 2005:

‘A Letter from Athens to the Christian Churches, Networks and Communities: Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile: Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities’, in: MATTHEY, JACQUES (ed.), *Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile!: Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities – Report of the WCC*

Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 9-16, 2005 (Geneva: WCC, 2008), 323-326.

LCWE-DOCUMENTS:

The Cape Town Commitment: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action, Didasko Files (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011).

THE MICAH NETWORK

The Micah Declaration on Integral Mission, in: CHESTER, TIM (ed.), *Justice, Mercy and Humility: The Papers of the Micah Network International on Integral Mission and the Poor, 2001* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002), 17-23.

B: GENERAL LITERATURE (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER):

AAGAARD, JOHANNES, 'Some Main Trends in Modern Protestant Missiology', in: *Studia Theologica* 19 (1965), 238-259.

ANDERSEN, WILHELM, 'Dr. Kraemer's Contribution to the Understanding of the Nature of Revelation', in: *IRM* 46/issue 184 (1957), 361-371.

ANDERSEN, WILHELM, *Towards a Theology of Mission: A Study of the Encounter Between the Missionary Enterprise and the Church and its Theology*, I.M.C. Research Pamphlet No. 2 (London: SCM Press, 1955).

ANDERSON, GERALD HARRY, *The Theology of Missions: 1928-1958*, Unpublished dissertation (Michigan: University Microfilms, 1960).

ATHYAL, SAPHIR P., *How Shall They Hear?: Consultation on World Evangelization. Official Reference Volume – Thailand Reports* (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1980).

AVIS, PAUL, 'Toward a Missiological Ecclesiology', in: ERNST, CHRISTOPH et al., *Ekklesiologie in missionarischer Perspektive/Ecclesiology in Mission Perspective: Beiträge zur siebenten Theologischen Konferenz im Rahmen des Meissen-Prozesses der Kirche von England und der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland/Contributions to the Seventh Theological Conference within the Framework of the Meissen Process of the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany. Salisbury/England (2011)* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012), 74-81 (English version) and 82-90 (German version).

BARTH, KARL, *Kirchliche Dogmatik I-IV* (Zürich: Zollikon, 1939-1970).

BARTH, KARL, *Church Dogmatics I-IV* (London/New York: T&T Clark International, 1936).

BARTH, KARL, 'Die Theologie und die Mission in der Gegenwart', in: BARTH, KARL, *Theologische Fragen und Antworten. Gesammelte Vorträge Band 3* (Zürich, Zollikon, 1957), 100-126 (previously in *ZZ* 10/3 (1932), 189-215).

- BASSHAM, RODGER C., *Mission Theology: 1948-1975 Years of Worldwide Creative Tension—Ecumenical, Evangelical, and Roman Catholic* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002 – reprint, previously Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1979).
- BAUCKHAM, RICHARD, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster/Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003).
- BAVINCK, J.H., *Alzoo wies het Woord: Een studie over den voortgang van het evangelie in de dagen van Paulus* (Baarn: Bosch & Keuning [1941]).
- BAVINCK, J.H., *Between the Beginning and the End: A Radical Kingdom Vision* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), translation of: BAVINCK, J.H., *De mensch en zijn wereld* (Baarn: Bosch & Keuning, [1946]).
- BAVINCK, J.H., *Ik geloof in de Heilige Geest* (Den Haag: Voorhoeve [1963]).
- BAVINCK, J.H., *The Impact of Christianity on the Non-Christian World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948).
- BAVINCK, J.H., *Inleiding in de Zendingwetenschap* (Kampen: Kok, 1954).
- BAVINCK, J.H., *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing Company, ©1960), translation of BAVINCK, J.H., *Inleiding in de Zendingwetenschap* (Kampen: Kok, 1954).
- BAVINCK, J.H., *Onze kerk zendingkerk* (Kampen: Kok, 1948).
- BAVINCK, J.H. et al., ‘Rapport uitgebracht aan de Nederlandse Zendingraad door de Studiecommissie inzake “de Bijbelse grondslagen van de Zending”’, in: *DHB* 4/8 (1951), 197-221.
- BAVINCK, J.H., ‘Theology and Mission’, in: *FUQ* VII (1960), 59-66.
- BAVINCK, J.H., ‘De vergadering van de wereldraad van kerken,’ in: *Bezinning* 3 (1948), 273-282.
- BECKER, J.W. et al., *Secularisatie en alternatieve zingeving in Nederland*, Sociale en Culturele Studies 24 (Rijswijk: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 1997).
- BENDER, KIMLYN J., *Karl Barth’s Christological Ecclesiology* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2013 – previously Hants: Ashgate, 2005).
- BENTLEY, WESSEL, *The Notion of Mission in Karl Barth’s Ecclesiology* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).
- BERKHOF, HENDRIKUS & PHILIP POTTER, *Key Words of the Gospel: Bible Studies Delivered at the Mexico Meeting of the World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism* (London: SCM Press, 1964).
- BERNTS, TON & JOANTINE BERGHUIJS, *God in Nederland 1966-2015* (Utrecht: Ten have, 2016).
- BEVANS, STEPHEN B. & ROGER P. SCHROEDER, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004).
- BIKKER, B., D. QUANT, & R.W.J. SOETERS (ed.), *Jaarboek 2021 van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn Motief, 2021).

- BLAUW, JOHANNES, *Gottes Werk in dieser Welt: Grundzüge einer biblischen Theologie der Mission* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1961).
- BLAUW, JOHANNES, *The Missionary Nature of the Church: A Survey of the Biblical Theology of Mission* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1962).
- BOSCH, DAVID J., *Believing in the Future. Toward a Missiology of Western Culture*, Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995).
- BOSCH, DAVID J., “‘Ecumenicals’ and ‘Evangelicals’: a Growing Relationship?’, in: *ER* 40/3-4 (1988), 458-472.
- BOSCH, DAVID J., *Die Heidenmission in der Zukunftsschau Jesu: Eine Untersuchung zur Eschatologie der synoptischen Evangelien*, Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments. Herausgegeben von W. Eichrodt und O. Cullman (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1959).
- BOSCH, DAVID J., *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2011 Twentieth Anniversary Edition).
- BRIENEN, T., *De Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland: Haar ontstaan, ontwikkeling, activiteit, identiteit en perspectief*. Serie Wegwijs (Kampen: Kok, 2002).
- BRUNNER, EMIL, *The Word and the World* (London: SCM Press, 1931).
- BRYMAN, ALAN, *Social Research Methods* Fourth Edition (Oxford, UP, 2012).
- CAMERON, HELEN, et al., *Talking About God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London, SCM Press 2010).
- CAMERON, JULIA E.M. (ed.), *Christ Our Reconciler: Gospel, Church, World. The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization* (Nottingham: IVP, 2012).
- CAMERON, JULIA E.M. & LARS DAHLE, ‘Communicating Lausanne – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow’, in: DAHLE, LARS et al., *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 99-112.
- CARLIER, J.H., ‘Een eeuwenoude opdracht’, in: *De Wekker* 1998, July 24.
- CARLSON, BLAIR T., ‘The Cape Town Congress as Process and Event’, in: DAHLE, LARS et al., *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 280-294.
- CLAYDON, DAVID, *A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call: Lausanne Occasional Papers from the 2004 Forum on World Evangelization hosted by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization: Pattaya, Thailand September 29-October 5, 2004* Vol. 1-3 (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2005).
- CLAYDON, ROBYN, ‘The Lausanne Story: A Personal Prelude’, in: DAHLE, LARS et al., *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 21-25.
- COOKE, LESLIE E. (ed.), *Digest of the 1966 World Consultation on Inter-Church Aid at Swanwick, Great Britain* (Geneva: World Council of Churches Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service, 1966).

- COOTE, ROBERT T., 'Lausanne II and World Evangelization', in: *IBMR 14/1* (1990), 10-17.
- COSTAS, ORLANDO E., *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books 1982).
- CULLMANN, OSCAR, *Christus und die Zeit: Die urchristliche Zeit- und Geschichtsauffassung* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag A.G. Zollikon, 1948).
- CULLMANN, OSCAR, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History* (London: SCM Press, 1971 Revised edition (1962) with a new introductory chapter), translation of: CULLMANN, OSCAR, *Christus und die Zeit: Die urchristliche Zeit- und Geschichtsauffassung* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag A.G. Zollikon, 1946).
- DAHLE, LARS, 'Mission in 3D: A Key Lausanne III Theme', in: DAHLE, LARS et al., *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 265-279.
- DANIÉLOU, JEAN, *Essai sur le mystère de l'histoire* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1953).
- DE GROOT, A., *De Bijbel over het heil der volken* (Roermond: Romen & Zonen, 1964).
- DE HART, JOEP & PEPIJN VAN HOUWELINGEN, *Christenen in Nederland: Kerkelijke deelname en christelijke gelovigheid* (Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, december 2018).
- DE HART, JOEP, *Geloven binnen en buiten verband: Godsdienstige ontwikkelingen in Nederland* (Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, mei 2014).
- DEKKER, GERARD, *Van het centrum naar de marge: De ontwikkeling van de christelijke godsdienst in Nederland* (Kampen: Kok, 2006).
- DEKKER, WIM, *Marginaal en missionair: Kleine theologie voor een krimpende kerk* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2011).
- DENNISON, JAMES T., *Reformed Confessions*, Vol. 1-4 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014).
- DODDS, ADAM, *The Mission of the Triune God: Trinitarian Missiology in the Tradition of Lesslie Newbigin* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2017).
- DOUGLAS, J.D. (ed.), *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization Lausanne, Switzerland. Official Reference Volume: Papers and Responses* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975).
- DOUGLAS, J. D. (ed.), *Proclaim Christ until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World. Lausanne II in Manila. International Congress on World Evangelization* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1990).
- DRIVER, JOHN, *Images of the Church in Mission* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1997).
- DURASINGH, CHRISTOPHER (ed.), *Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998).
- ELLIS, IAN, M., *A Century of Mission and Unity: A Centenary Perspective on the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin: The Columba Press: 2010).

- ENGELSVIKEN, TORMOD, 'Missio Dei: The Understanding and Misunderstanding of a Theological Concept in European Churches and Missiology', in: *IRM 92/issue 367* (2003), 481-497.
- ENGELSVIKEN, TORMOD, 'The Role of the Lausanne Movement in Modern Christian Mission', in: DAHLE, LARS et al., *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 26-44.
- ESCOBAR, SAMUEL, 'The Legacy of John Alexander Mackay', in: *IBMR 16/3* (1992), 116-118, 120-122.
- ESCOBAR, SAMUEL, 'Mackay, John A(lexander)', in: ANDERSON, GERALD H. (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 424.
- EVERS, JEANINE, *Kwalitatief interviewen: kunst én kunde* Tweede druk (Amsterdam: Boom Lemma uitgevers, 2015).
- FAULENBACH, HEINER & EBERHARD BUSCH (eds.), *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften*, Vol. 1- ... (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 2002 - ...).
- FEY, HAROLD E. (ed.), *The Ecumenical Advance: A History of The Ecumenical Movement. Volume 2, 1948-1968* (London: SPCK, 1970).
- FIEDLER, KLAUS, 'Evangelical Mission Theology I', in: MÜLLER, KARL et al., *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006 – reprint, previously Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), 144-146.
- FIEDLER, KLAUS, *Ganz auf Vertrauen: Geschichte und Kirchenverständnis der Glaubensmissionen* (Giessen/Basel: Brunnen Verlag, 1992).
- FIEDLER, KLAUS, *The Story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1994).
- FLEMING, DANIEL JOHNSON, *Whither Bound in Missions* (New York: Association Press, 1925).
- FLETT, JOHN G., *Apostolicity: The Ecumenical Question in World Christian Perspective* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2016).
- FLETT, JOHN G., 'Missio Dei: A Trinitarian Envisioning of a Non-Trinitarian Theme', in: *Miss. 37/1* (2009), 5-18.
- FLETT, JOHN G., 'A theology of *missio Dei*?' in: *TSCO 21/1* (2014), 69-78.
- FLETT, JOHN G., *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).
- FOX, ROBIN LANE, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* (London: Penguin Books, 1988 – previously London: Viking, 1986).
- FREYTAG, WALTER, 'The Meaning and Purpose of the Christian Mission', in: *IRM 39/issue 154* (1950), 153-161.
- FREYTAG, WALTER, 'Mission im Blick aufs Ende', in: FREYTAG, WALTER, *Reden und Aufsätze, herausgegeben von Jan Hermelink und Hans Jochem Margull, Zweiter Teil*, Theologische Bücherei. Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert Band

- 13/II (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1961), 186-198 (reprint of the same article in *EMZ* 3 (1940), 321-333).
- FREYTAG, WALTER, 'Weltmissionskonferenzen', in: FREYTAG, WALTER, *Reden und Aufsätze, herausgegeben von Jan Hermelink und Hans Jochen Margull, Zweiter Teil*, Theologische Bücherei. Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert 13/II (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1961), 97-110.
- GENSICHEN, HANS-WERNER, 'Freitag, Walter', in: ANDERSON, GERALD H. (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 228.
- GENSICHEN, HANS-WERNER, 'The Legacy of Walter Freitag', in: *IBMR* 5/1 (1981), 13-18 (also in: ANDERSON, GERALD H. et al., *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), 435-444).
- GLASSER, ARTHUR F., *Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God's Mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003).
- GOHEEN, MICHAEL W., "As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You": J.E. Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2000).
- GOHEEN, MICHAEL W., *Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History and Issues* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2014).
- GOHEEN, MICHAEL W., *The Church and Its Vocation: Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018).
- GOODALL, NORMAN, 'First Principles', in: *IRM* 39/issue 155 (1950), 257-262.
- GOODALL, NORMAN (ed.), *Missions under the Cross: Addresses delivered at the Enlarged Meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Willingen, in Germany, 1952; with Statements issued by the Meeting* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1953).
- GOODALL, NORMAN, 'Willingen—Milestone, not Terminus', in: GOODALL, NORMAN (ed.), *Missions under the Cross: Addresses delivered at the Enlarged Meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Willingen, in Germany, 1952; with Statements issued by the Meeting* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1953), 9-23.
- GORT, JERALD D., 'Jerusalem 1928: Mission, Kingdom and Church', in: *IRM* 67/issue 267 (1978), 273-298.
- GORT, JERALD D., 'Verkuyl, Johannes' in: ANDERSON, GERALD H. (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 700-701.
- GRAAFLAND, C., 'Theologische hoofdlijnen', in: J.P. VERSTEEG et al., *Gij die eertijds verre waart: Een overzicht van de geschiedenis en taken van de zending* (Utrecht: De Banier, 1978), 61-137.
- GRAHAM, WILLIAM FRANKLIN (BILLY), 'Why Lausanne', in: DOUGLAS, J.D. (ed.), *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization Lausanne, Switzerland. Official Reference Volume: Papers and Responses* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975), 22-36.

- GRIFFIOEN, DIRK, *Christelijke zending en wereldgodsdiensten: De godsdiensttheologie van Gustav Warneck, Hendrik Kraemer en J.E. Lesslie Newbigin in context* (Zoetermeer: Boeken-
centrum, 2007).
- GUDER, DARRELL L., *The Continuing Conversion of the Church, The Gospel and Our Culture Series* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).
- GUDER, DARRELL L. (ed.), *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America, The Gospel and Our Culture Series* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).
- GÜNTHER, WOLFGANG, 'Gott selbst treibt Mission: Das Modell der "Missio Dei"', in: SCHÄFER, KLAUS, *Plädoyer für Mission: Beiträge zum Verständnis von Mission heute* (Hamburg, Evangelische Missionswerk in Deutschland, 1998), 56-63.
- GÜNTHER, WOLFGANG, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico City: Die ekklesiologischen Bemühungen der Weltmissions-Konferenzen (1910 – 1963)* (Stuttgart: Evang. Missionsverlag 1970).
- GÜNTHER, WOLFGANG & GUILLERMO COOK, 'World Missionary Conferences', in: MÜLLER, KARL et al., *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006 – reprint, previously Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), 502-509.
- HAAPIAINEN, TIMO-MATTI, 'The Development and Outlines of *Missio Dei* in G.F. Vicedom' Theology', in: *SMT 100/1* (2012), 45-64.
- HAM, CARLOS, 'Unity in Mission; Evangelism and Diakonia Towards Fulness of Life', in: GIBAUT, JOHN & KNUD JØRGENSEN (eds.), *Called to Unity: For the Sake of Mission*, Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series 25 (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2014), 229-246.
- HARTENSTEIN, KARL, *Die Mission als theologisches Problem: Beiträge zum grundsätzlichen Verständnis der Mission* (Berlin: Furche Verlag GmbH, 1933).
- HARTENSTEIN, KARL, 'Theologische Besinnung', in: FREYTAG, WALTER (ed.), *Mission zwischen Gestern und Morgen: Vom Gestaltwandel der Weltmission der Christenheit im Licht der Konferenz des Internationalen Missionsrats in Willingen* (Stuttgart: Evang. Missionsverlag, 1952), 51-72.
- HARTENSTEIN, KARL, 'Was haben wir von Tambaram zu lernen?', in: SCHLUNK, MARTIN (ed.), *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der Erde: Bericht über die Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram (Südindien) 1938* (Stuttgart, Evang. Missionsverlag, 1939), 193-203.
- HARTENSTEIN, KARL, *Was hat die Theologie Karl Barth's der Mission zu sagen?* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1928).
- HARTENSTEIN, KARL, 'Zur Neubesinnung über das Wesen der Mission', in: *DEWM* (Jahrbuch 1951), 5-24.
- HEALY, NICHOLAS M., *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000).

- HEIM, KARL, 'Die Tagung des erweiterten internationalen Missionsrats in Jerusalem', in: *EMM* 72/1928, 161-164.
- HOEDEMAKER, L.A., 'Hoekendijk, J(ohannes) C(hristiaan) ("Hans")', in: ANDERSON, GERALD H. (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 297.
- HOEDEMAKER, L.A., 'Hendrik Kraemer 1888-1965: Biblical Realism Applied to Mission', in: ANDERSON, GERALD H. et al., *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994). 508-515.
- HOEDEMAKER, L.A., 'The Legacy of J.C. Hoekendijk', in: *IBMR* 19/4 (1995), 166-170.
- HOEKENDIJK, J.C., 'The Call to Evangelism', in: *IRM* 39/issue 154 (1950), 162-175.
- HOEKENDIJK, J.C., *The Church Inside Out* (London: SCM Press, 1967).
- HOEKENDIJK, J.C., 'The Church in Missionary Thinking', in: *IRM* 41/3 (1952), 324-336.
- HOEKENDIJK, J.C., 'Deelgenoten in verantwoordelijkheid: Nabetrachting op het Algemeen Zendingscongres op Woudschoten 10—13 Mei 1949', in: *DHB* 2 (1949), 197-235.
- HOEKENDIJK, J.C., *Kerk en volk in de Duitse zendingswetenschap* (Amsterdam: Kampert & Helm, 1948).
- HOEKENDIJK, J.C., *Kirche und Volk in der deutschen Missionswissenschaft, bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Erich-Walter Pollmann* Theologische Bücherei. Neudrucke und Berichte aus dem 20. Jahrhundert 35 (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967).
- HOEKENDIJK, J.C., 'Mission und Oekumene', in: *EMM* 95 (1951), 146-156.
- HOGG, WILLIAM RICHEY, *Ecumenical Foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council: And Its Nineteenth-Century Background* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2002 – reprint, previously New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952).
- HORTON, MICHAEL, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).
- HUNSBERGER, GEORGE R., *Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Leslie Newbigin's Theology of Cultural Plurality*, The Gospel and Our Culture Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).
- IHMELS, CARL, 'Walter Freytag und die deutschen evangelischen Missionen', in: HERMELINK, JAN & HANS JOCHEN MARGULL, *Basileia*, Walter Freytag zum 60. Geburtstag (Wuppertal: Verlag der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft, 1959), 9-12.
- JANSEN SCHOONHOVEN, E., 'Inleiding', in: BROUWER, B.J. et al., *Uit de nalatenschap van Dr. H. Kraemer* (Kampen: Kok, 1970), 7-17.
- JANSEN SCHOONHOVEN, E., 'Kraemer, Hendrik', in: NAUTA, D., et al., *Biografisch Lexicon voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlands Protestantisme*. Deel 1 (Kampen: Kok, 1978), 104-111.

- JONGELEEN, J., *Geschiedenis van de Buitenlandsche Zending der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland van 1834-1941* (Op verzoek van Deputaten en Zendende Kerken Saamgesteld. Apeldoorn: Eerste Apeldoornsche Schrijfkamer, 1942. Niet in de handel).
- JONGENEEL, J.A.B., 'Kraemer, Hendrik', in ANDERSON, GERALD H. (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 374-375.
- JONGENEEL, J.A.B., 'The Missiology of Gisbertus Voetius: The First Comprehensive Protestant Theology of Missions' in: *CTJ* 26/1 (1991), 47-79, translation of JONGENEEL, J.A.B., 'Voetius' zendingstheologie, de eerste comprehensieve protestantse zendingstheologie', in: VAN OORT, J. et al., *De onbekende Voetius: Voordrachten wetenschappelijk symposium Utrecht 3 maart 1989* (Kampen: Kok, 1989), 117-147.
- JONKMAN, J., 'Want Hij zal van Zichzelf niet spreken', in: *De Wekker* 1990 June 1.
- JØRGENSEN, KNUD, 'Edinburgh, Tokyo And Cape Town: Comparing and Contrasting on the Way to 2110', in: DAHLE, LARS et al., *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 353-366.
- JØRGENSEN, KNUD, 'The Lausanne Story: A Personal Prelude', in: DAHLE, LARS et al., *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 13-20.
- KÄHLER, MARTIN, 'Die Mission - ist sie ein unentbehrlicher Zug am Christentum?', in: KÄHLER, MARTIN, *Schriften zu Christologie und Mission* (München, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1971, previously in: KÄHLER, MARTIN, *Dogmatische Zeitfragen: Alte und neue Ausführungen zur Wissenschaft der Christlichen Lehre, Zweiter Band: Angewandte Dogmen* (Leipzig: Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1908), 340-486), 105-255.
- KÄSEMANN, ERNST, 'The Eschatological Royal Reign of God', in: MATTHEY, JACQUES (ed.), *Your Kingdom Come: Mission Perspectives, Report on the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism Melbourne, Australia 12-25 May 1980* (Geneva: Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches, 1980), 61-71.
- KAWERAU, GUSTAV, *Reich Gottes und Mission*, Flugschriften der Deutschen Evangelischen Missions-Hilfe, Heft 5 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1916).
- KENNEDY, JAMES, *Stad op een berg: De publieke rol van protestantse kerken* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2010).
- KEUM, JOOSEOP (ed.), *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2014).
- KIM, KIRSTEEN & ANDREW ANDERSON (eds.), *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Today and Tomorrow*, Edinburgh 2010 Series 3 (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2011).
- KIRK, J. ANDREW, *A New World Coming: A Fresh Look at the Gospel for Today* (Basingstoke: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1983).
- KRAEMER, HENDRIK, *Blijvende opdracht* ('s-Gravenhage: Boekencentrum, 1941).

- KRAEMER, HENDRIK, *The Christian Message in a non-Christian World* (New York/London: Harper & Brothers, 1938).
- KRAEMER, HENDRIK, 'Continuity or Discontinuity', in: PATON, WILLIAM (ed.), *The Authority of Faith (The Tambaram Series: Following the Meeting of the International Missionary Council at Tambaram, Madras, Christmas 1938, Vol. I* (London: Oxford UP, 1939).
- KRAEMER, HENDRIK, *Kerk en zending* ('s-Gravenhage: Boekencentrum, 1936).
- KRAEMER, HENDRIK, 'Mission im Wandel der Völkerwelt', in: Peter Vogelsanger (ed.), *Der Auftrag der Kirche in der modernen Welt*, Festgabe Emil Brunner (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1959), 291-307.
- KRAEMER, HENDRIK, *A Theology of the Laity* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958).
- KRAEMER, HENDRIK, *Waarom zending juist nu: Een studie over het goed recht en de noodzaak der zending, juist in den tegenwoordigen tijd* ('s-Gravenhage: Boekencentrum, 1938²).
- KREMER, W., 'Israël', in: *De Wekker* 1950, February 24.
- LATOURETTE, KENNETH SCOTT, 'Ecumenical Bearings of the Missionary Movement and the International Missionary Council', in: ROUSE, RUTH & NEILL, STEPHEN CHARLES (eds.), *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948* (London: SPCK, 1967 Second Edition with Revised Bibliography).
- LATOURETTE, KENNETH SCOTT, *A History of Christianity II: Reformation to the Present* Revised Edition by Ralph D. Winter (Peabody: Prince Press, 1997).
- LATOURETTE, KENNETH SCOTT, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*. Vols. I-VII (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937-1948).
- LATOURETTE, KENNETH SCOTT & WILLIAM RICHEY HOGG, *Tomorrow is Here: The Mission and Work of the Church as seen from the Meeting of the International Missionary Council at Whitby, Ontario, July 5-24, 1947* (New York: Published for the International Missionary Council by Friendship Press, 1948).
- LEHMANN, PAUL L. (ed.), 'The Missionary Obligation of the Church', in: *TbTo* 9 (1952/53), 20-38.
- LENGKEEK, F., 'Wat de wereld noodig heeft', in: *De Wekker* 1921, December 16.
- LIVINGSTON, J. KEVIN, *A Missiology of the Road: Early Perspectives in David Bosch's Theology of Mission and Evangelism* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2014).
- MACKAY, JOHN A., 'The Great Commission and the Church Today', in: GOODALL, NORMAN (ed.), *Missions under the Cross: Addresses delivered at the Enlarged Meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Willingen, in Germany, 1952; with Statements issued by the Meeting* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1953), 129-141.
- MACKAY, JOHN A., 'Theology, Christ, and the Missionary Obligation', in: *TbTo* 7 (1950/51), 429-436.
- MARKUS, ROBERT A., *Christianity and the Secular* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

- MARTIN-ACHARD, R., *Israël et les nations: La perspective missionnaire de l'Ancien Testament*, Cahiers Théologiques 42 (Neuchatel: Delachaux & Niestlé S.A., 1959).
- MATTHEY, JACQUES (ed.), *Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile!: Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities – Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 9-16, 2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2008).
- MATTHEY, JACQUES, 'Descriptive Introduction to the Programme of the Athens Conference', in: *IRM 94/issue 374* (2005), 326-331.
- MATTHEY, JACQUES (ed.), *Your Kingdom Come: Mission Perspectives, Report on the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism Melbourne, Australia 12-25 May 1980* (Geneva: Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches, 1980).
- MINEAR, PAUL S., *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960).
- MOLTMANN, JÜRGEN, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1977).
- MOREAU, A. SCOTT, 'World Consultation on World Evangelization (Pattaya 1980)', in: MOREAU, A. SCOTT, *The Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 1023-1024.
- MURRAY, GEOFFREY, 'Joint Service as an Instrument of Renewal', in: FEY, HAROLD E., *The Ecumenical Advance: A History of The Ecumenical Movement. Volume 2, 1948-1968* (London: SPCK, 1970), 199-231.
- MURRAY, STUART, *Church after Christendom*, After Christendom Series (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004).
- MURRAY, STUART, *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World*, After Christendom Series (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004).
- NEILL, STEPHEN C., *A history of Christian Missions* (London: Penguin Books, 1986 Revised Second Edition).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'Baptism, the Church and Koinonia: Three Letters and a Comment', in: THOMAS, M.M., *Some Theological Dialogues* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1977), 110-144.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'The Basis and the Forms of Unity: Second Peter Ainslie Lecture', in: *Mid-Stream: The Ecumenical Movement Today* 23 (1984), 1-11.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'Can the West be Converted?', in: *PSB 6/1* (1985), 25-37; reprinted in *IBMR 11/1* (1987), 2-7, and *ERT 11* (1987), 355-368.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *Context and Conversion* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1978).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'Cross-currents in Ecumenical and Evangelical Understandings of Mission', in: *IBMR 6/4* (1982), 146-151.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'Does Society Still Need the Parish Church', in: NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *A Word in Season: Perspectives on Christian World Missions*, edited by Eleanor Jackson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 48-65.

- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *A Faith for this One World* (London: SCM Press, 1961).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'The Form and Structure of the Visible Church', in: WAACK, OTTO et al., *So sende ich euch*, Festschrift für D. Dr. Martin Pörksen zum 70. Geburtstag (Korntal: Evang. Missionsverlag, 1973), 124-141; originally published in two parts in *NCCR 92* (1972), 444-451 & *NCCR 93* (1973), 4-18; reprinted in *One in Christ 13* (1977), 107-126.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'The Future of Missions and Missionaries', in: *RExp 74/2* (1977), 209-218.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *The Good Shepherd: Meditations on Christian Ministry in Today's World* (Oxford: Mowbray, 1977).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'The Henry Martyn Lectures', in: NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *Signs amid the Rubble: The Purposes of God in Human History*, Edited and Introduced by Geoffrey Wainwright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *The Holy Spirit and the Church* (Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1972).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of Church* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2008; previously London: SCM Press, 1953).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'Jesus, Saviour of the World', in: NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *The Good Shepherd: Meditations on Christian Ministry in Today's World* (Oxford: Mombroy, 1977), 148-158; previously published in *South India Churchman* February (1972), 5-8.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *Journey into Joy* (Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1972).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *Mission in Christ's Way: Bible Studies* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1987).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'Mission to Six Continents', in: FEY, HAROLD E., *The Ecumenical Advance: A History of The Ecumenical Movement. Volume 2, 1948-1968* (London: SPCK, 1970), 171-197.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'On Being the Church for the World', in: ECCLESTONE, GILES (ed.), *The Parish Church?: Explorations in the Relationship of the Church and the World* (London & Oxford: Mowbray & Co., 1988), 25-42.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *One Body, One Gospel, One World: The Christian Mission Today* (London: International Missionary Council, 1958).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) – revision from NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology* (London: SPCK, 1978).

- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'The Pastor's Opportunities: Evangelism in the City', in: NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *A Word in Season: Perspectives on Christian World Missions*, edited by Eleanor Jackson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 40-47; originally published in *ET* 98 (1987), 355-358; reprinted as 'Evangelism in the City', in: *RefR (H)* 41/1 (1987), 3-8.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *The Reunion of the Church: A Defence of The South India Scheme*, Revised Edition (London: SCM Press, 1960), original edition (London: SCM Press, 1948).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'A Sermon Preached at the Thanksgiving Service for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Tambaram Conference of the International Missionary Council', in: *IRM* 77/issue 307 (1988), 325-331.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *Sign of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981). American reissue of NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *Your Kingdom Come: Reflections on the Theme of the Melbourne Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, 1980* (Leeds: John Paul the Preacher's Press, 1980). Originally presented as the Waldström Lectures at the Theological Seminary of the Swedish Covenant Church at Lidingo in September 1979.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'Toespraak tot de gezamenlijke vergadering van de Synoden van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk en de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland op 22 november 1978 in De Blije Werelt te Lunteren', in: *WeZ* 8/1 (1979), 96-109.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006 – reprint, previously Carlisle: Paternoster 1988). Reissue of *The Relevance of Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission*, CWME Study Pamphlet 2 (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1963).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'The Trinity as Public Truth', in: VANHOOZER, KEVIN J. (ed.), *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age: Theological Essays on Culture and Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 1-8.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, *Unfinished Agenda: An updated autobiography* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1993).
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'Vision for the City', in: ELLIOT, ALLISON J. & I. SWANSON (eds.), *Renewal of Social Vision* (Edinburgh: Centre for Theology and Public Issues, University of Edinburgh, 1989), 39-41.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'What is "a local church truly united"?'', in: *ER* 29/2 (1977), 115-128.
- NEWBIGIN, J.E. LESSLIE, 'Why Study the Old Testament', in: *NCCR* 74 (1954), 71-76.
- NICHOLS, ALAN, *The Whole Gospel for the Whole World: Story of Lausanne II Congress on World Evangelization, Manila 1989* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1989).

- NIKOLAJSEN, JEPPE BACH, *The Distinctive Identity of the Church: A Constructive Study of the Post-Christendom Theologies of Leslie Newbigin and John Howard Yoder* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2015).
- NISSEN, KARSTEN, 'Mission and Unity: A Look at the Integration of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches', in: *IRM 63/issue 252* (1974), 539-550.
- NOORDEGRAAF, A., *Vijf broden en twee vissen: Missionair gemeentezijn in een (post)moderne samenleving* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1998).
- OOSTERHOFF, B.J., 'De open kerk', in: *De Wekker* 1950, June 16.
- ORCHARD, RONALD K. (ed.), *The Ghana Assembly of the International Missionary Council* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1958).
- PAAS, STEFAN, 'Activisme en activiteit in de kerk', in: *De Wekker* 2002, April 5.
- PAAS, STEFAN, *Church Planting in the Secular West: Learning from the European Experience* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).
- PAAS, STEFAN, 'Evangelisatie en de gemeente', in: *De Wekker* 2000, January 7.
- PAAS, STEFAN, 'Evangelisatie en vernieuwingen', in: *De Wekker* 2001, August 17.
- PAAS, STEFAN, 'Johan Herman Bavinck: Zielzorger in de wetenschap', in: FLIPSE, A (ed.), *Verder kijken: Honderdvijfendertig jaar Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in de samenleving* (Amsterdam: VU UP, 2016), 139-145.
- PAAS, STEFAN, 'The Making of a Mission Field: Paradigms of Evangelistic Mission in Europe', in: *Excb 41* (2012), 44-67.
- PAAS, STEFAN, *Naar binnen en naar buiten: Lessen van de Redeemer Presbyterian Church uit New York*, Brochurereeks Deputaten Evangelisatie van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland 3 (Veenendaal, 2001).
- PAAS, STEFAN, *Pilgrims and Priests: Christian Mission in a Post-Christian Society* (London: SCM Press, 2019).
- PAAS, STEFAN, 'Post-Christian, Post-Christendom, and Post-Modern Europe: Towards the Interaction of Missiology and the Social Sciences', in: *Mis.St 28* (2011), 3-25.
- PAAS, STEFAN, *Thuiskomen: Gesprekken met toetreders*, Brochurereeks Deputaten Evangelisatie van de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland 4 (Veenendaal, 2002).
- PAAS, STEFAN, *De werkers van het laatste uur: De inwijding van nieuwkomers in het christelijk geloof en in de christelijke gemeente* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2003).
- PAAS, STEFAN & SIEBRAND J. WIERDA, 'Gaait evangelisatie ten koste van gemeentebouw', in: *Ambtelijk Contact* 2003, April.
- PADILLA, C. RENÉ, 'Integral Mission and its Historical Development', in: CHESTER, TIM (ed.), *Justice, Mercy and Humility: The Papers of the Micah Network International Consultation on Integral Mission and the Poor (2001)* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 42-58.

- PADILLA, C. RENÉ, *Mission Between the Times: Essays on the Kingdom* Revised & Updated Edition (Carlisle: Langham Monographs, 2010).
- PAUL, HERMAN, *De slag om het hart: Over secularisatie van verlangen* (Utrecht: Boekencentrum, 2017).
- PERRY, TIM S., *Radical Difference: a Defence of Hendrik Kraemer's theology of religions* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001).
- QUIST, W.J., 'De toeëigening des heils in de brieven van Paulus', in: VELEMA, W.H. et al., *Delen in het heil: Over de toeëigening van het heil in Christus* (Kampen: Kok Voorhoeve, 1989), 9-26.
- RAEDTS, PETER, *De uitvinding van de rooms-katholieke kerk* (Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Wereldbibliotheek, 2013).
- REID, JOHN R., 'Evangelism and Social Responsibility', in: DAYTON, EDWARD R. & SAMUEL WILSON (eds.), *The Future of World Evangelization: Unreached Peoples '84* (Monrovia: Marc, 1984), 73-77.
- RICHEBÄCHER, WILHELM, 'Missio Dei: The Basis of Mission Theology or a Wrong Path?', in IRM 92/issue 367 (2003), 588-605.
- RIDDERBOS, HERMAN N., *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962).
- RIDDERBOS, HERMAN N., *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).
- ROEST, GERT-JAN, *The Gospel in the Western Context: A Missiological Reading of Christology in Dialogue with Hendrikus Berkhof and Colin Gunton* (Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit, 2016).
- ROOF, WADE C., *A Generation of Seekers* (New York: Harper & Collins, 1993).
- ROSCAM ABBING, P.J., *Komen als geroepen: Over de gemeente die haar roeping vervult, en over de kerkeraad die haar daarbij helpt* (s Gravenhage: Boekencentrum, 1978).
- ROSS, KENNETH R. et al., *Ecumenical Missiology: Changing Landscapes and New Conceptions of Mission*, Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series Volume 35 (Oxford: Regnum, 2016).
- ROSSEL, JACQUES, 'From a Theology of Crisis to a Theology of Revolution?', in: *ER* 21/3 (1969), 204-215.
- RUNIA, K., 'De gereformeerde kerken in Nederland en de oprichting van de Wereldraad', in: *DNK* 48 (1998), 54-66.
- SALOMONS, G., 'Inwendige zending', in: *De Wekker* 1925, November 27.
- SALOMONS, G., 'Inwendige zending', in: *De Wekker* 1925, December 11.
- SALOMONS, G., 'Inwendige zending', in: *De Wekker* 1926, March 5.
- SCHERER, JAMES A. et al., 'Evangelical Mission Theology II (Lausanne Movement)', in: MÜLLER, KARL et al., *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006 – reprint, previously Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), 146-151.

- SCHERER, JAMES A., *Gospel, Church & Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Mission Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987).
- SCHERER, JAMES A. & STEPHEN B. BEVANS, *New Directions in Mission & Evangelization 1: Basic Statements* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992).
- SCHLINK, EDMUND, 'Christus und die Kirche: 12 Thesen für ein ökumenisches Gespräch zwischen Theologen der evangelischen und der römischen Kirche', in: *KuD* 1/3 (1955), 208-225.
- SCHLUNK, MARTIN, 'Theology and Missions in Germany in Recent Years', in: *IRM* 27/3 (1938), 463-478.
- SCHLUNK, MARTIN (ed.), *Von den Höhen des Ölberges: Eine Schau über die Weltmission* (Stuttgart: Evang. Missionsverlag GmbH, 1928).
- SCHMIDT, KARL LUDWIG, 'εκκλησία', in: KITTEL, GERHARD (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. III* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 501-536.
- SCHWARZ, GEROLD, 'The Legacy of Karl Hartenstein', in: *IBMR* 8/3 (1984), 125-131 (also in: ANDERSON, GERALD H. et al., *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), 591-601).
- SCOTT, WALDRON, 'The Significance of Pattaya', in: *Miss.* 9/1 (1981), 57-76.
- STANLEY, BRIAN, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).
- STIEMER, RUUD, 'Johannes Verkuyl. Evangelie & engagement', in: FLIPSE, A (ed.), *Verder kijken: Honderdvijfendertig jaar Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in de samenleving* (Amsterdam: VU UP, 2016), 179-185.
- STIEMER, RUUD, *Johannes Verkuyl (1908-2001): een leven lang zending en dialoog: De ontwikkeling van zijn visie op andere godsdiensten en levensbeschouwingen* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2012).
- STONE, BRYAN P., *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007).
- STOTT, JOHN R.W., 'The Biblical Basis of Evangelism', in: DOUGLAS, J.D. (ed.), *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization Lausanne, Switzerland. Official Reference Volume: Papers and Responses* (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975), 65-78.
- STOTT, JOHN R.W., *The Lausanne Covenant: Complete Text with Study Guide* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012).
- STOTT, JOHN R.W. (ed.), *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996).
- STOTT, JOHN R.W., 'The Significance of Lausanne', in: *IRM* 64/issue 255 (1975), 288-294; reprint in: CHILCOTE, PAUL W. & LACEYE C. WARNER (eds.), *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 305-312.

- STULTS, DONALD LE ROY, *Grasping Truth and Reality. Lesslie Nembigin's Theology of Mission to the Western World* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2009).
- SUGDEN, CHRISTOPHER, 'Evangelicals and wholistic evangelism', in: SAMUEL, VINAY & ALBRECHT HAUSER (eds.), *Proclaiming Christ in Christ's Way: Studies in Integral Evangelism. Essays presented to Walter Arnold on the occasion of his 60th birthday* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1989), 29-51.
- SUNQUIST, SCOTT W., *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).
- SWINTON, JOHN & HARRIET MOWAT, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* Second Edition (London: SCM Press, 2016).
- TAYLOR, CHARLES, *A Secular Age* (London: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2007).
- TENNENT, TIMOTHY C., *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*, Invitation to Theological Studies Series (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2010).
- TENNENT, TIMOTHY C., 'Lausanne and Global Evangelicalism—Theological Distinctives and Missiological Impact', in: DAHLE, LARS et al., *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 45-60.
- TIDBALL, DEREK J., *Who are the Evangelicals?: Tracing the Roots of Today's Movements* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994).
- TIZON, AL, 'Evangelism and Social Responsibility: The Making of a Transformational Vision', in: DAHLE, LARS et al., *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 170-181.
- TORRANCE, THOMAS F., *Royal Priesthood: A Theology of Ordained Ministry*. Second Edition (London: T&T Clark, 1993).
- TSCHACKERT, PAUL, 'Die Mission: Vereinssache oder Aufgabe der Kirche', in: NKZ VIII/7 (1897), 521-542.
- VAN DEN BERG, J., 'Johan Herman Bavinck 1895-1964: Understanding Religion in Light of God's Revelation', in: ANDERSON, GERALD H. et al., *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), 428-434 (previously published as VAN DEN BERG, J., 'The Legacy of Johan Herman Bavinck', in: IBMR 7/4 (1983), 171-175).
- VAN DEN BRINK, G. & C. VAN DER KOOI, *Christelijke dogmatiek: Een inleiding* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2012).
- VAN DER BORGHT, EDUARDUS A.J.G., 'Reformed Ecclesiology', in: MANNION, GERARD (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 187-201.
- VAN DER SCHUIT, J.J., 'Correspondentie', in: *De Wekker* 1956, June 15.
- VAN DER SCHUIT, J.J., 'Evangelisatie', in: *De Wekker* 1947, August 29.
- VAN GELDER, CRAIG & DWIGHT J. ZSCHEILE, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

- VAN GENDEREN, J., 'Apostoliciteit en heiligheid van de kerk', in: *De Wekker* 1973, October 26.
- VAN HARSKAMP, A., 'Simply astounding: ongoing secularization in the Netherlands' in: SENGERS, E. (ed.), *The Dutch and their Gods: secularization and transformation of religion in the Netherlands since 1950* (Hilversum: Verloren 2005), 43-57.
- VAN LEEUWEN, A.TH., *Hendrik Kraemer: Dienaar der wereldkerk* (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1959).
- VAN 'T HOF, I.P.C., *Op zoek naar het geheim van de zending: In dialoog met de Wereldzendingconferenties 1910-1963* (Wageningen: Veenman & Zonen, 1972).
- VAN 'T SPIJKER, J., "*De Prima Plantatione et Collectione Ecclesiae, aut Ecclesiarum*": Een onderzoek naar de opvattingen van de reformatoren en de vertegenwoordigers van de Nadere Reformatie, met name Gisbertus Voetius, met betrekking tot de zending en de doorwerking daarvan, Doctoraalscriptie Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn (Lelystad, 1997).
- VAN 'T SPIJKER, W., 'Marginaal?', in: *De Wekker* 1988, December 16.
- VAN 'T SPIJKER, W., *De toeïgening van het heil* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1993).
- VELEMA, J.H. 'De Evangelisatie-Ouderling', in: *Ambtelijk Contact* 1963, 176.
- VELEMA, J.H. 'De levende gemeente', in: *De Wekker* 1968, March 8.
- VELEMA, J.H. 'Missionair-Demissionair', in: *De Wekker* 1981, August 21.
- VELEMA, J.H. 'Om het isolement?', in: *De Wekker* 1964, June 26.
- VELEMA, J.H., 'De roep om een reveil', in: *De Wekker* 1966, January 7.
- VELEMA, J.H. 'Tussen Christus' eerste en tweede komst', in: *De Wekker* 1982, December 17.
- VELEMA, W.H. et al., *Bijbelse lijnen voor kerk en samenleving (rapport van het deputaatschap Kerk en samenleving)*, in: *Ambtelijk Contact: maandblad ten dienste van ouderlingen en diakenen van de christelijke gereformeerde kerken in Nederland 15/2 (1976)*, 13-35.
- VERKUYL, JOHANNES, *De boodschap der bevrijding in deze tijd* (Kampen: Kok, 1970).
- VERKUYL, JOHANNES, *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), translation by Dale Cooper of: VERKUYL, JOHANNES, *Inleiding in de nieuwere zendingswetenschap* (Kampen: Kok, 1975).
- VERKUYL, JOHANNES, *Daar en nu: Over de assistentie aan de kerken in Azië, Afrika en Latijns Amerika in de huidige situatie* (Kampen: Kok, 1966).
- VERKUYL, JOHANNES, *Gedenken en verwachten: Memoires* (Kampen: Kok, 1983).
- VERKUYL, JOHANNES et al., *Gods initiatief en ons mandaat: De betekenis van de wereldzendingconferentie in Mexico City* Uitgegeven onder auspiciën van de Nederlandse Zendingraad en van de Oecumenische Raad van kerken in Nederland (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1964).
- VERKUYL, JOHANNES & OKKE JAGER, *Inleiding in de evangelistiek* (Kampen: Kok, 1978).
- VERKUYL, Johannes, *Inleiding in de nieuwere zendingswetenschap* (Kampen: Kok, 1975).

- VERKUYL, JOHANNES, 'The Kingdom of God as the Goal of the Missio Dei', in: *IRM 68/issue 270* (1979), 168-176.
- VERKUYL, JOHANNES, 'My Pilgrimage in Mission', in: *IBMR 10/4* (1986), 150-154.
- VERKUYL, JOHANNES, 'Het werelddiakonaat', in: ENKLAAR, I.H. & J. VERKUYL, *Onze blijvende opdracht: De Nederlandse deelname aan wereldzending en werelddiakonaat in een nieuwe tijd*. Met medewerking van auteurs uit vele zendingsinstanties (Kampen: Kok, 1968), 109-123.
- VERSTEEG, J.P., 'De bijbelse fundering van het zendingswerk', in: J.P. VERSTEEG et al., *Gij die eertijds verre waart: Een overzicht van de geschiedenis en taken van de zending* (Utrecht: De Banier, 1978) 9-60.
- VERSTEEG, J.P., *De Geest en de gelovige: De verhouding van het werk van de Geest en het werk van de gelovige volgens het Nieuwe Testament*. Apeldoornse Studies 11 (Kampen: Kok, 1976).
- VERSTEEG, J.P., 'Het missionair karakter van de gemeente', in: *Ambtelijk Contact* 1975, February.
- VICEDOM, GEORG F., *Missio Dei. Einführung in eine Theologie der Mission I* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1958).
- VICEDOM, GEORG F., *The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), translation of VICEDOM, GEORG F., *Missio Dei. Einführung in eine Theologie der Mission I* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1958).
- VICEDOM, GEORG F., *Die Rechtfertigung als gestaltende Kraft der Mission*, Bekennende lutherische Kirche, Heft 9 (Neuendettelsau: Freimund Verlag, 1952).
- VISCHER, LUKAS, 'The Reformed Tradition and Its Multiple Facets', in: BAUSWEIN, JEAN-JACQUES & LUKAS VISCHER, *The Reformed Family Worldwide: A Survey of Reformed churches, theological schools and international organizations* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1-33.
- VISSER, PAUL JAN, *Heart for the Gospel, Heart for the World: The Life and Thought of a Reformed Pioneer Missiologist – Johan Herman Bavinck, 1895-1964* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2003), translation of VISSER, PAUL JAN, *Bemoenien en getuigenis: Het leven en de missionaire theologie van Johan H. Bavinck* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1997).
- VISSER, PAUL JAN, 'Introduction: The Life and Thought of Johan Herman Bavinck (1895-1964)', in: BOLT, JOHN et al., *The J.H. Bavinck Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 1-92.
- VISSER 'T HOOFT, W.A. (ed.), *The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches Held at Amsterdam, August 22nd to September 4th, 1948*, The Amsterdam Assembly Series Vol. V (London: SCM Press, 1949).
- VISSER 'T HOOFT, W.A., 'Missions as the Test of Faith', in: ORCHARD, RONALD K. (ed.), *Witness in Six Continents: Records of the Meeting of the Commission of World*

- Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches held in Mexico-City, December 8th to 19th, 1963* (New York: Friendship Press, 1964), 20-28.
- WAINWRIGHT, GEOFFREY, *Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life* (Oxford: UP, 2000).
- WALLS, ANDREW F., 'Newbigin, James Edward Lesslie (1909-98)', in: MARTIN, DAVIE et al., *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*, Second Edition (Downers Grove: IVP, 2016), 615-616.
- WARD, MARCUS, 'Towards a Theology of Missions', in: *IRM 37/3* (1948), 249-255.
- WARD, PETE, *Liquid Ecclesiology: The Gospel and the Church* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017).
- WARD, PETE, 'Seeing and Believing', in: SEXTON JASON S. & PAUL WESTON (eds.), *The End of Theology: Shaping Theology for the Sake of Mission* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 145-169.
- WARNECK, G.A., *Evangelische Missionslehre: Ein missionstheoretischer Versuch* (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes 1897-1903, Band I, II, III/1-3).
- WESSELS, ANTON, 'In Memoriam Johannes Verkuyl', in: *Exch 31/1* (2002), 81-93.
- WIERDA, S.J., *Gezonden met perspectief: Naar een theologisch kader voor gemeentestichting vanuit een missionair motief in Nederland* (Masterthesis Theological University Apeldoorn 2001).
- WIERDA, S.J., *Naar binnen en naar buiten: Beschrijving en analyse van de Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City* (Masterthesis Theological University Apeldoorn 2000).
- WILSON, FREDERICK R. (ed.), *The San Antonio Report. Your will be Done: Mission in Christ's Way* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990).
- WIND, A., *Zending en Oecumene in de twintigste eeuw: Handboek over de geschiedenis van zending en oecumene aan de hand van de grote conferenties en assemblées. Deel I Van Edinburg 1910 tot en met Evanston 1954* (Kampen: Kok, 1984).
- WIND, A., *Zending en Oecumene in de twintigste eeuw: Handboek over de geschiedenis van zending en oecumene aan de hand van de grote conferenties en assemblées. Deel IIa Van Ghana 1957/58 tot en met Uppsala 1968* (Kampen: Kok, 1991).
- WIND, A., *Zending en Oecumene in de twintigste eeuw: Handboek over de geschiedenis van zending en oecumene aan de hand van de grote conferenties en assemblées. Deel IIb Van Bangkok 1972/1973 tot en met Melbourne en Pattaya 1980* (Kampen: Kok, 1998).
- WINTER, RALPH D., 'Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission', in: *Miss. 2/1* (1974), 121-139.
- WOLTERSTORFF, NICHOLAS, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).
- WROGEMANN, HENNING, *Theologies of Mission Intercultural Theology Volume 2* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2018).
- YATES, TIMOTHY, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: UP, 1994).

INDEX OF NAMES

- Aagaard, J., 96
Andersen, W., 34, 43, 60, 61, 73, 86, 108
Anderson, A., 49, 65, 80
Anderson, G.H., 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 40,
57, 60, 75
Athyal, S.P., 81, 82, 88, 89
Avis, P., 17
Banning, W., 106
Barth, K., 75, 95-98
Bassham, R.C., 25, 37, 45
Bauckham, R., 151
Bavinck, J.H., 31, 32, 41, 59, 72, 85, 94,
98-105, 118, 134, 136, 138, 204,
210
Becker, J.W., 9
Bender, K.J., 95, 97, 98
Bentley, W., 95
Berghuis, J. 9
Berkhof, H., 36
Bernts, T., 9
Bevans, S.B., 37, 54, 67, 82
Bikker, B., 10
Birdsal, S.D., 37
Blauw, J., 31, 35, 44, 61, 74, 75, 86, 116,
151
Boendermaker, P., 31, 104
Bosch, D.J., 37, 68, 95, 96, 141
Brienen, T., 11
Brunner, E., 127
Brouwer, K.J., 31
Bryman, A., 22, 168, 169
Busch, E., 94
Cameron, H., 22, 144, 145
Cameron, J.E.M., 55
Carlier, J.H., 165
Carlson, B.T., 55
Claydon, D., 55, 82, 83, 89, 90
Claydon, R., 54
Cook, G., 42
Cooke, L.E., 117
Coote, R.T., 54
Costas, O.E., 53
Cullmann, O., 61, 74, 95
Dahle, L., 37, 55
Daniélou, J., 44
De Groot, A., 116
De Hart, J., 9
De Jong-Heins, P.Th., 159
De Waard, J., 159
Dekker, G., 9
Dekker, W., 9
Dennison, J.T., 94
Dingemanse, A., 159
Dodds, A., 123
Douglas, J.D., 38, 50, 51, 52, 54, 66, 67,
81, 82, 88, 89
Driver, J., 119
Duraisingh, C., 63, 78
Dürr, J., 95
Elliot, A.B., 103
Ellis, I.M., 29
Engelsviken, T., 34, 37, 54, 66
Escobar, S., 32
Evers, J., 22, 168, 169
Faulenbach, H., 94
Fey, H.E., 75
Fiedler, K., 37, 68
Fleming, D.J., 29
Flett, J.G., 34, 41, 95, 96, 97, 123, 144
Fox, R.L., 18
Freytag, W., 29, 31, 58, 70, 71, 85
Gensichen, H.W., 31

Glasser, A.F., 149
 Goheen, M.W., 68, 76, 121, 122, 123,
 124, 128, 141
 Goodall, N., 31, 32, 33, 70, 99, 122
 Gort, J.D., 29, 39, 114
 Graafland, C., 151
 Graham, W.F., 37
 Gravemeyer, K.H.E., 106
 Griffioen, D., 105
 Guder, D.L., 96, 141, 149
 Günther, W., 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35, 36,
 39, 40, 42, 75, 144
 Haapiainen, T.M., 34
 Ham, C., 48
 Hartenstein, K., 28, 31, 33, 34, 40, 42,
 43, 57, 58, 60, 70, 73, 96, 97, 116
 Healy, N.M., 10, 18
 Heim, K., 57
 Hoedemaker, L.A., 40, 105, 106, 107
 Hoekendijk, J.C., 40, 41, 58, 59, 71, 85,
 99, 100, 101, 137
 Hogg, W.R., 28, 29, 30, 39, 44, 106, 108
 Horton, M., 181
 Houston, T., 38
 Hunsberger, G.R., 128, 141
 Ihmels, C., 31
 Jansen Schoonhoven, E., 31, 105, 106
 Jones, R., 44
 Jongeleen, J., 154
 Jongeneel, J.A.B., 101, 105, 106
 Jonkman, J., 166
 Jørgensen, K., 55, 91
 Kähler, M., 192
 Käsemann, E., 62
 Kawerau, G., 56
 Kennedy, J., 9
 Keum, J., 36, 49, 65, 80, 81, 88
 Kievit, J., 159
 Kim, K., 49, 65, 80
 Kirk, J.A., 52, 67
 Kraemer, H., 95, 103, 105-113, 134,
 136, 138, 204, 205, 210, 211
 Kremer, W., 167
 Kuyper, A., 10, 11, 28, 101
 Latourette, K.S., 28, 29, 30, 50
 Lehmann, P.L., 32, 41, 42, 72, 85, 86,
 92
 Lengkeek, F., 167
 Livingston, J.K., 95
 Mackay, J.A., 32
 Maris, J.W., 14
 Markus, R.A., 18
 Martin-Achard, R., 74
 Matthey, J., 46, 49, 62, 64, 77, 87
 Meulmeester, A., 157
 Minear, P.S., 119
 Moltmann, J., 118
 Moody, D.L., 191
 Moreau, A.S., 52
 Mott, J.R., 28
 Mowat, H., 144
 Mulder, M.C., 159
 Murray, G., 117
 Murray, S., 9
 Neill, S.C., 37, 68
 Newbiggin, J.E.L., 31, 36, 75, 76, 95, 97,
 121-131, 135, 136, 137, 138, 140,
 141, 151, 152, 171, 204, 210, 211
 Nichols, A., 54
 Nikolajsen, J.B., 128
 Nissen, K., 37, 75
 Noordegraaf, A., 9
 Oosterhoff, B.J., 165
 Orchard, R.K., 75
 Paas, S., 9, 25, 44, 99, 141, 159, 160,
 162, 163, 166, 167
 Padilla, C.R., 50, 51, 53, 54
 Paul, H., 9
 Peels, H.G.L., 14
 Perry, Tim S., 108

Philip, P.O., 29
 Potter, Ph., 36, 77
 Quist, W.J., 148
 Raedts, P., 18
 Rasker, A.J., 31
 Reid, J.R., 53
 Richebächer, W., 35
 Ridderbos, H.N., 31, 148, 153
 Roest, G.J., 9
 Roof, W.C., 10
 Roscam Abbing, P.J., 197
 Ross, K.R., 28, 29, 30, 31, 36, 45, 46, 47,
 63, 75
 Rossel, J., 96
 Runia, K., 99
 Salomons, G., 164, 165
 Scherer, J.A., 37, 46, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54,
 66, 67, 82
 Schlink, E., 112
 Schlunk, M., 30, 39
 Schmidt, K.L., 128
 Schroeder, R.P., 37
 Schwarz, G., 31, 58
 Scott, W., 52
 Sevenster, G., 31
 Stanley, B., 28
 Stiemer, R., 114, 115
 Stone, B.P., 9
 Stott, J.R.W., 27, 37, 38, 51, 52, 53, 54,
 65, 66, 67, 81, 82, 88
 Stults, D.L.R., 121
 Sugden, C., 53
 Sunquist, S.W., 37, 68
 Swinton, J., 144
 Taylor, C., 10
 Tennent, T.C., 27, 37, 154
 Tidball, D.J., 191
 Tizon, A., 50, 52, 53, 54
 Torrance, T.F., 108
 Tschackert, P., 28
 Van den Berg, J., 98
 Van den Brink, G., 149, 152
 Van der Borgh, E.A.J.G., 94
 Van der Kooi, C., 149, 152
 Van der Linden, J., 31
 Van der Schuit, J.J., 164, 165
 Van Gelder, C., 140
 Van Genderen, J., 165
 Van Harskamp, A., 9
 Van Leeuwen, A.Th., 105, 106, 107
 Van 't Hof, I.P.C., 28, 29, 30, 31, 36, 56,
 69, 75
 Van 't Spijker, J., 101
 Van 't Spijker, W., 148, 166
 Velema, J.H., 164, 165, 166, 167
 Verkuyl, J., 95, 114-120, 135, 136, 137,
 138, 204, 210
 Versteeg, J.P., 148, 149, 151, 166, 167
 Vicedom, G.F., 34, 35, 43, 61, 73, 74,
 86, 116, 152
 Vischer, L., 94
 Visser, P.J., 98, 99, 100, 103, 134
 Visser, P.L.D., 159
 Visser, T., 178
 Visser 't Hooft, W.A., 62, 115, 116, 122
 Vriezen, Th.C., 31
 Wainwright, G., 121, 123
 Walls, A.F., 121
 Ward, M., 31, 90
 Ward, P., 144, 145
 Warneck, G.A., 28
 Warren, M., 37
 Wessels, A., 114
 Wierda, S.J., 163, 166
 Wilson, F.R., 47, 63, 78, 87, 88
 Wind, A., 28, 29, 30, 31, 36, 37, 45, 46,
 75, 99, 114
 Winter, R.D., 89, 92, 154
 Wolterstorff, N., 193
 Wright, C.J.H., 27

Wrogemann, H., 28, 29, 30, 31, 36, 37,
40, 41, 45, 46, 47, 51, 52, 55, 63,
71, 75, 91
Yates, T., 29, 39
Zscheile, D.J., 140

CURRICULUM VITAE

Jan van 't Spijker was born on January 31, 1960 in Drogeham. After finishing High School (gymnasium at the Christelijk Lyceum in Apeldoorn), he studied theology at the TUA where he passed the candidate exam in 1985. He became a pastor in the Christian Reformed Churches and successively served the congregations of New Amsterdam (1985-1991), Zwijndrecht (1991-1996) and Hoogeveen (2005-2011). From 1997 to June 2005, he served as a missionary. He worked as a training minister in an inter-denominational project set up in the Zambezia province of Mozambique, together with *Rádio Trans Mundial*. In January 1997 he completed his doctoral exam in writing a thesis on the cutting edge of church history and missiology about the tract of Gisbertus Voetius *De Prima Plantatio et Collectio Ecclesiae, aut Ecclesiarum*. The first reformed missionary theology. After returning from missionary service, he was appointed in 2008 as a part-time lecturer of missiology and evangelism at the TUA. As of September 1, 2011, he is employed full time at the TUA. In addition to missionary subjects, he is also teaching in the area of pastorate and diaconate. He is an adviser of the Deputies for Foreign Mission, and of the Deputies for Evangelism.

In 1980 he married Fennie van der Veen. They have two children, Marianne (1999) and Jochanan (2001).

The emergence of so-called “mission congregations” around the turn of the century within the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands (CGKN) confronted this denomination in a very direct way with the question of how to give shape to being a church in a missionary context.

This study aims at contributing to finding an answer to that question. It examines the missionary ecclesiological debate as it took place in the global missionary movement of the 20th century. This debate reveals that mission is to be understood as part of the plan of salvation of the Triune God, and that He Himself takes care of its realization. It is His mission, the *missio Dei*. The church is not only the fruit of this mission of God but is also included and involved in His mission. The church is the community of the Kingdom of God that in the time between the ascension and the return of Christ is engaged in the ongoing execution of the *missio Dei*.

This study, further, examines this theme by focusing on four influential missionary theologians in the reformed context in the Netherlands, Johan Herman Bavinck, Hendrik Kraemer, Johannes Verkuyl and James Lesslie Newbigin. Next to these theological voices, the missiological discussion as it developed within the CGKN is studied. What is contributed by this discussion, both by formal and normative “voices” and by workers in the “mission congregations”? In bringing together all these voices, in its conclusions, this study shows fundamentals and necessary elements needed in looking for an ecclesial structure to be a witnessing church today. The church participates in God’s mission.

ISBN 9789463013611

