THE SELF-IDENTITY OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL CHURCH:

THE PAULINE THEOLOGY OF ALBERT SCHWEITZER AND SUCCESSORS IN THE RESURFACING OF A MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted by me for the Magister Artium degree at the University of the Orange Free State is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty. I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

SIGNED: _____ DATE:_____

Colin Banfield

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ABSTRACT

The Pauline Theology of Albert Schweitzer and the developments in this field of study a century on from him forms the core of this current Masters dissertation. The subject of the investigation is the extent to which Schweitzer was a catalyst in steering the conversation toward a self-identity of the Church which can be described as a participation with Christ in His mission. The motivation for this investigation is the growing interest and development in what has become known globally as, 'Missional Ecclesiology', with its claim to be a more faithful understanding of Paul and a true description of the nature and identity of the earliest Church.

The dissertation concerns itself mainly with the work written in the early part of the 20th century by Albert Schweitzer called, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*. The present work attempts to highlight and briefly describe Schweitzer's Pauline theology on key themes such as eschatology, Christ-mysticism, the law, justification, and more. It then takes a fair selection of New Testament scholars who have been more influential than most in this field and demonstrate how and where they have contributed to the main thesis – that of the self-understanding of the Christian, the Church and her mission. These include such scholars as: Rudolf Bultmann; CH Dodd; Oscar Cullman; WD Davies; EP Sanders; Lesslie Newbigin; NT Wright, and others.

The investigation is set within the changing context from a Christendom to a post-Christendom environment in Europe with South Africa following close on the heals of these changes. We are introduced to the statistical data in South Africa with its present situation of change, focussing particularly on the Church of England in South Africa as the Author's

personal context at the time of writing. After the core work on Schweitzer and his successors is completed with sufficient evidence of Schweitzer's influence especially in eschatology, the dissertation analyses the post-Christian environment of England and Scotland. It quite deliberately focuses on the theological responses of the two large National Churches of these countries - the Church of England and the Church of Scotland - and not on the smaller missional initiatives from newer, independent church groups in order to observe the sense of urgency for change despite the long and historical complexity of these organizations.

The dissertation concludes with an attempt to determine any detectable similarities between the theological response of these national churches in a post-Christian environment and the Pauline conversation of Schweitzer and his successors over the preceding century. The conclusion shows an overall eschatological orientation in both as well as a similar emphases on a corporate participation in the mission of God in Christ that determines the shape and life of the Church as a foretaste of the Kingdom.

SAMEVATTING

Die Pauliniese teologie van Albert Schweitzer en die verdere verwikkelinge in hierdie studierigting van 'n eeu gelede, vorm die kern van hierdie Magister verhandeling. Die onderwerp van die navorsing is die vraag na die omvang van die katalisator wat Schweitzer was deur die insiëring van gesprek oor die self-identiteit van die Kerk, en dit wat beskryf kan word as die medeseggenskap met Christus in sy sending. Die motivering vir hierdie ondersoek is die groeiende belangstelling in en die ontwikkeling van wat nou wêreldwyd bekend staan as 'Missionale Ekklesiologie'. Die aanspraak word gemaak dat dit 'n meer getroue weergawe van Paulus se intensie en ook 'n ware beskrywing van die wese en identiteit van die vroeë Kerk is.

Die verhandeling handel hoofsaaklik oor "The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle", wat in die vroeë helfte van die 20ste eeu deur Albert Schweitzer geskryf is. Hierdie werk probeer om Schweitzer se Pauliniese teologie soos die eskatalogie, Christus mistisisme, die wet, regverdiging en so meer, kortliks te beskryf en te beklemtoon. Verder demonstreer dit hoe en waar verskeie invloedryke vakkundiges bygedra het tot die hooftema – die self-ondersoek van die Christen, die Kerk en haar sending. Dit sluit kundiges soos Rudolf Bultmann, CH Dodd ,Oscar Cullman, WD Davies, EP Sanders, Lesslie Newbigin, NT Wright en andere in.

Hierdie ondersoek word verder gerig deur die uitdagings van die verskuiwende werklikhede van die Christendom tot die post-Christendom milieu in Europa en Suid-Afrika. Statistiese data in Suid–Afrika met die huidige veranderende omstandighede word bekendgestel, met die klem op veral die "Church of England in South Africa", waaraan die skrywer persoonlik behoort het ten tye van die skrywe. Nadat die kern van Schweitzer en sy opvolgers se bydrae

ontleed is, en genoegsame bewyse van Schweitzer se invloed op veral die eskatologie gelewer is, ontleed die verhandeling die post-Christelike milieu in Engeland en Skotland. Daar word doelbewus gefokus op die teologiese reaksies van die twee groot Nasionale Kerke van hierdie lande – "Church of England" en "Church of Scotland" – en nie op die kleiner sendingbewegings van nuwe, onafhanklike kerkgroepe nie; om juis die aspekte van indringende verandering, ten spyte van die lang, historiese en gekompliseerde agtergrond van hierdie organisasies, waar te neem.

Hierdie verhandeling sluit af met 'n poging om vas te stel of daar enige bespeurbare ooreenkomste tussen die teologiese reaksie van hierdie nasionale kerke in 'n post-Christelike milieu en die Pauliniese diskoers van Schweitzer en sy navolgers in die vorige eeu is. Die slotsom waartoe gekom word, is dat die eskatalogie 'n beslisssende rol speel en dat dit die korporatiewe deelname in die sending van God in Christus, wat die Kerk vorm en bepaal, as voorspel van die Koninkryk, bepaal.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACC   Anglican Consultative Council

Bapt   Baptist Church

BNG   Breaking New Ground (report)

CESA   Church of England in South Africa

C of E   Church of England (in the United Kingdom)

C of S   Church of Scotland

Cong   Congregational Church

CWW   Church Without Walls (report)

GOCN   Gospel and Our Culture Network

HTB   Holy Trinity Brompton

IM   Industrial Mission

Luth   Lutheran Church

MM   A Measure for Measures (report)

MPA   Mysticism of Paul the Apostle

MSC   Mission-Shaped Church (report)

SA   South Africa

UK   United Kingdom

Vol   Volume

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GRAPHS, FIGURES AND TABLES

INTRODUCTION

This thesis has as its focal point a distinctly missional[1] ecclesiology which is emerging globally, but will concern itself mainly with an examination of some of the theological (as opposed to sociological) developments which I believe assisted in its recent development.

1. Problem Statement and Focus

If one has an interest in the Church and also in God's mission through His Church, it would be of interest to discover the emergence of a growing number around the world who have been talking about an understanding of the Church which is thoroughly missional by nature. In fact, in an Occasional Paper of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in 2004, congregations were urged to become missional in understanding and practice (Claydon, 2005:7). Perhaps it would be good to give the definition of the term 'missional' from that Occasional Paper at this point, although I will be describing 'missional' in greater detail in a later chapter. Here is their definition:

> Just what is a missional congregation? Missional congregations are those communities of Christ-followers who see the church as the people of God who are sent on a mission. To a large extent their identity is rooted in what they do apart from a church service or a church building. They cease to yield to the Christendom assumptions that the surrounding culture will naturally want to come to church, or that coming to church is the goal of all mission ... These Christ-followers seek to embody the way of Christ within their particular surrounding cultures and not necessarily within the four walls of a church building or service.
>
> (Claydon, 2005: 7)

More than a vague interest has been shown. Missional ecclesiology is being taught and practiced by leading practitioners and theologians from across the theological and

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[1] The first missiologist to use the term 'missional' in its modern understanding was Francis DuBose in his book, *God Who Sends: A Fresh Quest for Biblical Mission* (Broadman Press, 1983)

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denominational divides. My bibliography will show earlier works advocating such an

ecclesiology by Lesslie Newbegin (1953 ff), Johannes Blauw (1962), George Webber (1964)

and later works by David Bosch (1991), Charles Van Engen (1991), Wilber Shenk (1999),

Darrel Guder (1998, 2000), Stuart Murray (2004), etc, as well as reports passed by larger

denominations such as the Church of England in the United Kingdom (Mission-Shaped

Church, 2004) and The Church of Scotland (Church Without Walls, 2001).

Is this a new dangerous phenomenon set to undermine the faithful existence and work of the

many traditional and long-standing churches and bring a flood of heresy and damage in its

wake? Or does it have a Biblical justification which needs to be investigated? What was the

Church of the first centuries AD like, and how did they understand themselves? Surely their

essential self-understanding should remain constant even over thousands of years. Or could it

be possible that something has inadvertently been lost which is so fundamental that we would

struggle to grasp it even with the New Testament descriptions of it before us all the time[2]?

In trying to determine this, one soon realizes that New Testament scholarly endeavor has

always raised questions concerning our understanding of the life, writings and theology of the

early church[3].

The problem is, are many of us involved in the Church today aware of these debates and

fashions in theology or the paradigms that so easily direct our thinking – paradigms so

integral to the understanding of our very existence? Has the Biblical Criticism done over the

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[2] As is suggested by the title of Darrel Guder's book, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (2000)
[3] Pertaining to this present thesis, it was the Apostle Paul who was the centre of attention in the 19th Century and F.C. Baur was the first, in his book, *Paul: Apostle of Jesus Christ* (1845), to attempt a unified theory by bringing together Paul's history, literature and theology. Those after him may have rejected his hypothesis of a late date for the NT writings, but it became standard to engage in these three aspects.

past century, especially in Pauline studies, left us with a valid and more helpful self-understanding as the church?

In the early part of the 20th century Albert Schweitzer, in his books *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, *Paul and His Interpreters*, and especially in *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, proposed ideas which I intend to show have been an influence or a catalyst in the development of arguments (often opposing one another like Bultmann and Schweitzer himself) throughout the century and into the 21st Century. I also hope to raise the possibility that he may have had some part to play in unearthing a more accurate understanding of 1st Century theology and the self-understanding of the Christian and thereby, the Church as a whole.

2. Theoretical Point of Departure

I have ministered within the Church of England in South Africa for most of my adult life, but have recently begun to work within a network of church planters in order to pursue a more missional ecclesiology. I should therefore make some comments about the state of the church in general in South Africa, as well as the denomination I worked within for so long, as these influence my point of departure for this thesis.

In briefly outlining the present statistical data and undertones of unease (this chapter 2.1 and 2.2), I will also be touching on another reason for the rise of missional ecclesiology – the

realization that Church (not the gospel) as we have known it for centuries, is becoming increasingly ineffective, especially in the West[4].

For this reason I will bracket my work on Schweitzer and others (Chapters 1-3) between the Church situation in South African (this Introduction 2.1 - 2.3) and that of the United Kingdom (chapter 4) to provide an immediately recognizable context into which we can place the work done by these scholars. Hopefully this context will prove helpful for us in South Africa for two reasons:

Firstly, in helping us take the situation in the United Kingdom seriously as the trends in South Africa tend toward the same post-Christian environment they have already experienced for some time[5].

Secondly, to encourage us to consider the developments over the last century in what is purported to be a more primitive, or eschatologically-based, ecclesiology (Chapter 3).

This post-Christian environment, together with these theological developments, seem to have influenced the emergence of a more missional ecclesiology in the United Kingdom which I wish to then demonstrate in two case studies (Chapter 5).

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[4] For example Peter Brierley's church attendance surveys point this out (2000) as well the work of students of culture such as Lesslie Newbigin in, *Foolishness to Greeks: The gospel and Western culture* (1986), David Shenk in, *Practicing Truth: Confident Witness in Our Pluralistic World* (1999) and Anabapists such as Stuart Murray in, *Church Planting in a Postmodern Context* (2004) and, *Post-Christendom: Church and mission in a strange new world* (2004).
[5] See Chapter 4 for the reality of that situation.

2.1. Church Trends in South Africa

In his inaugural speech, 'The Future of the Church, The Church of the Future'[6], Professor Jurgens Hendriks disclosed the results of an examination of the 2001 Population Census in respect to religion (Hendriks, 2003: 5-10). The Christian population in South Africa at the beginning of the millenium is statistically shown to be quite healthy (Graph 1). These statistics indicate the percentage of Christians, and the growth of that percentage, to be significant despite the fact that this is not an indication of actual Church attendance and could be 'nominal' affiliation. The drop in 1991 and 1996 are explained by Hendriks as due to the inclusion of the word, 'optional', in the question on religion. This was changed in the 2001 census.
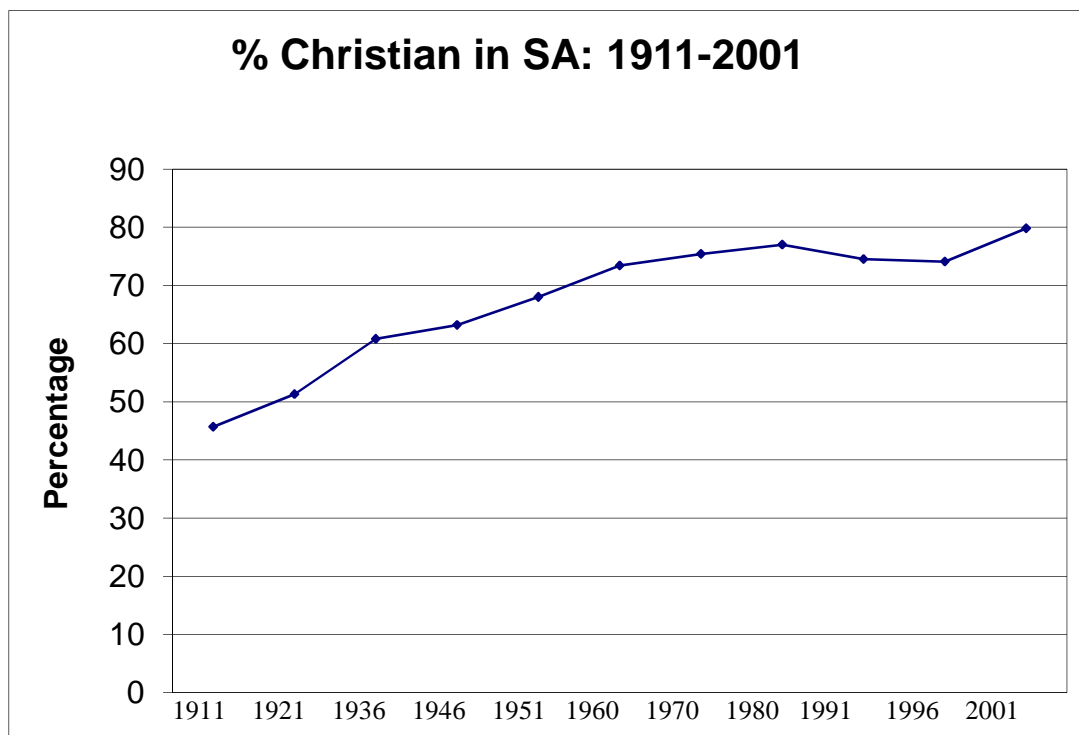
Graph 1

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[6] Presented at the University of Stellenbosch in November 2003. He points out that the 1996 and 2001 censuses, methodologically, are the most advanced censuses. However, he concedes that there are still many classification errors although not as many as there were in the past due to political factors (Hendriks: 2003, 20 n3).

What becomes evident is that although the percentage of Christians in South Africa is slowly increasing and following the trends in Africa, the 'typical Western pattern of a declining Christendom' is starting within the White and Coloured population groups (Ibid, 10). *Graph 2* demonstrates this trend in each population group, although in actual Church membership numbers only the White group has seen a literal decline.

% Christian in Population Groups

X-axis: 1911, 1921, 1936, 1946, 1951, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1991, 1996, 2001

Legend: Whites, Coloureds, Blacks, Asians
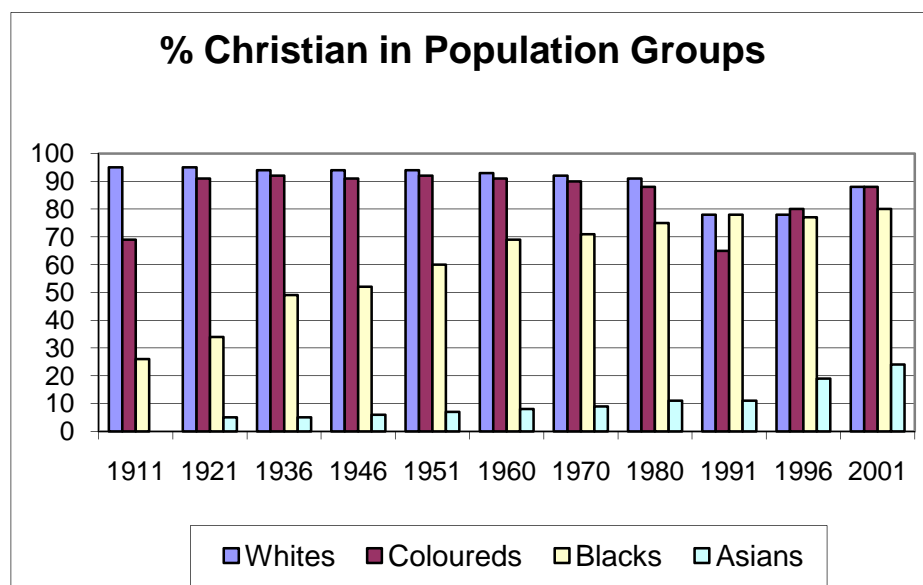
Graph 2

The 'market share' within the established Churches that came to South Africa from Europe and have retained their European identity is suffering a loss (Graph 3). Comparing *Graph 1* with *Graph 3*, one immediately notices that as the number of Christians in the country grew, the trends show the opposite in these denominations. Where are the other Christians going? Hendriks shows that the loss in the mainline denominations transposes into a gain for the African Independent Churches, the Pentecostal/Charismatics and the new Independent Churches. The African Independent Churches far outnumber the Pentecostal and independent churches. The latter two have followed a similar trend in growth over this period reaching

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7% and 12% respectively in 2001, while the African Independent Churches reached 41% in the same year (Ibid, 8).

Professor Hendriks' opinion is that, although 'modernity's established churches have lost their market share', and are declining and dying, there is also the birth of 'a whole series of churches that contextualize in the new time'(Ibid, 15). He also says that these 'churches will be altogether different' in the end (Ibid, 15). Whether the Biblical commitment is strong in those growing Churches is not of consequence here, simply their perceived contextualizing.

Christian Market Share Mainline Protestant Denominations
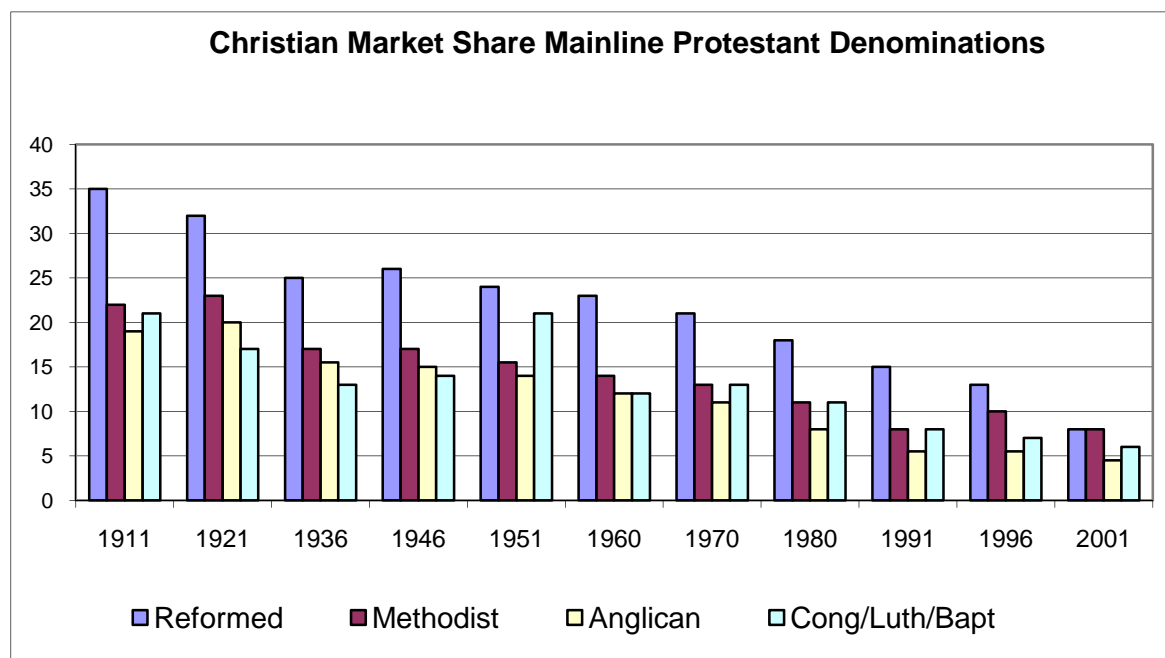
Graph 3

These findings confirm the decades of observations and commentary of other scholars[7]. Richard Niebuhr for instance (1935), after commenting on the way a new church within a culture shifts from being a distinct people to being an established church, calls such a church

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[7] I am indebted here to Michael Goheen's work in collating and summarizing the problem well in his dissertation for his Doctoral degree, '*As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You': J.E.Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology* (2000).

a 'captive church' (Niebuhr, 1935: 128), and a church corrupted by the idolatry of its culture (Ibid: 123). He then proposes the task of the present generation to be a, 'liberation of the church from its bondage to a corrupt civilization" (Ibid: 124, 128). By this stage, presumably, the church hardly recognizes its bondage and merely sees itself as playing an accepted role within society.

After the church moved from the Medieval period and through the Reformation period, the ecclesiology of the established church was hardly challenged, observes Miguez Bonino, who argues that the classical ecclesiologies of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation all thought within a Christendom context (Miguez Bonino, 1975: 155). In other words, they did not define themselves 'in terms of their calling to the world but rather in contrast to one another', agrees Michael Goheen (Goheen, 2000: 3). 'Each', he says, 'prided itself in accentuating what they possessed and the other lacked. Both ecclesiologies were formed over against other churches rather than in terms of their calling in the world' (Ibid:4).

Goheen observes that, 'This kind of Christendom ecclesiology has shaped the self-consciousness of the church in western culture to the present day' (Ibid: 4). It is my goal to determine how the conversation over the last Century has assisted in re-establishing a more biblical self-identity of the church, starting with Schweitzer as a possible catalyst.

2.2. The Church of England in South Africa (CESA)

The old adage of the frog slowly being cooked alive by slowly increasing the water temperature without the frog realizing it, seems to apply to Church traditions that have become unhelpful in a changing context (as seen in the statistics). The observations of scholars as outlined above, concerning the situation within Christendom and the trends

outlined by Professor Hendriks concerning the South African situation, especially after the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, have been felt by every denomination including the CESA. Although the CESA denomination has for a long time been about 50% White/Black with a minority Indian and a struggling Coloured representation[8], the change in the country brought a previously little-expressed fact to the surface - CESA is, in identity and style, a White middle-class English denomination. It became apparent within her ranks that this would not help in her evangelistic endeavours in this new political situation (see below concerning the Imbizo). Highlighted by the statistics (Graph 2), which show the percentage of Asian Christians to be rising and the percentage of Coloured Christians to be as strong as the White figure, this realisation has become blatantly obvious to some.

The Presiding Bishop had a deep desire to address this situation. He called for an 'Imbizo', or gathering, on the 10th May 2003 in order to rethink how CESA ought to do church in South Africa.[9] He wanted the clergy and delegates to imagine they had arrived in Cape Town for the first time. As they stood on Table Mountain and looked out over the land, who would they see populating the area and how would they best reach those people for Christ? He wanted them to 'think outside of the box' in how they would 'do church'. It sounded as if a mission-driven ecclesiology may indeed be on the horizon for the denomination.

However, on the day of the Imbizo we were reminded of what the distinctives that characterized the denomination were, and therefore the 'box' in which we were to think was, 'Protestant, Reformed and Evangelical with the distinctive of a congregational participation

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[8] Latest statistics can be found by enquiring at the CESA website, http://www.cesa.org.za/area-councils.html , under 'Scrutineers'.
[9] The call for the Imbizo is recorded in Cape Area Council minutes of the Church of England in South Africa earlier that same year and can be requested from the head office of the General Secretary.

in its liturgy'[10]. Although it is a broad statement, one may argue that it nevertheless placed a psychological restriction on freedom of thought on that day. Delegates would either be in doubt as to what these descriptions meant and would hesitate to suggest much, or, failing to distinguish between 'form' and 'essence' in Gospel practice, would accept that CESA, already perceived in terms of those distinctives, was fine for the future and perhaps merely in need of some tweaking[11].

The elective I chaired however – 'Gospel Strategy for the Western Cape' – surfaced some interesting comments which were minuted after setting the scene from two passages[12]. The following salient points were recorded:

- It was questioned whether CESA was catering for the diversity within the Cape, to which consensus was reached that we should avoid 'historical stereotypes'.
- To the question, 'What would people expect our churches to look like if we were really familiar with the Western Cape?', the discussion led to asking whether a denomination as a whole could become like Paul – 'all things to all people'. This led to questioning the priority of denominational identity as opposed to effectiveness.
- After discussion on the apparent weakness of CESA to change, the point was made by the principal of the CESA training institute (George Whitefield College) that too much of CESA's ministry was bound up in church buildings and that they were afraid to step outside their 'comfort methods' of only worshipping publicly one day a week and in church buildings. [13]

I include these notes in order to demonstrate that there was indeed a felt need for an Imbizo and that the trends in the country are therefore not imaginary or off the mark. At the 2003

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[10] This can also be found on the CESA website at, http://www.cesa.org.za/where-we-stand.html
[11] The latter seems to have been the effect as not much resulted from the Imbizo.
[12] 1 Peter 2:9f on who we are as God's Church in the world and 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, etc. on Paul's adaptability for the Gospel community becoming all things to all men.
[13] Minutes taken on the day by Rev. Mark Dickson are found in the appendix 1

CESA Synod in September the Presiding Bishop pointed out that, 'as a denomination we are, by God's grace, growing but not as fast as we hoped or as we should' (Charge: 2003, 2). The absolute commitment to thinking outside of the denominational box for the sake of the Church's mission is, however, not an urgently felt reality within the CESA, nor perhaps in the South African mainline churches at present (see the statistics above, although there is more openness to doing so from the 'laity') [14].

2.3. Concluding remarks

More astounding, it seems, is the reticence by many in the 'established Church' to question the validity of denominational identity over and above an identity in Christ. Michael Goheen says that the Church during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation period, 'presupposed a Christendom context' and, 'They did not define themselves in terms of their calling to the world but rather in contrast with one another' (Goheen, 2000: 20). David Bosch says,

> ... the church was defined in terms of what happens inside its four walls, not in terms of its calling in the world. The verbs used in the Augustana are all in the passive voice: the church is a place where the gospel is *taught* purely and the sacraments *are administered* rightly. It is a place where something is done, not a living organism doing something.
>
> (Bosch 1991:249)

Goheen reminds us that, 'Bishop Stephen Neill examined the ecclesiologies of this period by comparing the various confessional statements of the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed traditions'. Wilber Shenk summarizes Neill's findings thus:

> The thrust of these statements, which were the very basis for catechizing and guiding the faithful, rather than equipping and mobilizing the church to engage the world, was to guard and preserve. This is altogether logical, of course, if the whole of society is by definition already under the lordship of Christ.
>
> (Shenk, 1995: 38)

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[14] At least the minutes from the 'Gospel Strategy for the Western Cape' demonstrates this.

For this reason it becomes more important to examine the validity of a missional ecclesiology in order to bring potentially helpful correctives to a Church marooned, it seems, in an unhelpful identity crisis.

3. Plan of research

With the situation in South Africa briefly outlined, my research from this point on will mainly be done by examining:

- Schweitzer's understanding of Paul and eschatology

- the published works and monographs of relevant scholars on this theme

- the journal articles of those interacting in this particular field of study.

I will also draw from:

- denominational work groups on missional-type Church

- the theological advisors of the above mentioned work groups

- proposals made by such work groups to their denominational governing bodies.

For the chapters that follow I will proceed with my research as outline below:

Firstly, I intend to briefly paint a picture of the man Albert Schweitzer and the field of play during the time he was engaging in theological writing.

Secondly, I will attempt to highlight and briefly describe Schweitzer's understanding of Paul's theology on key themes such as eschatology, Christ-Mysticism, the law, justification, and more (predominantly from his, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*).

Thirdly, I will take a fair selection of New Testament scholars, by no means all in the confines of this dissertation, who have been more influential than most and demonstrate how and where they have contributed to my main thesis – that of the self-understanding of the Christian, the Church and her mission. These will include such scholars as:

- Rudolf Bultmann

- C.H. Dodd

- Oscar Cullman

- W.D. Davies

- E.P. Sanders

- Lesslie Newbigin

- N.T. Wright, and others.

Fourthly, I will attempt to discover whether Schweitzer has indeed been a catalyst and influence in the thinking of the above mentioned scholars in the light of his understanding of Paul, as mentioned above, and if this in turn has influenced missiology.

In conclusion, I will move from South Africa (where I began in this introduction) with its present situation of change, to a context in which the post-Christian environment has been present for much longer, in order to observe the response to this situation by the Church. I have chosen to look at the two largest Protestant National Churches in the UK – the Church

of England (C of E) and the Church of Scotland (C of S). The reason for this is that although we could look at smaller missional initiatives from newer, independent church groups, these larger National Churches have a long history and are very complex organizations. These factors seemed important as it highlights the will and sense of urgency to change at great cost.

The first 'bracket' has been provided - the present statistical data and undertones of unease I have detected in South Africa (this chapter 2.1 and 2.2). In Chapter 4 I will provide the other 'bracket' when I deal with statistics in the much more post-Christian environment of the United Kingdom were there has been a realization that Church as we have known it for centuries, is becoming increasingly ineffective, especially in the West[15].

Now we will turn to Schweitzer and others to consider the developments over the last century in what is purported to be a more primitive, or eschatologically-based, ecclesiology (Chapters 1-3) before we consider the emergence of a missional ecclesiology in the United Kingdom (Chapter 5).

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[15] For example Peter Brierley's church attendance surveys point this out (2000) as well the work of students of culture such as Lesslie Newbigin in, *Foolishness to Greeks: The gospel and Western culture* (1986), David Shenk in, *Practicing Truth: Confident Witness in Our Pluralistic World* (1999) and Anabapists such as Stuart Murray in, *Church Planting in a Postmodern Context* (2004) and, *Post-Christendom: Church and mission in a strange new world* (2004)

CHAPTER 1

THE ALBERT SCHWEITZER FACTOR

Introduction

A man with an immense capacity for intellectual pursuit as well as physical work, Albert Schweitzer has left us with not only much to think through, not only a legacy of dedication to others and to life in general, but also a call to decide and to act upon our convictions. Whatever we may make of the man or his beliefs he cannot be ignored or dismissed by arm-chair theologians, but must be admired and carefully heard out[1].

Dr Schweitzer preached a participation with Christ in His sufferings (Schweitzer, 1953: 141f) which was no theological notion, but was characteristic of his own life (as can be borne out by his biographers and those who worked with him or visited him)[2]. Before World War I, on 23rd February 1902, (and before his life-work in Africa) he preached in Strasbourg on Jesus' statement about being lifted up and drawing all men to himself. To Schweitzer this not only meant a drawing unto salvation, but also to suffer with Him. 'The Lord will draw us after Him into suffering' (Bentley, 1992: 110). In that same sermon he said that the Apostle Paul 'speaks of himself in a time of great tribulation as filling up that which is lacking in the sufferings of Jesus. A beautiful saying. We too must all pass through suffering. We must not tremble or ask questions. We must know that misfortune is part of what it means to be a Christian' (Ibid).

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[1] See his biographers, such as the most complete biography by George Seaver, *Albert Schweitzer: The Man & His Mind* (1959) and even his critics such as Gerald McKnight, *Verdict on Schweitzer* (1964).
[2] See for example, Edgar Berman, *In Africa with Schweitzer* (1986) for a critical appraisal of the Doctor.

Later that year, while preaching to his own congregation, he urged them to take active steps to embrace such sufferings. 'A man who does not act goes no further than the maxim, life means suffering and tribulation' (Ibid). Going beyond the maxim, the followers of Jesus, according to Schweitzer, would know that His strength can overcome any harm only when they experience pain and sorrow in their own lives – for initially Jesus brought to men and women not peace but a sword(Ibid). Soon enough Schweitzer himself, and his bride-to-be, would experience this as a reality.

Albert Schweitzer was born on 14th January 1875 at Kaysersberg (Alsace). A doctor four times over – in philosophy, in theology, in music and in medicine – he earned three of these distinctions while in his twenties! Not only is this a tremendous accomplishment, but in each of these fields he was a serious explorer, no mere visitor, but one who contributed much (Seaver, 1959: 3, 39).

In his own autobiography, *My Life and Thought*, Schweitzer tells how he dropped the bomb-shell to his parents and some of his closer friends that by the time winter came he would enter himself as a medical student in order to go to Equatorial Africa as a doctor. He also sent in his resignation as the Principal of the Theological College of St Thomas because of this claim on his life (Schweitzer, 1948:102). He explains that this plan had been put into his mind a long time before.

> It struck me as incomprehensible that I should be allowed to lead such a happy life, while I saw so many people around me wrestling with care and suffering … I could not help thinking continually of others who were denied that happiness by their material circumstances or their health.
>
> (Ibid)

He then tells how on one morning of 1896 in Gunsbach, after wrestling with this thought again,

> I settled with myself before I got up, that I would consider myself justified in living till I was thirty for science and art, in order to devote myself from that time forward to the direct service of humanity. Many a time already had I tried to settle what meaning lay hidden for me in the saying of Jesus! "Whosoever would save his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall save it." Now the answer was found. In addition to the outward, I now had inward happiness.
>
> (Ibid: 103)

His decision to study medicine was so that he may be able to work out his beliefs. He wanted to be able to act them out instead of only talking (Seaver, 1959: 38). He received much criticism for this decision, and those closest to him found it difficult to understand why he had taken such a drastic decision (Schweitzer, 1948: 108). Widor, his music teacher and close friend, thought it a waste to throw away his gifts and learning to 'live amongst the savages!' (Manton, 1955: 67). Widor is reported to have said that if he must go to Africa, 'why not go as a Pastor? At least you are that already'. To that Schweitzer answered that they need a doctor. 'It's no use preaching to people about a religion of love; they must see you practice it' (Ibid: 67-68).

Once again in his autobiography he allows us into the spiritual motives within him and the emotional hurt he felt. I include this to show once more that Schweitzer, no matter what we may think of his theology, was a deeply spiritual man, albeit a man of his time theologically. He was driven by a simplicity of conviction that, in some sense, overpowers even his weighty theology.

> In the many verbal duels which I had to fight, as a weary opponent, with people who passed themselves for Christians, it moved me strangely to see them so far from perceiving that the effort to serve the love preached by Jesus may sweep a man into a new course of life, although they read in the New Testament that it can do so … I had assumed as a matter of course that familiarity with the sayings of Jesus would produce a much better appreciation of what to popular logic is non-rational …
>
> (Schweitzer, 1948: 108-109)

> I felt it a real kindness the action of persons who made no attempt to dig their fists into my heart, but regarded me as a precocious young man, not

quite right in the head, and treated me correspondingly with affectionate mockery.

(Ibid)

To the music critic, Gustav von Lupke, he wrote, 'Am I supposed to devote my life to making ever fresh critical discoveries, so as to become a famous theologian, and to go on training pastors who will also sit at home?' Answering his own question he said, 'It became clear to me that this is not my life. I want to be a simple human being, to do something small in the spirit of Jesus' (Bentley, 1992: 110).

It is perhaps fitting in an examination of the self-identity found in a missional ecclesiology that works itself out in God's mission, which is this thesis, to start with a man of whom was reported,

> The stimulus which drove Schweitzer out of the cool, sequestered vale of life into the heat and dust of the arena, which impelled him to abandon further prospects of a brilliant career in science and music and letters in order, as he put it to himself, "to try and live in the spirit of Jesus," may well strike the reader as a strange one; *yet it demonstrates how deeply the recorded sayings – even the "hard sayings" – of the historical Jesus had woven themselves in the very fibers of his being.*
>
> (Seaver, 1959: 53 - italics mine)

1.1. The Theological Fabric at the Time of Dr Schweitzer

What was the shape of things before the turn of the twentieth century? As with any fabric, there are many interwoven threads, so we will have to limit ourselves if we are to be brief. David Bosch, in his *Transforming Missions* (1991: 498) recalls Ernst Troeltsch who said of the 19th century liberal theology that the 'eschatological office' was mostly closed. He then comments that the most striking characteristic of twentieth century theology is the rediscovery of eschatology, first in Protestantism, then in Catholicism. In our century the 'eschatology office' has been working overtime he says (Ibid).

18

This recovery of eschatology as an ingredient in religion was at total variance to the

Newtonian views of time and space[3]. Eschatology stands for hope, but the Enlightenment of

the 18th century, for all intents and purposes, destroyed the category of hope. It operated only

in terms of cause and effect, not purpose. For the church to lose the eschatological element,

is to lose her identity and gospel mission. As Ernst Käsemann so correctly says,

> It is the Gospel which is at stake in the enlightenment. It sought to free the
> historical Jesus from the veils of christological dogma and expected, by
> doing so, to come upon the gospel in its primitive form. Albert Schweitzer
> has given us a breath-taking account of the history of this attempt, with its
> continual fresh starts and ever-changing methods … the attempt was a
> failure.
>
> (Käsemann, 1964: 59)

Eschatology was the major ingredient Albert Schweitzer drew upon in engaging and twisting

the fabric of the theological world from the 19th into the 20th century. New Testament

researchers had for a while been attempting (and still do attempt) to discover the 'centre' of

Pauline theology (Martin, 1993:92).[4] It was Wrede who in 1904, argued that Paul's

theological conviction was that Christ had ushered in the Kingdom of God, thus making

Eschatology the center, or 'generating principle' of Paul's theology (Hafemann, 1993: 674).

Schweitzer took Wrede's 'centre', which was novel at the time, and combined it with Adolf

Deissmann's, 'Christ-mysticism' which Deissmann argued in 1892 was, 'the characteristic

expression of his [Paul's] Christianity' (Ibid). We will deal with this later, save to say here

that Albert Schweitzer seemed to see eschatology not so much as a 'centre', but as a

framework within which Paul lived and thought (Schweitzer, 1953:219ff). After all, the early

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[3] The Newtonian 'worldview' was that of a closed causal nexus governed deterministically and completely by laws that could be mathematized. Could, or would God intervene in His own natural laws? The Enlightenment period saw divine action as having to be accommodated into the Newtonian understanding of the cosmos. See B.C. Downing, "Eschatological implications of the understanding of time and space in the thought of Isaac Newton" (1966) and, Ted Peters, *Science, Theology, and Ethics* (2003).

[4] This pursuit has proven illusive, as many find Paul an enigma. Does he have a 'centre' to his theology or world view, and if he has, can we hope to find it in his letters or in Acts which were often written as polemic?

church, in contrast to the Enlightenment, had a vibrant expectation of the future as seen in the New Testament.

Bosch is of the opinion that the 'Church found it almost impossible to hold on to the eschatological-historical character of the faith' (Bosch, 1991: 500) as time went on and as the Christian proclamation shifted in time from 'announcing the reign of God to introducing to people the only true and universal religion' (Ibid). It is understandable that the Old Testament would take a back seat, as the church established itself over against the Jewish faith, which was a major reason for the loss of this important element of our faith.

As Bosch says, 'History – events in human life – became above all a manual for moral philosophy, a mirror for human use' (Ibid), as it was Hellenized. Later, attention was transferred from eschatology to protology as the debates centered around the trinity, the origin of Christ, and the theological agenda changed (Ibid).

Puritism *did* fan into flame and keep an eschatological hope alive that 'was not merely individual or ecclesial' (Ibid: 501). This resulted in authors like Jonathan Edwards sparking missionary enthusiasm (Ibid). The most dominant theology at the time was postmillennial (Bosch, 1991: 501). This gradually settled down into an earthly happiness and prosperity. Only in premillennial circles did the original puritan idea of a cataclysmic overthrow of the existing order survive. But in the late 19th century premillenialism was marginalized (Ibid).

On the continent eschatology was an 'expendable husk' for liberal theology and 'an embarrassment'(Ibid). Bosch, citing Van 't Hof, says that 'Eschatological thinking was … hardly in evidence at the 1910 World Missionary Conference (cf Van 't Hof, 1972: 48).

Mission consisted, to a large extent, in the Christianizing and civilizing of nations via church planting…' (Ibid).

Michael Goheen agrees with the above observations when he states that, 'the eschatological message of the New Testament had reasserted itself in a powerful way early in the twentieth century (Goheen, 2000: 138). He is of the opinion that nineteenth-century liberalism had, 'effectively eclipsed the eschatological dimension from the mission of Jesus by interpreting the kingdom as a worldly and ethical order' (Ibid). This had turned the kingdom into a 'universal moral community which could be achieved by men working together in neighbourly love'. He then mentions Scwheitzer's role at this crucial time:

> … The books *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* by Johannes Weiss (1892) and *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* by Albert Schweitzer (1901) marked the first signs of a dramatic shift that led New Testament scholarship to interpret Jesus in terms of the apocalyptic kingdom of God … New attention was focussed [sic] on the eschatological message of the New Testament. Not until several decades later was the liberal notion of the kingdom finally shattered by the trauma of two world wars.
>
> (Ibid)

It appears then that the "eschatological office" was reopened. Bosch too states that Albert Schweitzer argued the opposite to the liberalism on the continent, saying that eschatology was not a husk, but integral to the entire life and ministry of Jesus and the early church (Bosch, 1991: 501).

This in essence was the 'knot' that Albert Schweitzer tied so very well in the fabric of Pauline theology at the time as he critiqued those before him and engaged with his contemporaries[5]. It had many implications, some of which we will investigate as we proceed.

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[5] See especially Schweitzer's, *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History* (1912)

We will now focus on the immediate New Testament research that was happening just prior to Albert Schweitzer, lest we see him in isolation.

As mentioned above, the Apostle Paul was the centre of attention in the 1800s. F.C. Baur had written *Paul: Apostle of Jesus Christ* in 1845. He was attempting to re-date the New Testament literature to fit his hypothesis. However, in engaging in this pursuit he did leave us with something of lasting importance - he covered the three aspects of Paul which everyone since has had to engage in. These are the *history* of the time of Paul (Paul and Peter and thus the Jewish and Greek churches were seen to be in conflict), the *literature* of the Apostle (only a few of his letters were proved genuine), and Paul's *theology* (mostly extracted from Hellenism). Besides this he endeavored to place it all within the development of early Christianity (Figure 1)[6], which for him was a late development, dating the New Testament books mostly in the 2nd century[7].

Early Development of Christianity
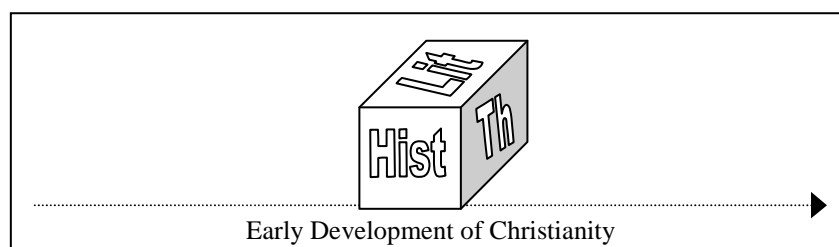
Figure 1
F.C. Baur sets us the task of pursuing a comprehensive, Organic and integrated study of Paul comprising of the three elements of History, Literature and theology, while placing them within the historical development of early Christianity.

From this the famous Tübingen School was formed. People were ready to grab at what Baur taught as it gave an alternative to the origins of Christianity (Howell, 1993:308). This was the age of Darwinism after all! The present climate was to dismiss faith in a personal God.

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[6] Figures 1-4 and 7 were class notes from Dr Paul Bowers at the George Whitefield College, 2001.
[7] See W.G. Kummel, 1977: 30-31; N.T. Wright, 1992: 108; Don N. Howell, 1993: 307-309; and S.J. Hafemann, 1993: 666-668 for concise overviews of Baur's contribution.

This school was criticized in Germany, and well answered by Lightfoot et al. in England in 1875 (Ibid). Later Albert Schweitzer also demolished most of his arguments (Schweitzer, 1951: 12ff). However, at more or less the same time as Albert Schweitzer, at the turn of the century, the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* [8] came to the fore. They tried to place Christianity within the religious setting of the time, which was the Greek/Roman world. Those such as Bousset and Reitzenstein[9] ended up claiming that key Christian concepts were nothing more than elements borrowed from the mystery religions, such as the sacraments being from cultic rites and the Son of Man being a cultic lord of the Greek world (Bousset, 1970: 210). Paul was even considered the greatest of the Gnostics (Howell, 1993: 310)!

This movement had such a fascination with finding parallels with Christianity that it lost sight of Christianity itself (Hafemann, 1993: 668-669). It did however, give us a look into the setting of the early church. This, together with what Baur had given us, has by the sovereignty of God helped us in our rediscovery of the New Testament world of thought. Baur encouraged scholars to integrate our work on Paul (History, Literature and Theology) and to place them in the historical development of Christianity, while the History-of-Religions school urged us to see this in the setting of the religious milieu which would naturally be reflected in the New Testament writings.

Despite all of this, most still thought in Reformational terms – that Paul thought doctrinally, centered in the anti-Judaistic debate (as per the Tubingen School) with his theological center as Justification by faith (more on this later). Alongside the acceptable assumption that the

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[8] That is the *History-of-Religions school*. It is hard to translate accurately, but perhaps is best explained by saying that in the 1890's a trend developed to discover the various religious or cultic practices of the first century.
[9] See Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus* (1970) and Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance* (1978).

world of the early church was Hellenistic (History of Religions School), was the other

assumption that because Paul was a Jew from the Diaspora he was almost thoroughly

Hellenistic in thought (thus explaining his problem with the Palestinian Judaisers). Jesus

himself, as portrayed in the gospels, was seen as a fabrication from a later date by a

Hellenistic church, or an early catholic church which itself was a mutated result of a

prolonged struggle to unite the Jewish/Greek factions (Yamauchi, 1993:385-386).
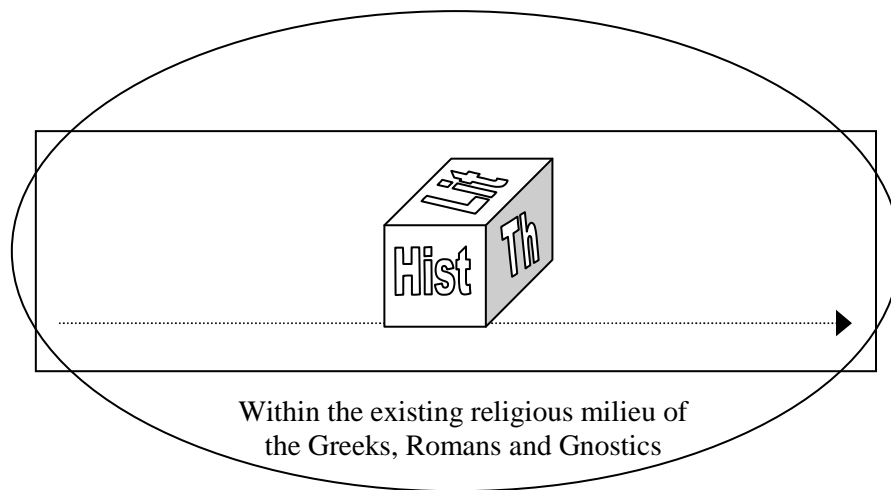
Figure 2
The *Religionsgeschichtliche Shule* emphasize the importance of seeing the integrated and historical development within the religio-historical milieu of the time.

1.2. Gathering The Threads Of The Theological Fabric

Albert Schweitzer, in 1903 was principal of the theological college at Strasbourg. During this

time he was questioning the state of the church and his own personal beliefs (Bentley, 1992:

110). He had a philosophical mind and a unique ability to assess much literature and give

insightful commentary on them all (Seaver, 1959: 3, 39).

During this time he wrote his Q*uest of the Historical Jesus*[10], in which he shocked the world,

liberal and conservative alike[11] (Seaver, 1959: 221-222), by portraying Jesus as a Jewish

apocalyptic man of his time. In 1911 he wrote *Paul and his Interpreters*[12]*,* which was a

critique of all the previous research in the field of Pauline studies. It was in writing this book

that his own convictions developed. This was merely intended as a negative introduction

(Ibid: 230) (clearing the way in Pauline thought thus far) to his larger positive volume

published only in 1930[13] – *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*. This book captured Albert

Schweitzer's developed eschatology and its implications on other areas of New Testament

studies – unfortunately not as well known as his *Quest*.[14]

However, it was in writing and researching his *Interpreters* that we gather who influenced

him the most.   It appears that the debate between L. Usteri (1824) and H.E.G. Paulus (1831)

over whether imputed righteousness or the new creation was the 'centre' of Paul's thought

(Schweitzer, 1951: 9-10) becomes a main question in his later volume (Schweitzer, 1959:

205-226). R.A. Lipsius (1853) tried to say that Paul held these two in a single train of

thought (Schweitzer, 1951: 19). Richard Kabisch (1893) was claiming that Paul was closely

bound up with the Judaism of his time and was largely rejected because this thought was far

too alien an idea for contemporary theology to understand (Schweitzer, 1951: 58,74).

Kabisch was also saying that to be redeemed according to Paul, meant to share in a realistic,

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[10] Written in German as *From Reimarus to Wrede* (1906), translated into English by Montgomery as, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1910).

[11] Seaver quotes from Wrede's response to *The Quest*, 'The title ought to read, *From Reimarus to Schweitzer*, for Wrede is also one of the many corpses on the vast Life-of-Jesus battlefield on which Schweitzer is the sole survivor'. In Germany its reception was 'distinctly chilly' and also negatively received in England where it made a 'great sensation'.

[12] Translated the following year into English by Montgomery.

[13] Due to many interruptions, including medical studies, marriage, organ recitals, a world war and mission work in Africa!

[14] Schweitzer's biographer George Seaver, says "*Mysticism…* is by far the greatest study of the Apostle's thought that has ever been produced …" (Seaver, 1969: 254). A. C. Thiselton mentions that Kummel, in his history of New Testament studies, has many pages from the *Quest*, but only a few lines from *Mysticism*. Also that Steven Neill in his *Interpretation of the New Testament*, only makes reference to the *Quest*! (Thiselton, 1978-79: 132).

almost physical way, the death and resurrection of Christ (Thiselton, 1978-79: 133). Wrede

(1898) stressed that redemption was not something that takes place in the individual as such,

but is a universal event in which the individual has a part (Schweitzer, 1951:166f).

Johannes Weiss in 1892 had published a book called *The Preaching of Jesus about the*

Kingdom of God. In this book he interprets Jesus' message in terms of the milieu of Jewish

apocalyptic[15]. Ladd, Beker, Käsemann and others agree that Johannes Weiss was the main

influence on Schweitzer's 'consistent eschatology' and that 'this approach was made famous

by Schweitzer' in the *Quest* in 1906 (Ladd, 1974: 6). This apocalyptic idea took a back seat

until Schweitzer. Ernst Käsemann says:

> The history of theology in the last two generations shows that the discovery
> of primitive Christian apocalyptic in its significance for the whole NT,
> which was the merit especially of Kabisch, J. Weiss, and Albert Schweitzer,
> was such a shock to its discoverers and their contemporaries as we can
> hardly imagine. J. Weiss promptly fell back upon the liberal picture of
> Jesus, A. Schweitzer bravely drew the consequences from his thesis about
> the historical Jesus … It is to the credit of M. Werner that … he called to
> mind again the unsolved problem of primitive Christian apocalyptic that
> had been more or less assiduously eliminated or relegated to the outermost
> periphery – though to be sure he did not anywhere lead New Testament
> scholars beyond Schweitzer's thesis.
>
> (Käsemann, 1969a:100,n.2)

As one can see, despite the fact that others were saying similar things a little earlier than

Schweitzer, it was he who finally gathered most of the existing fabric together and wove for

us an outrageous and unpopular tapestry depiction of Paul and early Christian thought. As

tainted as this portrayal may be to us today, it must be seen as a huge step forward. N.T.

Wright pays tribute to him with similar sentiment, 'Schweitzer thus carved out his own path

through the first half of this century, a lonely and learned giant amidst the hordes of noisy and

shallow theological pygmies' (Wright, 1997: 12-14).

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[15] See Hans Schwarz, *Eschatology* (2000:108-110) for a concise description on Weiss' eschatology.

Before we move on to trace Schweitzer's influence on the 20th century, which by now must be becoming evident purely through his powerful insistence on a Jewish eschatological framework, we should stop and take note of the part he had played thus far.

If Baur had introduced an integrated Pauline approach of history, literature and theology within the development of early Christianity and the History-of-Religions school had stamped this with the importance of seeing it all within the context of the religious milieu of the Mediterranean world, then Albert Schweitzer had added an element which has remained with us as well. He said the background of the New Testament writers and their thinking must be above all Jewish and the type of Judaism at that time in Jewish history was extremely apocalyptic (Schweitzer, 1953: 26f).
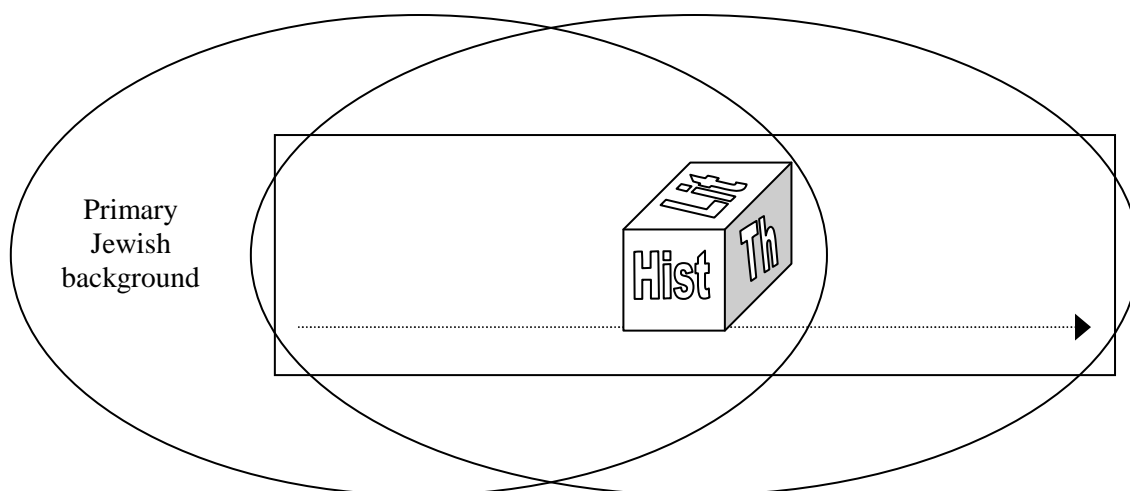
Figure 3
Schweitzer engages in the same conversation, but insisted that the influence of the contemporary milieu had to be governed by Paul's Jewish background as his primary influence.

CHAPTER 2

HOW SCHWEITZER UNDERSTOOD PAUL'S THEOLOGY

What did Albert Schweitzer believe to be the main framework in which the early church thought and lived? He goes to the Apostle Paul as the source of early Christian thought. For this reason I will be extracting his main points from his book *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*[1]. As mentioned above, this book covers the greater scope, is greater in depth and scholarship and is, according to Seaver, much greater in originality than his *Quest* (Seaver, 1959: 253). We have already noticed the place he gives to Apocalyptic Judaism, but how does he relate this to other key elements of Pauline thought? We need to try and summarize briefly what he proposed in order to recognize his subsequent influence and hear his critics.

Perhaps Stephen Westerholm summarizes the feel one gets when reading Schweitzer, even in translation.

> … every single aspect of Pauline thought will be explained as a consistent, logical deduction from early Christian eschatological convictions. Readers willingly suspend their disbelief as long as the master is at work, effortlessly fitting together the pieces of the intricate puzzle, providing an assured explanation for each apparent anomaly that arises. Never has Paul appeared more consistent …
>
> (Westerholm, 2004: 109)

Simple page number references in this chapter refer to *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle.*

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[1] This chapter will be referencing, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (1953) extensively and will therefore only use page numbers when referring to this particular work.

2.1. Great Expectations of Redemption

As a backdrop to the rest of his book and indeed this present chapter, I need to say something about his view of redemption as it colours most of what he had to say.

After orientating his readers on relevant texts from the New Testament including Romans 8:19 (52-54) on Creation yearning for the day of revelation of the sons of God, Schweitzer claims that Paul never, throughout his writings, slacked in 'eschatological expectations' (54). He summarizes his own chapter concisely in these words:

> The conception of Redemption which stands behind this eschatological expectation is, to put it quite generally, that Jesus Christ has made an end to the natural world and is bringing in the Messianic Kingdom. It is thus cosmologically conceived. By it a man is transferred from the perishable world to the imperishable, because the whole world is transferred from the one state to the other, and he with it. The redemption which the believer experiences is therefore not a mere transaction arranged between himself, God, and Christ, but a world-event in which he has a share.
>
> (54)

However, the Kingdom cannot come in until the 'pre-Messianic tribulation' has occurred. This is where Schweitzer suggests Jesus discovered that He must suffer a death that 'God can accept as the equivalent of that tribulation' and thereby bring in the Kingdom (60).

> The death of Jesus makes possible the fulfillment of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer for forgiveness of sins, for exemption from the 'temptation', and for deliverance from the Evil One.
>
> (61)

The view current in Jewish eschatology was that evil in the world was largely due to the presence of demons and that God had given permission to be between man and Himself (55) until the Kingdom comes, which Jesus death accomplishes[2].

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[2] See also Westerholm's (2004) summary of Schweitzer on redemption: 110-116.

The destruction of the dominion of Satan and the angels will only be completed on Jesus' return (65). The whole of nature will pass through a transforming, as do people, from mortality to immortality (66)[3]. This is the end of the Messianic Kingdom (67) and falls into the general description, 'the end' (68). The angels and the Devil are destroyed at this point along with mankind who are damned (68). However, what Paul is mainly concerned about, according to Schweitzer, is that at this point Messiah hands over His authority to God and world history reaches its consummation (68). The angels are no longer between God and men (68ff). This is fairly standard up to this point. However,

> … alongside of this eschatological gnosis Paul has something else which gives the same results, only in a more complete form, namely, the Eschatological Mysticism[4]. It also has the power of showing that redemption is already present, while it is superior to the eschatological Gnosis in that it replaces the external interpretation of the death and resurrection of Jesus by an internal interpretation[5]. For that reason the eschatological doctrine of redemption remains something occasional, whereas the mystical is the centre of Paul's thought.
>
> (74)

Westerholm clearly and helpfully points out that Schweitzer has three different doctrines of redemption that appear side by side in Paul's epistles, according to Schweitzer. They are: eschatological, mystical and juridical (Westerholm, 2004:111). The Eschatological we have outlined briefly and is significant to Schweitzer in that it is from this starting point that Paul develops his theology (Ibid: 115). To Schweitzer, the Juridical, justification by faith, is the least important to Paul, while the Mystical become the heart of Paul's theology (Ibid).

As the title of his book on Paul suggests, 'Mysticism' is something so fundamental to his understanding of Paul that we must begin by clarifying it. What Schweitzer does is define

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[3] Schweitzer makes a lot of Rom. 8:19-22 as it fits with his cosmological redemption.
[4] 'Complete' in that the first is still futuristic while the second can be a present reality, as he goes on to say.
[5] As will be seen below, for Schweitzer the death and resurrection of Jesus is no mere external event to be believed, although for him it is always historical, but also something in which the believer participates in a real sense in His suffering and rising to new life (more on this later).

what he believes Paul to have understood and then attempts to show how that Mysticism works its way through the other major themes in Paul. I will follow the same process.

2.2. Defining 'Christ-Mysticism' or 'Being-in-Christ'

2.2.1. As a General Concept

Schweitzer briefly explains what he means by mysticism in general and then moves on to Paul's understanding of mysticism. The general definition he gives is that one is,

> in the presence mysticism when we find a human being looking upon the division between earthly and super-earthly … and feeling himself, while still eternally amid the earthly and temporal, to belong to the super-earthly and eternal.
>
> (1)

All human beings whether primitive or developed, experience something of this (1).

2.2.2. As uniquely Pauline

The precise nature of the mysticism of Paul, he believes, occupies a unique place between primitive and 'intellectual'/ 'developed' mysticism (3). This mysticism, he explains, is not what one would expect – unity of God and man – (as did the mystery religions of the time) but rather, he says,

> Paul never speaks of being one with God or being in God. He does indeed assert the divine sonship of believers. But, strangely enough, he does not conceive of sonship to God as an immediate mystical relation to God, but as mediated and affected by means of the mystical union with Christ.
>
> (3)

And so the fundamental thought in Paul is this:

> I am in Christ; in Him I know myself as a being who is raised above this sensuous, sinful, and transient world and already belongs to the transcendent; in Him I am assured of resurrection; in Him I am a child of God.
>
> (3)

Going further, this means that the believer has died and risen again in Him and is freed from the law and sin and possesses the Spirit of Christ. He calls it a 'being-in-Christ' which if grasped, according to Schweitzer, gives the clue to the whole of Paul's teaching (3)[6].

Despite seeing the 'being-in-Christ' as a mediation and only thereby can we be 'in God' (because we are in Christ and He is in God), he says that Paul does not make a distinction between the Spirit of Christ and that of God which all believers possess (5).

2.2.3. As unique to attaining a homogeneous humanity

Picking up on the objection of Adolf Deissmann (cited in Schweitzer, 1953: 6) that Paul, in Acts 17:28, had a mysticism of being-in-God, Schweitzer first defended his view that the Acts speech was probably not Paul's directly (7) and then he nevertheless tackled the said passage. He calls the concept of, 'in Him we live and move and have our being', and, 'for we are also His offspring', as being a 'Stoic pantheistic Mysticism' – they saw all of the forces of life and nature as being God at work so that all that is, is 'in God' (8). His answer is that if Paul spoke like that, it was a 'literary device' in order to be a Greek to the Greeks (8).

> The Discourse on the Areopagus has its place in our hearts because it proclaims the being-in-God mysticism which our own religious sense craves, and which is nowhere else in the New Testament expressed in such a direct fashion.
>
> (8)

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[6] Biblical references to this are supplied by Schweitzer (p3-4)

This type of expression in the pagan religions of Paul's day, presupposed a oneness with God of all humanity, says Schweitzer, – a homogeneous humanity (9). For Paul, he says, there is no homogeneous humanity, but only various categories of men – distinctions such as Jew and Greek, male and female. However, these are not only distinctions of race and sex, but also gradations of nearness to God (9). As Jews are closer to God (in terms of the covenant, etc), men are closer due to the 'curious arguments' made by Paul concerning women covering their heads in prayer, (1 Cor. 11:7-11) because man 'is the image and reflection of God, the wife is the reflection of the man'. Paul, he says, 'assumes a hierarchic gradation, God – Christ – Man – Woman' (10). And here is the crux of Schweitzer's understanding.

> 'This difference in nearness to God is abrogated only by the being-in-Christ. It is in Christ that the elect portion of mankind first attains to homogeneity … in Him all possess the same essential being and personality'.
>
> (10)

Therefore, for Schweitzer, Paul would never have had a Stoic understanding of humanity physically being-in-God. No, this is so remote from Paul's thinking that, 'he must call in the aid of the mysticism of being-in-Christ' (10) if we are ever to be one humanity in God. In fact, later he takes it upon himself to say that Paul abbreviates phrases for 'linguistic and dialectic convenience' (206) and so the complete expression, 'fellowship in the corporeity of Christ' becomes 'being-in-Christ. An additional reason is that the shorter expression 'provides a better antithesis to the being-in-the-flesh' (207).

2.2.4. As uniquely Jewish in eschatology

As pointed out, Paul could not have had the Hellenistic religions in mind, according to Schweitzer (still opposing the History of Religions School), because those religions with their pantheistic mysticism were diametrically opposed to Paul's Jewish world-view. God and the

world are held 'firmly apart' (10), they are not one. He understands that angelic powers stand

between man and God and make that union impossible. It is only in Christ that Paul can

include a hymn of joy, as he does in Romans chapter 8, concerning the relationship of the

elect – nothing, including angels, stand between us and God (Rom. 8:38-39)!

With this, Schweitzer says, a 'world-process' is established which is directed towards God

(11). For Paul, the world is not Nature (as in the Hellenistic world), but,

> … a supernatural historical process which has for its stages the forth going
> of the world from God, its alienation from Him, and its return to Him.
>   This dramatic view of world history is also in its own way a kind of
> mysticism, a mysticism which can assert that all things are *from* God and
> *through* God and *unto* God … It is only when the end comes, when time
> gives place to eternity and all things return to God, that they can be said to
> be in God.[7]
>
> (11)

Schweitzer sees Paul as founding this doctrine squarely on the teaching of Jesus concerning

the closeness of the Kingdom of God against the backdrop of late Jewish apocalyptic

expectations. For Jesus, in His life-time, the Kingdom was consistently future and would

come in at His death. But by the time Paul is teaching, things are different. When Paul sees

Jesus alive on the Damascus road, he realizes a cosmic change has occurred (thus the

apparent differences in the content of the teaching of Jesus and Paul).

> If Jesus has risen, that means, for those who dare to think consistently, that
> it is now already the supernatural age. And this is Paul's point of view. He
> cannot regard the resurrection of Jesus as an isolated event, but must regard
> it as the initial event of the rising of the dead in general. According to this
> view Jesus rose as 'the first-fruits of those who had fallen asleep' … We are
> therefore in the resurrection period: even though the resurrection of others
> is still to come.
>
> (98)

With the death and resurrection of Jesus, the future kingdom has therefore appeared. There

has been a huge change in the eschatological situation. In trying to fathom this apparent

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[7] See Rom. 11:36 for this, including 1 Cor. 15:26-28 for the end when Christ overcomes all and hands the
Kingdom over in order that God may be 'all in all', as used by Schweitzer (p12).

discrepancy between the 'already' of Christ's resurrection, and the 'not yet' of the final consummation of the kingdom, Schweitzer says that Paul associated himself with the eschatological 'schema' of the apocalypse of Baruch and the fourth book of Ezra as they in turn attempted to bring the eschatologies of the prophets and Daniel into harmony. Paul, it is said, thus conceived of a messianic kingdom coming before the full revelation of the Kingdom of God (89ff). Therefore the Messianic kingdom anticipated by the prophets is seen as something temporary. In this period, the natural and the supernatural worlds meet one another – they telescope into each other (86).

At the resurrection of Christ this overlap begins and those belonging to Him participate in his resurrection (90). It is they 'on whom the ends of the world have come' (1 Cor. 10:11). If the elect have risen with Christ, then they are also sharers in this new mode of resurrection being. 'Behind the apparent immobile outward show of the natural world, it's transformation into the supernatural was in progress, as the transformation of a stage goes on behind the curtain.' (99). In his typically powerful style Schweitzer states, 'the springtime of super-earthly life has already begun, even though elsewhere in the world the winter of natural existence still holds sway.' (110).

This, in brief, is Schweitzer's Christ-mysticism: that the elect are no longer natural men, but as Christ, supernatural beings, although this is not yet manifest (109f). He also expresses it as 'being-in-Christ'. This mysticism is not a feeling, simply inner or spiritual, but an 'objective mysticism of facts' (100).[8]

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[8] See also Ridderbos,1975: 29-30 and Thiselton, 1978-79: 133-134 for a good summary here, although I will return to elements of this later, especially on the sacraments.

Dunn considers Schweitzer to have pressed his understanding of Paul's Christ mysticism 'well beyond the metaphorical' (so that in baptism the dying and rising with Christ becomes effective for redemption) and that the 'extremeness of his views helps explain why the mystical approach faded so quickly as a viable option for Pauline studies in the middle decades of the century' (Dunn, 1998: 392-393). Nevertheless, Schweitzer goes on to show how all the different aspects of Paul's teaching hang on this eschatological Christ-mysticism, some of which I mention below.

2.3. The Law

Because Schweitzer is convinced of Paul's 'being-in-Christ' mysticism, he is equally convinced that Paul's preaching to the Gentiles was a calling for them to be in Christ, not to become Jews. Schweitzer points out that the Pharisees of Jesus' time had a universalistic eschatology[9], but were mistaken as to the place the law would play at that time (178)[10].

It was because the Law became an issue between Jewish and Gentile Christians that Paul stresses the doctrine of being-in-Christ.

> If uninformed belief here attempts to make the decision for itself, it will be exposed to the completely fatal error of treating the law as still valid even after the death and resurrection of Jesus, and will consequently, in all simplicity, demand of the Gentile convert that he shall submit himself to it, (as one who has joined himself to the Chosen People) to establish his claim upon the promises which refer to them. But in reality the Gentile convert, if he does this, irrevocably falls away from Christ, even though he continues to acknowledge Him as Messiah, and to make ready by repentance and sanctification for His coming. For by his acceptance of the being-in-the-law he gives up the being-in-Christ and therewith his redemption.
>
> (187)

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[9] See Schweitzer, 1953: 177-186, where he reiterates an eschatological universalism first introduced by the exilic and post-exilic prophets, where the Gentiles will serve God along with Israel.
[10] See Matt. 23:15, probably based on their eschatological understanding of Ez. 36: 26-27; Jer. 31:33 where the Spirit is given to serve the Law. More on this later under 'ethics'.

As has already been seen, if we have died with Christ then naturally the Law no longer has any power over us. The new age has come, the power of sin is destroyed, because it only has place in the body which was crucified with Christ (177ff).

Paul's attitude toward the law, despite the simplicity of it being no longer valid as explained above, is a little more complex. Schweitzer proposes two questions Paul had in mind and that we must ask if we are to understand his meaning – a theoretical one and a practical one. Firstly, in what sense and to what extent is the law no longer valid? Secondly, what is the right attitude of believers to the law, in so far as it is no longer valid? (187) To the first he answers that the present natural world is in process of being changed into the supernatural. This,

> … supernatural world already exists within the corporeity of those who are in Christ … Outside of that sphere all else … is still natural world. The law is no longer valid for those who are in-Christ-Jesus. As those who have died – died with Christ! – they are liberated from the Law in the same way as the dead and risen Christ …. It has no power.
>
> (188)

But those who are not in Christ and also those who have been misled into exchanging their being-in-Christ for being-under-the-Law, 'are made to feel its power' (189). "Paul thus affirms the co-existence of a validity and a non-validity of the Law corresponding to the difference of world-era within the sphere of being-in-Christ and outside of it." (189).

To the second question – the attitude of believers toward the law, which is for them no longer valid – Schweitzer suggests that it would have been the simplest if Paul could have called it 'an *adiaphoron*, a thing indifferent, neither harmful nor useful' (193). Because it was not a simple case of people deciding to follow certain Jewish customs (which would have been an

unnecessary burden), but because it was the work of zealots, he had to treat it seriously because his doctrine of Christ Mysticism demanded it (193).

To the next obvious question, according to Schweitzer, of why it was fine for the Jews to follow the Law in their customs, but not for the Gentiles to do so, he gives the following answer:

> Whatever was the external condition in which a man has made his election a reality, that is to say, has become a believer, in that condition he is, as a believer, to remain. The theory of the *status quo* is twice enunciated by Paul in the same context[11].
>
> (193-194)

Schweitzer points out that he was not persuading Jews to abandon their customs in a spirit of freethinking. Paul himself took Jewish vows in order to show that he was not teaching the Jews of the Diaspora to abandon Moses without foundation[12] (196). More than this,

> Paul refuses to admit that the Jewish zealots are acting only because they are deceived. He holds that they are also moved by fear. They see in his own case what those who, by preaching the pure doctrine of the cross, interfere with the plans of the Angels, have to endure in the way of persecutions and sufferings. This they desire to escape. That is why they set up the Law alongside of the cross.
>
> (200)

He maintains that Paul made life difficult for himself because of his Mysticism and also the resulting *status quo* stance toward the Law, but that in the end, after Jerusalem was destroyed and there was no controversy, the theory was already present in Paul's tradition and letters and gave credence to a liberation from the Law (although not always understood along with his eschatological mysticism) (204).

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[11] Here Schweitzer is referring to 1 Cor. 7:17 and 1 Cor. 7:20. This theory of *status quo*, is understood by Schweitzer as a short period of time in anticipation of the coming of Christ, where a change in one's situation is of absolutely no meaning – as a house bought for demolition, there is no need to make alterations.
[12] See Acts 21: 20-26

2.4. Justification / Righteousness by Faith

To Paul the term 'righteous' had a futuristic reference. To be righteous means to acquire by keeping the commandments, a claim to be pronounced righteous at the coming judgment, and consequently to be a partaker of the Messianic glory' (205). However, the keeping of the commandments or Law is replaced in Paul by 'faith in the redemptive power of the death of Jesus Christ'(205)[13].

Therefore, according to Schweitzer, righteousness can only be considered as already attained as a consequence of the being-in-Christ and is really the first effect of this state. Schweitzer puts it into a sequence – 'Because the believers, through the being-in-Christ, have become righteous men, they are already in the resurrection state of existence and in possession of the Spirit' (205). What part does faith then play in our being righteous? Schweitzer once again gives us a sequence – 'In consequence of believing in Christ we possess righteousness through being-in-Christ' (206). In other words, I am not made righteous as a direct consequence of my faith, but I am included in Christ as a consequence of my faith. Because I am in Christ I am righteous and am therefore already proclaimed as righteous.

Thus, righteousness becomes a 'condition of the Messianic era' similar to our present state of being raised with Christ (205). How can Paul ascribe to faith what only comes through being-in-Christ then? He explains it thus:

> He [Paul]is led to do so by considerations of linguistic and dialectic convenience.The complete expression "Righteousness, in consequence of faith, through the being-in-Christ" is too awkward to be constantly employed in the course of an argument. And the short and accurate "righteousness in Christ" is not well adapted to his dialectic purpose … Thus the expression "righteousness by faith," though really less accurate, makes a better antithesis to "righteousness by the Law" than the more

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[13] Once again, he is stressing the incompatibility of Law and eschatology (dealt with above in 'The Law').

accurate "righteousness in Christ." Not logical correctness, but dialectical convenience, has here been the deciding factor.

(206-207)

In other words, as a polemic Schweitzer is saying that Paul wanted to contrast two things. The first was a 'doing' – the law. The other was a 'state of being' – in Christ. So he chose to keep the sense of 'doing' to contrast the two. Thus '*by* doing the Law' or '*by* faith in Christ' – the way to a declaration (futuristic judgment day) of being righteous. The difference here is that the future comes into the present for those in Christ and in fact is only attainable by being 'in Christ', the only righteous man[14].

Another reason Schweitzer gives for Paul's use of this phrase is that the Scriptures speak in old covenant terms and obviously use 'doing' terminology. His opponents are using the Scriptures and so must he. So he uses the 'doing' argument of the Old Testament in the phrase, 'righteousness *by* faith' for that reason. However, Schweitzer considers Paul's discovery of two passages in his argument 'brilliant' (208). They are Gen. 15:6 (used in Gal. 3:6 & Rom. 4:3) concerning Abraham being reckoned as righteous because he believed, and Hab. 2:4 (used in Gal. 3:11 & Rom. 1:17) where God says, 'He who is righteous by faith shall live'. But in order to use them, he must substitute his doctrine of righteousness through being-in-Christ with that of righteousness by faith (208-209)[15].

Later on Schweitzer says that Paul understood and held fast to the doctrine that he is justified by faith in the expiatory death of Christ, but contrary to the Reformational view, Schweitzer saw justification by faith as a "subsidiary crater, which has formed within the rim of the main

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[14] See also his own explanation of 'doing' on page 207

[15] It should also be noted that Schweitzer's understanding of the 'Angels' giving the law can appear disturbing (see especially p213). However, he is trying to place Paul in his own thought world where the Angels, he believes, were between men and God and although the law came through Moses, the writer to the Hebrews talks in terms of angels giving us scripture (Heb. 2:2) as well as other Scriptures: Duet. 33:2; Acts 7:38, 53; Gal. 3:19

crater – the mystical doctrine of redemption through the being-in-Christ." (225). It's not that

he disregards it as unimportant, but rather sees it as used by Paul not as a pivot of his thought,

but as a convenient polemic (205f) when dealing with the Judaizing party.

He also insists that to stress this doctrine one effectively 'shuts off the road to ethics' (225).

He believes that due to the Hellenization of the church, justification by faith lost it's roots in a

strong belief in the Kingdom of God and our part in its consummation. This made it too

individualistic and the church lost its power to reform one's life and the world (381ff).

Although this is so, it is a resurrection state of existence, just as the possession of the Spirit is

a mode of manifestation of the same condition[16]. Seaver summarizes for us,

> For St. Paul, Righteousness by Faith is not a condition of passive
> receptivity, still less is it a proposition for academic debate; it is the
> mystical experience of being-in-Christ in action and in passion.
> (Seaver, 1959: 246).

2.5. The Mystical Doctrine of Dying and Rising with Christ

Schweitzer deals with both of these doctrines in one chapter (Ch VI) where he, amongst other

things, places some emphasis on the Community of the Saints, or the Community of God and

its relationships. Together in Christ they are those who die and rise again. I will first

summarise what he says about community, then move on to both doctrines as he expresses

them in the following chapters (Chapters VII and VIII).

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[16] See Schweitzer on dying and rising with Christ in terms of suffering and the Spirit – all having a strong sense
of action (Chapters 6-8 in *Mysticism*).

2.5.1. The 'Community of God' Concept

Schweitzer wants to point out here that there was eschatological premise for Paul to have the idea of a union between the pre-ordained Elect themselves and with the Messiah in the Messianic Kingdom. This he calls the community of the Saints (101).

Schweitzer is comfortable with this idea of a corporate identity or union in Christ because this was always the principle in the Scriptures – a nation belonging to God, then a remnant despite unfaithfulness, but always a people kept by God[17] (101).

Not only the Old Testament and inter-testamental writings, but Jesus[18] and Paul[19] include this concept of the pre-destined community of saints in their eschatological thinking (102-103). He stresses that a 'catholic' concept of this people of God was always in Paul's mind, not as many Protestant scholars understand him to be talking - mainly of local individual churches[20] (103). For Paul, he says, community in a particular place is the general community, as there locally manifested (104).

Although he admits that the Jewish eschatology of the time allowed for a belief that there would be a union of Messiah and the Elect in the Kingdom, he says that the unforeseen occurred – the Messiah appeared before the Kingdom, as a man with men.

> The union of the Elect with one another and with the Messiah receives an anticipatory realization. Relationships between them, which were first to be

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[17] See Is. 4:3; Mal. 3:16-17 as references Schweitzer uses. In fact the idea of saints together destined for the Kingdom, occurs frequently. He cites Psalm of Solomon 15:4-6; Dan. 7:27; Enoch 38:1-5, 62:7-8.

[18] e.g. 'Those who have ears to hear' are those (plural) who are appointed to accept (Mk. 4:9-12) and the promise to Peter that He will build His Community, or 'ecclesia' (Mt. 22:14).

[19] He cites Rom. 8:28 and Gal. 4:26-27)

[20] He admits it is true that Paul does have local churches in mind as he writes to them, but there are often times when he speaks of the community as a whole. He cites Gal. 1:13; 1 Cor. 15:9; 11:22; 10:32.

made manifest in the Messianic world, now, since they have already come into contact in the natural world, comes into force forthwith.[21]

<div align="right">(105)</div>

This community, this concept of the mystical body of Christ, cannot simply be explained away as, 'a summation of the being-in-Christ of the multitude of believers', says Schweitzer (117). As if desperately seeking to ensure this is grasped he continues,

> The mystical body of Christ remains an enigma so long as it is not understood in the light of the fundamental concept of the community of God, in which by preordination the Elect are closely united with one another and with Christ. The "Being-in-Christ" is in fact inexplicable until it is made intelligible by the concept of the mystical body of Christ.
>
> <div align="right">(117)</div>

To take us into the sections on the actual dying and rising in Christ that Schweitzer had in mind, we need to understand what he says about the 'converse formulae' expressing the reality of the mystical connection that the Elect have together in Christ (125). That is: 'Christ in us' can be substituted for, 'we in Christ', and in place of, 'Christ for us' there also appears, 'we for Christ' (Ibid).

He uses 2 Cor. 4:11 where Paul states that 'we, the living, are given up to death for the sake of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may also be made manifest in our mortal flesh', and footnotes Rom. 8:36: 'For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter', which is itself from Ps.44:22 (125). He continues to comment on 2 Cor. 4:11 specifically,

> The union between the Elect and Christ has thus a meaning not only in relation to the Elect, but also in relation to Christ Himself. In the above passage the Elect are treated as fuel, the consumption of which extends the sphere of the dying and rising again of Jesus.
>
> <div align="right">(125-126)</div>

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[21]Similar to Newbigin's thinking of this reality being a 'foretaste' of the Kingdom (Newbigin, 1993: 99). Goheen says, 'Newbigin's longing for unity was very closely related to the mission of the church; the church as a foretaste of the new world must witness to the power of Christ to draw all people to Himself in one body' (Goheen, 2000: 16).

In other words, as the Elect grasp what Christ has done for them in dying and rising, their calling in The Christ undergoes a similar experience for the sake of Christ and extends the sphere of influence the Dying and rising of Christ has – a participation in the mission. With that we are ready to investigate each of these doctrines in turn as Schweitzer would have us see them.

2.5.2. Dying with Christ Manifested in Suffering

It is as a consequence of his mystical teaching of Being-in-Christ that Paul has to assert the existence of death and resurrection in the believers experience even though there is no such thing visible (141). He does, however, show that there are indications of it.

> The dying which the believer experiences with Christ is made manifest in the suffering which destroys, or tends to destroy, his life. The resurrection state which is in process of formation is manifested by the presence of the Spirit as a supernatural life-principle.
> The diminution of the natural life and the expression of supernatural life in the natural are, for the knowledge which can look into the depths of things, indications of the displacement of the natural state by the supernatural which is in progress in the believer.
>
> (141)

Where does Schweitzer find reference to this? He comments that in the first letter of Peter there is more on this than in all of Paul's writings put together (141) [22] and that there are only a few passages in which Paul speaks of suffering with Christ (142) [23]. Then there are the times where Paul, according to Schweitzer, 'usually, as though he were following some inner necessity, lets the thought of suffering merge into that of dying' (142)[24]. However, there are more remarkably extensive texts where he speaks directly of dying[25].

> As a rule, however, he spares himself the detour by way of the idea of suffering, and speaks simply of dying where he might more logically speak

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[22] Schweitzer's references are: 1Peter 1:6-7,11; 2:20-21; 3:14; 4:1,13,16,19; 5:9,10
[23] Schweitzer's references are: 2 Cor.1:5; Rom.8:17,18
[24] Schweitzer's references are: Phil. 3:10-11; Rom. 8:35-36; 2 Cor. 1:8-10; 4:8-12; 11:23
[25] Schweitzer's references are: 1 Cor. 15:31; Rom. 6:2,4,8,11; 7:4; 8:10; 2 Cor. 4:10,11; Gal. 2:20; 6:14,17

only of suffering. In order to make the paradox complete he can express
the dying as a being crucified and buried with Christ.

(142)

In referring to these suffering as 'indications' of a mystical dying, he most naturally speaks of the suffering as marks (stigmata) or signs of belonging to Christ[26] (143), and in that way the Elect carry around with them the indications or marks of belonging to Christ.

Schweitzer then traces the roots of this from the time of Jesus, through the primitive Church, to that of Paul. *Firstly,* Jesus, according to him, indicated that His disciples would be marked as belonging to Him through joining Him in suffering in the 'Pre-Messianic tribulation' (144). *Secondly*, because the Kingdom did not appear, that his disciples would be spared the tribulation as He realized He needed to suffer this alone as the acceptable atonement for the Elect (144). *Thirdly*, persecution and suffering continued for the primitive Church and in fact really began in earnest (144). *Fourthly*, the idea of a pre-Messianic tribulation persisted and believers understood their persecutions as,

… being a part of it. They … brought these sufferings into relation with those of Jesus, since that was also an event of the pre-Messianic tribulation. Their suffering is connected with His and continues it.

(144)

More than that, *Fifthly*, the primitive Church, being familiar with a 'living relation of the sufferings of Christ to that of the believer', saw this as a manifestation of the merits Christ won through his suffering being passed on to those who are partakers with Him in suffering. In other words, it is those who fellowship with Jesus in His suffering who have been freed from sin (p145-146).[27] And *finally*, Schweitzer says Paul dismisses the notion of the suffering being a pre-Messianic tribulation because for him the Messianic time is already

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[26] He explains *stigmata* as brandings by which a slave or an animal was made recognisable as the master's property.
[27] Schweitzer references a number of texts here, but specifically deals with 1 Peter 4:1-2

present. Instead he simply treats suffering as a dying with Christ (to the natural world, as dealt with till this point).

> Bold as it is to regard suffering as the equivalent of dying, Paul is nevertheless entitled to expect that those who are already familiar with the thought of suffering with Christ will recognize and understand it in the intensified form, which it has become necessary to give it, of fellowship in the death of Christ.
>
> (147)

Therefore, to Paul, his 'Christ-dedicated life' really was to him a being delivered over to death (148). Even though he is misunderstood and a spectacle 'to angels and to me' (1 Cor. 4:9), he knows it is a sign of his dying with Christ, but also how the life of Christ is becoming evident in him.

> Thus in the end his sufferings come to mean more to him than even being caught up into the third heaven and into paradise. He closes the record of his ecstasy and of his bodily sufferings with the enthusiastic, "Now I will most gladly boast of my weakness, ill-treatment, hardship, persecution and affliction for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. xii. 9-10).
>
> (159)

With this mention of resurrection life and the strength coming through weakness, we move on to the doctrine of resurrection.

2.5.3. Being-Risen-With-Christ Manifested in the Possession of the Spirit

Put very simply, Schweitzer sees the possession of the Spirit as 'a sign of the resurrection which is already in process of being realized in the believer' (160). As Thiselton summarizes, 'The Spirit raises believers out of merely 'natural' existence, and this is a direct implicate of sharing in Christ's having-been-raised.' (Thiselton,1978-79 :134).

Does this concept have Scriptural grounding? Schweitzer says that according to the prophetic eschatology it does. The Messiah of David's line is endowed with the Spirit and therefore becomes capable of bringing in the Kingdom of Peace (Is. 11:1-2). In Ezekiel and Jeremiah this concept includes the messianic people, who become bearers of the Spirit (Jer. 31:33).[28]

In a rather circular argument, Schweitzer attempts to show that Paul believes the Spirit to only be present in men from the time they find themselves to be in Christ. The Spirit animates this corporate entity to be what it is and thereby they have a part in the Spirit of God and become 'vehicles' of that Spirit. These are not natural men anymore, They are actually engaged in the saving work (dying and rising) of the Messiah. He says it like this:

> The Spirit of God is in men only since men have been "in Christ Jesus," and in union with His corporeity have also part in the Spirit of God by which this is animated … Not as natural men, but as those who are actually dying and rising again with Christ, are they vehicles of the Spirit.
>
> (165)

In an attempt to emphasize that Paul was bringing something unique to our understanding, Schweitzer continues to say that this is not the customary way of understanding the work of the Spirit – that of revelation, which was present in the prophets and in Christ[29]. No, more than that, believers have a part in the Spirit of Christ who is more 'all-embracing'. This is the 'life-principle of His Messianic personality and of the state of existence characteristic of the Messianic Kingdom' (165).

In other words, the Elect not only receive understanding of the work of God (revelation) and not only are they united with Him (thereby secure until the day of resurrection), but they are also renewed into a new personality (of the Messiah) and experience something of the future

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[28] See pg 161 in *Mysticism* for more references.
[29] Reference is made here once more to 1 Peter 1:10-11 where the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets predicting the sufferings and the glory. As the Greek word is 'pre-witness', could Peter here and in 5:1 (where he himself once again speaks of witnessing the suffering of Christ and glory to follow) be talking a similar mystical language of not merely speaking or seeing the suffering of Christ, but experiencing it in real pain?

state of existence (the Messianic Kingdom) as a community. Listen to how Schweitzer

further attempts to express Paul's thinking:

> His conviction, that with the resurrection of Jesus the supernatural world-period has begun, makes itself felt in his thinking in all directions, and determines also his conception of the Spirit. Paul thus inevitably comes to see in the manifestation of the Spirit an efflorescence of the Messianic glory within the natural world …
>
> (166)

And Paul does this by,

> …conceiving of the Spirit not only as a spiritual and ethical principle … nor as a phenomenon of revelation … but, in addition, as the power which communicates the resurrection mode of existence.
>
> (166)

In this believers have the assurance, through the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts, of sharing

in the same resurrection of Christ and the coming glory. So that,

> As the vehicle of the resurrection-Spirit which is bestowed upon the Elect, Christ becomes the ancestor of an immortal race of men. He is the heavenly Adam, who takes the place of the earthly.
>
> (166)

As can be seen from this, let me summarize thus far. There are in the world, according to

Paul, a new race of men. A race of the future Kingdom and glory, who have the Spirit of that

age, through the resurrection of Jesus and our being in Him. This is manifested as we, in this

natural world, die with him. This in turn is a manifestation that we have His Spirit.

How does all this talk of possessing the Spirit manifest itself in life as we know it?

Schweitzer firstly puts the onus on the Elect. The believer must decide if he will be earnest

about this new State of existence by consistently living in the Spirit, but letting the Spirit rule

his thought, speech and action (168). Those who are in Christ must realize that their being in

the flesh is only an outward appearance, not a real state of existence (168).

He then Gives us Paul and the Church as an example of this happening. Paul knows,

> … that the Spirit acts through him. If his preaching is effectual, that is because it is done in the power of the Spirit; if signs and wonders proceed from him, they are wrought by the Spirit. In the same way all the gifts which manifest themselves in believers, however various they may be, are due to the Spirit. All this is truly spiritual and all exercises of power manifested in miracles proceed from the supernatural principle which is already at work in the world.
>
> (169)

If we are the 'vehicles' of the Spirit and the embodiment of the age of the Kingdom, how is one to recognize the Spirit, or the community of the Spirit? Schweitzer, referring to 1 Cor. 14, says that Paul, valuing the work of the Spirit in advancing the spiritual life, advocates prophecy over tongues speaking (170). This is all done in an orderly fashion. So we recognize the community as one which is most welcoming of the Spirit's activity in building the community up and creating a recognition of one another in their behavior (allowing one or two to speak and stopping to let others have a say) (170).

Schweitzer continues in a section on discerning the spirits, to further illustrate the type of community the Spirit produces. The first thing to note is that the Spirit of God will speak the truth about Christ so that the community may know whether what they are learning is from the Lord (174-175)[30].

Another sign Schweitzer gives is from the *Didache* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Here the communities realized that those who are claiming to speak on behalf of the Spirit are to be judged upon the ground of their conduct (175).[31]

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[30] Naturally reference is made to 1 Cor. 12:3 but also 1 Cor. 12:10 and later 1 John 4:1-3
[31] Schweitzer references: *Did.* 11:7-12 and Hermas, *Mand*. 11:8

2.6. Ethics

2.6.1. Inner Freedom from the World, not Outer Withdrawal

After a survey of what Schweitzer has to say on this subject and in order to get to the heart of it, one needs to realize that Schweitzer once again is fully convinced of Paul's Christ Mysticism – his Being-in-Christ and therefore already in the age of the Spirit. His ethic then is orientated to 'the expectation of the end of the natural world' (311). Schweitzer points out that one would imagine his ethic to be ascetic (311) or otherworldly (333). It is to a degree, but is rooted in this natural world as well (333).

Schweitzer's example of this in Paul goes like this: with reference to,

> … the coming trials of the Times of the End (1 Cor. Vii.26) and the destruction of the world (1 Cor. Vii.29,31), he holds up celibacy as the ideal (1 Cor. Vii. 1,7,26,38) … But he is not rigorous in his application of the ascetic principle … He maintains the principle that a man should be as free as possible from earthly cares in order that his thoughts may be directed wholly to the Lord (1 Cor. Vii. 32); but the essential thing for him is the spiritual liberation from the earthly, not the outward. He therefore lays no special stress upon remoulding the daily life of the believer in consequence of the expectation of the imminent end of the world.
>
> (311-312)

In fact, he would much rather that daily life continues as usual, so there is no withdrawal from it, save that believers should, 'have an inner freedom from it' (312).

As already mentioned above, he sees Paul as coming to these conclusions because of the fact that through suffering, or dying with Christ, the believer has a new ethic which comes into play. 'Really, and in principle, they are a new creation because the powers of death and

resurrection[32] … have begun their work in them. But at the same time this fact is only in process of being realized. Here ethics comes into play' (301).

> It is only in so far as a man is purified and liberated from the world by that which he experiences and endures, that he becomes capable of truly ethical action … The being "not as the world" in action is the expression of the being made free from the world, through suffering and dying with Christ.
>
> (302)

Therefore, to not live as the world does, is an 'expression' of being made free from it, and that through suffering.

Does this mean that the believer becomes detached from the world? Not at all, according to Schweitzer. He points out that to Paul, 'disorderliness and idleness' are a spiritual danger (312). So despite his sights being set on the end of the world, he sees work as desirable because it is 'in the interests of the spiritual life of the community' (312).[33]

In fact, Schweitzer points out that Paul's view of the Messianic Kingdom is not one of 'repose, but of action' (313).

> The whole period of the Messiah's reign is filled by a succession of victories over the God-opposing powers … (1 Cor. Xv. 24-28). That the Elect will aid Him in this overcoming of evil we learn from the fact that they are to judge the angels (1 Cor. Vi. 3). The Messianic blessedness consists therefore for Paul in the comradeship of the Elect with the Messiah in His struggles against the evil powers.
>
> (313)

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[32] Schweitzer sees the power of death and resurrection to be at work in the believer because of their union with Christ. It is a 'life principle' as mentioned before, that must grip the understanding of the believer, and to which he must progressively give himself over to, if he is ever to live the Spirit-enabled ethical life (301f).

[33] Schweitzer points to Paul's example in this regard in a lengthy part of his book (p320-333) where he mentions Paul's work (p320), especially his attitude of a servant as an expression of love (p322) coming from his self consciousness in Christ (327).

2.6.2. The Fruit of the Spirit, not that of Repentance

Ethics, for Schweitzer's Paul, is not how John the Baptist, Jesus or the primitive-Christian community would have understood it.[34] For them the Messianic Kingdom was still to come, so their ministry was one of calling to repentance and bearing the fruits of repentance through a determination to free themselves from their present earthly reality (293)[35]

But for Paul he says, repentance is only the ethical act leading up to baptism, and 'the freedom from earthliness and sinfulness, which the baptized man is to maintain, is more than repentance' (293). What produces the Christian ethic then, if repentance does not? It is 'produced by Christ in the believers who attach themselves to Him' (294).

Schweitzer detects a weakness in primitive Christianity which saw the main work of the promised Spirit to be that of receiving and announcing revelation. Whereas Paul, in Schweitzer's thesis, sees the Spirit as doing more than this.

> As one who is already raised from the dead, the believer, according to him, receives the Spirit of the glorified Christ as the life-principle of the supernatural state of existence on which he has now entered. Thus, for the mystical doctrine of the being-in-Christ, ethics is nothing else than the Spirit's working.
>
> (294)

Therefore, ethics for Paul, is not the fruits of repentance, but the fruits of the Spirit, says Schweitzer quoting Gal. 5:22 (294).

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[34] Remembering always that Schweitzer sees a difference in the eschatological timeframe between Jesus and Paul, including the Primitive Church because they were still in need of Paul's ministry of explanation.

[35] Cited here are Matt. 3:2,8; 4:17 and Acts 2:38 with the conclusion in Acts 26:20

In opposing those who understand righteousness to have come simply by faith, and not the believers mystical union in Christ (the righteous man) as a result of believing in Him[36], Schweitzer has this to say: Paul could have made use of the argument that,

> … the righteousness obtained without works must manifest itself in works. But it would have been difficult to offer proof that it is capable of doing this, or that it carries in itself any impulse in that direction. It would have been necessary to show how the man who previously was inherently incapable of producing good works received through the act of justification the capacity to do so. That capacity can only be bestowed upon him through Christ; but according to the doctrine of faith-righteousness, all that Christ does to believers is to cause them to be justified.
>
> (295)

This is a subtle argument in many ways. Schweitzer is keen to make it clear that our righteousness and thereby our ethics, comes not by any outward act on our part, (faith or repentance) but through being-in-Christ and animated by His Spirit.

2.6.3. Love, the Highest Expression of Christian Ethic

Schweitzer's premise for claiming that 'love' is the highest expression of Paul's ethics comes from Paul's need to answer those who objected to his particular doctrine of righteousness by faith and subsequent freedom from the Law. Those objecting to Paul, who said that God's grace is the sole source of our righteousness, also argued that this does not give people a sufficient motive to work their way clear of sin (303). Paul's answer is that those who have died to sin can no longer live in sin (Rom. 6:1-2)[37].

> Paul's thought is not merely that the law of the Spirit is substituted for the Law of Moses, but rather that it is only those who are no longer mere natural men who can properly fulfill the ethical demands of the Law. The tragic thing was that this "pneumatic" and holy law (Rom. Vii. 2, 14) laid upon the natural man demands which only the "pneumatic man" could fulfill. For only the pneumatic man is capable of love, which is the only real fulfilling of the Law. And love is a gift of the Spirit.
>
> (303)

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[36] See Schweitzer's arguments already covered in this chapter under, *2.4 Justification/Righteousness by Faith*
[37] Schweitzer references also : Gal. 5:13-14,18; 6:2; Rom. 8:2,4; 13:8-10

Love, according the Schweitzer, is the greatest of the fruits of the Spirit as Paul places it first

amongst the fruits in Gal. 5:22. Paul explains why it is first in 1 Cor. 13. He explains that

the other gifts, 'have only a value when the spiritual gift [love] which is to be sought by all,

and which is obtainable by all, is present' (304).

He continues to explain that love is the highest, because it is the only gift that is eternal and is

thereby greater even than faith and hope, 'although redemption is dependent on these' (305).

Also, he says that it is the 'pre-eternal thing which man can possess here and now in its true

essence (305). He explains that since love is the highest manifestation of the being-in-Christ,

love for Paul, 'belongs to the essence of faith (307)[38].

2.6.4. A Self-Consciousness Assists Paul and Believers in Ethics

Schweitzer points out that Paul had a 'tremendous self-consciousness' behind his 'humble

attitude'. This is because he understands God to have called him to a unique work for Christ

and that, 'Christ's Spirit manifests itself in his thought, speech, and action' (327).

Paul, he says, is aware of this calling as a 'tremendous responsibility' and not of power (328).

This is what keeps him free of pride, however proud his phrases may sometimes sound' (327-

328).

Where does he get this self-consciousness from? Schweitzer says it, 'rests as its ultimate

basis upon the greatness of the sufferings which he has passed through' above most others

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[38] Here he quotes Gal. 5:6 'In Christ neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which expresses itself in love'.

(329), and in this he holds himself up as a moral example without any sense of self-exultation (330). This, says Schweitzer, is only possible because he is, 'conscious of desiring to realize in his own conduct the being-in-Christ, and the sincerity, peaceableness, and humility of the Spirit of Christ' (330).

Not only did this self-consciousness assist Paul, but Schweitzer sees the same in the writings of Paul for all believers. He sees Paul as intuitively preparing the Christian Church for the future as he realizes that the end is not to come anytime soon (332). He does this by not becoming an, 'ascetic zealot' who abandons the things of this world, but substitutes this for an 'inner freedom from them'. He finds himself moving, 'between the narrow bounds of eschatology as a free man' and does not want that to free him of his real humanity, but for it to become, 'more profound' (332-333). And so his self-consciousness as a man is for all men. That man is endowed by Paul with a, 'living ethic' by his mystical dying and rising with Christ. This is the self-consciousness he imparts to those after him in Christ.

> Ethic is for him the necessary outward expression of the translation from the earthly world to the super-earthly, which has already taken place in the being-in-Christ. And further, that the man who has undergone this translation has placed himself under the direction of the Spirit of Christ, and so has become Man in the highest sense of the word.
>
> (333)

According to Schweitzer, Paul was giving the church, through his eschatological mysticism, a 'relation to the Person of Christ', and because of this relationship the Spirit produces the ethic. Or to put it in another way, Schweitzer says that through this eschatological thought, 'he grasps ethics as life in the Spirit of Christ, and thereby creates a Christian ethic valid for all time to come' (333).

This self-awareness has a knock-on effect in the attitude with which the believer thinks and expresses his new humanity. Schweitzer says that even though the 'earthly world' continues with all of its circumstances,

> … what we have to do is so to live in it in the spirit of unworldliness that truth and peace already make their influence felt in it. That is the ideal of Paul's ethic, to live with the eyes fixed on eternity, while standing firmly upon the solid ground of reality … He proves the truth of his ethic by his way of living it. Alike in suffering and in action he shows himself a human being, who by the Spirit of Christ has been purified and led up to a higher humanity. Though his work lies in the world, he ventures to live the unworldly life, and to rely only on the power which is at his disposal, because of that which he, in the Spirit of Christ, has inwardly become.
>
> (333).

CHAPTER 3.

DETERMINING SCHWEITZER'S INFLUENCE:

CONVERSATIONS AND VARIATIONS ON THEMES

With the background to Schweitzer's understanding on a few key themes already covered, we now need to discover the influence he may have had through the century before determining the extent to which those main themes are evident in missional ecclesiology today.

I will do this in two parts:

- **Firstly** a brief introduction, with summaries, to the work of a select group of scholars who have worked with the 'reopened' eschatological office, as Bosch called it[1], noting their interaction with Schweitzer throughout.

- **Secondly**, I will present a focused examination with summaries of the themes covered by these scholars and by Schweitzer (from my Chapter 2[2]), to determine how much of a catalyst he has been in the development of an eschatological self-identity and if this in fact has led to a missional ecclesiology.

How much of a catalyst has he been? That he has been an influence is clearly suggested by the likes of Thiselton who said that Schweitzer had an "enormous influence on subsequent writers" (Thiselton, 1978-79: 135). As we determine the truth of this statement we will be noticing the strengths and weaknesses of his work as well as the fact that others have

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[1] Bosch states that Albert Schweitzer argued the opposite to the liberalism on the continent, saying that eschatology was not a husk, but integral to the entire life and ministry of Jesus and the early church (Bosch, 1991: 501). This in essence was the 'knot' that Albert Schweitzer tied so very well in the fabric of Pauline theology at the time as he critiqued those before him and engaged with his contemporaries. See especially Schweitzer's, *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History* (1912).

[2] The topics in Chapter 2, because they are substantially how Schweitzer dealt with them in *Mysticism*, will not directly compare to the subheadings in this chapter, but will be seen to relate nevertheless.

obviously said more than Schweitzer – often disagreeing, while at times a lot clearer than he was on the themes he covered at the turn of the last century.

Why eschatology specifically?   Thiselton reminds us that Martin Werner raised the strengths and weaknesses in the eschatological approach to Paul as early as 1941 in his, *Formation of Christian Dogma*, where he referred mainly to Weiss and Schweitzer[3]. His achievement was to show even more clearly than Schweitzer had, the far-reaching consequences which follow from this eschatological approach and the neglect thereof (Thiselton, 1978-79: 135)[4].

G.E. Ladd was also of the opinion that, 'The history of criticism since Schweitzer may be described as a struggle over eschatology' (Ladd, 1974b: 5) and after a lengthy survey of the eschatological debate, says that, '… the growing consensus is supported by the almost universal modification of Schweitzer's Consistent Eschatology' (Ibid: 39).

Amos N. Wilder who goes so far as to say that, '…few will disagree with Schweitzer on the main point, viz, that Jesus taught an imminent judgment and world renovation' (Ibid: 125)[5]

Thiselton says, "With Schweitzer he re-captured something of the sense of urgency and fire of the primitive eschatological faith." (Thiselton, 1978-79: 135). To investigate this claim alone seems essential in this dissertation.

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[3] Werner dedicated his book to Albert Schweitzer in memory of him as an old friend.
[4] See Werner, 1957: 37 on the effects of the eschatological expectation on the post-apostolic church; Also: 71f on the disintegration of the eschatological doctrine in early Christianity; 269f on the effects on other doctrines in the early church caused by a de-eschatologizing.
[5] From Wilder's *Eschatology and Ethics in the Teaching of Jesus*, New York: Harper & Row, 1939; rev.ed., 1950: 38

This kind of debate has been the nature of the conversation all along. Characteristic of it is a kind of 'provocative error'[6] with which the contributors have engaged one another.

3.1. A Conversation on Paul: his thought-world and theology

We will begin with a summary of Schweitzer's contribution in order to observe how the fabric once again unfurled after he seemed to gather it all together under his critical eye and then supply his own design of what it should look like[7].

3.1.1. Albert Schweitzer: salient points

- He wrote *Paul and his Interpreters* in 1912 and *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* in 1931.

- Schweitzer saw Paul as an eschatologically minded apocalyptic Jew.

- Being-in-Christ or Christ-mysticism gives the clue to the whole of Paul's thought as the future is being experienced in the present.

- He sees the 'centre' of early Christian theology as the doctrine of redemption through being-in-Christ and the doctrine of justification by faith as subsidiary to it.

- He stressed, in contradiction to the majority of scholars, that the church's thinking was only Hellenized after the apostles, which impoverished Christianity because it then came adrift from its eschatological and Jewish roots[8].

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[6] A term used in, *A Cultural History of the Modern Age: Renaissance and Reformation*, for the , 'original, sometimes frivolous but more often profound' conversations of philosophers. Authored by Egon Friendell, Allan Janik (first published in 1930), Transaction publishers, 2008: xx), which, it seems, is an apt description of the nature of this conversation.

[7] As has already been covered in Chapter 1 and 2. See Thiselton, 1980: 219-220, where he remarks on Schweitzer's 'devastating work *Von Reimarus zu Wrede'* which he says especially shaped New Testament studies for Bultmann.

[8] Not covered in this thesis, but see Schweitzer's chapters focussing on this: *Hellenistic or Judaic* (CH II) and, *The Hellenization of Paul's Mysticism By Ignatius and the Johannine Theology* (CH XIII), in *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*.

- Schweitzer's four questions set the agenda for the next 50 years of scholarship at least. They were:

1) Where do we put Paul in the history of first-century religion?[9] (HISTORY)

2) How do we understand his theology, it's staring point and centre? (THEOLOGY)

3) How do we read the individual letters, getting out of them what the writers put into them? (EXEGESIS)

4) What is the result in terms of our own life and work today?[10] (APPLICATION)

As Tom Wright says,

> … all writers on Paul implicitly or explicitly engage with these four questions. One of the reasons why Schweitzer is so important is that he saw them so clearly and, though his own solutions are variable in quality, he nevertheless provides a benchmark for subsequent study.
>
> (Wright, 1997: 14)

3.1.2. Immediate Opposition: Rudolf Bultmann

Bultmann was a leading thinker for two decades after World War II (Fergusson, 2007: 261 and Thiselton, 1980: 24-25). His career was rather uneventful though[11]. He wrote *Theology of the New Testament* in 1948 in which he covered Jesus, Paul and John. His intentions were honourable in that he saw the need to interpret the New Testament for modern man (Bultmann, 1955: 251). For him, however, this meant thinking existentially (Ibid and Bultmann, 1985: 9, 14-15, 88-90)[12]. This resulted in him 'demythologizing' the gospels of all the things and nuances he felt would be misleading and merely contemporary baggage

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[9] Not dealt with extensively in this thesis. More can be found in Schweitzer, 1953: 26-36; 41-51

[10] The last two points are covered throughout *Mysticism*. However, his final chapter (XIV. *The Permanent Elements in Paul's Mysticism*) give us more on application.

[11] He spent his entire academic career in Marburg (Fergusson, 2007:261).

[12] See also Johnson, 1987: 22 and Ridderbos, 1960, 14

(Bultmann, 1951: 295f; Bultmann, 1984: 93, 9-15, 101-105)[13]. He wanted to get to the bare facts before he could interpret it for today. What he was trying to do with Paul, was render a usable Paul for our age.

How did he interact with Schweitzer? For quite some time his 'school' and Schweitzer were locked in conflicting debate (Thiselton, 1980: 220)[14].

> Schweitzer and Bultmann are of vital, if negative, importance to contemporary work on the New Testament. This is not merely because of their direct influence. Schweitzer, in fact never had a 'school' of disciples …. No: Schweitzer and Bultmann are important because they saw, arguably more clearly than anyone else this century, the fundamental shape of the New Testament jigsaw, and the nature of the problems involved in trying to put it together. They thus established fundamental hypotheses for lesser lights to test, elaborate and modify.
>
> (Wright, 1996:5)[15]

Bultmann did however, agree with Schweitzer that Paul was eschatological (Bultmann, 1951: 257, 273, 330, 306, and 1957:33-37), but said Paul realized that he was mistaken about the *parousia*[16] and was forced to oppose this Jewish form of his gospel, picking up ideas from non-Jewish mystery religions and Gnosticism (Bultmann, 1951: 306f, 311, 347, and Bultmann 1957: 52). He stressed that we must marginalize the apocalyptic for anthropological reasons - Paul was speaking as a man suffering from the personal dilemma of transitional thinking[17].

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[13] See also Johnson, 1987: 40 and Ridderbos, 1960: 17

[14] In this reference Bultmann disagrees with Schweitzer but refers to his book, *The Quest*, as 'brilliantly written' while using it to prove his own point that there was no value in the nineteenth century 'lives of Jesus'.

[15] Wright, in *Jesus* (1996:658), comments interestingly that Bultmann achieved a demythologization while Schweitzer achieved a 'personality' for Jesus. Also that Schweitzer's Jesus was a man of action, summoning people to tasks (Schweitzer ends up in Africa), while Bultmann's Jesus is a man of words, urging people to think (Bultmann ends up writing a theology of the New Testament).

[16] Parousia is not abandoned, but becomes a way of speaking of Christ's first appearance in the past (Bultmann, 1957:55.

[17] See Bultmann, 1957:38-73 for his description of Paul's struggle during this time.

But what about all of Paul's very Jewish themes and words? For Bultmann this was merely the flotsam and jetsam of an apocalyptic view which no longer governed the apostle's mind. He leaned heavily on Bousset, Reitzenstein and others from the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, (See Thiselton's description - 1980:218)[18] who Albert Schweitzer shunned most vehemently. He was convinced that Paul's thought concerning Jesus took three ideas into account: 1) The Jewish apocalyptic Son of Man, 2) reinterpreted as the mystery religion's cultic 'lord' and 3) the Gnostic redeemer myth (Bultmann, 1951: 51-52, 124-128). In other words Bultmann interacts with Schweitzer by agreeing apocolyptically and then says that Paul was forced to change his views, thereby Hellenizing the church - which would explain the residual apocalyptic tones[19].

In the end, what can be said of Bultmann's contribution is that he was committed to proclaiming the Gospel (as he saw it once demythologized) to the present day with an emphasis on individual self-identity. This too can be added to our illustration (Figure 4):

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[18] For a brief comment by Bultmann himself see 1955: 246-248

[19] Ibid, for Bultman's clearly articulated description of the eschatological Church.
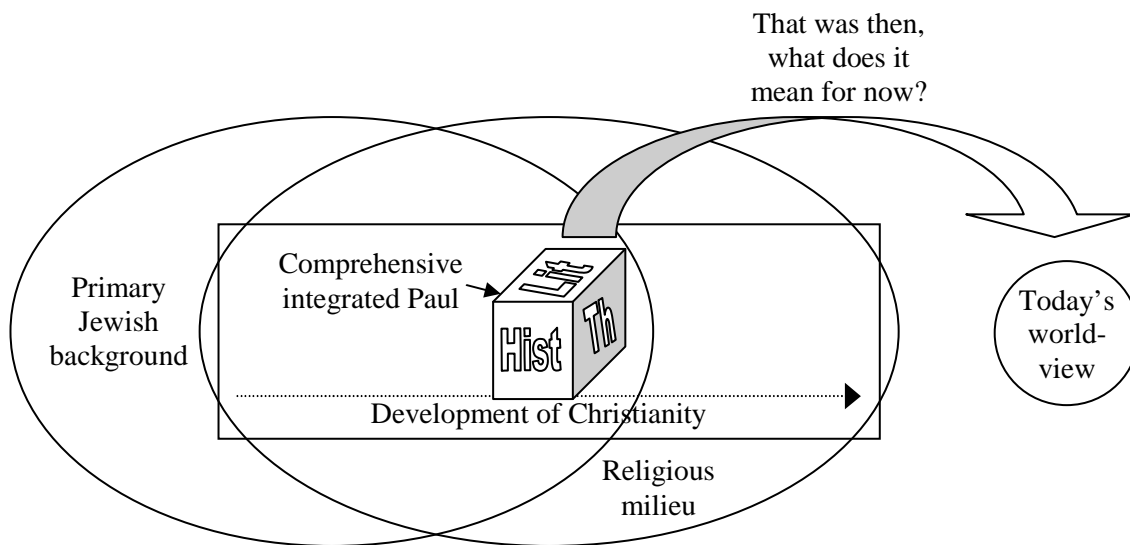
Figure 4
Bultmann worked within this whole framework, but was committed to proclaiming the gospel to his day. In order to do this he had to understand the world and thought of Paul and the Gospel writers and then demythologize them. He engaged with Schweitzer and rejected Paul's Jewish background as the primary influence. He preferred the *Relionsgeschichtliche Shule*'s religious milieu as Paul's thought world.

Summary Remarks:

Although contradicting a lot of what Schweitzer was seeking to establish, Bultmann and Schweitzer seemed to have established the fundamental hypotheses, as Wright has already said, for us to test, elaborate and modify. This is indeed what has happened as we shall see.

However, in Bultmann we could say we have a classic example of what a Hellenized New Testament Christianity, divorced from its Jewish and eschatological roots due to a perceived problem with the parousia, results in – a more static, contemplative, 'wordy' and individualistic Christianity. The opposite is a community compelled to action because of who they are.

3.1.3. Thy Kingdom Come?

What follows is an attempt to capture the contours of subsequent thought and is not intended by any means to be a thorough commentary on these scholars. Some will be only a mention, while others will need a little more description for this inquiry.

C.H. Dodd, made an impact with his 'realized eschatology'[20] (the kingdom was present in Jesus' time), whereas Schweitzer's was known as 'consistent eschatology' (The Kingdom was always future)[21].   Dodd's understanding of Paul was that he was an Apocalyptist (the Kingdom will appear imminently) in his earlier letters but matured toward embracing a 'Realized Eschatology' in Colossians and Ephesians (Dodd, 1953: 108f)[22]. He understood that the 'wholly other' of the future had entered into history – all that the prophets had hoped for had been experienced in history (Dodd, 1970: 115)[23]. Dodd's observation is that Paul replaced apocalyptic with eternal life with Christ now (from the time of writing 2 Corinthians, especially seen in Colossians) – a sort of mysticism – so that his thought is never wholly eschatological or mystical (Dodd, 1953: 113). Bosch calls it an ecclesiology (Bosch, 2005: 142)[24]. Many scholars have appreciated Dodd's contribution - that the Kingdom was actually present in Jesus' ministry (Ladd, 1974:58-59).

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[20] This became popular in his book, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (1935).

[21] As we have already seen, this assessment of Schweitzer's eschatology is taken from ,*The Quest*. By the time he writes, *Mysticism*, he has to understand eschatology from Paul's vantage point, which is that the Messianic Kingdom is already present but not consummated. However, the Kingdom coming in its fullness must still be seen as an apocalyptic event, and thus consistently future.

[22] See also Bosch,2005: 141

[23] See also Ladd, 1974: 56-57. After being criticised for this (Ladd, 1974: 59) Dodd later admitted that the Kingdom awaits consummation 'beyond history' in his, *The Founder of Christianity* (1970:115). This brings him closer to Schweitzer.

[24] If the end is not coming now, this eschatological age shapes our existence as a people and gives it meaning (See Bosch, 2005: 165-166).

As one can see, we have two things being said: Jesus saw the Kingdom as always and 'consistently' future, about to break in (Schweitzer); and as 'already present' (Dodd). Later, **J. Jeremias** commended Dodd but introduced an 'eschatology in process of realization' (Jeremias, 1963: 21, 230)[25].

Geerhardus Vos, in 1930, wrote *The Pauline Eschatology,* in which he demonstrates a similar but developed understanding of a Christian alteration to the Jewish eschatological schema. He developed a picture of the 'overlap' of two ages which has become familiar today (Vos, 1972: 38).

Oscar Cullmann, especially through his contribution to the Biblical Theology movement, helped develop our understanding of an 'overlap of the ages' (Ladd, 1974:69. See also Ziesler, 1983:401-403)[26]. He saw the Bible as a story primarily – the revelatory account of God's mighty acts in history, and not a system of beliefs (Ladd, 1974: 402).

He was professor of Basil University in Switzerland when he wrote *Christ in Time* in 1948. He came from the same part of the world as Schweitzer and had an intimate knowledge of his work (Dorman, 2007: 333). While in Strasbourg he engaged in the Dodd/Schweitzer debate (realized or future) and said it is not an either/or, but both/and. It was him who coined the phrase 'now-but-not-yet', or 'inaugurated eschatology' (Ibid: 335 and Cullmann, 1951:86). Thoroughly convinced of the importance of what he called '*heilsgeschichte*'[27], he also took issue with Bultmann who said that the history of the time was the 'husk' and not the kernel. Bultmann had said that the kernel was the theology which we needed to ascertain. Zatzinger

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[25] See Ladd, 1974: 59, for more commentary

[26] Similar to Vos (above), but Cullman does not seem to be familiar with Vos' writing on this issue, as Anthony Hoekema agrees (*The Bible and the Future* ,1994:301).

[27] 'Salvation History' - the Bible as the story of God's mighty acts in history, and not a system of beliefs.

believes Cullmann argued convincingly that Salvation History was as important (Ratzinger, 1988: 51).

Basically, Cullmann pointed out that the future to which the Jews were looking forward (the coming of the Messiah) can be considered the 'midpoint' in their two part history – the present age and the coming age (Cullman, 1951:81). However, after the Easter event, this midpoint has already happened and no longer lies in the future (Ibid)[28]. The midpoint now is the life and work of Jesus (Ibid: 82). He explains it as the battle that has been won early on in the war which has proved to be decisive, although the war continues until the complete consummation of the Kingdom (Ibid:84), or ultimate victory.

Between Vos, Cullmann and others[29], we can understand the Jews to be expecting three things: 1) a future kingdom glory (Ladd, 1974: 66); 2) a suffering in achieving this (see Cullmann, 1951: 82, 157-159); and 3) the coming of the nations into the kingdom (see Bosch, 2005: 145-147). All of this would happen on the day of the Lord at the 'general resurrection'. What these scholars made plain is that we can in fact accept the notion of two days of the Lord[30]. *Figure 5* shows (1) the Jewish midpoint 'Day of the Lord' and the Christian midpoint, or decisive battle (2), and the newly placed, and extended, period of time between the two where the nations enter the Kingdom (3)[31].

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[28] Bosch says Cullmann has 'effectively displaced the event of God's coming glory', and quotes Cullmann to have considered eschatology to have been dethroned (Bosch, 2005: 142). Beker (1980: 355f) tried to rescue this conflict between Apocalyptic and Eschatology. Apocalyptic in his opinion, explains the imminent kingdom character in Paul.

[29] See Hoekema, 1994: 298-306

[30] Although Figure 5. is not the illustration Cullmann or Vos have in their books, *Christ and Time*1951: 81-93, and *The Pauline Eschatology* ,1972:38, it illustrates what they are saying.

[31] See J. Munck (below) for this aspect of the illustration (cited in Hafemann, 1993: 671) as well as J.D.G. Dunn, 1982:114.

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┌─────────────┐                                      ┌─────────────┐
│     (2)     │                (3)                   │     (1)     │
│     The     │      The nations come in             │     The     │
│   suffering │                                      │    Glory    │
│             │                                      │   (at his   │
│      ✝      ├──────────────────────────────────────┤   return)   │
└─────────────┘                                      └─────────────┘
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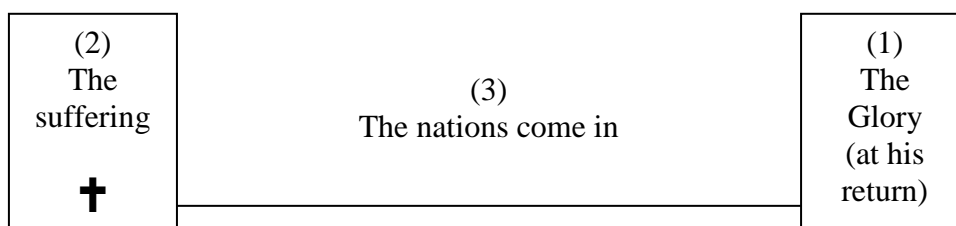
Figure 5
Instead of one Day of the Lord we have two, with the time between them of vital importance in God's salvation history (still to be considered).

One cannot understand this theologically unless salvation history is recognised. Cullmann went on to show how the advent and work of Jesus is the critical fulcrum, or mid-point of salvation history, not the *parousia* – time had gone through a cosmic shift (most of his *Christ and Time* fleshes out this argument in various ways).

Summary Remarks:

The Kingdom of God emphasis, although a grappling with how much of the Kingdom is present now and if it was present in Jesus time, has ensured that our focus is not simply on personal salvation, but on what God is doing cosmologically and corporately. Events in which we can find ourselves included.

Thanks to Vos and Cullmann, we have a more or less articulate 'overlap of the ages' eschatology, which was Schweitzer's developed 'telescopic' scheme (Schweitzer, 1953: 86). This it seems, has led to what Bosch called, an ecclesiology – this eschatological age in which we find ourselves, shapes our existence as a people and gives it meaning. This was no doubt helped by Cullmann's emphasis on the Salvation History narrative.

Not only so, but the emphasis that has been placed on the historical and sequential revelation of events, with Christ at centre stage, being as important as the theological message (contra Bultmann), must be noted. This has stressed that the Christian faith is not a theological idea or system of beliefs with the historical context a mere husk, but that the historical context plays an important role in interpreting all we know and includes us in the narrative. The emphasis on the decisive victory in Jesus and the extended war until the consummated Kingdom, must give a sense of vocation to the Church, as it seems to have for Paul and the earliest Church.

If the eschatological Kingdom and Salvation History are not a correct emphasis, then it appears one's theology stands the strong possibility of becoming existential as time moves on, with an individual ethic in the present age. Having said that, Bultmann's call for understanding how the core message shapes our identity must be heard.

3.1.4. Paul's Influences and Battles: Judaic or Hellenistic?

W.D. Davies studied under C.H. Dodd at Cambridge where he was considered a brilliant scholar capable of replacing Dodd. However, he left instead for the USA (Wright, 1997:16). His major work was *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism,* written in 1948. He was also inspired by Claude Montefiore (1914) who promoted the idea that there were 'several Judaisms' (Montefiore, 1914: 3, 13) at the time, and that because Paul was part of the Diaspora he was therefore a Hellenized Jew, which was not purely rabbinic (Ibid: 68, 81) or truly Jewish (see also Westerholm, 2004: 120-122). He claimed that the Rabbinic Judaism of Palestine was a 'more noble religion' than Paul makes out (Montefiore, 1914: 87), and that within Hellenistic Judaism there was 'a spiritual anxiety' (Ibid: 95-97) which is what Paul was influenced by.

Davies' research however, showed many links between the Judaism of the day and Paul's writing. In *Paul and Rabbinic* Judaism, Davies sets out to show that although one cannot split Hellenistic, Jewish and other factors when talking about Paul, and that one should not deny all Hellenistic influence on him, Paul did belong to the mainstream of first-century Judaism (Davies 1948: 1)[32]. When Paul, for instance, speaks of our solidarity with Christ he is definitely not speaking from a Hellenistic mystery religions background (Ibid: 89f). He speaks rather from rabbinic speculations on Adam, thereby explaining Paul's Adam-Christology and our being-in-Christ as our new representative in whom we live (Ibid: 36-57)[33].

It ought to be evident how, with all of this research, the thought world of Paul is becoming more and more entrenched in some or other aspect of Judaism and not Hellenism (as Schweitzer had insisted). What Paul began to discover, says Davies, were the universalist promises of the Old Testament (Ibid:57)[34].

> Paul accepted the traditional Rabbinic doctrine of the unity of mankind in Adam … In that one body of Adam east and west, north and south were brought together, male and female … The 'body' of Adam included all mankind. Was it not natural, then, that Paul when he thought of the new humanity being incorporated 'in Christ' should have conceived of it as the 'body' of the second Adam, where there was neither Jew nor Greek, male or female, bond or free … i.e. the reconstruction of the essential oneness of mankind in Christ as a spiritual community, as it was one in Adam in a physical sense.
>
> (Ibid)

Paul therefore never had to abandoned the faith and practices of the Torah. He still saw the Jews as his kinsmen according to the flesh, says Hare (Hare, 2007:352).

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[32] See Also Wright, 1997:16
[33] See also Hare, 2007:352
[34] See also Hare, 2007:352

In a more direct interaction with Doctor Schweitzer, Davies saw the 'dying-and-rising-with-Christ' not as influenced by the mystery religions, nor as Schweitzer had seen it, as part of the apocalyptic scheme (Davies, :87, 98f). He said it was one example of the Christian personally experiencing a major Old Testament event, which he goes on to demonstrate (Ibid: 100f). For example, dying and rising with Christ is equivalent to a new exodus. Or being confronted with Jesus' teaching is like standing at mount Sinai hearing God's Word. It is Jesus' teaching that gives ethical content to the dying and rising. i.e. Schweitzer's understanding of Paul's 'mysticism' (being-in-Christ) and this new ethic or morality, become thus inseparable (Waters, 2004: 19-20).

In answer to Schweitzer, who he thinks is too extreme in his eschatological focus, Davies said that it is not apocalyptic Judaism that shaped Paul's thinking, but Rabbinic Judaism - while not denying the apocalyptic (Davies, 1948: 10). Also that Paul's teaching on the Spirit is that it is a communal experience and in fact, *the* eschatological expectation of Israel. Here Davies declares his agreement with Schweitzer as to justification being a subsidiary thought of Paul, used by him for polemic reasons (Hare, 2007:352).

There were others of arguably lesser importance to my aim in this inquiry who contributed, but I will highlight only H.J. Schoeps and J. Munck.

Schoeps added weight to the whole debate as to who or what Paul was critiquing when speaking about Judaism. He claimed that Paul was part of a Diaspora Judaism which was a debased and Hellenized form of Judaism, but that it was not purely Hellenistic (Schoeps, 1961: 23). For instance, he claims that Paul's eschatology was correctly shaped by the rabbinical schools of Palestine (Ibid: 40) and that his conversion experience enabled him to

realize that the Messiah had in fact come and that he (Paul) was now living 'post-messianic' (Ibid: 58). This meant that the Church itself lived at 'the end of the age', which was the shape of Paul's theology throughout (Ibid: 62).

He followed Albert Schweitzer in saying that Paul realized that the Law would lose validity when the Messianic Kingdom began, as the Rabbinic tradition taught. And so Paul differed from the Rabbinic view only in that he claimed Jesus to in fact be the Messiah – thus bringing in the age (Schoeps, 1961: 173).

So what was Paul critiquing? Westerholm points out that unlike Davies, Schoeps says Paul's controlling thought *is* a critique of Israel and the Law, as opposed to grace (Westerholm, 2004:126), because the Diaspora Jews saw the Law not as covenantal but as 'nomos', from which they longed to be free (Ibid: 127). Thus Paul's criticisms do not touch real Judaism, but his perception of Judaism through his interaction with the Diaspora Jews (Schoeps, 1961: 202, 261-262).

J. Munck wrote, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* in 1954, in which he said that eschatology was not the all-in-all, but was the key to understanding Paul and early Christianity. The most important thing to Paul (and to himself) is the preaching of the gospel to the nations (Hafemann, 1993: 671). Therefore, in the confusion of Paul being Hellenistic or Judaistic and who he was opposing, mission strategy should be seen as the thing that placed tension between Paul and the Jerusalem Apostles. In this controversy Paul is placing an emphasis on the Gentiles, saying that the Gentiles must be won first as a prelude to the salvation of Israel (Ibid).

Summary remarks:

What is Paul critiquing? This seems to be the key issue in the debate to determine Paul's thought world. There seems to be an attempt to want to see Diaspora Judaism as fundamentally different to Palestinian Judaism and that Paul was so entrenched in the Diaspora Judaism, that when he attacks this we think it is real Judaism. In other words, for some it is untenable that Paul's thought world was thoroughly Jewish, but that he needed to have gone through some or other Hellenization for the New Testament to make sense.

More than this, people like Montefiore and Schoeps need to say that Paul was struggling with the same 'spiritual anxiety' as the Diaspora Jews because, in their opinion Hellenistic Judaism and Diaspora Jews were less covenantal about the law and saw it as purely 'nomos', from which they longed to be free.

It seems important therefore, to take Davies attempt to correct this perception seriously at this point when he stresses the importance of Jewish thought and theology in Paul: that God was always intending to reconcile the nations in Christ; that Old Testament events could find their fulfillment not only in Christ, but in the experience of the Messianic people – the Church; that the longings and hopes of the Jewish Scriptures were for an age of the Spirit which, Davies says, was *the* eschatological expectation of Israel.

Munck's observations from the New Testament need to be considered when he says that Paul's conflicts with Judaism were not due to him being Hellenized or not, but due to his missionary calling to the Gentiles. That Paul was seeking to be inclusive of the Gentiles caused the issues of law and justification to become front and central, in his opinion.

3.1.5. 'Controversy is the breath of life': Debating the 'Centre'

'Controversy is the breath of life to a German theologian, and mutual discussion is the duty of us all'. These were the opening words of Ernst Käsemann in his famous answer to Krister Stendahl as to what the 'centre' of Paul's theology was (Käsemann, 1969: 60).

In mid-century we come across an interesting character in **Krister Stendahl**, a Swedish clergyman and sharp challenger of traditional ways of understanding Paul. We need to take note of him because he, like Schweitzer and Cullman, is said to have had 'impressive revolutionary interpretations'[35]. However, on closer investigation he is indeed picking up themes already in conversation since the turn of the century – especially ideas from Kümmel (Westerholm, 2004:146). He does bring to it a sharpness and a freshness which calls for a reaction. This he got from Ernst Käsemann. Käsemann reacted to Stendahl's paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association in 1961 called, *The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West*[36]. It was later printed in his book *Paul among Jews and Gentiles: and Other Essays*, written in 1976, in which he answers Ernst Käsemann's 'severe criticism' (Stendahl, 1976: 78).

What was this criticism? In his essay he is convinced that Luther applied Paul to his own time, but that we must not read Luther back into Paul' time. What he means is Luther suffered from a guilty conscience, but that Paul did not have this problem (Westerholm, 2004: 146-149). Paul saw in Jesus the fulfillment of 'the Day'. He was not fighting against 'works' as opposed to 'faith' (Stendahl, 1976: 2). With Schweitzer, Stendahl believed justification by faith to have been used by Paul for a specific and limited reason – to defend

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[35] So says the review on the cover of his book *Paul among Jews and* Gentiles (1976).
[36] More detail on this below

the rights of gentile converts to be full and genuine heirs of the promises of God to Israel[37].

i.e. Justification by faith is not his 'centre', but a salvation-history scheme is. In fact, Paul

was not converted, but 'called' (Ibid).

Ernst Käsemann admitted that Stendahl's line of thought was within the established

theological tradition (Salvation History) of those before him such as Munck and Cullmann

(Käsemann, 1971: 61). He goes on to say that Stendahl's conclusions were not new - Wrede

and Schweitzer had been saying similar things before him - but that Stendahl was now re-

asking these questions, bringing them up to date and thus becoming the 'spokesman of a line

of approach which is beginning to find increasing acceptance in New Testament theology'

(Ibid). However, Käsemann as a Lutheran, took him on with regard to this and insisted that

Justification was the centre of Paul's thought (Ibid: 70f)[38].

He wrote, *Essays on New Testament Themes* in 1964 and, *Perspectives on Paul* in 1969. He

was no 'armchair theologian'. As a member of the Confessional Church in Nazi Germany

during WWII, he considered himself a revolutionary 'partisan', campaigning against idolatry

on every front. He celebrated confrontation with the Gestapo, and saw it all as a struggle

against the "Principalities and Powers'. He was later imprisoned for opposing Hitler[39].

Taking Schweitzer's four questions seriously (history, theology, exegesis, and application of

Paul) he answered them, from his point of view, in his commentary on Romans in 1973. To

him apocalyptic was the mother of Christian theology. He states this in terms of the

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[37] It can be noted that Stendahl's argument is remarkably similar to that of Munck when commenting on Paul's Hellenistic or Judaistic thought world in the previous section.
[38] See also Westerholm, 2004: 21
[39] See Paul F.M. Zahl's, *A Tribute to Ernst Käsemann and a theological testament*, in The Anglican Theological Review, Summer 1998.

Christian's new anthropology - one of a new Lordship now, and life in another world
(Käsemann, 1971: 29)[40]. He clearly states,

> These ontological observations characterize the horizon under which Paul
> develops not only his anthropology and cosmology, but his Christology,
> soteriology, ecclesiology and eschatology as well.
>
> (Ibid)

This helped him to place Paul and the early church not in the Gnostic or Hellenistic world, but even more convincingly within the Jewish apocalyptic. He said that Paul picked up and transformed the Jewish-style apocalyptic belief of the earliest church (Ibid: 31). God's 'righteousness' is the rule of Christ over the world and the Church, in anticipation of His final triumph (Hafemann, 1993: 676). Against Bultmann, and with Stendahl, he insisted that Pauline justification was corporate rather than individual (Käsemann, 1971:74f)[41].

Of note in the subsequent conversations are people like **C.E.B Cranfield**, with his popular commentary on Romans (1975 – Vol. 1 and 1979 – Vol. 2). His opinion is that whatever we conclude, Paul was not a Lutheran nor a Marcionite, but that Judaism *was* legalistic (Cranfield, 2004: 512, 520, 852)[42].

Herman Ridderbos and G.E. Ladd are two examples of those who have done fairly comprehensive works in the New Testament. They wrote at about the same time. Ridderbos wrote his *Paul* in 1966[43] in which he took the 'now-but-not-yet' paradigm and sought to show how it works out in all of Paul's theology and writing. Ladd wrote *Theology of the New Testament* in 1974 and does very much the same as Ridderbos (Ladd, 1997: 368).

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[40] See also Hafemann, 1993:677
[41] See also Waters 2004: 21-22, citing, 'The Righteousness of God in Paul' by Käsemann, 1961
[42] See also Hafemann, 1993:672 on Cranfield's position.
[43] This was unfortunately only translated into English in 1975.

The age to come

'D Day' (✝)

The overlap of the ages

'V Day' (Return)

This present age
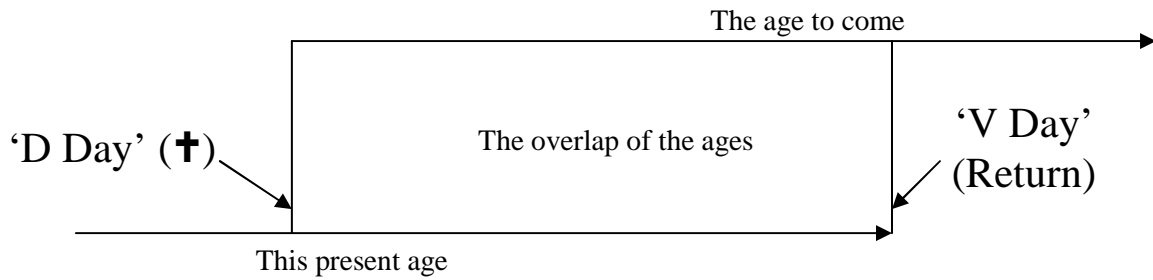
Figure 6
Vos' 'overlap of the ages' in relation to Cullmann's salvation-history. Jesus inaugurates the victory of God by means of a 'D day' activity on the cross. His return will see the 'V Day' (final victory). Similar to Schweitzer's 'Christ-mysticism' theology we in the mean time, live with the tension of experiencing something of the age to come while living in the present fallen age.

Summary Remarks:

As can be detected and will be raised later, this issue affects ones understanding of the gospel itself. It is also not unrelated to the previous section on Paul's thought world (Hellenistic or Judaisic). Stendahl for instance, made his point that Paul was not a guilt-ridden Luther and that we should not make him out to be, as Munck and Schoeps had.

Tom Wright has tried to show, however, how Stendahl and Käsemann are, in his opinion, missing one another in this debate. Käsemann did not like what he saw of the individualism and the narrow concentration on anthropology as Bultmann (his teacher) had done. Käsemann, according to Wright, does however see Israel as the 'religious man' whose pride and boasting is struck with full force by the gospel. It is at this point that he and Stendahl disagree. (Käsemann, 1969: 60-78; Stendahl, 1976: 78-96)[44]. However, it is here that in fact Wright/ Neill are of the opinion that progress will come - by going down this path, not by going back to thinking of Paul as the Hellenist, as did Bultmann, or a Rabbi who never critiqued Israel, as did Davies (Neill, 1988:420-421).

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[44] See also Wright, 1978: 61-88

Nevertheless, it is remarkable that the radical work of Schweitzer in his day, and the 'tugging' at the New Testament 'fabric' by subsequent scholars, has brought us to the point where Cullmann's 'D day' and 'V day' terminology, or the 'now-but-not-yet' / 'overlap of the ages' of Vos, is a familiar picture (Ladd, 1997: 409)[45]. This has become the accepted way of seeing salvation history in a growing number of evangelical churches.

3.1.6. Schweitzer Revivus – The Sanders Revolution

E.P. Sanders is considered to have caused a revolution, or 'watershed' in Pauline studies (Wright, 1997: 18; Bosch, 2005: 155). Some have completely rejected his work, while others have welcomed it as a long awaited missing link to what in their opinion, was bound to be correct (Wright, 1997: 18).

In a way, one could say that Sanders resuscitated Dr. Schweitzer who, although had never really stopped breathing, had never truly been appreciated as yet (Ibid: 19). This Sanders did in researching the Palestinian Judaism of the second temple period more thoroughly[46].

As the pupil of Davies, he was inspired to investigate the Jewish sources in some depth. Taking the Stendahl / Käsemann debate into account, and Bultmann's thesis that Judaism was the 'religious man'[47] striving for acceptance, one will see how important *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* was when it was published in 1977. In it he made the extraordinary

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[45] This was popularised in Graeme Goldworthy's, *According to Plan* . 1991, 288-290, 297-298
[46] See Waters (2004: 59f) on the likeness of Schweitzer and Sanders. His chapter at this point is called, 'Schweitzer Revivus'.
[47] See Wright, 1978: 61-88; Käsemann, 1969: 60-78; Stendahl, 1976: 78-96.

claim that there has been a massive perversion and misunderstanding of the material that everyone had been working with (Sanders, 1977: 59)[48].

After much research he concluded and proposed that the mainline Judaism of Paul's time could be described as 'Covenantal Nomism', not legalism (Sanders, 1977: 75)[49]. Rabbinic Judaism, according to Sanders, understood that to be a part of the people of God was dependant on God's election of Israel through a covenant and that the response to this grace was obedience to the commands (Sanders, 1977: 75). Israel had agreed to the terms (the Law), and now sought to keep the law as a means of 'staying in' (Sanders, 1977: 421, 544)[50]. 'Righteousness' in Judaism, was a term implying 'the *maintenance of status* among the group of the elect' (Sanders, 1977: 75, 420, 544).

The structure of Sander's Rabbinic Judaism could be summarized as follows:

- God chose Israel (grace)

- God gave them the law (nomism)

- in the law was the requirement to obey - with rewards and punishments (covenant)

- God promised to maintain election through atonement (mercy)

- those who are maintained in this relationship through obedience, atonement and mercy are among those who will be saved (Ibid: 422).

The 'works of the Law' Paul spoke about were identity markers or badges, identifying them as God's people (Hare, 2007: 353). These he said were specifically the food laws, circumcision and Special days.[51]

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[48] See also Hafemann, 1993: 673
[49] See also Waters 2004: 37f
[50] See also Bosch, 2005: 156
[51] See Sanders, 1991: 84-100, for a concise explanation of his views.

With the advent of Jesus, the time had come when their national identity as God's people

with its 'markers' had lost it's significance. The Messiah had taken their identity on himself.

God's people, in the person of His Son, had died. In other words, Paul did not reject the law

and Judaism as the wrong sort of religion (like a Lutheran), nor does he charge them with

legalism (as Cranfield says), nor did Paul have no critique of Judaism (like Davies). His new

way of thinking was not justification by faith, nor was it 'covenantal nomism' (as if he had

picked up the Jewish scheme and adjusted its details), but it is 'participation eschatology' -

through union with Christ (Sanders, 1977: 552)[52].

As the believer exercises faith in Christ as the fulfilment of the covenant, he participates in

the Spirit, or in Christ (Ibid: 459). Sanders could say, 'we nowhere have in Paul a simple

soteriology of eschatological expectation divorced from the present reality of participation in

Christ or in the Spirit. Rather the two go together' (Ibid: 461).

Summary Remarks:

This last paragraph is it seems, a refined version of Schweitzer's 'Christ-mysticism'.

Whether we agree with Sanders or not, we are forced to accept that he has become a major

contributor to the discussion. And so at this point we need to look at the overall picture

again.

Sanders could be said to have put a road block or detour into the picture. He worked on a

specific part of the whole, not on the whole itself. He did not attempt a comprehensive

reconstruction, but what he did contribute affects it all and the whole paradigm has to be

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[52] See also Hafemann, 1993: 675

rethought (Figure 7). It is much like changing one cell in a spreadsheet and watching how all the other cells are altered.[53] However we want to look at it, it either causes us to stop and answer many questions, as in a road block, or end up veering off of the traditional route.
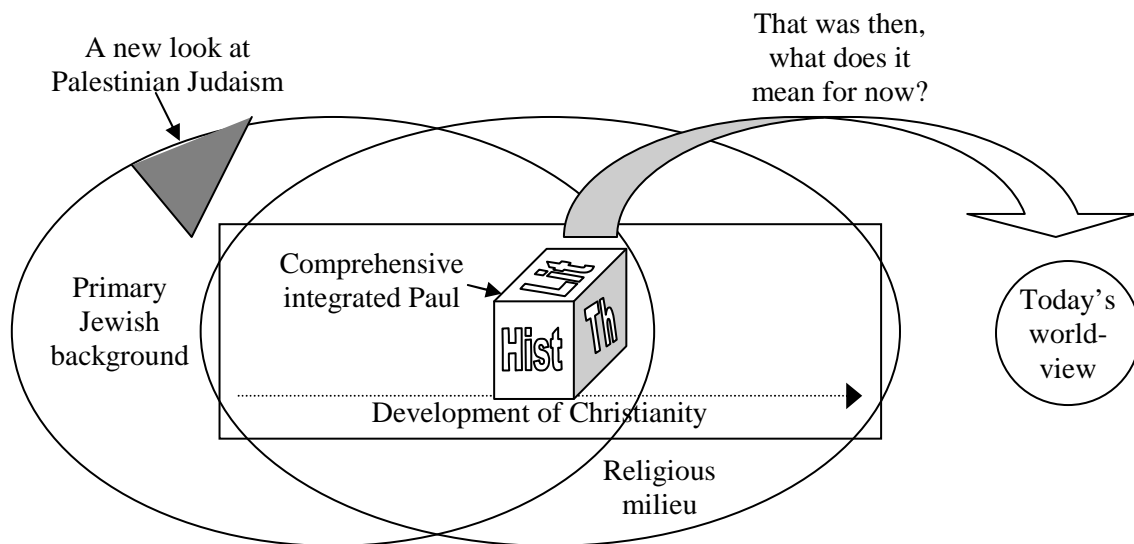
Figure 7
E.P. Sanders did not attempt a comprehensive construct as Schweitzer and Bultmann had, but nevertheless worked on the assumption that Schweitzer was right in saying that the Jewish background was primary. He introduced a new understanding of Palestinian Judaism which in turn re-shuffled the whole paradigm.

All of this brings us to a current conversation in New Testament studies (especially from an eschatologically oriented starting point) that I need to include, which Tom Wright calls 'pleasantly confusing … but an exciting time to be a Pauline scholar' (Wright, 1997: 20).

3.1.7. The New Perspective on Paul – A Current Conversation

Sanders, we observe, brought the need to rethink, not only the opponents of Paul (Judaism), but also Paul's 'problem' of the Law and of Righteousness. This all climaxed in the 1980's

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[53] Dr Paul Bowers is credited with this comment while lecturing at George Whitefield College, South Africa, Novenber 2000.

with a most famous reorientation by **J.D.G. Dunn** in his article entitled, 'The New Perspective on Paul' (1983).

Although the 'pendulum of opinion seems to now be swinging toward the new perspective' (Hafemann, 1993: 673) [54], there are many who remain convinced of the traditional view, saying that the paradigm shift is unfounded[55]. James Dunn on the other hand has taken Sanders' work seriously and explains that the 'works of the Law' mentioned by Paul as no longer grounds for being justified, are in fact expressions of covenant loyalty, deeply ingrained in the Jew (Dunn, 1982-83: 108-109).

In brief, for Paul the advent of Christ had introduced the time of fulfillment, including the fulfillment of the purpose of the covenant. God's purpose in making the covenant with Israel was an eschatological purpose of blessing the nations. Therefore the covenant can no longer be seen in nationalistic terms (Dunn, 1982-83: 114). Dunn says that 'Sanders in effect freed Pauline exegesis from its 16th century blinkers, but he has still left us with a Paul who could have made little sense of his fellow Jews.' (Dunn, 1982-83: 119). This is why Sanders contribution has caused such a flurry of work – he never took it much further himself in presenting an integrated construct of its implications.

Tom Wright has been the leading light in the New Perspective following on from Dunn. Pauline scholarship is in the process of waiting for Wright to complete his promised comprehensive and integrated reconstruction of Paul, and therefore New Testament theology.

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[54] Although the New Perspective on Paul is still a weighty contributor to the conversation, it must be pointed out that we are already considered by some to be in a 'post New Perspective' era. See for example, B. Byrne, "Interpreting Romans Theologically in a Post-'New Perspective' Perspective", *HTR* 94 (2001) 227-41.
[55] For instance: P. Stuhlmacher (2001); M. A. Seifrid (1992); S. Kim (2002).

To summarize, Wright proposes that Paul's theology constitutes a redefinition of monotheism and election in light of what God has done in Jesus (and the Spirit) – what Paul expected God to do with Israel at the end of time, God has done with Jesus in the midst of time (Wright,1988: 496-499).

Whereas Dunn had proposed a new integrated *theology, literature* and *history* of Paul in the light of the "Sanders revolution" on Judaism[56], Wright is attempting to reconstruct the whole paradigm of Figure 7.

What is the New Perspective on Paul? There is not one agreed upon perspective in the 'New Perspective'. As Tom Wright says, 'there are probably almost as many "New Perspective" positions as there are writers espousing it – and …I disagree with most of them' (Wright: 2003, *Introduction*)[57].

However, two core issues which make up the New Perspective (shared to varying degrees by its proponents) are:

- **The non-legalist nature of Palestinian Judaism** from the first century and the rejection of the Lutheran view of the Law/Gospel antithesis. The 'pattern of religion' which E.P. Sanders called 'Covenantal Nomism', forms a basic agreed-upon concept for those teaching the New Perspective (Wright, 1978:65). Paul does not believe 'that

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[56] See Thielman, Frank, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* . Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1994
[57] For positive works on the New Perspective include: E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (1977); James D. G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul" in *BJRL* IXV, (1982-83): 93-122 (see also his, *Jesus, Paul. and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians.* Louisville. Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press. 1990); N. T. Wright, *What St Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (1997).

God's justification depends on 'covenantal nomism,' that God's grace extends only to those who wear the badge of the covenant' (Dunn, 1990, 194).

> We should not let our grasp of Paul's reasoning slip back into the old distinction between faith and works in general, between faith and 'good works'. Paul is not arguing here for a concept of faith which is totally passive because it fears to become a 'work'. It is the demand for a *particular* work as the necessary expression of faith which he denies.
>
> (Ibid: 198)

- **Justification by faith is not the core of Paul's gospel**, but the outworking of it. The death and resurrection of Christ and his exaltation as Lord – the Messiah who fulfilled the expectations of Israel – is the core. The 'gospel' is not 'how to get saved', it is the proclamation of the Lordship of this Christ (Wright, 1997: 132).

> Let us be quite clear. 'The gospel' is the announcement of Jesus' lordship, which works with power to bring people into the family of Abraham, now redefined around Jesus Christ and characterized solely by faith in him. 'Justification' is the doctrine which insists that all those who have this faith belong as full members of this family, on this basis and no other.
>
> (Ibid: 133)

Therefore, the question of whether one is justified or not, comes down to whether one is part of the covenant people of God or not. How does one show that you in fact are part of the people of God? What is the mark of belonging? It is no longer the 'works of the law' or covenant 'badges' - circumcision, food laws, or special days (Jewish cultural observances), but faith in the person and work of Jesus (Ibid: 119). By this faith one is included in Christ and is recognized as a member of God's people. Wright makes clear that the debate about justification, 'wasn't so much about soteriology as about ecclesiology; not so much about salvation as about the church' (Ibid).

Summary Remarks:

The New Perspective, if anything, exalts the person and work of Jesus on our behalf and takes seriously our calling to be His people. As Wright said, we should not slip back into the distinction between faith and good works – the New Perspective advocates are not promoting a 'works' religion which denies the absolute necessity for all that Christ is and has done. The problem which the New Perspective tackles is a faith which is totally passive and which fears becoming a 'work'.

Here, the emphasis in the gospel is not on, 'how to get saved', but that the gospel is a message of an act of God in Christ which we are called to respond to by faith - along with the belief that to be justified is to be found in Christ and not outside of Him. In other words, it is not a matter of how you got in, but that you are in Christ – that you are God's people.

With the 'badges' or 'identity markers' of old covenant Israel moved aside and in fact nailed to the cross, the identity of God's people becomes truly international and human, rather than nationalistic and culture bound. Rather than complicating the gospel, it fixes the Good News in the missional context of God's purposes in the world, which needs to be thought through and not easily dismissed. As Wright says, the debate about justification, 'wasn't so much about soteriology as about ecclesiology; not so much about salvation as about the church' (Wright, 1997: 119).

3.2. Pauline Themes: detecting Schweitzer's influence

I will now focus on examining the themes covered by these scholars in the conversations we have just listened to and in Schweitzer (outlined in Chapter 2)[58]. The aim is to determine how much of a catalyst he has been in the development of an eschatological self-identity and if this in fact has led to a missional ecclesiology. For this we need to cover aspects of theology affected by and affecting an eschatological understanding of the Church.

3.2.1. Paul's Thought-World: Judaic or Hellenistic?

It has already been shown how Hellenism was believed by many at the turn of the last century (1900) to have been Paul's thought world, and that he was heavily influenced by it[59]. However, we must spend some time on this to determine just how important scholars have found the change in thought from Hellenism to Judaism over the past century, as demonstrated in 3.1.4, and Schweitzer's role in this change according to those same scholars.

In pointing out that many had interpreted Paul and his thought world in terms of a heavy influence from Hellenism, W.D. Davies goes back to Albert Schweitzer as the one who finally interpreted Paul in exclusively Jewish terms. Davies himself believed there to have been Hellenistic thought involved, but that it may have been derived from the Judaism of the day anyway (Davies, 1970: 1).

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[58] The topics in Chapter 2, because they are substantially covered by Schweitzer in *Mysticism*, will not directly compare to the subheadings in this chapter, but will be seen to relate nevertheless.
[59] See my first chapter - 1.1

In pointing out that apocalyptic was by no means separate from pharisaic Judaism, Davies says that Albert Schweitzer tried to isolate the two to show the key to Paul's thought (Davies, 1970: 10). However, the truth of Albert Schweitzer's statements have been acknowledged by others such as C.H. Dodd – 'It seems clear that Paul started with eschatological beliefs of the type best represented by such Jewish writings as the book of Enoch, the Apocalypse of Baruch and the Apocalypse of Ezra (2 Esdras) especially the last named.' (Dodd, 1933: Vol. xviii, no.1, pg 27). This is Albert Schweitzer's basic thesis (Schweitzer, 1953: 10, 89ff).

Davies also points out that Schweitzer was right in saying that the mysticism of Judaism was not like that of the Greek world. He says that Schweitzer shows convincingly that Paul's mysticism cannot be Hellenistic because Paul never speaks of being deified (Davies, 1970: 14f). After assuring us that we can agree with Albert Schweitzer's survey of the historical development of apocalyptic thought in Jerusalem, Davies thought Schweitzer was trying to force the eschatological details of Paul's letters into that eschatological scheme which he finds in first century Judaism (Davies, 1970: 288f). He insists that although Paul borrowed terminology from current apocalyptic speculation among Jews, his eschatology rises from the significance he gave to Jesus (Ibid: 290). His eschatology was subservient to his faith (Ibid).

Davies shows how others have heavily criticized Albert Schweitzer on this point, calling Schweitzer's view 'a mode of being effected by eschatological rites'. While he himself called it very unsatisfying, he goes on to say … 'Nevertheless, despite all this, this much at least must be said of Schweitzer's theory, that it does not lead us to a cul-de-sac as did that of the influence of mystery religions on Paul … the latter implied a discontinuity between Jesus and Paul.' (Davies, 1970: 98f).

In talking about the History-of-Religions School, Davies quotes Albert Schweitzer where he accuses scholars for saying that Paul substituted the pharisaic doctrine of the resurrection with the Hellenistic immortality of the soul doctrine (Davies, 1970: 309n1).

How was Schweitzer accepted on this score? Kümmel notes that,

> A Paul so closely bound up with the Judaism of his time was, however, still too alien for contemporary theology to understand, and so Kabisch's work was largely rejected. The Strasbourg tutor, Albert Schweitzer, received a similar reception a few years later … when dealing with the historical Jesus.
>
> (Kümmel, 1972: 235)

Albert Schweitzer was rejected across the board in Germany, Kümmel tells us,

> At the moment when Schweitzer's eschatological picture of Jesus compelled attention, the strangeness of the Jesus set wholly within Jewish apocalyptic contradicted the traditional concepts so violently that even critically oriented scholars saw it as an unhistorical distortion of reality.
>
> (Kümmel, 1972: 235-44)

While Schweitzer's contributions to the conversation were delayed (as mentioned earlier, he wrote his draft for *Mysticism* in 1906 and only published it in 1931), his 'consistent eschatology' was gaining recognition (Ladd, 1997:6). G.E. Ladd admits that seeing Jesus' message in terms of the milieu of Jewish apocalyptic, "was made famous by Albert Schweitzer" in the *Quest* (1906), making the liberal Jesus a distinct modernization (Ibid). Eschatology, instead of being seen as the "husk", was shown to be the very kernel of Jesus' message (Ibid).

However, a parallel study of the NT (History-of-Religions) had developed during his absence. Scholars were so impressed by the History-of-Religions proposals that although

Schweitzer's teaching of Paul's expectations of the end was more or less proven[60], his Jewish-apocalyptic interpretation of Paul which denied all Hellenistic influence, was rejected (Ladd, 1974: 400) [61].

Why was this? Wright reminds us that Bultmann was enormously popular in the scholarly study of the NT for a good half of the present century and that his work ensured that Schweitzer's plea to read Paul within his Jewish context fell all too often on deaf ears (Wright, 1997: 12-14). He also says what we noted earlier (Ladd, 97: 400), that Judaism was misread, so Hellenism's influence remained intact for a long time. In fact it was so until Davies began examining the Jewish Rabbis and discovered that what was attributed to Hellenism in Paul could be attributed to the Rabbis[62] (Wright, 1997:16). Wright tells us that although Davies did not make of Paul all that Albert Schweitzer did, 'his work represents a turn back in Schweitzer's direction … Significantly, Davies, like Schweitzer, thereby held to one side Paul's critique of Judaism, both theologically and exegetically' (Ibid).

Summary Remarks:

As we get closer to the end of the century, it has become an almost accepted fact that Paul's theology or thought world, was mostly Jewish. Even where there are hints of Hellenism, James Bentley says that Paul did not take on pagan ideas in his theology, but where he used Greek terms, it was in order to convey the gospel (Bentley, 1992: 117).

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[60] With reference to Paul, Ladd admits that Schweitzer made it impossible to ignore the importance of eschatology, but also that his analysis of first century Judaism was not sound (Ladd, 1974: 400).
[61] We need to remember that Schweitzer was working with what he had, and because not many others had contributed to the conversation in this regard at that point. It was only later, after the Qumran texts were found and studied, and other scholars such as Sanders had done their research (inspired by people like Schweitzer), that we can say we know better.
[62] See Davies major work, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, in which he argues that Paul was a Jewish Rabbi who believed that Jesus was the Messiah.

In Tom Wright's words, Albert Schweitzer 'poured scorn on those who insisted on bringing pagan, Hellenistic categories to Paul … Paul is Jewish through and through'. Schweitzer, he says, understood Paul's 'in Christ', against the backdrop of apocalyptic Judaism (Wright, 1997: 12-14).

The quest to import pagan influences into the mind of Paul in order to grasp his theology and polemic seems futile in the light of such research. James Dunn criticized Albert Schweitzer and Weiss in going too far and distancing Jesus from us by placing him absolutely in Jewish apocalyptic (Dunn, 1991: 6-7), thus putting him in a different era and unrelated to us. However, I will end this section with a quote from Schweitzer himself, who said,

> Since all [Paul's] conceptions and thoughts are rooted in eschatology, those who labour to explain him on the basis of Hellenism, are like a man who should bring water from a long distance in leaky watering-cans in order to water a garden lying beside a stream.
>
> (Schweitzer, 1953: 140)

3.2.2. The 'Centre' Of Pauline Theology

Having seen how Schweitzer considered Paul's thought world and main influence to be Jewish and not Hellenistic, we can move quite naturally to what is spoken of as the 'centre' of Paul's theology.

In dealing with the 'centre', Ladd tells us that two lines have usually been drawn – justification by faith, and the mystical union of being in Christ (Ladd, 1974 rev 93: 411-12). Although there are other proposals[63], Ladd says that since the reformation justification had taken central position in the church. Beker reminds us of the same thing and adds that it was

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[63] Dunn (1998: 20) summarizes for example: The tension between Jewish and Gentile Christianity (Baur); a theology of the cross (Wilckens); or an underlying unifying principle such as Paul's anthropology (Braun), salvation history (Cullmann) or an underlying narrative such as 'covenant' or 'Christ' (Richard Hays). See also Hasel, *New Testament Theology* Ch.3; Plevnik, "Center."

commonly thought that Paul's thought was 'doctrine' (Beker, 1980: 28), centering on an anti-Jewish debate – thus justification by faith.   It was Wrede (1907) and then Schweitzer who had insisted that the whole of Pauline religion could be expounded without mentioning justification by faith unless we were discussing the law (Ibid: 31f).

What then, was Paul's 'centre' according to Schweitzer? Ladd says (Referring to *Mysticism*, 222),

> Schweitzer, who rediscovered the importance of eschatology for Paul, felt that justification by faith as a starting point would lead to a misunderstanding of Paul, and that this doctrine was only a side issue. The central concept was the mystical being-in-Christ conceived in quasi-physical terms.
>
> (Ladd, 1993: 411-12)

Speaking about the place of the Law in relation to Jewish and Gentile Christians, Krister Stendahl said,

> Albert Schweitzer was certainly right when he recognized that Paul's teaching about justification by faith had such a limited function in Paul's theology and could not be considered the center of his total view. 'The doctrine of righteousness by faith is therefore a subsidiary crater …' (MPA 225) [Schweitzer's view of what the 'main crater' is, is however quite different from mine].
>
> (Stendahl, 1963/64: 84n)

The 'main crater' that Schweitzer was speaking of as the 'centre' of Paul's theology was 'the mystical doctrine of redemption through the being-in-Christ' (Schweitzer, 1931: 225).

In Tom Wright, Christiaan Beker and E.P. Sanders we have at least three scholars who clearly consider Schweitzer's influence on the very issues of justification by faith and being-in-Christ as 'centres' to be huge.

Wright says that Schweitzer posed questions 'which have continued to dominate scholarship …' (Wright, 1997: 12-14). He goes on to say that Schweitzer says two main things:

First, being-in-Christ instead of Justification is the thing that matters, because then one is free to live out the life of Christ in new and different ways. 'This, I think, is what sustained Schweitzer himself in his unique and extraordinary life and work.' (Ibid).

Second, he did not want to pay too much attention to what the official church was doing, since it was still stuck with Paul the dogmatic theologian (Ibid).

Beker reminds us that preceded by Holtzmann, Pfleiderer and Wrede, 'Albert Schweitzer formulated the issue in a classic way that preoccupies scholarship even today.' (Beker,1980:13). He sees Schweitzer's 'centre' to be eschatological mysticism, within which one finds justification by faith as an important doctrine encountered as a polemic in Pauline literature. As an example he says that this continues, however modified, to be influential in the perennial debate about the main structure of Romans 1-8 (Ibid: 67).

A convincing argument is that which says that the apocalyptic structure is the thing that remained in Paul's thought from his Pharisaic to his Christian life. Beker is of this view when he says,

> … the apocalyptic structure of his [Paul's] thought remains the constant in his pharisaic and Christian life … Apocalyptic is not a peripheral curiosity for Paul but the central climax and focus of his thought, as it was for most early Christian thinkers. This has been almost dogmatically denied by New Testament scholarship, notwithstanding the research of Schweitzer and Bousset.
>
> (Ibid: 144)

In fact he states earlier that,

> Concepts such as "the righteousness of God", "justification", "salvation", or "reconciliation" cannot be played off against each other, as if one of them were decisive for explaining the meaning of all the others … these terms

> are metaphors that must make the gospel … significant for particular situations …
>
> We must instead become aware of this coherent center as *a field* of meaning, a network composed of parts that interlock in a symbolic relationship. The makeup of this field as a whole is determined by the apocalyptic act of God in the death and resurrection of Christ.
>
> (Ibid: 18-19)

He insightfully warns us by saying that all these searches for the centre of Paul's thought carry on the Marcion search and stand the chance of also forming a canon within a canon where other concepts were downgraded, mentioning Schweitzer as an example (Beker, 1980: 31).

Sanders definitely sided very closely with Schweitzer concerning this in his 'participationist eschatology', which is very much the same as Christ-mysticism, being the 'centre' of Paul's thought (Sanders, 1977:459, 461, 552).

This doesn't mean that the gospel is lost in Schweitzer's concept of Paul's 'centre'. In fact for Schweitzer, Paul's teaching on the cross and resurrection were the eschatological events *par excellence* (Schweitzer, 1953: 145, 147-159).

Imagery of 'centre' is still useful for a subject like theology. But Dunn cautions us that although Christ has to be regarded as the centre of Paul's theology, He should only be considered this, 'as a living centre of his theologizing, and not just a conceptual centre of a static system' (Dunn, 1998: 729-730). Despite these warnings, it is still the pursuit of many to find this 'centre'.

The reason why 'apocalyptic' can be spoken of as Paul's 'centre' at times, and at other times the eschatological mysticism of 'being-in-Christ', is because the Jewish apocalyptic thought

of the Messiah included the idea of a close association of the Messiah with the elect (Schweitzer, 1953: 117, 125, 166).

Beker refers to a number of scholars who have drawn attention to apocalyptic since Schweitzer – Peter Stuhlmacher, Hans Schoeps, Kümmel and E.P. Sanders, etc. Also theologians like Moltmann and Pannenberg (Beker, 1980: 360-361). He admits however, that the clarity with which they use apocalyptic is not certain a lot of the time. He mentions how Sanders fused it into mainstream rabbinic Judaism, Schoeps followed Albert Schweitzer's interpretation and focuses on what he called a 'self-contained Christ-metaphysic' (this appealed to him more than Schweitzer's 'Christ mysticism') and Käsemann who posits apocalyptic as 'the mother of Christian theology' and marks it as a post-Easter phenomenon and exempts Jesus from it because He 'proclaimed the immediate nearness of God' (Ibid). i.e. Jesus never taught in the time we are living now, theologically. Beker ends by saying that the significance of apocalyptic is not disputed today, but how one may assess it as a viable option for our time and thought (Ibid).

Summary Remarks:

Has Schweitzer been influential here? Most certainly. His influence has resulted in a line being drawn even through reformed church circles. The importance of eschatology is seen right here. Either Paul was teaching doctrine in his epistles, the most important and key one being soteriology – thus justification by faith, or he was concerned about what constituted the people of God – none other than Christ alone and secondarily those found in Him and who participate with Him by His Spirit (Missional ecclesiology).

The difference is seen in the outworking. It seems that as Dunn said, if Christ as God's person is seen as the 'centre', then he is a 'living centre' for all our subsequent theologizing 'and not just a conceptual centre of a static system' (Dunn, 1998: 729-730).

The Gospel is not lost in the eschatological, ecclesiological or participationist camp, but as Schweitzer reminds us and Sanders agrees, the cross and resurrection are the eschatological events *par excellence* (Schweitzer, 1953: 145, 147-159).

The danger in seeking a 'centre', as Beker warns us, is that we become Marcionists and form a canon within a canon by downgrading other key concepts. This is to be avoided.

3.2.3. Justification By Faith

If justification was not Paul's 'centre', as so many of the reformed faith have maintained, then what influence has Albert Schweitzer had on subsequent thought in this area?

Davies takes the position, as does Schweitzer, that Justification by faith cannot be the pivot of Paul's thought, but rather a convenient polemic. He then continues to say,

> ... a doctrine such as justification by faith, which has always to be hedged about so as not to lead to antinomianism, a plague that Paul dreaded, and which leads, as Schweitzer has rightly insisted, to an ethical cul-de-sac (p225), cannot have been the dominant factor in the thought of one who would never have separated religion and life'.
> (Davies, 1948: 222 n4,6)

Stendahl too, has been influenced by what Albert Schweitzer has taught concerning the law as it relates to Jewish and Gentile Christians. He says that 'Albert Schweitzer was certainly right when he recognised that Paul's teaching about justification by faith had such a limited

function in Paul's theology and could not be considered the centre of his total view'
(Stendahl, 1963/64: 84n). In Stendahl's debate with Käsemann on these very issues, as has
already been covered, Käsemann insisted on the centrality of justification by faith. However,
he stressed its cosmic, rather than individual dimension, because of its apocalyptic context
(Käsemann, 1971:74f). Stendahl rejected the centrality of justification. Thiselton comments
that,

> Indeed Stendahl might well have written words which actually come from
> the pen of Schweitzer, namely that he must reject any interpretation which
> represents man 'as wholly concerned with his own individual redemption,
> and not equally with the coming of the Kingdom of God' (MPA, 384).
> That Paul does not *begin* with the problem of sin is also urged by E.P.
> Sanders. Hence Schweitzer's arguments are of the utmost relevance to the
> whole modern debate, offering points of connection with recent claims by
> Käsemann, Stendahl, and Sanders, although saying something different
> from them all.
>
> (Thiselton, 1978-79: 136)

Dealing with the end of the law, Beker quotes Albert Schweitzer at length concerning
whether Paul really was suffering inward distress over his powerlessness to keep the law
before his Damascus experience and how it meant that the law was abolished (Beker, 1980:
184-85). He then goes on to show how Schweitzer is correct in raising these questions (and
in the way he answers them). In fact he stresses how in Paul's radical understanding of the
law, a crucified Messiah did not make sense, but that after his vision it became the driving
force in his gospel - a crucified and resurrected Messiah means the end of the law because he
was indeed cursed and rejected, thus making the law null and void (Ibid). He does point out
however, that Albert Schweitzer's observations may be misleading because Paul was not the
first Christian to understand this (Ibid).

One may also observe how Beker does battle with Schweitzer's 'two crater' theory of
redemption and justification, but also shows how Gerd Theissen in, *Soteriological Symbolism
in Pauline writings* has developed a structural analysis of how Paul interprets the event,

which resembles Albert Schweitzer's 'two crater' theory, while going further than Schweitzer does (Beker, 1980: 256). Later he compares his views of righteousness with Schweitzer's crater theory (Beker, 1980: 260).

In his later book, Davies outlines varying views on the relationship of Romans 9-11 with 1-8, and says that they are arranged into three views. One of which is Käsemann's - justification by faith understood eschatologically. Here Albert Schweitzer is mentioned and his view that this doctrine is a secondary crater in Paulinism (Davies, 1984: 345n32 (3)). He shows how this led to Stendahl's teaching which says we need to dismiss the idea that Paul was dealing with 'the pangs of individual conscience in Western Christianity' in its understanding of Justification by faith (Ibid). He later mentions how Stendahl has 'dramatically reopened the discussion'(Ibid).

In the most modern debates Schweitzer continues to be heard in this matter, as Tom Wright mentions in his 1997 book on Paul. Here Wright, while dealing with justification by faith and being-in-Christ, says that Albert Schweitzer poses questions 'which have continued to dominate scholarship' (Wright, 1997: 12-14).

Summary Remarks:

Again one can see the finger prints of Schweitzer all over current debate. Perhaps the most telling comment Davies made, echoing Schweitzer, is that the doctrine of Justification always has to be 'hedged about so as not to lead to antinomianism, a plague that Paul dreaded' because it always seems to end in an 'ethical cul-de-sac' (Davies, 1948: 222 n4,6).

Apt too, is the reminder that an interpretation of Paul's thinking that represents man concerned with his own individual redemption which is not equally concerned with the coming of God's Kingdom, must be rejected (Thiselton, 1978-79: 136). Adding weight to this is Sander's insistence that Paul does not *begin* with the problem of sin (Ibid).

3.2.4. Salvation History

On this matter one would immediately think of Oscar Cullmann for his substantial body of work[64]. However even if Cullmann disagreed with his fellow Alsace, he nevertheless engaged with him even on this point. Schweitzer had something to say about salvation history which Cullmann had to respond to.

Schweitzer's view was that salvation history arose as an explanation for the delayed parousia[65] (Cullmann, 1951: 84-86). Whichever way one wants to see this, Schweitzer was not denying that the early church developed a salvation-history understanding of life. Cullmann does take issue with Schweitzer over what the mid-point of the redemptive line was, however (Ibid). Schweitzer naturally saw it as always future (to be consistent), whereas Cullmann insisted that Christianity does not have the same eschatological orientation as Judaism (Ibid). However, in developing his thesis of the mid-point and salvation history, he falls back on Albert Schweitzer frequently as the source of the change in New Testament scholarship, often commending him and developing his work with substantial changes and very often disagreeing outright (Ibid: xiii, 29f).

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[64] Especially, *Salvation in History* (1967), and *Christ and Time* (1951).
[65] In fact, the schools of both Schweitzer and Bultmann ended up merging on this point quite independently. In reviewing Cullmann's book, *Salvation in History,* Bultmann said that Albert Schweitzer and Werner were correct in saying that the delayed parousia created a problem (see Cullmann, 1946 ET 51: xviii f and Cullman, 1964 ET 67: 40f).

In his later work, *Salvation in History*, Cullmann in fact pays tribute to Schweitzer as the one whose, 'thesis … has determined the course of the development of the problem both positively and negatively up to its climax …', and after heavily criticizing Schweitzer's exegetical work and inconsistencies he nevertheless says that his, 'imposing theological work left behind burning unanswered questions and therefore has determined the debate of the present to an extent which the parties in dialogue today hardly recognize' (Cullman, 1961: 29f) .

Kummel (Kümmel, 1972: 316n) recommends that 'on the enduring importance of Albert Schweitzer's New Testament research', we read Oscar Cullman's, *Schweitzer's understanding of the primitive Christian hope of the Kingdom of God in the light of present day research* (EvTh, N.F.20 (1965), 643ff.).

Summary Remarks:

Salvation History has indeed assisted our understanding of mission. We will come to this later, save to mention at this point that Lesslie Newbigin, that great missionary thinker, while discussing Acts 1:7-8 insisted that the answer to the Apostle's question as to times and seasons is a commission (Newbigin, 1953: 152). It is for no other purpose, says Newbigin, that the parousia is delayed. 'The Bible compels us to say … that God leads the world to its consummation through the apostolate of the Church' (Ibid).

In fact, once again it seems that there is nothing new in New Testament theology since Schweitzer! Although all who engaged with him on this point had serious issues with his starting point – a delayed parousia - and even his exegesis. They have had to allow him into the conversation because he did see the early church as having a salvation historical

understanding of life. The subsequent debate has nevertheless solidified Salvation History as an eschatological paradigm, which in turn has to encourage continual engagement in God's history.

3.2.5. The Overlap of the Ages

Although not unrelated to the previous section, we must move on to what has come to be known as the 'overlap of the ages' because, as Cullmann observes,

> … the whole discussion of Albert Schweitzer's 'consistent eschatology', applied to Jesus' message, and of the 'realized eschatology' of C.H. Dodd is so important for the question of salvation history. Both Schweitzer's thesis (only futuristic eschatology) and that of Dodd (only already realized eschatology) excludes the salvation-historical tension of the present in their one-sidedness.
>
> (Cullmann, 1967: 173f)

An understanding of our present stage in world history, or more precisely salvation history, is to see it as an extraordinary time where two ages are overlapping, as it were. I have already mentioned this and illustrated it[66]. Schweitzer was working through these things early in the last century, but from a slightly different source – mainly the inter-testamental books. In trying to fathom this apparent discrepancy between the 'already' of Christ's resurrection and the 'not yet' of the final consummation of the kingdom, Schweitzer says that Paul associated himself with the eschatological 'schema' of the apocalypse of Baruch and the fourth book of Ezra as they in turn attempted to bring the eschatologies of the prophets and Daniel into harmony (Schweitzer, 1953: 89ff). Paul, he says, thus conceived of a messianic kingdom coming before the full revelation of the Kingdom of God (Ibid). Therefore the Messianic kingdom anticipated by the prophets is seen as something temporary. In this period the

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[66] See Chapter 2.2.4 and also Figure 6.

natural and the supernatural worlds meet one another – they telescope into each other (Ibid: 86).

However, the question need not even be asked as to whether he has been of any significant influence in this regard. Again, Cullmann agrees that we are living in an interim period and that there is a new ethic (Cullmann, 1951: 29f, 213). But he disagrees when Schweitzer says that the interim ethic was not intended for subsequent generations after the primitive church (Ibid)[67].

This topic is closely related to 'resurrection' in the New Testament because the resurrection of Jesus, as we have seen, is considered the 'mid-point' of salvation history and the inauguration of the new age, while the final resurrection is seen as the end of the present age and the fullness of the future age. It's interesting that Davies in dealing with this issue, feels that he need not deal exhaustively with the views of the many scholars who have spoken on this, but that he need only refer to Schweitzer's treatment of the question (Davies, 1948: 287)! This he proceeds to extract from page 75f of *Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*. This is where Schweitzer works with Baruch and 4 Ezra. It is from these books and in comparing them to Daniel and the prophets, that Schweitzer detects an apparent contradiction which he attempts to show can be solved by two kingdoms – the Messianic Kingdom and the Kingdom of God. Davies points out that although Paul, Jesus, Baruch and 4 Ezra were not slaves to any apocalyptic conventions, Albert Schweitzer 'has nevertheless insisted on the extreme logicality of his eschatological thinking and has sought to unravel its intricacies with a precision that is mathematical.' (Ibid: 287).

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[67] It must be remembered that Schweitzer was, in a very consistent way, trying to understand how the two ages related to one another and how Jesus' understanding and teaching (beatitudes especially) related to the change from the old age to the new.

As to whether the kingdom is present or future, many have debated over the past century. Ladd summarizes for us when he says that if a majority of scholars have approached consensus, it is that the kingdom is in some real sense both present and future (Ladd, 1993: 56f). Kummel claimed from this that the kingdom was also present, but only in Jesus, not in his disciples, while Jeremias suggested an 'eschatology in process of realization' (Ibid).

Beker, talking about 'D Day' and 'V Day' in light of the Corinthians problem of wanting to claim for the present what was actually meant for the future, says 'The interpreters of consistent eschatology (Albert Schweitzer …) deserve credit for pointing to this futurist-eschatological element in the New Testament as a whole' (Beker, 1980: 184-85).

As to the significance of this overlap period, Bosch says that the reign of God is a hermeneutical key (Bosch, 1991: 503). He stresses that this reign is both present and future and that it is the time of the Spirit and of missions. It has become so widely accepted that one could, in Bosch's opinion, make the case that practically all contemporary schools of eschatology and of missionary thinking, in one way or another are offshoots of Cullmann's approach - even if some would prefer to deny this (Ibid).

Cullmann's comments on the interval period between the two appearances of Jesus shows how Paul considered this period as utterly indispensable to God's salvation plan no matter how long or short it may have been (Cullmann, 1967: 254). It is not just the 'end of history', says Cullmann, but that, 'Albert Schweitzer is right when in his book MPA he regards this interval as the main characteristic in Paul's thought. In accord with his thesis of Paul's eschatological mysticism, he describes being in this time as 'being in Christ' …' (Ibid).

Summary Remarks:

Albert Schweitzer as a scholar familiar with inter-testamental literature and convinced of Jesus' and Paul's thorough apocalyptic Jewishness, discovered an overlap of two ages which helped him understand the prophets. His understanding of the natural and supernatural worlds meeting during this time has become insightful, so that Cullmann could say that this period is utterly indispensable to God's salvation plan and as Schweitzer said, to be the main characteristic in Paul's thought (Cullmann, 1967: 254).

Schweitzer's German mind, if one can make such a characterization, perhaps forced him to come to conclusions which may have been more consistent with his assumptions than with good New Testament exegesis. For example, his 'interim ethic' as applicable only for that generation in Paul's mind, is admittedly not acceptable to most today. Nor is his conclusion that there are of necessity two Kingdoms – the Messianic Kingdom, and the Kingdom of God. However, it seems he was nevertheless grappling in the same field of play that others following him would find themselves.

What is important to see is that although Schweitzer seems to get rather complex, he did unearth an eschatological view which is very much an overlap of the ages. His Messianic Kingdom can be likened to the present age of the reign of Christ, before He hands it over to God the Father. It is in grappling with such profound insights that Schweitzer had inspired others to take his research further and thereby giving it a truer biblical foundation. For example, after grappling with Schweitzer's interim ethic, Ladd says the 'eschatological ethics', as put forward by Schweitzer, can be transmuted into "ethical eschatology", and thus have permanent validity (Ladd, 1993: 120).

Bosch has reminded us that because Jesus' reign is both present and future, it means that this is the time of the Spirit and of mission – a now widely accepted theological and missiological belief. Lesslie Newbigin for instance, interacts with these concepts when he says that 'our hope for the future is a rest held in constant tension with ceaseless work' (Newbigin, 1953: 161). If we can pick up the missions theme here, he says that the 'church is a mission and a mission has to be a church …The church is a means and an end, because it is a foretaste' (Ibid: 199).

As we are about to move on to the Church, participation in Christ and missions, let's hear Newbigin once again. Notice the tension of the two ages in his writing.

> We died and our life is hid with Christ, yet we have to mortify our members and seek the things above. We are risen with Him, yet await the resurrection. We cry, 'Abba Father,' yet wait for our adoption. The Church is Christ's bride – yet she longs for the marriage feast. He is with us always – yet we cry, 'Come, Lord Jesus.' Such must necessarily be the character of the life of the age to come in the midst of the life of this age – of the Church in the world. It is what it is not yet, it longs to be what it is.
>
> (Ibid: 152)

3.2.6. The Corporeity of the Church 'In Christ'

We deal here with a dual topic really. The one is our personal union with Christ and the other our corporate oneness as His body. However, I would like to cover them together as the two can surely not to be understood separately, considering what we have already discussed.

Here we are getting to the heart of the matter, the end to which this whole investigation leads. It is what makes our self identity in Christ as His Church exciting and absolutely imperative

to come to grips with. I outlined Schweitzer's Christ-Mysticism earlier[68]. The question now is, has his Christ mysticism influenced subsequent scholarship to any extent?

Davies agrees with Albert Schweitzer that Paul's concept that the Christian's solidarity with all other Christians and with Christ comes from his eschatological background (Davies, 1948: 56). He quotes Schweitzer's *Mysticism* – 'Since both Jesus and Paul move in an eschatological world of thought, the concept of this community of the saints in which, by the predestination of God, the saints are united with one another and with the messiah as the Lord of the elect, is to them perfectly familiar' (Ibid). He can also quote Moffatt – 'There is more than half a truth in Dr Schweitzer's contention that the so-called mysticism of Paul really amounts to his statement of the truth that the preexistent church is manifested in appearance and reality through the death and resurrection of Jesus' (Ibid). Schweitzer, then, was seeing the person and life of Christ as a pre-existent church and being taken up by the elect in an extreme way. Typical of Schweitzer, he states things in such stark ways, that others are forced to react to what he says.

As an example, Davies asks why Paul should use the term 'body' and quotes Albert Schweitzer again – 'How could a thinker come to produce this conception of the extension of the body of a personal being? How could Paul regard it as so self-evident that he can make use of it without ever explaining it?' (Ibid). He then says that this does help us to understand the community of the Messiah with his followers, but that a more helpful suggestion, as mentioned earlier[69], is that of the Adamic speculations of first century Judaism - they spoke of the whole world of nations being one in Adam. So it becomes obvious to Davies that Paul would speak of us all being one in Christ, people from every nation (Ibid).

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[68] Chapter 2.2
[69] In this chapter – 3.1.4

Talking of this 'universalism' of Paul, Davies points out that Albert Schweitzer takes 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 to mean 'all' the elect, but that Dodd is right in taking Paul to mean all of creation (Ibid: 58n4). On the same issue and in relation to Schweitzer, Davies makes the statement, 'It is not insignificant that to be converted had meant for Paul to be a missionary to the Gentiles. Universalism was involved in his conversion' (Ibid: 58n7).

As to the question of how this union actually happens, he is as vague as Schweitzer. He believes the sacraments to play the key role here. It has to do in some way with the 'dying and rising with Christ', which is why Schweitzer uses his notorious word 'mysticism'. Davies summarizes Schweitzer's view, which is that it is the concept often found in apocalyptic literature - that the elect are closely bound up with the Messiah (Schweitzer, 1953: 101f). Schweitzer had said that because Christ had passed into the resurrection mode of existence and because of the elect's corporeity with him, they too have died and risen with him into the life of the resurrection. It is not by belief in Christ that this happens, but by receiving baptism (Ibid:117). What he means by this is that it is not something the believer accomplishes in himself (even in the act of faith), but rather it is applied to him by others and God at baptism (Ibid: 225), while the communion is a pledge that the believer will partake in the Messianic banquet (Ibid: 117).

However extremely sacramental this may appear, or even sound like the mystery religions, Davies can say the following in defence of Schweitzer, 'His concept of the solidarity of the messiah with the elect, too mechanically applied by himself, does provide us with a key to the real meaning of Paul's thought on the individual …'. Nevertheless, I agree with Davies that Schweitzer then goes too far in saying things that amount to people being included in the

Messianic Kingdom by their willing fellowship with Jesus although they are not elect (Ibid; Schweitzer, 1931: 107). Although this may be Schweitzer's way of saying that the Church in this age will always include imposters. His terminology of 'Messianic Kingdom' is consistent with his 'Two Kingdom' theory – that this Kingdom is temporary – and is synonymous with 'church'.

Cullmann and Schweitzer are in agreement a lot of the time on the issue of our corporate identity as the Church in Christ, as can be seen when he uses Schweitzer in talking of the main characteristic of the age we are living in, 'In accord with his [Schweitzer's] thesis of Paul's eschatological mysticism, he describes being in this time as 'being-in-Christ' …' (Cullmann,1967: 254). This 'mysticism' as Schweitzer calls it, has been the other main contender, besides justification by faith, as the 'centre' of Paul's theology. This mainly because of the amount of times Paul refers to it, but also because so much hangs from it. Davies considers Schweitzer to have had 'one of his important insights' in the whole area of the communal nature of the Church in the context of Christ-Mysticism (Davies, 1984: 337n61).

It's no wonder that Tom Wright can call Schweitzer's work 'monumental' and to have 'dominated scholarship' especially in the area of being-in-Christ. In Wright's words,

> He [Schweitzer] understood 'in Christ' against the backdrop of apocalyptic Judaism. The God of Israel had acted in the world dramatically, apocalyptically, through Jesus the messiah. The true people of God were now somehow bound up with this Messiah. They were incorporated into Him.
>
> (Wright, 1997: 12-14)

Summary Remarks:

Here we have seen the ecclesiological significance of Schweitzer's Christ Mysticism. Moffatt could commend Schweitzer on his insight that the person and work of Christ in his

life, death and resurrection was a pre-existent manifestation of the Church. Perhaps one of

the most clear references to this in the New Testament is found in Philippians chapter 3 verse

10 – 11

> I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and fellowship of
> sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow,
> to attain to the resurrection from the dead

When the 'universalism' of 'Being-in-Christ' is seen as the Jews had understood being in

Adam, and when this is the focal point or 'centre' of Pauline theology, there is an

inclusiveness of the nations which forces mission to be a non-negotiable expression of the

Christian identity. Schweitzer it seems, indeed did have one of his important insights in the

whole area of the communal nature of the Church in the context of Christ-Mysticism, as

Davies said.

Newbigin[70] has a lot to say about the unity of the church, which is to be expected as he

speaks from an ecumenical platform. However his passion for the corporate nature of the

Christian can be seen everywhere in his writing.

> … of course the individual believer is not a mere individual. Every
> Christian has his life in Christ only as a member in the body of Christ. He
> shares in the life of Christ only by sharing it with all His people. The new
> birth, the new man in Christ, is a social reality. The ego which is crucified
> with Christ is the independent, self-sufficient ego. The life of Christ in the
> believer is a corporate life in which he can only share by sharing it with all.
>
> (Newbigin, 1953: 155)

3.2.7. Our Participation In Christ

Schweitzer had said that to be in fellowship with Christ was to guarantee future fellowship

with the "Son of Man" (Schweitzer 1953: 105). Bearing this in mind, Schweitzer said that it

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[70] I am including comments from Newbigin in these summary remarks mainly because he has had such an
influence in missional ecclesiology in the United Kingdom and beyond, which will become evident in the last
chapters of this dissertation.

makes sense that whoever accepts the disciples, accepts Him and that the places that refuse them are unwittingly refusing Christ. In his view, they are an extension of His personality in some way. Of course his explanation for this solidarity he found in eschatology (Ibid: 101). It is commonly accepted today that the idea of Messiah, in apocalyptic, involves the community of the Messiah (Davies, 1948: 98f).

This participation has real implications for the identity of the church. Newbigin who has mission at heart, makes the point that we need to participate in this sense with Christ or we are not His Church.

> We have the sacrament of the supper as a real participation in Christ: yet at every supper we are to remind ourselves that it is 'till he come'. Once this tension of longing and hope, this pressing forward to the goal which is still beyond our sight, goes out of the Christian life, we cease to be – in the apostolic sense – partakers of Christ (Heb 3:14).
>
> (Newbigin, 1953: 167)

Later he says with much the same force that our fellowship in Christ is a participation in his apostolate to the world (Newbigin,1953: 192).

And so, Hans Margull[71] can define evangelism as,

> … the Churches' participation in the messianic work of Jesus Christ. It is eschatological ministry to all [persons] who have not as yet heard the gospel's call to repentance. In evangelism the churches live out their hope that Jesus Christ, with a view to His future, gathers men [and women] throughout the whole world for His congregation. More briefly: *Evangelism is hope in action*.
>
> (Margull, 1962. Cited in Thomas, 1995: 313)

How did we arrive at the point where these things could be spoken of so emphatically? Thus far it seems consistent to say that the person to have taken Schweitzer's participation theology and rocketed it into modern scholarship in a fresh way has been E.P. Sanders.

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[71] The head of the department of evangelism of the World Council of Churches, formally professor of theology at the University of Hamburg.

Sanders equated 'righteousness by faith' with 'participation in Christ' (Sanders, 1977: 506) by which he means that 'the goal of religion' for the Jew and Gentile is 'to be found in Christ' and to attain, by suffering and dying with him, the resurrection' (Ibid). In other words, righteousness in Christ is not only that we have faith in his death and resurrection and thereby be found in Him, but that we participate with Him in his death to the power of sin and rise with him to the new life of the Spirit. This is the goal of true religion. Not that it comes by the keeping of the Law, but that it comes through Christ. How do we know this? Because of the resurrection of Christ (ibid).

Wright summarizes Sanders' view by saying, 'The centre of Paul's thought (here Sanders sides very firmly with Schweitzer) was not Justification, not his critique of Israel; the center was what Sanders calls 'participation', Sander's word for the complex of Pauline thought which focuses on 'being in Christ'' (Wright, 1997: 19). Concerning this 'being in Christ' or 'participation' concept of Paul in which we are partakers in Christ, not as individuals, but as a collective whole, Sanders himself asserts, 'The main points of Schweitzer's analysis seem to me to be precisely correct' (Sanders, 1977: 549)[72].

One can open journals such as *Evangel* and notice the impact this kind of thinking is making at last. Richard Bauckham in an article called, *The Decline of Progress and the Prospects for Christian Hope,* entitled his final point, 'New Testament 'apocalyptic' and the postmodern condition'. After cautioning us to avoid the kind of apocalyptic literature that reassures the faithful of escape from the destruction to which the rest of humanity is doomed, calling it 'the ideology of sectarian withdrawal', he takes us to Scripture. He says,

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[72] See also Thiselton, 1978-79: 136

> … the book of Revelation itself does not fit the [above] model at all. It is oriented to the coming of God's Kingdom in the whole of creation and calls its Christian readers to active participation in the coming of the kingdom. They are called out of the complacency in which some of the seven churches languished into courageous prophetic witness in the public, political world where they must understand the idolatrous ideology of the beast and the seductive attractions of the harlot … provide the opportunity for repentance and hope.
>
> (Bauckham, 1999: 95)

In much the same vein, Bosch says '…we must define our mission – with due humility – as participation in the *Missio Dei*. Witnessing to the gospel of present salvation and future hope we then identify with the awesome birth pangs of God's new creation' (Bosch, 1991: 510).

Summary Remarks:

This concept has a strong emphasis on the church being an extension of the personality of Jesus in some 'mystical' way. It appears to be commonly accepted that in eschatology, or more accurately in apoloclyptic, the role of the Messiah includes or incorporates in some way the community of the Messiah.

Did Newbigin overplay the 'participation' card? It depends how we understand him. In a sense he can be correct if we read him to be saying that we either participate or we don't – an activity. However, when he says that our fellowship in Christ is a participation in His apostolate to the world, it may also be seen in a passive sense – to *be* the church, or a member of it, *is* a participation in God's purposes.

However, it seems important that we understand our new identity in Christ if we are going to be fruitful as his body. Hans Margull says it well when he said that, 'churches live out their hope that Jesus Christ, with a view to His future, gathers men [and women] throughout the

whole world for His congregation' (Thomas, 1995:313). In other words, they live eschatologically.

It seems that to think correctly about the apocalypse we need to think within the overall eschatological environment in which the Jews and early Christians thought. A caution is heard here from Bauckham if we don't – it ends in 'the ideology of sectarian withdrawal' (Bauckham, 1999: 95) as we simply wait for the appearing.

We are yet to discuss Mission and the Church, but eschatology according to this inquiry, seems to unite these so tightly that it is easy to see that our very existence 'in Christ' is by nature missionary as we participate in the work of the Spirit of Christ. And with that we move on to a reflection and conclusion.

3.3. Gathering the Thematic Threads of the Conversation on Eschatology Together for the Church And Mission

Before we move on to the final part of this dissertation – an investigation of a few examples of a move toward a more missional expression of Church – we need to come to some conclusions from this section and then demonstrate how it impacts the Church and mission.

To do this I will:

- **Firstly,** briefly recall the summary remarks already made in this chapter
- **Secondly**, inquire specifically about these eschatological implications for our understanding of the Church and mission from a few scholars
- **Finally**, end with some concluding remarks

3.3.1. A Summary of our Findings

- Bultmann and Schweitzer seemed to have established the fundamental hypotheses for us to test, elaborate and modify. However, Bultmann's thesis disengages us from Jewish and eschatological roots, leaving us with a more individualist and existential Christianity (3.1.2).

- The 'Kingdom of God' emphasis has ensured that our focus is not simply on personal salvation but on what God is doing cosmologically and corporately - events in which we can find ourselves included. The 'now but not yet' conclusions emphasize the eschatological age in which we find ourselves, shapes our existence as a people and gives it meaning. The emphasis on the decisive victory in Jesus and the extended war until the consummated Kingdom must give a sense of vocation to the Church, as it seems to have for Paul and the earliest Church. In other words a participation in the birth pangs of the Kingdom (3.1.3).

    Schweitzer's understanding of the natural and supernatural worlds meeting during what has become known as an 'overlap of the ages' has become insightful. So that Cullmann could say that this period is utterly indispensable to God's salvation plan and as Schweitzer said, to be the main characteristic in Paul's thought. This has become known as the time of the Spirit and of mission (3.2.5).

- It is in an insistence on a Judaic, and not a Hellenistic thought-world, that we find a true home for the early church and her self-understanding[73]: where we find a God who always intended to reconcile the nations in Christ; that Old Testament events could find their fulfillment not only in Christ, but in the experience of the Messianic

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[73] Wright's comment is well put when he says, 'For neither the first nor the last time, the Jewish storyline and the Greco-Roman allusions and confrontations meet like two tectonic plates, throwing up a craggy mountain range we call New Testament Theology' (Wright, 2007: 142).

people – the Church; that the longings and hopes of the Jewish Scriptures were for an age of the Spirit which, Davies says, was *the* eschatological expectation of Israel. It is the mission of Paul and the other apostles that caused the church to have to deal with her universal identity, so that ecclesiology is front and centre in Acts and the epistles (3.1.4).

- The debate on the 'centre' of Paul's theology has led to question the place of Justification in the proclamation of the gospel. It has also brought to centre stage the possibility of our being-in-Christ as the thing that drove Paul and gave him and the early church a missional self-understanding. This has led at least to an acceptable 'overlap of the ages' understanding of eschatology and the place of the church in this schema (3.1.5).

Schweitzer was helpful in showing that either Paul was teaching doctrine in his epistles, the most important and key one being soteriology – thus justification by faith, or he was concerned about what constituted the people of God – none other than Christ alone, and secondarily those found in Him and participate with Him by His Spirit. Thus a Missional Ecclesiology (3.2.2).

- E.P. Sanders has caused a 'road block' in the whole conversation where scholars have either had to stop and think and ask serious questions about the whole unified theory of Paul, or take a detour, even if a temporary one. Some have chosen to take the detour from the Lutheran and Reformed path and let Sanders revive Schweitzer in so many ways (3.1.6).

- The New Perspective tackles a faith which is passive and which fears becoming a 'work'. The emphasis in understanding the Gospel is not on, 'how to get saved', but that the gospel is a message of an act of God outside of ourselves and in Christ which we are called to respond to by faith. It has emphasized that being-in-Christ as a

corporate people is where we are justified. The debate about justification wasn't so much about soteriology than about ecclesiology; not so much about salvation than about the church (3.1.7).

Schweitzer's warnings of an antinomianism, or ethical cul-de-sac, arising from an over emphasis on justification by faith was taken seriously in the debate, as was his warnings that an interpretation of Paul that represents man concerned with his own redemption and not equally with the coming of God's Kingdom, should be rejected (3.2.3).

- In Salvation History, something Schweitzer admitted was part of the early church thinking *because* of a delayed parousia, we discover the apostolate of the church to be a contributing factor *to the delay* of the parousia (3.2.4).

- Schweitzer's 'Christ Mysticism' has had an ecclesiological significance, in that the life and work of Christ was seen as a pre-existent manifestation of the church. It is a returning to the Rabbinic understanding of the universal inclusion of all nations in Adam, now translated mainly by Paul into an inclusion in Christ which too is universal. This naturally has not only ecclesial significance, but missional ecclesiological significance as well. The new corporate identity of the man in Christ as a 'social reality' has been valued (3.2.6).

- In a 'participation in Christ' made popular by Sanders, we can say that churches live eschatologically as they live out their hope - a hope that Jesus Christ, with a view to His future, gathers men [and women] throughout the whole world for His congregation. This prevents a sectarian withdrawal from the affairs of the world which can so easily be the default if apocalyptic is not understood within the overall eschatological environment of a Messianic Kingdom in process of realizing God's purposes.

3.3.2. An Implication for Church and Mission

Davies has already said that to be converted had meant for Paul to be a missionary to the
Gentiles because universalism was involved in his conversion (Davies, 1948: 58n7).
Newbigin was thoroughly convinced of this when he said that when the Church becomes
settled and thinks of her election as a privilege instead of missionary responsibility, then she
comes under God's judgement as Israel did (Newbigin, 1953: 176).

In answer to the question as to why the Kingdom has come, but not yet, Newbigin takes us to
Acts 1:7-8. He points out a warning, a promise and a commission. A warning not to
determine times, and a promise of the Spirit to bring the nations in. But included in his
answer to their question about times and seasons, Jesus gives them a commission. It is for no
other purpose that the end is delayed, says Newbigin. 'The Bible compels us to say .. that
God leads the world to its consummation through the apostolate of the church' (Newbigin,
1953: 183f).

After following this line of inquiry and tracing the development of thinking in New
Testament scholarship, it can be seen how the Church has indeed been assisted in
understanding her self identity - an identity that can only but lead to a more proactive mission
activity in the world. It must be observed that this will happen not from a sense of guilt or in
an attempt to justify her worth to the world or because some have used bits of Scripture to
develop a 'biblical basis' for an activity which suits their personal aspirations or
temperament. The fact is that many have very easily missed the nature of the Church's
mission in all of their activity.

Our very fellowship in Christ, Newbigin could say, is a participation in his apostolate to the world (Newbigin, 1953: 192).

> It [the Church] is true to its own essential nature only when it takes this fact seriously and therefore treats the world-wide mission of the church as something which belongs to the very core of its existence as a corporate body.
>
> (Ibid)

Can we really say this? Has this really been as a result of the research done since Schweitzer? Has the Church not always understood herself in this way? What part could eschatology have played?

Johannes Blauw was commissioned to survey the biblical theology of missions in scholarship, which he did in his book *The Missionary Nature of the Church* in 1962. Here he points out that since 1930 the eschatological character of mission has been receiving more and more emphasis (Blauw, 1962: 107). However, he points out that the church and mission are still often contrasted with each other as static and dynamic, introverted and extraverted. A reason he puts forward as a contributing factor in the separation of mission and the church, is that the eschatological nature of mission is still confused with, what he calls, 'apocalyptic agitation' (Ibid). By this he means what we have already hinted at – the periods throughout history when 'the end' has consumed some within the Church to an 'eschatological fever', as Bosch has already said (Bosch, 1991: 504)[74]

Blauw names a few who had been pleading for an eschatological foundation for missions – Hartenstein, Freytag, Hoekendijk, Manson, Warren, etc. He said that these men are not to be blamed for the agitation or over hastiness (Blauw, 1962: 107). In his opinion, those who

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[74] Bosch was referring to people such as Hal Lindsay. His response to this has already been noted (Bosch, 1991: 504-510).

have advocated the eschatological foundation of missionary work should receive lasting credit for, 'drawing the conclusions from the academic theological discussion in favour of missionary work' that was to be more generally recognised later on (Blauw, 1962: 109).

Although it is true to some extent that there have been those who have drawn conclusions from academic theological discussion (as has Newbigin, Bosch and Blauw, etc.), it seems to be taking a long time to filter down to the actual thinking of individual members of the churches[75]. Bosch claims that it was, 'the trauma of two world wars that created a climate in which eschatological thinking once again began to make sense in mainline churches and theological circles (Bosch, 1991: 502). This was mainly seen amongst the continental delegates at the IMC at Jerusalem (1928) and Tambaram (1938), specifically the Germans in what was known as the 'German Eschatological Declaration' (Ibid)[76]. It was only at the Willingen IMC after World War II (1952) that eschatology entered as a foundation for mission in ecumenical discussions (Ibid).

The schools of thought, mainly German Protestantism, that Bosch mentions with regard to eschatological thinking were 'far from uniform', yet each of them had an impact on missionary thinking (Ibid: 502). The following Table (Table 1) helps us to see the approach to mission that each resulted in. The columns are: the **Model**, or school from which the particular eschatological thought came; which scholar it is generally **Associated** with; the **Missiologists** who were impacted by this thinking; and the resulting **Expression** of church life in the secular sphere or mission activity as a church.[77]

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[75] Until fairly recently, as we will discuss in the following chapter.
[76] Although not signed exclusively by German delegates.
[77] Extracted and collated from Bosch 1991: 502-503

DAVID BOSCH'S COMPARISON OF ESCHATOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO MISSION			
MODEL	**ASSOCIATION**	**MISSIOLOGIST**	**EXPRESSION**
Dialectical Eschatology	The younger Karl Barth	Paul Schutz The younger Karl Hartenstein Hans Scharer Hendrik Kraemer	No human intervention, God will bring in His Kingdom in fullness at the end of time solely on His own.
Existential Eschatology	Rudolf Bultmann	Walter Holsten	Limited to the offer of a new self-understanding or 'private apocalypse' as an individual. No ethic to work for in the public life.
Actualized Eschatology or 'in the process of being realized'	Paul Althaus Hints of Dodd	Gerhard Rosenkranz	Proclamation of the imminent return of the Lord to judge and of a present Kingdom yet hidden
Salvation Historical Eschatology	Oscar Cullmann	Walter Frytag The older Karl Hartenstein	New age of the Spirit has begun but the old has not ended. Mission fills this gap & is a preparation for the end and a precondition.

Table 1

Bosch helps us to see that of the eschatological schools of thought mentioned above, only the fourth takes history seriously (Bosch, 1991: 503). As I have attempted to show, this would not have been the case in the 1800's as it was an embarrassment to liberal thinking, and in fact the Hellenistic world was considered the thought world of the Apostles, thus divorcing the church from its Jewish eschatological roots[78].

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[78] See Chapter 1.1

The fourth school or model, also distinguishes itself from the other three in the following ways (Ibid: 503):

- The reign of God becomes its hermeneutical key

- This reign is both present and future

- That it is the time of the Spirit and of mission.

It has become so widely accepted that one could in Bosch's opinion, make the case that practically all contemporary schools of eschatology and of missionary thinking, in one way or another, are offshoots of this approach - even if some would prefer to deny this (Ibid: 504).

Oscar Cullmann says that, 'The close relation between Christian action and the expectation of the end comes out in two prominent characteristics of New Testament eschatology' (Cullmann, 1995: 308-309):

- we do not know when the end will come.

- although the end lies in the future, the present is already part of the period which begins with the death and resurrection of Christ.

He continues, '… it is a mistake to think that eschatology has nothing to do with the present day and therefore, that it has a paralyzing effect upon Christian action' and later, 'Does this mean … that the Kingdom of God will come only when all … have been converted? If that were so, then its coming would depend on us and the divine omnipotence would be ignored' (Ibid).

Bosch's own comment on this is that it is, 'the soundest base for an understanding of the eschatological nature of mission from a postmodern perspective' (Bosch, 1991: 504). He

then points out the hazards of periods of 'eschatological fever' with such people as Hal Lindsay, etc. (Ibid).   However he says that, 'The validity of the views of Freytag and Cullmann lies in their unflagging insistence that there is no authentic mission without a fundamental eschatological disposition' (Ibid: 505) and quoting Braaten, 'Without this eschatological dimension our 'gospel' becomes reduced to ethics' (Ibid: 507). However, with this dimension he says, '…we must define our mission – with due humility – as participation in the *Missio Dei*. Witnessing to the gospel of present salvation and future hope we then identify with the awesome birth pangs of God's new creation' (Ibid: 510).

One of Latin America's leading theologians, C. René Padilla, wrote *Mission between the Times* in 1985. In his writing he shows obvious signs of engagement with Cullmann. He says,

> Although the midpoint of the timeline has appeared, the consummation of the new age still remains in the future … The Kingdom of God is, therefore, both a present reality and a promise to be fulfilled in the future: it has come … and it is to come … This simultaneous affirmation of the present and the future gives rise to the eschatological tension that permeates the entire New Testament and undoubtedly represents a rediscovery of the Old Testament 'prophetic-apocalyptic' eschatology that Judaism had lost.
> (Padilla, 1985. cited in Thomas, 1995: 315-3-6)

In modern journals one finds such thought to have permeated missions thinking, although not always from the same perspective. In the European Journal of Theology, Mike Goheen uses the heading, 'Post modernity: Recovery of Missionary Self-Understanding?' In this section he reminds us that we live in a 'post'- society – post modern, post industrial, post-critical, post-liberal, post-enlightenment, post Christian, etc. He says that the churches who have hitched themselves to some aspect of modernity feel the enormous threat of post modernity. However, he points out that post-modernity also represents an opportunity. This can be illustrated he says, by employing the language of anthropologist Victor Turner.

> The church in western culture is at a point of liminality[79] … At such times one struggles with identity. The church has lost its dominant position and is now at the margins. As it struggles with its identity, the opportunity is there to recover a missionary self-consciousness … maybe the postmodern condition offers the church the opportunity to recover the counter-culture stance for which Bosch calls, the redemptive tension of the early church – hopefully a stance that will take seriously both cultural responsibility and antithetical critique.
>
> (Goheen, 1999: 166-167)

Goheen quotes Lesslie Newbigin who after returning to the west after a long spell in India, said that, 'A recovery of a missionary understanding of the church is a vital matter if the church in the west is to remain as a significant presence' (Goheen, 1999: 167).

3.3.3. In Conclusion

Was Newbigin overplaying the 'participation' card once more when he spoke of the church coming under God's judgment as Israel had, when she becomes settled and thinks of her election as a privilege rather than a responsibility? This does seem to at least echo Revelation chapters 2 and 3 where local churches were indeed under the threat of judgment by Jesus. For this reason he has a point. As he mentioned later, God is leading the world to its consummation through the apostolate of the church (Newbigin, 1953: 183f) – an incredible responsibility for the Church to grasp.

What New Testament research[80] has done since Schweitzer, is help us to understand New Testament ecclesiology, which can rekindle its own natural outworking, or expression in

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[79] Liminality is a condition of transition from one position or role in culture to another. For example, the movement from adolescence to adulthood is a point of liminality.

[80] Particularly in the 're-opened eschatological office', as pertains to this inquiry.

mission. In other words what becomes clear is that to be the church, is to be a sign, foretaste and instrument of God's Kingly rule[81] thereby engage quite naturally in the mission of God.

Academic theological conversation has drawn certain conclusions which Blauw commends missiologists for advocating (Blauw, 1962: 107-109) – the eschatological foundation for mission work.

Bosch considers the views of Freytag and Cullmann valid when they insist that there is no authentic mission without a fundamental eschatological disposition (Bosch, 1991: 505), without which mission becomes reduced to ethics (Ibid: 507). Perhaps he could not have spoken more clearly as a missiologist than when he said the Church identifies with the 'awesome birth pangs of God's new creation' when she witnesses to the Gospel of 'present salvation and future hope' (Ibid:510).

We are most assuredly going through a time of liminality where the Church has lost its dominant position and now from the margins and with the help of this re-opened eschatological office, can work through the struggle for identity within a missionary self-consciousness (Goheen, 1999: 166-167).

When I began I queried whether Albert Schweitzer's contribution, coupled with the life he endeavored to live, was not in some way catalytic or prophetic. Here was a man who, understanding something of the mind of Paul and having the ability to feel the thoughts of the great Apostle, was so utterly convinced of his calling as a member of the church, that he could do no other than immerse himself in the Christ of his own understanding. For this

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[81] See Newbigin, 1987: 358 and 1990: 6 for this often repeated definition of the Church by him.

reason at least, his theological proposals call on us to reckon with them as more than academic.

To Schweitzer with his enquiring philosophical mind, so easily and often misunderstood by his critics within the church, life was to be valued and understood. I believe that, notwithstanding his endeavours to understand eastern thought, his emphasis on reverence for life, his appreciation of philosophy and his music, it was in Paul that he found the greatest and deepest pleasure. He was discovering something which we would do well to grasp with the help of those who have clarified it.

And so we end this chapter with emphatic remarks from some others about the influence Schweitzer has had in all of this.

On Schweitzer's understanding of Paul, Wright has said, 'This, I think, is what sustained Schweitzer himself in his unique and extraordinary life and work … he did not want to pay too much attention to what the official church was doing, since it was still stuck with Paul the dogmatic theologian' (Wright, 1997: 12-14). One may criticize the 'New Perspective', but not without having to take into account the impetus it gives to mission as fundamental to the nature of its theological perspective. One need only look at the works of Dunn and Wright to see a strong, unforced, excitement for engaging in the 'Great Commission' which seems to be lacking in other scholarly circles for reasons, perhaps, outlined up to this point.

Thiselton said that Schweitzer had an 'enormous influence on subsequent writers' (Thiselton, 1978-79: 135) and that Martin Werner raised the strengths and weaknesses in the eschatological approach to Paul as early as 1941 in his, *Formation of Christian Dogma*,

where he referred mainly to Weiss and Schweitzer[82]. His achievement was to show even more clearly than Schweitzer had, the far-reaching consequences which follow from this eschatological approach and the neglect thereof (Thiselton, 1978-79: 135)[83].

G.E. Ladd was also of the opinion that, 'The history of criticism since Schweitzer may be described as a struggle over eschatology' (Ladd, 1974b: 5) and after a lengthy survey of the eschatological debate, says that, '… the growing consensus is supported by the almost universal modification of Schweitzer's Consistent Eschatology' (Ibid: 39).

Amos N. Wilder goes so far as to say that, '…few will disagree with Schweitzer on the main point, viz., that Jesus taught an imminent judgment and world renovation' (Ibid: 125).[84]

As Tom Wright says concerning the four questions Schweitzer raised for discussion,[85]

> … all writers on Paul implicitly or explicitly engage with these four questions. One of the reasons why Schweitzer is so important is that he saw them so clearly and, though his own solutions are variable in quality, he nevertheless provides a benchmark for subsequent study.
>
> (Wright, 1997: 14)

In Blauw's opinion, those who have advocated the eschatological foundation of missionary work should receive lasting credit for, 'drawing the conclusions from the academic theological discussion in favour of missionary work' (Blauw, 1962: 109).

Lastly, Thiselton says, 'With Schweitzer he re-captured something of the sense of urgency and fire of the primitive eschatological faith' (Thiselton, 1978-79: 135).

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[82] Werner dedicated his book to Albert Schweitzer in memory of him as an old friend.

[83] See Werner, 1957: 37 on the effects of the eschatological expectation on the post-apostolic church; 71f, on the disintegration of the eschatological doctrine in early Christianity; 269f on the effects on other doctrines in the early church caused by a de-eschatologising.

[84] From Wilder's *Eschatology and Ethics in the Teaching of Jesus*, New York: Harper & Row, 1939; rev.ed., 1950: 38

[85] See Chapter 3.1.1

With this we turn to an inquiry into the environment in the United Kingdome and a couple of examples of the changes happening even within established denominations. We will make an inquiry into these denominations in order see if their theological motivation for change bears any similarity to the developments discovered in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

THE GROWING SENSE OF UNEASE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In my introduction on the mainline Church attendance and undertones of unease in South Africa (Introduction 2.1 - 2.2) I opened the first 'bracket' for my work on Schweitzer and others (Chapters 1-3). I now need to close that major section with the other 'bracket'. This time in a European context where the realization that church, as we have known it for centuries, is becoming increasingly ineffective and misunderstood.[1] I have chosen to focus on the United Kingdom (UK) in order to do this.

Why the United Kingdom?

I have chosen to move from the South African church context where the trends are tending toward a post-Christian environment to the United Kingdom where they have already experienced this for some time[2]. Their post-Christian environment, together with the theological developments over the last century[3], seem to have influenced the emergence of a more missional ecclesiology which I will introduce in Chapter 5 by means of two case studies.

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[1] See the work of students of culture such as Lesslie Newbigin in, *Foolishness to Greeks: The gospel and Western culture* (1986), David Shenk in, *Practicing Truth: Confident Witness in Our Pluralistic World* (1999) and Anabapists such as Stuart Murray in, *Church Planting in a Postmodern Context* (2004) and, *Post-Christendom: Church and mission in a strange new world* (2004)

[2] For a description of the United Kingdom being post-Christian, see for instance: Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Christianity and Society in the Modern World*, London: Routledge, 2001; Alan D. Gilbert. *The making of post-Christian Britain: a history of the secularization of modern society*, London: Longman, 1980; Hugh McLeod. *World Christianities c. 1914-c. 2000* , Cambridge University Press, 2006.

[3] Which are considered by many to be a more primitive, or eschatologically-based, ecclesiology (my Chapters 2 and 3).

I have chosen to look at the two largest Protestant National Churches in the UK – the Church of England (C of E) and the Church of Scotland (C of S). The reason for this choice is that although we could look at smaller missional initiatives from newer, independent church groups, these larger National Churches have a long history and are very complex organizations. These factors seemed important as it highlights the will and sense of urgency to change at great cost. That and the fact that my church roots are in Anglicanism, as highlighted in the introduction.

I am hoping this will encourage the Church in South Africa to compare the trends in their own country to those in the United Kingdom, to be aware of the theological developments of Chapter 3 and the initiatives I am yet to cover in Chapter 5, and to consider how this could assist the Church in their calling.

The rest of this dissertation will therefore concern itself with the following:

- **The growing sense of unease in the United Kingdom**

  In this Chapter I will be raising the concerns over the statistics and decline of Church membership, with some reasons given for the decline.

- **The response by two national Church bodies in the United Kingdom**

  In Chapter 5 I will sketch the mandates given to work-groups by the Synod and National assembly of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland as well as their theological basis for change.

- **A final Summary Remark**

  I will conclude with some remarks on their theological basis for change, connecting them with what we have seen developing in Chapters 2 and 3.

4.1. A Timely Observation

Archbishop Peter Jensen of the diocese of Sydney, Australia, addressed a series of Anglican Evangelical Conferences in the UK in January 2003. What he had to say is recorded in the booklet, *Christ's Gospel to the Nations: The heart and mind of evangelicalism, past, present and future* (2003). According to him the type of church or fellowships needed in the UK were ones that had an ecclesiology, 'of key missiological importance' (Jensen, 2003: 47). I need to quote Jensen extensively here, because fully aware of the 'death of Christian Britain' (ibid, 25) and the 'post-denominational' age we find ourselves in (ibid, 36)[4], he said,

> People who are coming to know Christ are doing so in the fellowship of other real people; for them it is what happens locally that matters. **Church is not a great national institution**, but an experience down the street; it is the quality and accessibility of what happens there which matters, **not decisions made in headquarters**.
>
> … even the local church is not the basic community: it is the congregation or fellowship. What we need to do is multiply these; note, **not 'services' as such, but 'communities'** … we must experiment with weekdays and Saturdays; we have to leave our premises and start meetings in … local venues and in homes and in nursing homes … **Church can no longer be defined by building or by time or by priest or by liturgy** – important though all these things are.
>
> … People are too mobile and too defensive of their privacy to be easily contactable through Christians in their domestic location. We need to look for 'kinship groups', or 'interest groups': those who work in a particular place, or who belong to a profession or a club, or whose children go to the same school, or those who are related to each other, or those belonging to an ethnic group. **The Church set up amongst such people may not look particularly 'Anglican'; it may or may not be formally connected with a local church**; but if it is a fellowship in which people find Christ in his word and by his Spirit and are nourished in love, surely we should be delighted. If we are not going to give attention to penetrating society in such ways as this, by what right do we call ourselves a national church? Mere geographical extension is a sham.
>
> (Jensen, 2003: 48-49. Emphasis are mine)

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[4] See the following sections on the Church trends in the United Kingdom.

These statements reveal a sense of anxiety and urgency within the very post-Christendom environment within the UK even among Evangelical churches. What has caused this anxiety and sense of urgency? What are the contributing factors?

A headline of an article by Chris Morgan in the Sunday Times of 11 July 1999 said, 'Future of C of E in the balance as attendance falls'. The Principal of London Bible College, Rev Dr Derek Tidball, said in April 1999 that, 'Something is seriously wrong with the church. People are leaving in their droves (cited in Brierley, 2000: 66). The Louth Regeneration Survey 1995 (a typical secular survey in a small town in Lincolnshire) produced this gloomy conclusion to the section on churches, 'The predominant view of those under 40 is that a church is of no importance to them' (Cole, 2004: 'Evidence'). In a very cynical article from the National Secular Society of May 2001, Keith Porteous Wood said,

> After a great deal of humming and hawing, the C of E has at last published its attendance figures for both 1996 and 1997 … The figures were - as the NSS predicted - pretty dreadful. They revealed that Sunday attendance had fallen below the psychologically significant one million threshold; 995,700 to be precise. If children are excluded from this figure it reduces to 816,500. The Times concluded that "The decade of evangelism, now drawing to a close has, largely failed to stem the decline." … Now the Church has to face the double embarrassment of poor figures and criticism for having tried to suppress them'.
>
> (Wood, 2001)

4.2. British Church Statistics

4.2.1. Statistical Sources and Methods

In order to ascertain a longer historical picture I will rely on the accuracy of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship which is considered the best source of national data for the nineteenth

century[5]. The twentieth century itself has been covered by Peter Brierley's nation-wide censuses and surveys of church attendance in England, Wales and Scotland[6].

Confidence for the data I used here is found in the fact that it balances with the Church of England's own data. That data also shows that in 1997 Anglican church attendance fell below one million for the first time since records began in the eighteenth century and this in the context of a population that has grown steadily from 18 million in 1850 to 52 million in 2000 (Bruce, 2001a). With the exception of Stark and his associates, every scholar who has studied British church membership has reported similar trends and come to the same conclusions (ibid).

Bruce's research found that as a base for evaluating the twentieth century data it is fair to assume that between 40 and 60% of the adult population of Great Britain in 1851 attended church, 27% in 1900 and, according to Brierley's latest surveys (1998), 7.5% of the adult population attend church at present. This represents a continuation of the trends previously found by Brierley: the figures for his 1979 and 1989 censuses were respectively 12 and 10% (ibid). The reason Bruce is assuming attendance figures for the 1800s is because only the 'dissenting' congregations had 'membership'. The national churches of England, Wales and Scotland served all those who did not dissent. Formal membership was not a consideration to them because attendance was considered a better mark of adherence. With the growth of the dissenting churches in the early parts of the 19th century, people in the national churches also began to express their loyalty by 'joining' the churches they attended. The figures on record

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[5] This is confirmed by Steve Bruce from the Department of Sociology at the University of Aberdeen in his 2001 research article, *Christianity in Britain, R. I. P* (2001a).

[6] Of the surveys done this is considered to rank very highly and has received great confidence from churches country wide. As in the 1851 Census, his data is sourced mostly from clergy estimates of how many people come into their churches on a particular Sunday (Bruce: 2001b, 2). The results of the third English study conducted by Brierley in 1998, have been published (Brierley, 2000).

are therefore not a true reflection during this period of change. Bruce is surely correct in his belief that by the end of the 20th century attendance had become a better index of attachment than membership (Bruce, 2001b: 3).

The method Brierley used for gathering attendance statistics was to survey all churches accepting a Trinitarian formula of belief. This excluded Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Christian Scientists, Christadelphians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and members of non-Trinitarian or non-Christian groups. The percent of the UK population effectively excluded in his latest survey was then about 7% (Brierley, 2000: 19).

'Church' was defined for the purpose of the survey as a body of people meeting on a Sunday in the same premises primarily for public worship at regular intervals. Churches meeting on Saturdays, like the Seventh Day Adventists, were also included as were those who held services fortnightly or monthly (Ibid).

4.2.2. The Statistics

However, with the source material at our disposal from people like Brierley and Bruce we can plot the decline in Church and Sunday School attendance over the last century as depicted in *Graph 4* (Statistics sourced from Bruce: 2001a).

CHURCH ATTENDANCE, UK, 1900-2000
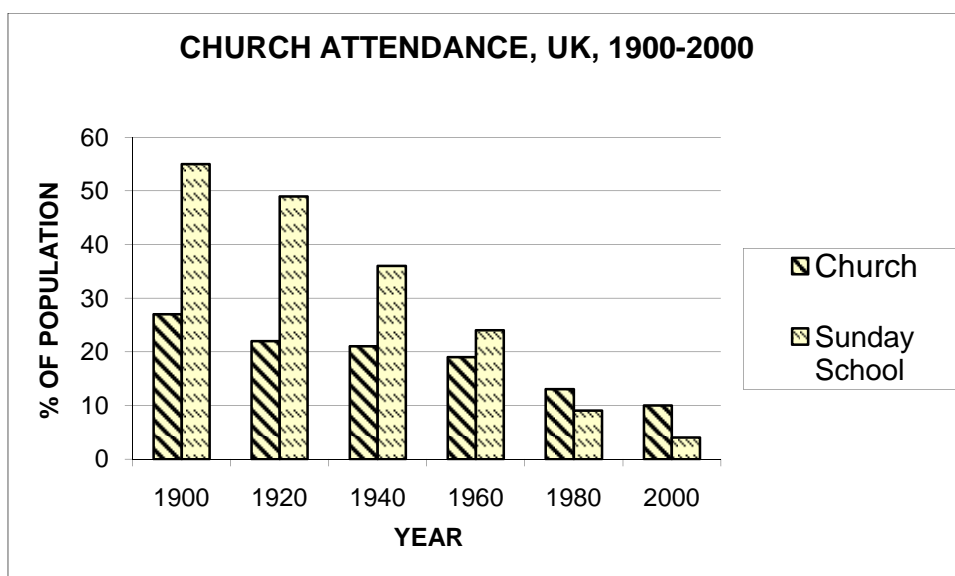
Graph 4

Perhaps it is helpful to note at this point that it is not until 1980 that the number of Children in Sunday School dropped below the adult Church attendance. The pattern shows that by the time the children become the adults in each case (twenty years later), only about half of them attend Church while still sending their children to Sunday School. Only in1960 do we see a change in this pattern which culminates in 1980 and 2000 with less Children at Sunday School than adults in Church.

Table 2. Total Sunday Church attendance, 1979-1998

	1979	**Change**	**1989**	**Change**	**1998**
Institutional churches	3,862,000	-19%	3,143,800	-25%	2,357,600
Non-institutional churches	1,579,000	+1%	1,599,000	-15%	1,357,100
Total all England	**5,441,000**	**-13%**	4,742,800	**-22%**	**3,714,700**

Table 3. Institutional Churches Sunday Attendance, 1979-1998

Denomination	1979	Change	1989	Change	1998
Roman Catholic	1,991,000	-14%	1,715,900	-28%	1,230,100
Church of England	1,671,000	-24%	1,266,300	-23%	980,600
United Reformed	190,000	-21%	149,300	-18%	121,700
Orthodox	10,000	+23%	12,300	+105%	25,200
Institutional	**3,862,000**	**-19%**	**3,143,800**	**-25%**	**2,357,600**

Brierley considers a major factor in the drop in attendance in the Roman Catholic Church between 1990 and 1994 to be the less strict application of the teaching that a person not attending Mass is committing a mortal sin (Brierley, 2000: 34). The rise in orthodox attendance can be deceiving if one does not realise that the actual numbers are very small.

Table 4. Non- institutional Churches Sunday attendance, 1979-1998

Denomination	1979	Change	1989	Change	1998
Methodist	621,000	-18%	512,300	-26%	379,700
Baptist	290,000	-7%	270,900	+2%	277,600
New Churches	64,000	+161%	167,000	+38%	230,500
Pentecostal	228,000	+4%	236,700	-9%	214,600
Independent	235,000	+27%	298,500	-46%	161,600
Other denominations	141,000	-19%	113,600	-18%	93,100
Non-institutional	**1,579,000**	**+1%**	**1,599,000**	**-15%**	**1,357,100**

It appears that a third to a half of the growth shown in the 'New Churches' is mainly due to a migration from other churches because of the emphasis they place on children's work. They are not a composite whole, but comprise of at least twenty 'streams' (Brierley, 2000: 40-41). The sudden drop in Independent and Pentecostal church attendance in the last decade is also due to a move to the New Churches – around 500 congregations of about 30 000 people (Ibid).

Despite the general decline, the number of Churches being started is worth noting. Data suggests that the number of new churches is increasing. Between 1975 and 1979, 654 churches were started. Between 1980 and 1984, this rose to 801, with 863 churches being started between 1985 and 1989. Between 1989 and 1998, this rose to 1867 churches (Christian Leadership World, 2004).

The number of clerics in the UK has declined. In 1900 there were 45 408 clerics. With a steady declined the 2000 figures reveal only 34 157. A 'fall of 25 percent at a time when the population almost doubled' (Mackay, cited in Bruce, 2001a). Entrants at training institutions have declined even faster. In 1979 there were 193 men studying for the priesthood. In 1999 there were only 57 (Ibid).

Bruce says that while the proportion of people coming to church to be married, baptised and buried remains higher than the number of members or regular attenders, the trends are moving in the same direction. 'In the nineteenth century almost all weddings were religious ceremonies. In 1971 the proportion of English weddings that were religious was 60 percent. This declined fairly steadily to 31% in 2000' (Bruce, 2001a).

To conclude, some research now suggests up to 40% of the population should best be regarded as 'de-churched'. They have deliberately walked away from a previous association with local church life. Only a tiny proportion might be persuaded to return. Meanwhile up to 50% ('non-church') now know nothing of church or Christianity apart from what they learned at school (Cole: 2004, 'action 1'). What are the factors contributing to this walk away from the church?

4.3. Some Given Reasons for the Decline

- The Synod decision to ordain women in the Church of England in 1992 immediately led to the loss of 300 priests, some of whom set up alternate Anglican congregations - 58 by 1997 (Brierley, 2000: 14).

- The 1990s saw a large swing from marriage to cohabitating first. According to a government journal between 40 – 60% of couples marrying in Church cohabited first (ibid: 15). Because most people cohabiting realise that the Church has always been against this, they rarely or perhaps never feel inclined to attend Church (Ibid).

- A legislation passed in 1994 allowed shops to open for 6 hours on a Sunday. Not all Churchgoers shop on a Sunday, but one survey showed 8% did while 60% of the rest of the population did (ibid). There seems to be 'competition' from other areas as well. Schools and sports clubs are turning to Sunday for their fixtures, making it difficult for children to get to Sunday School. The divorce rate has caused a drop in Sunday School and Church as well as Sunday becomes the day for the father or mother to have the children.

- Pressure, says Brierley, is hard to measure, but he detects that with recession and people trying to keep jobs they work longer hours to try and maintain a prosperous, comfortable lifestyle. This naturally includes Churchgoers (ibid: 17-18).

- A rejection of external authorities in providing answers or giving meaning to life's big questions. A mid-term report on the Decade of Evangelism in 1995 is of the opinion that individualism and cynicism have led to this (Cited in Cole, 2004, 'Action 1').

- In the C of E it was recognised that there are at least five reasons why the dynamic of a church planting movement has never been released despite the creative developments in mission and church planting over the past 20 years (MSC, 2004: 130)[7]. The reasons given are:

  - The parish system is not geared to foster church plants that are cross borders.
  - Permission to reopen old buildings or rescue ill parishes is hard to secure.
  - Many weak parishes that are unable to multiply effectively and strong parishes unable to persuade the diocese to recruit the amount of staff needed to multiply.
  - Pioneer or entrepreneur leaders have difficulty in finding their calling within Anglican structures.
  - Many leaders oversee a creative and contextual plant but then have to play a role outside of their expertise with no-one to take over.

The underlying problem was expressed as 'Anglican methodology' (Ibid: 131). However, the way it is expressed helps us understand a problem many denominations have.

> We are an English Church moulded by history and culture to be like the English: in favour of slow evolutionary change. However, that is not the context we face. At present we do not possess the levers that can accelerate the process of mission response to the changing culture of England.

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[7] This is from the Mission-Shaped Church – A report of a review group within the C of E which I will be concentrating on in the next Chapter.

> At the same time, a number of pioneers are living with a tension between the call to be Anglican and a call to be apostolic. They love the Church that nurtured them. They are called to love the world outside it. At best this tension is constructive, with mission and order in dynamic balance. At worst it becomes impossible to maintain.
>
> (MSC, 2004: 132)

- Lastly, Brierley considers post-modernity to have played a role in this decline (Brierley, 2000: 16,17). In the reasons he gives there are at least the following characteristics:

  - A spirituality without Christianity
  - A commitment to an environment without a Creator
  - Words do not need to have absolute meaning [as in dogmatics and creeds]
  - Individuality is valued without belonging [to institutions]
  - A living for the present without a corresponding future concern.

Summary Remarks

In light of the above perhaps Bruce is correct in saying,

> This is not surprising. Christian beliefs should decline when the institutions that carry them decline. Ideologies require support and ways of transmitting beliefs to the next generation. Now Christian ideas are not taught in schools, are not promoted by social elites, are not reinforced by rights of passage, and are not taken-for-granted in the mass media.
>
> (Bruce, 2001a)

The general flight from institutions is in general also a sociological phenomenon that must be a major factor. Trade union membership is down as well as that of political parties and voluntary organizations (Ibid). Sociologist Grace Davie subtitled her book on religion in Britain since 1945, 'believing without belonging' (Ibid).

From researching the data and the reasons for the decline, something that surfaces constantly is the fact that despite all of the above, there is still a belief in God. The quest for depth of

meaning in life is still important for more than half the population, according to BBC

research on British social attitudes (Cole, 2004: 'Action 1'). However, the research forces

the recognition that only a small percentage make the connection between a spiritual quest

and Church-going, says John Cole (Ibid). He continues to say that about half the UK

population are of vague faith. They have an affiliation to a religion, but no active attachment

to a place of worship (Ibid).

The statistics are alarming, and the C of E has tried to respond to the facts as we shall see.

However, is 'getting people to a Church service' what the Church is really all about? Can it

really be a serious measure of the Church's success or failure? Lesslie Newbigin said,

> We might even consider abolishing our beloved statistics which are
> hopelessly inaccurate anyway, and which probably serve to emphasise all
> the wrong things about the Church. It is not very important whether the
> Church is 2% or 21% of the nation; it is very important whether the Church
> credibly represents Jesus as the Saviour of the whole nation.
>
> (Newbigin, 1977: 156)

With the Church scene in the United Kingdom demonstrating a real post-Christian

environment, we turn next to the response to this situation by two National Churches, one in

Scotland and one in England.

CHAPTER 5

THE THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE OF TWO NATIONAL CHURCHES

WITHIN A POST-CHRISTIAN ENVIRONMENT

(CASE STUDIES)

We have already seen how the theological conversation over the previous century, particularly in eschatology and the self-identity of the Church, has influenced missiology. I have also shown the implications for Church and mission (Chapter 3.3). Now we need to look at some examples of where a similar theological orientation is being implemented.

The reason I have chosen to consider the Church of England (C of E) and the Church of Scotland (C of S) in my conclusion is because unlike smaller or more independent church groups, these have a long history and are very complex organizations. This seemed important as I discovered the will and effort that was taken in order to respond to their situation instead of ignoring it.

Of course the question is, as they responded in a time of crisis, were they merely being pragmatic in a desire to see numbers grow or was their response driven by a theological conviction? More particularly for this dissertation, was that theological conviction at all similar to that which I have shown to be developing over the last century? Was it at all eschatological in orientation and did it result in a more helpful missional ecclesiology?

And so we turn to these national Churches. The first being the Church of England.

5.1. The Church of England

The C of E has responded to the crisis and the developed missional ecclesiologies of people such as the late Bishop Lesslie Newbigin (*Mission-Shaped Church,* 2004: 34, 91, 94, 95, 158 n.46) and have attempted to re-shape their legal system (*Measure for Measures*, 2004), to allow a more missional approach to church planting across parish borders. This has also meant that there has been a permission-giving[1] and the emergence of 'fresh Expressions of church that have not looked particularly Anglican[2].

Section 1.1 below, and *Figure 8* will describe how these changes came about. The expressions of church that have become evident even within the C of E are many and varied (See MSC, 2004: 43-80, for examples of these), but all have a desire to plant a valid expression of the Church into the variety of cultures and sub-cultures in the United Kingdom. These would most often be people who would never consider the Christian message otherwise (Ibid: 80).

> Only creative church planting will do in a society where those with spiritual questions naturally assume that the church is not the place to find the answers, since Christianity has been tried and found wanting.
>
> (MSC: 80)[3]

The types of 'fresh expressions' of missional churches that have been planted in the United Kingdom would include the following (Ibid: 43-80): Alternative Worship Communities; Cafe Church; Pub Church; Network-focussed churches; New Monastic Communities and more.

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[1] There are many references to permission-giving stemming from the MSC report, such as the article in the *Church Times*, Issue 7663 – 29 January 2010 (http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=88246).
[2] The Anglican Church 'Fresh Expressions' and is led by Bishop Graham Cray who headed up the MSC Working Committee for the C of E Synod. http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/.
[3] Citing Stuart Murray, who heads up the Anabaptist Network in the UK, *Church Planting Laying Foundations*, Herald Press, 2001.

5.1.1. The Prelude to Change

As one investigates the process leading up to the changes I have observed, and tries to trace out at least the more recent and relevant developments, the larger steps contributing to the changes within the C of E become evident. They are in the form of reports by various commissioned workgroups such as:

- the 'Breaking New Ground' report of 1994 (BNG)[4]

- the 'A Measure for Measures: In Mission and Ministry' report of 2003 (MM)[5].

- the 'Mission-shaped Church' report of 2003 (MSC)[6].

The 'Breaking New Ground' and the 'Mission-Shaped Church' reports were the results of working-groups mandated by the C of E's Mission and Public Affairs Council and were adopted at their Synods. The latter was a reworking of the first and was adopted at the 2004 Synod[7]. At the same Synod the Dioceses and Pastoral and Related Measures Working Group submitted their report and had that adopted as well (with amendments)[8]. The latter was an attempt to restructure the legal system within the C of E in order to accommodate fresh expressions of church-planting and the Mission-Shaped Church developments and proposals and became know as, 'A Measure for Measures: In Mission and Ministry'.

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[4] *Breaking New Ground: church planting in the Church of England*. London: Church House Publishing, 1994

[5] *A Measure for Measures: In Mission and Ministry: Report of the Review of the Dioceses, Pastoral and related Measures*. (for the Archbishops' Council) London: Church House Publishing, 2004. Also known as the 'Toyne Report' after the chair of the Special Commission, Dr Peter Toyne.

[6] *Mission-Shaped Church: church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context*. Report from the Church of England Mission and Public Affairs Council. London: Church House Publishing, 2004. First known as the 'Breaking New Ground 2' report. Some have simply called it the 'Cray Report' after the Chair of the working group, Bishop Graham Cray.

[7] *Mission-Shaped Church*. Minutes of the General Synod of the Church of England, February 2004, Group of Sessions. Sourced from www.cofe.anglican.org on 12 August 2004. The record of the discussion and adoption of the report is found on pages 128 – 158 of the Synod minutes.

[8] Sourced from www.cofe.anglican.org on 12 August 2004. The record of the discussion and adoption of the report is found on pages 159 – 177 of the Synod minutes.

A more complete picture, with other developments, can be seen in *Figure 8*. 2001 saw the

submission of a significant report within the Church of Scotland called the 'Church Without

Walls' (CWW)[9]. This report will also receive attention in this conclusion, but I need to

mention it now as it slightly preceded the MM and MSC reports of their Episcopal

neighbours and seems to have had an influence at least on the MSC report (MSC: 26).
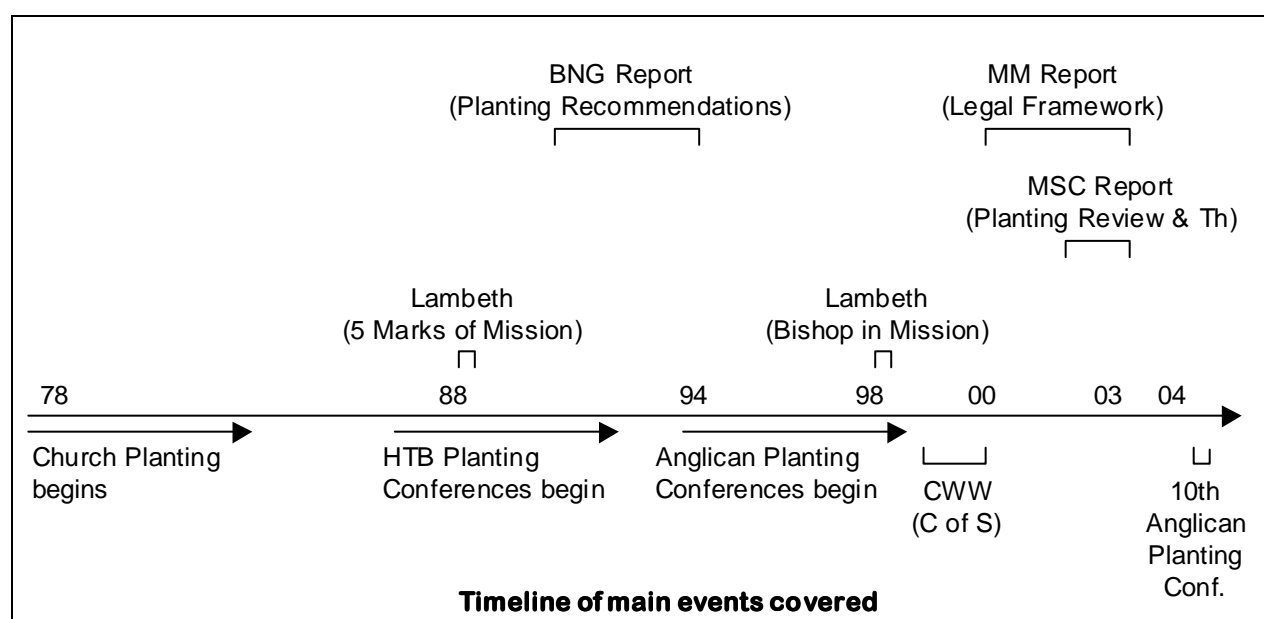
Figure 8 [10]

It is of immediate importance to note, whether one agrees with every aspect of these

developments or not, that Anglican Ecclesiology has been developing a missiological

character since the late 1980s[11].

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[9] *A Church without Walls*. The Report of the Special Commission anent Review and Reform to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (2001). Sourced from www.churchwithoutwalls.org.uk on 12 August 2004

[10] HTB = Holy Trinity Brompton; C of S = Church of Scotland.

[11] At least seen in the HTB church-planting and the Lambeth '5 Marks of Mission' in Figure 8.

5.1.1.1. The Five Marks of Mission

Some of these earlier developments included the 'Five Marks of Mission' which the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) identified and developed (ACC, 1984). According to John Cole in, *How to be a Local Church*, these marks have Methodist origins (Cole: 2004), but were nevertheless adopted by the Lambeth Conference and the Primates meeting in 1988 of the same year and published as part of the, 'The Truth Shall Make You Free' report[12]. The five marks of mission identified were:

- to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom

- to teach, baptize and nurture new believers

- to respond to human need by loving service

- to seek to transform the unjust structures of society

- to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth[13]

The Lambeth Conference passed Resolution 44 at that same conference of 1988, which built upon this mission conviction in what appears to have been something of a risk they were willing to take, as this reference makes clear:

> This conference calls for a shift to a dynamic missionary emphasis, going beyond care and nurture to proclamation and service; and therefore accepts the challenge this presents to diocesan and local church structures and patterns of worship and ministry, and looks to God for a fresh movement of the Spirit; in prayer, outgoing love and evangelism in obedience to our Lord's command.
>
> (cited in MSC, 2004: 36)

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[12] *The Truth shall make you free: the Lambeth Conference 1988: the reports, resolutions & pastoral letters from the Bishops* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 1988)

[13] See Appendix 2 for these and some revised comments. From the Anglican Communion Official Website (1999). http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/fivemarks.cfm

5.1.1.2. Called to Live and Proclaim the Good News

The 1988 Lambeth Conference Resolution (44) was no idol entry to be forgotten when other pressing needs controlled the agenda (MSC: 36). The invitation to attend the 1998 Lambeth Conference, sent to the world's Anglican Bishops a decade later, included an essay entitled, 'Called to live and proclaim the good news' (Called to Live:1998).

The essay had three main sections: *Called by God*; *Called to live the good news*; and *Called to proclaim the good news*. The following references are to the essay, 'Called to live and proclaim the good news' of 1998.

The first section of the essay – *Called by God* – followed a logical progression culminating in the place of the Bishop in the church. For our purposes an important thing to notice from the essay is that the understanding of our calling by God is one that incorporates sending. 'The Life of the prophet must itself become a message' (Called: 1.1). Furthermore, there is a stress on being 'caught up' in God's own 'movement of love by being called to be with Jesus', which emphasises that being 'in Jesus' is not simply to be included in a static church gathering or private relationship with Him. Rather, mission is part of being 'in Christ' (Ibid:1.2). The starting point for the necessary unity in the mission is our baptism into Christ. 'The credibility of the church is therefore compromised by its disunity'. The work of the Spirit from the day we are baptized into Christ must be seen as God's mission going on in all of us constantly. A great emphasis is therefore placed on letting 'this divine action through in our plans, words and acts' (Ibid: 1.3). Then finally, it sees a minister or Bishop as 'entrusted with renewing among all God's people the sense of being called, endowed and sent by God'. The essay stresses the structure of the ministry of Bishops and other ministers to only be

justifiable if they serve mission. 'The structures of the Anglican Communion, from parish to diocese to the Lambeth Conference, must be judged by how far they assist God's people to hear and answer God's call' (Ibid: 1.6).

The second section – *Called to Live the Good News* – has a few things to take note of as well. Firstly, the emphasis placed on living the Good News by modelling a full humanity (Called: 2.1). It includes some challenges to modelling Jesus in his interaction with a broken and lost world (Ibid: 2.2f). Worth noticing is the comment in 2.4 para.1, that in bringing people into our fellowship with Jesus we can't insist that they fall in with how we do and organize things. As stated in the next paragraph, 'mission itself changes and renews the Church'. In 2.5 it refers to Base Ecclesial Communities as an example and 2.7 refers to the local church as a primary agent in mission.

The third and last section – *Called to Proclaim the Good News* – again emphasizes that proclamation must be expressed authentically in our cultures (Ibid: 3.4) and that the Gospel is translatable, including by the shape of the church (Ibid: 3.5).

Overall, one can see how the 1988 and 1998 conferences were grappling with the need to be a church that is thoroughly caught up in the mission of God and to let this have precedence over a fear of change. There is also a good and helpful Pauline influence in the 'in Christ' comments.

5.1.2. The Mandates for Change

5.1.2.1. The 'Measure for Measures' Mandate

The Review of the Dioceses and Pastoral and related Measures Working Group was

appointed by the Archbishops' Council at the end of 2000[14] with the following terms of

reference:

> To review in consultation with the dioceses, the current commissioners, the
> Dioceses Commission and other interested parties, the provisions and
> operation of the Dioceses Measure 1978, the Pastoral Measure 1983, the
> Team and Group Ministries Measure 1995 and related Measures, in order to
> ensure flexible and cost effective procedures which fully meet changing
> pastoral and mission needs, and to report with recommendations, to the
> Archbishops' Council by the summer of 2003.
>
> (Appendix 3: vii)

In other words, being flexible in meeting changing pastoral and mission needs was seen as a

priority and desirable.

There were mixed responses from the 'rank and file' however, when the working group were

appointed. Some thought the present measure adequate and should be left alone as they had

served them well enough to date (Appendix 3: ix). Others thought significant changes were

seriously needed, while still others thought the work group should recommend that they begin

afresh with totally new and radically enabling measures (Ibid).

However, it became clear that the majority were convinced that the 'baby should not be

thrown out with the bath water' (Ibid), but that significant change was needed. The working

group therefore felt that the changes were needed to ensure far more flexibility suiting

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[14] This review group was chaired by professor Dr Peter Toyne and was published for General Synod as, *A Measure for Measures: In Mission and Ministry,* but is sometimes known as the Toyne Report. I shall refer to it as the 'MM' report.

different local needs and new ways of being church. They were determined that their

decisions and recommendations be rooted in an ecclesiological understanding of the issues

involved and therefore consulted a theological advisor, Dr Malcolm Brown (Ibid). I will deal

with his theological guidance separately and show how the report made use of his advice.

5.1.2.2. The 'Mission-Shaped Church' Mandate

The 1991 House of Bishops Standing Committee called for the formation of a working party

on 'church planting'. Their work became known as the 1994 report - *Breaking New Ground:*

church planting in the Church of England (BNG, 1994).

The *Breaking New Ground* (BNG) report set out to recommend good practice for church

planting and to address the difficulties raised by the unauthorised plants. It is significantly

the first formal document in which the Church of England owned 'planting' as a missionary

strategy. The chair of BNG, Bishop Patrick Harris, made clear what the report had found and

was wanting to propose.

> The conclusion of the present report is that the structures and Canons of the
> Church of England are flexible enough to allow Bishops to encourage and
> to enable Church Planting to take place in their dioceses. Where there is
> goodwill on both sides, new congregations can be planted even across the
> boundaries of parishes, deaneries and dioceses.
>
> (BNG: 1994, v)

The *Mission-Shaped Church* (MSC) review group were mandated with essentially two tasks:

to review progress in church planting since the publication of *Breaking New Ground* in 1994,

and to comment on the range of new forms of church which had emerged over much the

same period[15].

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[15] *Mission-Shaped Church.* Minutes of the General Synod of the Church of England, February 2004

5.1.3. A Theology for Change

5.1.3.1. The Theology Behind the 'Measures' Report

In the 'Toyne', or 'Measures' report[16] a copy of an essay by their theological advisor, Revd Dr Malcolm Brown from Cambridge, is included as appendix 1. It is entitled, *Whose Church? Which Culture?: Discerning the Missionary Structures for Tomorrow*. The report makes use of this essay throughout and demonstrates its dependence on it[17].

His title alludes to the 1988 book by the moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre called, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Appendix 3: 113). MacIntyre considered a tradition to have died when it ceased to be an on-going debate about what it means to live within that tradition. In such a case it becomes a mere 'repetition of decontextualised habit' (Ibid). Brown sums up MacIntyre's argument by saying, '… the kind of vibrant tradition that forms community is simultaneously in touch with its roots, aware of the story of how it got from there to here, and argues within itself about where to go next' (Ibid).

5.1.3.1.1. A Theology of the Interim

Brown's starting point is what he calls, 'A Theology of the Interim' (Appendix 3: 107-108). As he cautions the C of E to allow for mistakes and leave room for repentance and forgiveness when such mistakes are made, he stresses this key issue within an eschatological understanding of the Church.

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[16] *A Measure for Measures: In Mission and Ministry: Report of the Review of the Dioceses, Pastoral and related Measures*. (for the Archbishops' Council), 2004.
[17] I have included it in this dissertation as Appendix 3 and will refer to it as 'Appx 3' throughout.

This is the 'age between Pentecost (with the saving work of Christ culminating in the resurrection and the Spirit present within the created order) and the Parousia when God will bring all things into fulfilment in Himself", an age where, '… grace is a present reality but where sin persists' (Ibid). He explains the Kingdom of Heaven as, 'inaugurated but not yet comprehended in its fullness' (Ibid). In this 'interim' where human endeavour is corrupted, Christians are still called to 'seek the Kingdom, to prefigure its life in their own lives and to bring its values closer on earth as in heaven' (Ibid).

He explained to the group that because actions taken faithfully can turn out to be in error, the structural level of our corporate relationships should make provision for restoration. In other words the 'medium can be a part of the message' (Ibid: 108)[18].

He then moved on to an understanding of the Church.

5.1.3.1.2. The Importance of Ecclesiology

In answering the question, what is meant by 'The Church'? Brown chose to develop this on the model of the Nicene Creed - 'I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church' (Ibid: 108-114) .

The creed, according to Brown, is not an empirical definition of the church, but is to 'enunciate its vocation and to remind of its aspiration' (Ibid 108). Because of the nature of

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[18] Throughout the essay one notices that the 'interim' theology he began with was not mere theological correctness or an excuse for poor theological decision-making, but a humble conviction reflected in the realistic manner in which he sees the community of faith.

the interim and the flawed reality of the church in its central position in God's purposes in the world, Brown presents us with the Church's paradoxical ability to reflect this despite its flawed character, and to always keep the two in focus at all times (Ibid). Part of the struggle he explains, is to maintain the balance between the adjectives in this creedal statement. The Church throughout history, as he points out, has tended to focus on one or the other.

> So the empirical Church is demonstrably not one, its holiness is often suspect, its catholicity damaged and its apostolicity questionable! And yet it is in the striving after these virtues that its character becomes clear.
>
> (Appendix 3: 108)

Why is an understanding of the Church in this sense important to him? Although our ecclesiology comes from the New Testament, he says that we need to remember when reasoning deductively from these texts and reflecting on their application in our own context, that we are dealing with people who were themselves exploring their contexts and situations in the light of their convictions of Christ and his living presence with his people (Ibid: 108-109). Their identity as a transformed people, 'bound together by their experience of the Holy Spirit … rooted in the teaching, the death and the resurrection of Jesus', produced this identity (Ibid). In other words, they were a people on mission as they formed their ecclesiology. 'Mission comes before ecclesiology' (Ibid: 109).

With this in mind, Brown doubts that God had a 'blueprint' of the shape the church should take, safely guarded and passed on to the Apostles. The existing church added to their number only because they were certain of their relationship with the risen Christ and that 'that relationship had consequences for all their relationships' (Ibid). In his words,

> Ecclesiology is nothing more or less than the way the people of God work out their relationship with Christ, with each other and with the world. Without a framework on those issues mission cannot happen (Whose mission would it be? And how would we know?).
>
> (Ibid: 109)

With Brown the emphasis is clearly not on the modern day consumer as he/she chooses Christ and then chooses a church to go to, but rather on ecclesiology that rests on the rich story of the activity of the Holy Spirit in and through our relationships, neighbourliness and context (Ibid).

5.1.3.1.3. One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church

The following then, is a basic summary of Brown's view of this Nicene Creedal statement.

One:

Brown's view is that the church being 'one' requires us to understand that God, who is One, created it as one body and because Christ prayed for it to be one (Ibid)[19]. The fact that the Church is divided is a 'scandal and a short-falling', but it has always had divisions about the 'nature … of the Way' (Ibid). These were brought on mostly because of the universal mission from Judaism outwards and the growing Christian community felt the strains of loyalty and social difference (Ibid)[20]. Therefore he concludes,

> Unity is a mark of the Kingdom fulfilled – a central element in our eschatological hope. But, in the theological Interim, unity is like many virtues - its nature uncovered in the act of pursuing it'. That is not to acquiesce in disunity. Schism is a stumbling block to faith. But till all things are made clear at the coming of God's Kingdom, faithful Christians will come to different conclusions about the Christ-like life, Unity, then, may sit in tension with holiness.
>
> (Ibid: 110)

Holy:

It is about reflecting the divine nature, and so is beyond human attainment in this fallen world, in its fullness (Ibid 110). However, because our understanding of being a holy people

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[19] Deut 6:4 and John 17:22 are Brown's examples.
[20] Acts 10:44 – 11:18; 15:1-11 and 1 Corinthians 1 are examples Brown gives.

(1 Peter 1:16) stems from the conviction of God's saving love, especially 'revealed in the crucified and risen Christ, a relationship with God and a sacrificial way of life must be central' (Ibid).

Brown argues that in our call to be holy there is a 'strong corporate framework rather than an individualistic or consumerist one' (Ibid). Furthermore, 'the saving love of God revealed in the crucified and risen Christ' must, lead to a relationship.

> In Pauline teaching the Church is never a holiness sect which withdraws from contact with a profane world. The complexities of a Public Theology, expressing the Christian concern for the welfare of the whole created order and recognizing that the faithful remain citizens of this world, are essential elements in seeking holiness.
>
> (Ibid: 110)

To prevent the slide into exclusivity, Brown advocates 'Authenticity' – 'The Church's task is to live authentically in the light of its knowledge of God and its grasp of scripture and tradition…'(Ibid: 111), and so the Church ought to create structures in which they can together think theologically in order to discern an authentic life without compromise.

Catholic:

Brown firstly defines 'catholic' in creedal terms – it involves 'embracing difference – the conviction that understanding the demands of the Gospel differently for different contexts does not mean separation from the Body of Christ' (Ibid: 111).

In historic terms, however, he reminds us that there have been severe limits to such catholicity. However, he calls for an understanding of what is essential and what is peripheral to the Gospel (Ibid: 111), thus protecting the essential bond between Christians..

However, Brown says that this world-wide bond, or catholicity, infers the existence of

boundaries and limits to fellowship because there are those who obviously do not belong

(Ibid 112). He cautions us to hold this together with an awareness that human judgements on

such things are often flawed. He therefore adds,

> The process for deciding the degree of diversity which can authentically be
> represented within the church must be participative, deeply careful and
> prayerful, if it is not to fall into the trap of capricious authoritarianism …
> where faithful Christians may honestly disagree … The Holy Spirit moves
> within the community and is not the possession of any grouping. God
> continues to be revealed in the created order and God's 'prevenient grace'
> touches where the empirical Church often does not … It is one task of
> Christians to redress that balance in each other and to be open to having the
> balance redressed in themselves through fellowship with other Christians.
>
> (Ibid: 112)

Apostolic:

He takes the line that the apostolic nature of the church is one of 'continuity' and of 'role'

(Ibid: 112). Continuity with the apostles who responded to the crucified and risen Lord and

received the Holy Spirit, but then also participated in Christ's role of being 'sent'(Ibid).

In the word 'Apostolic', according to Brown, is a dynamic implication – it implies 'action,

purpose and place' (Ibid). 'Sent' is explained in terms of 'apostleship' being extended to

include Paul and the church in their mandate to the world and not only the original twelve

(Ibid). 'Continuity' is explained not as an unbroken chain of laying-on-of-hands but as a

symbolic expression of the idea of the apostolic literary corpus being passed on from

generation to generation – which tells the church something important about the historic unity

of the faith (Ibid: 113).

> If we want to judge whether a particular development in Church life is
> authentic, one measure is the degree to which change can be seen as
> building upon, rather than devaluing, what is gone before. This is not just
> about an innate conservatism. Rather, the apostolic principle involves a
> radicalism which recognises the good faith and Christian commitment of
> every generation, each of which sought to continue the apostolic mission …
> and each of which was flawed in some respect. In that sense, the apostolic

> principle is like an imaginative conversation between the Church of the present and every previous generation of Christians.

<div align="right">(Appendix 3: 113)</div>

If this is not so, the tradition of the Church remains only as a 'repetition of decontextualised habit' (Ibid).

Apostolicity also, according to Brown, lies in the Church's remembrance of that decisive apostolic event of the Eucharist which becomes for Paul the tradition he passes on to them in an attempt to seal their unity[21]. The Eucharist, he says, 'brings together the Church as one, holy and apostolic'. By this he means the Eucharist symbolises our unity as God's people 'in Christ' and in His election as God's sent-Son in His sacrificial service of rescue (Ibid).

In conclusion, he considers these four adjectives to be 'throwing up some common tensions' such as between mission and structure –different models of Authority (Ibid). It is his opinion that the nature of the church in the interim is to live with tensions and that it will not find final solutions this side of the eschaton (Ibid). He says that the tensions are at the heart of Anglicanism (in its broad inclusivism). It should be seen as a theological and ecclesiological mark of its authenticity as a Church (Ibid).

5.1.3.1.4. Anglicanism

With the above-mentioned argument, Brown goes on to deduce that the Anglican Church is a valid expression of the true Church as it lives with diversity and tensions (Ibid 114). The set of tensions or 'quadrilateral' being held together by the C of E as a 'dynamic of virtues' are: scripture; tradition; reason; and experience (Ibid) - as in Figure 9 (Figures are my own).

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[21] 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 is referred to at this point.

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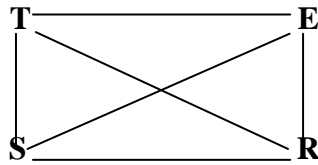
Figure 9

It is this that gives Anglicanism a mature grasp of the 'nature of a Kingdom Church within a fallen world', according to Brown (Ibid). The legal structures safeguard this tension against the personal allegiances of those holding ecclesial power (i) or the vagaries of fashion (ii) from eliminating or disregarding any one of the long-standing traditions within the Church (points of the quadrilateral as seen in Figure 10) overnight, so to speak (Ibid:115).

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┌─────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────┐
│  Anglo-Catholic │        │   Alternate     │
│     Bishop      │        │   worship       │
│       (i)     T─┼────────┼─E   (ii)        │
└───────────────┼─┼────────┼─┼───────────────┘
                │  \      /  │
                │   \    /   │      ⇐ Structural
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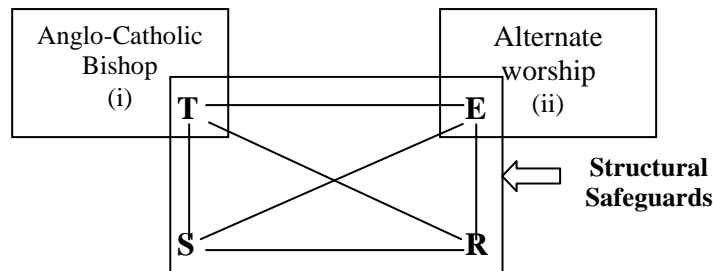
Figure 10

What followed was a discussion of the contemporary culture and that the Church ought to respond with a proper theological 'suspicion that important aspects of the nature of God and of being human are being obscured' (Ibid: 117). That said, there is an encouragement to the C of E to 'enable change and experiment' in the Church's mission and ministry (Ibid: 118). It is,

> …less about what we do than about opening up new possibilities for God to work in us. Mission may be less about building up the temporal, empirical, church (although that is a vital means) than about participating with God in making the Word incarnate.
>
> (Ibid: 119)

5.1.3.1.5. Mission and the Changing Church

As an illustration he takes us back to Sheffield in the 1940's, and the Industrial Mission (IM) set up by Bishop Leslie Hunter (Ibid: 120). Hunter did not set out to bring pastoral care to the workers or to persuade them to return to church. He believed that the church at that time was apostate and had mistaken bourgeois values for Christian ones. He wanted to spend time with these men, listening to the lives and stories of those the church had neglected. Impressive as his attempts were, I think he was seen as an 'authorised subversive' and the IM was frozen out and cut off when his successor tried to turn the venture into the more traditional ('get them to church') mission (Ibid)[22].

Again Brown uses an apt example, this time from 1985, when an analysis was done of an IM by Shigeko Masumoto, a Japanese Christian (Ibid:120). She developed the concept of the 'missiological gap' where a triangle (Figure 11) depicted the relationship between the Kingdom of God, the Church and the World (each axis being a gap). She then asked which 'gap' mission seeks to address. Her insight impacts directly on Brown's essay.
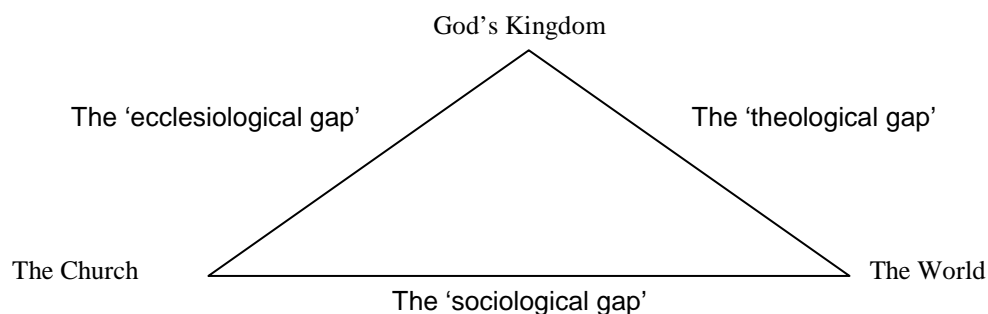
Figure 11

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[22] Interestingly, this initiative was close to the type of thinking and activity that is being called 'mission-shaped church' today and which these review groups have been called upon to accommodate. It is also the conviction of other independent missional communities, such as the Crowded House Network, to have a 'go to them' posture as a church community instead of a 'come to us'. This naturally has led to a variety of expressions of church. See http://www.thecrowdedhouse.org/ and the link to their 'Values'.

To explain the 'gaps' the following summary of the argument could be made (Ibid):

- Mission seen from the 'sociological gap' perspective is concerned with asking how the Church can attract people to it and how it can make the Gospel intelligible.

- Mission in the 'theological gap' is the task the church has in helping God's Kingdom come on earth as is in heaven, or in affecting change in the world.

- Mission in the 'ecclesiological gap' is when the Church recognises that it fails to mirror the values and nature of the Kingdom as well as it could.

Brown's opinion is that the second 'gap' (theological) is what most Christians see the purpose of mission (the *missio dei*) to be concerned with (Ibid:120). However, he and Masumoto claim that the real change in the church's mission effectiveness takes place in the third (Ecclesiological). 'Whilst the world remains fallen', he says, 'and Christians remain in the world, the Church must attend to its failings and be radicalised by visions of the Kingdom presented afresh' (Ibid:121). The gap between the Kingdom and the Church is addressed when the church works on authentic discipleship and theological reflection on its essential nature instead of focussing outside of itself. His conclusion at this point is important to hear.

> In the discussions of the Review Group, much of the concern was for experimental mission initiatives which risk either being enculturated into the church-as-it-is, or dying for the lack of a wider community of faith, if they are not understood as having a role in calling the Church to its authentic vocation.
>
> (Appendix 3: 121)

5.1.3.1.6. Incarnation and Atonement

Drawing on Dr John Atherton's book, *Public Theology for Changing Times* (2000)[23], he says that in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century history of the Church of England, the Age of Atonement gave way to the Age of Incarnation (Ibid: 127). The focus on atonement, as depicted in Figure 12 (Figures are my own), caused the church to preach a 'drawing out' of the faithful from a corrupt and corrupting world into a church that sought to be a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven[24]. Perhaps this foretaste was never really intended to be missional, simply reclusive.
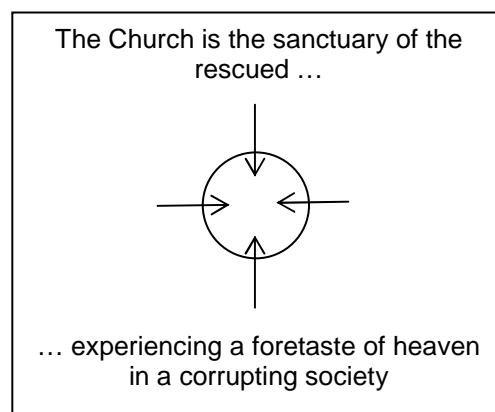
Figure 12

The 'world-denying consequences of that theology' caused a reaction which surfaced the 'equally true doctrine of the incarnation' of God's love in sending His Son (Ibid: 127) (Figure 13).

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[23] John Atherton, *Public Theology for Changing Times*, SPCK, 2000.
[24] This drawing out and resulting foretaste, in the context of this essay, is understood as never intending to be missional by doing this, but simply reclusive.

The Church is the sanctuary of the rescued in incarnational rescue …

… participating with God in His mission in a corrupting society
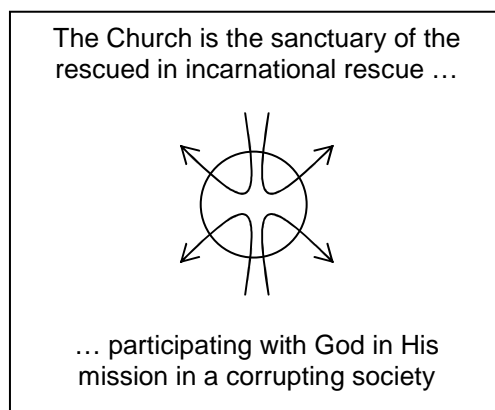
Figure 13

It is Brown's opinion that we may be experiencing a second Age of Atonement (Figure 14) as,

> … the counter-culture nature of Christian discipleship is thrown into sharp relief by the knowledge that God's hand can too quickly be identified in the mirage of cultural 'progress'
>
> (Appendix 3: 127)

The Church is present in the life of the world as counter-culture disciples …

… demonstrating & offering in foretaste what a corrupting world needs
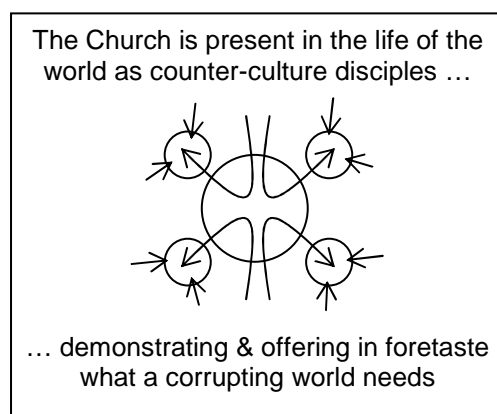
Figure 14

He calls for both to be present in the Christian life and the ordering of the Church.

> Changing times require a church that is responsive but is nonetheless deeply rooted in the Christian identity … Uncertain times require that we are a church which maintains the conversation about what that Christian identity entails – a conversation conducted not just in words but in action, ways of being community, and "practices of piety".
>
> (Ibid: 127)

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Brown ends his theological essay to the working group by reminding them of a few things arising from the essay:

- We are the body of Christ

- The members of the body bring with them their uniqueness, their perspective, their partiality and fallibility and most fundamentally, their faith in the crucified and risen Christ.

- Changing, uncertain and unsettling times will generate wildly diverse opportunities for mission and ministry.

- Fragmenting times will mean that no one size fits all. Yet …

- We are still members of one another, expressed in part by membership of one Church of England.

And so I close this section with Brown's own intention for the 'Measures' report.

> It is the intention of this report to make a contribution to the liberation of church structures so that ways forward may one day become evident from a plethora of possibilities. Possibilities which are properly constrained by a theology of the One Body, which recognises the propensity of churches to the sin of division. But possibilities also which might wean God's people away from unworthy dependency on outward manifestations of church life which no longer communicates properly the inward spiritual reality.
>
> (Ibid: 128)

5.1.3.2. The Theology Behind the 'Mission-Shaped Church' Report

Cray's conviction concerning the place and timing of the MSC report is well express in the report itself,

> … the time has come to ensure that any fresh expressions of church that emerge within the Church of England, or are granted a home within it, are undergirded by an adequate ecclesiology…

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> The Church of England needs to be true to the gospel and its own history
> while engaging adequately with the society in which we now live. The
> intention here is not primarily to provide a blanket theological underpinning
> for all new forms of church, but to suggest some theological principles that
> should influence all decisions about the shape of the Church of England at
> this time of missionary opportunity.
>
> <div align="right">(MSC, 84)</div>

The focus on the report's theology[25] is not as clearly structured as one would have liked, so I will gather and summarise the essence of its orientation under my own headings.

5.1.3.2.1. God Speaks Clearly, So Must The Church

From pages 84 to 93 an attempt is made to demonstrate that God has always had a mission in this world and that the nature of that mission has been Trinitarian and relational and has therefore never ignored the need to communicate intelligibly within the cultural contexts of this fallen world. He does this mainly under the heading, 'Salvation History' (MSC: 84).

Foundationally, Cray would have us understand that knowing God as Trinity is fundamental to all that follows. God, he says, has always and only been known through his 'outgoing movement of generosity' and never simply as a relationship 'closed in on itself' (Ibid: 85). Therefore God has been known and experienced in two great mission activities (Ibid):

- as creator, through Christ, in the power of the Spirit, to bring into being and sustain the whole creation

- as redeemer, through Christ, in the power of the Spirit, to reconcile the fallen creation[26].

---

[25] In Chapter five of *Mission-Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing society*

He makes the point that God's mission is 'cosmic in scope', concerned with the 'restoration of all things' – the renewal of creation as well as 'the redemption of fallen humanity and the building of the Church' (Ibid)[27]. This mission is from the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Spirit. But the place of the Church in this mission is expressed by him as 'both the fruit of God's mission – those whom he has redeemed, and the agent of his mission – the community through whom he acts for the world's redemption' (Ibid). Quoting James Torrance[28], he says,

> The mission of the Church is the gift of participating through the Holy Spirit in the Son's mission from the Father to the World.
>
> (MSC: 85)

He stresses that the very DNA of the Church is to be a missionary community (Ibid). Because of this emphasis right at the outset of the chapter on theology, it becomes clear that to Cray, church planting should never be 'church centred' – a device to perpetuate an institution for that institution's own sake. Rather it is to be an 'expression of the mission of God'. In fact he quotes Robin Greenwood[29] who said,

> What is mission if not the engagement with God in the entire enterprise of bringing the whole of creation to its intended destiny? A local church cannot claim to be part of this if it only serves itself.
>
> (Ibid: 85)

In other words we are stewards of the Good news of what God has done for us through Christ in His incarnation, atonement, resurrection and ascension (Ibid: 85-86). But to 'expression', this is more than a simple verbal stewardship, according to Cray. In probably one of his most succinct statements he states,

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[26] Referring to Colossians 1:20.
[27] Here Cray draws on Stuart Murray, the Anabaptist, and his book, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*, Paternoster Press, 1998 : 31.
[28] From, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*, Paternoster, 1996: ix
[29] In *Practicing Community,* SPCK, 1996: 28

It is the work of the Spirit to empower the Church to preach and embody that gospel in ways appropriate to each cultural context.

(MSC, 86)

This brings him to the issue of cultural context. Simply stated, he believes that the Son became a human being in the context of one particular culture, while the salvation he secured is a universal offer (Ibid). Therefore the Spirit, through whom the incarnation occurred, 'inspires and directs the particular form the gospel community takes within each culture' (Ibid).

5.1.3.2.2. The Work of Christ as Pattern

He then proceeds to direct our attention to God's activity through his Son and Spirit within culture while cautioning us of the dangers of syncretism. Therefore, taking the life of Christ as a pattern of mission, he says, draws a parallel for us to follow (Ibid: 87-89)[30].

Incarnation – a world to enter

The revelation of God to all cultures was embodied in one particular cultural identity. If it was necessary for God to do this, it is necessary for us (Ibid: 87). The Gospel can only be proclaimed *in* a culture, not *to* a culture. Cultural solidarity with the Palestinian communities by Christ was a necessary aspect of His mission and the same principle applies to us today. The early Christians did not remain culturally static but translated the good news into other languages and cultures (Ibid).

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[30] Cray is keen to make the point that in speaking of an 'incarnational principle' he is referring to the culture specific nature of Christ's incarnation, and thereby applicable to Christian mission.

The cross – a world to counter

Miroslav Volf[31] is quoted to have said, 'The incarnation of divine love in a world of sin leads to the cross' (Ibid: 87). Jesus, although belonging to His own culture, was critical of it and his obedience to His Father within His culture led to His death. Christians are encouraged by Cray to live according to the call they have received – to live 'within their own culture, under the Lordship of Christ, irrespective of the cost (Ibid). This goes for the Church as a community as well. Therefore an incarnational church,

> …imitates, through the Spirit, both Christ's loving identification with his culture and his costly counter-cultural stance with it. His announcement of, and promise of, God's kingdom cannot be separated from his call to repentance, as the price of entry. Following his example, his Church is called to loving identification with those to whom it is sent, and to exemplify the way of life to which those who repent turn. Otherwise its call to repentance is reduced to detached moralizing.
>
> (MSC, 87-88)

Incarnation and cross – a missionary exchange

What happened in the incarnation was a giving of God in love for others, resulting in rejection and death. It is a similar attitude that Paul had in his missionary approach and understanding – he became all things to all people (Ibid: 88)[32] This exchange is 'relived every time there is an act of inculturation', says Gerald Arbuckle[33] (Ibid: 88). In Philippians chapter 2 Jesus' act of 'missionary exchange' is both a subject of praise and is commended as a pattern of relationships, says Cray. Relationships surely not confined within the church, he says, but between the church and the world as well – that is why the Son of God took flesh (Ibid)!

> If it is the nature of God's love to undertake such sacrifice, it must also be the nature of his church. The Church is most true to itself when it gives itself up, in current cultural form, to be re-formed among those who do not know God's Son. In each new context the Church must die to live.
>
> (Ibid: 89)

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[31] In *Exclusion and Embrace*, Abbingdon Press, 1996: 25.
[32] 1 Corinthians 9:19ff
[33] *Grieving for Change: a Spirituality for Refounding Gospel Communities,* Geoffrey Chapman, 1991: 118.

Resurrection – a world to anticipate

Not only is the resurrection a unique act of God in history, but it is also the power of the future at work in the world today (Ibid: 89). Our work as God's redeemed people, endowed with the first-fruits of his future Kingdom (His Spirit) can now have eternal value as we become pointers to the truth of the promised future. We are, in the words of the report, 'sources of hope, imperfect local pilot plants of God's future world' (Ibid).

5.1.3.2.3. The Spirit of Christ

The work of God's Spirit in our Churches today is expressed in the report as God's gift to us from the future[34].

> The Spirit brings into being, in and through the Church, anticipations of things that Scripture promises for the Last Day … God's Kingdom is where the blind see, the deaf hear and the lame dance for joy. It is a future in which justice comes for the poor, peace to the nations and all visions of race, culture and national identity disappear as we discover we are all family together and we worship our God forever.
>
> (Ibid: 89)

He states that the Church takes its 'missionary form from receiving the gifts of the past and the future' (Ibid: 90). He then says that the C of E needs to learn 'from the Spirit to be more an anticipation of God's future than a society for the preservation of the past' (Ibid). It is 'integral for the Spirit's eschatological ministry – to carry the church forward in mission, anticipating here and now in ever-fresh ways the Father's final eschatological desire' (ibid).

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[34] Here, and in the previous section, Cray shows his absolute reliance on the Christian Scriptures from the following passages: 1 Corinthians 4:5; 11:1; 15; Philippians 3:10; Romans 8:23; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; Hebrews 6:4,5; Acts 1:8. He demonstrates a familiarity with the eschatological age of the Spirit as expounded throughout this dissertation.

5.1.3.2.4. The Church's Missionary Posture

On a cautionary note, Cray highlights the need for contextualization while warning of syncretism (Ibid:90-93). On the one hand he makes the point that many evangelicals have treated contextualization as of limited importance, appropriate only to those preparing to serve overseas. He puts this down to assumptions about Christendom and its blinding affect on our imaginations concerning the form the church could take (Ibid: 90).

Cray refers to the 1997 Lausanne Consultation which observed that contextualization needs to be 'the necessary practice of all churches in mission within their own cultures' (Ibid)[35]. He therefore promotes what has become known as the 'three-way conversation' of inculturation. The partners in the conversation being (Ibid: 91):

- the historic gospel, uniquely revealed in Holy Scripture and embodied in the Catholic Creeds
- the Church, which is engaged in mission, with its own particular culture and history
- the culture within which the Gospel is being shared .

This process, he says, is not possible by an evangelist who analyses a culture and reinterprets the Gospel in its light - this is a superficial adaptation of a message. The process ought always to be, as far as possible, a community process (Ibid). He is adamant that no serious attempt at this by the C of E can start from a 'fixed view of the outward form of the local church' (Ibid). This in his opinion is a confusing of 'meaning' and 'form'.

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[35] Citing the Report of the Lausanne Haslev Consultation, *Contextualization Revisited*, 1997

On the other hand, in the attempt to be relevant, syncretism is the danger. But that does not

mean to say one should avoid trying to be contextual, or the result could be irrelevance (Ibid).

The key, according to Cray, is in the example of Paul in 1 Corinthians 9.

> Although at home with his Jewish culture, his approach is 'to the Jew I became as a Jew'. *His identity is now found in the Messiah.* This puts a critical distance between him and his former way of life, and, at the same time, frees him to enter and value other cultures.
>
> <div align="right">(Ibid: 92. Emphasis mine)</div>

In my conversation with Cray in London, during the 10th Annual Anglican Church Planting

Conference (2004), it became clear that he has much praise for Michael Nazir-Ali's book,

Future Shapes of the Church, where he speaks of a 'double listening' between the apostolic

tradition and the present context. I detected just as much excitement from Cray concerning

Vincent Donovan's methodology and insights. Donovan's missionary experience amongst

the Masai in the 1960s gave him a particularly missional outlook to church planting. His

comment on encountering youth in the West was one which Cray kept bringing the

conference back to, and from which he draws in MSC.

> … do not try to call them [post-Christian youth] back to where they were, and do not try to call them to where you are, beautiful as that place may seem to you. You must have the courage to go with them to a place that neither you nor they have been before.
>
> <div align="right">(Ibid: 93)[36]</div>

5.1.3.2.5. Salvation History and the *Missio Dei*

According to Cray, the Church is God's community with a divine mandate to reproduce and

to fill creation (Ibid: 93). This dimension, he claims, is essential to any missionary

ecclesiology (Ibid). In expressing his theology for a missional Church, Cray sketches a quick

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[36] Donovan's preface to the second edition of his book, *Christianity Rediscovered*, SCM Press, 2001.

picture of God's dealings with his people throughout Biblical history showing the

reproductive purposes God has for the sake of His world (Ibid: 93-96)

From Genesis he shows how even before the fall, God intended his people to reproduce and

fill the earth in order to govern it rightly. He likens this to Jesus as the Second Adam and

Lord of the Church calling us to be a new humanity, reproducing ourselves through mission,

and so filling the earth (Ibid: 93).

God's covenant with Abraham and His purpose for humanity is highlighted as the promise of

offspring as numerous as the stars and the sand. A reproducing community not existing for

itself, but for the blessing of all the families of the earth (Ibid 94). Again, the New Testament

fulfilment of this is seen in John 8 and Galatians 3 in the form of Jesus' followers – the true

children of Abraham (Ibid). He lays emphasis at this point on the pilgrim Nature of God's

people who, although for a time were settled in the land, were uprooted and scattered once

again, while all the time instruments in God's purposes (Ibid).

Here he draws on Lesslie Newbigin, who we have already seen as central to the development

of an eschatological and missional ecclesiology[37]. Newbigin says,

> The church is the pilgrim people of God. It is on the move, hastening to the
> ends of the earth to beseech all men to be reconciled to God, and hastening
> to the end of time to meet its Lord who will gather all into one. Therefore
> the nature of the church is never to be defined in static terms, but only in
> terms of that to which it is going. It cannot be understood rightly except in
> a perspective which is at once missionary and eschatological.
>
> (Newbigin, 1953: 32)

The Gospels, Cray points out, talk in terms of the Kingdom of God disclosed in the Church

(by the time of their writing) as something that grows. He refers to Jesus' parables

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[37] See my previous Chapter 3.3 especially.

concerning reproductive growth, as well as Jesus likening His relationship with His disciples as that of a vine and branches in John 15. The purpose of remaining in the vine is to produce fruit to God's glory, but the purpose of fruit is reproduction – so it is, he says, with Christ and His church (Ibid:94)[38].

The young church in Acts and the Epistles is an account not only of mission, but of the results of mission – churches. Church planting was at the heart of Paul's mission, as seen in Romans 15:23 when he was eager to move on to the ends of the known world (Ibid: 95).

Again we can learn from Newbigin, as Cray cites him (Ibid).

> What, exactly, has Paul done? Certainly not converted all the populations of those regions. Certainly not solved their social and economic problems. He has in his own words 'fully preached the gospel' and left behind communities of men and women who believe the gospel and live by it.
> (Newbigin, 1989: 121)

As Cray says, the story of the young church bears witness to a church born to reproduce; not just planting churches, but with an 'ecclesiological instinct for furthering God's mission' (Ibid).

Key to the report is the undergirding understanding that this is indeed God's mission – *Missio Dei*. We see this in the introduction when it says,

> We have entitled this report *Mission-Shaped Church*. This echoes two themes within this report: that the Church is the fruit of God's mission, and that as such it exists to serve and participate in the ongoing mission of God.
> (MSC: xii)

Also throughout the report there is a reminder of this fact. The report says that: the Church derives its 'self-understanding from the *missio dei*' (Ibid: 20, 81), *missio dei* expresses the

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[38] Fruit is not an end in itself – to be eaten – but natures way of reproducing. The purpose of fruit for reproduction is an interesting illustration, as producing fruit must include making disciples (context of John 15).

triune nature of God (Ibid: 85) as creator and redeemer; the Church comes into being because of the *missio dei* (Ibid); church planting must be an expression of the *missio dei* and not about perpetuating an institution (Ibid).

In considering the ultimate destiny of the Church when its mission and planting will cease, one is forced again to consider its present character. It is to be a foretaste of the coming Kingdom – 'an imperfect anticipation of God's future world' – not a 'preservation of earlier cultural forms' (ibid).

> The inevitable weakness and sinfulness of the Church at any particular time cannot simply be excused, but it is, through God's grace, the place where forgiveness and the power for a change of life can be seen and experienced.
>
> (Ibid: 96)

In short, the Church, he says, participates in the life of God. As it does so it is not only a sign and an instrument of the truth of the gospel, but a genuine foretaste of God's Kingdom, 'called to show forth visibly, in the midst of history, God's final purposes for humanity' (Ibid: 95).

5.1.3.2.6. The Nicene Nature of the Church

Once again the Church as 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic' is used as the classic marks of the true church (Ibid: 96-99). This time we are told it reminds us of the true nature of its calling and can also be a call to repentance (Ibid). What interpretation does Cray attribute to this creedal statement?

The Church is One

The Church is one through baptism and this, he says, is integral to mission (Ibid). In its oneness there is necessarily diversity (the mission Church's catholic nature). In reproducing itself the church ought not to clone and make 'more of the same', but to take on a diversity of appropriate forms in different cultures while remaining essentially one (Ibid).

In order to make this point he uses the oneness and diversity of the Trinity in two ways:

- our relationships within a community of whatever size should express the nature of God or it will only be held together by 'organizational artificial glue' (Ibid: 99), and
- inter-church relationships. He urges 'fresh expressions' and more traditional churches to live interdependently with one another in our multi-layered network society (Ibid: 96).

The Church is Holy

Set apart for God's missionary purposes as expressed in 1 Peter 2:9, 'in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light' (Ibid: 96-97). He categorically claims that a church that is separate, even distinct, but not involved in the mission of its Lord cannot claim to be holy. This leads to a distinctively holy life – becoming like God in holiness and a willingness to die to ones own comforts and live for God's preferences (Ibid:97). Without this gradual transforming occurring, he says we are 'only playing liturgical games or having charismatic caresses' (Ibid). In true church planting terms he says that it, 'is a holy Church that is willing to die to its own culture in order to live for God in another' (Ibid).

The Church is Catholic

Cray's definition of Catholicity is 'that which accords to wholeness', not global uniformity, but an invitation to inclusion(Ibid)[39].

In practical terms, the local church must be seen to be relating –the local with the wider Church (we came from something larger), the contemporary with the historical (we can be proud of and learn from those before us), the militant with the triumphant (celebrating the connection at worship times) (Ibid: 99).

The church then is a place where all nations can find a home and therefore embraces diverse ways of believing and worshipping. He calls it 'cultural hospitality' (Ibid:97). But because it is one, set apart, inclusively hospitable church, it must imply limits to its catholicity (Ibid). Those limits are focused on the fact that there is one Christ, the Christ of Scripture. Again, on the missional nature of catholicity he says,

> When catholicity is understood as an invitation to cultural hospitality, effective Christian mission will inevitably raise questions of unity and of reconciliation. In the New Testament it was the Gentile mission (preaching the Gospel to people 'not like us') that led both to necessary diversity in the New testament Church, and to conflict and a challenge to reconciliation.
> (Ibid: 97-98)

On a practical note, and to maintain this inclusiveness in the one, set apart church, he urges churches to give a new plant space to mature and to develop its own identity so that they can mutually enrich one another as adults (Ibid: 98).

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[39] Here he shows his agreement with Stephen Cotrell, *Sacrament, Wholeness and Evangelism*, Grove Evangelism 33, 1999:9

The Church is Apostolic

This is where most interpretations of the creed differ[40]. Cray is convinced that it is here that

the true source of the Church's unity and catholicity is found and is, in fact, the, 'safeguard

that prevents inculturation from becoming syncretism' (Ibid). By this he means that it is the

link between the original message and mission of the Apostles and the task of the Church

today. It is a 'dynamic continuity and spiritual faithfulness of the Church in mission' (Ibid)[41].

He includes an element of both sides of the debate in his interpretation when he says,

> 'Apostolicity requires obedience to the original and fundamental apostolic witness by reinterpretation to meet the needs of each new situation'[42]
>
> … The Church must model the apostolic nature of Christ, if it is to be genuinely Christian. Being apostolic is equally about a future direction as it is about an authorized past … it is apostolic in that it was sent by Jesus: 'so I send you'. But there is more than this functional connection. The Church is apostolic because Jesus was apostolic first. 'As the Father has sent me …'. 'In Christ, God was his own apostle'[43].
>
> (Ibid: 98)

If we lack the dimension of being apostolic in the sense of Jesus being apostolic, he says the

Church is in danger of introspection and becoming fixed and complacent, entering the realm

of disobedience and ignoring the call of the missionary God (Ibid: 99).

5.1.3.3. The Supporting Theology of the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury

The following is from the Keynote Address made by the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, Dr

Rowan Williams, at the 10th Annual Anglican Church Planting Conference in Kensington,

London on the 23rd June 2004.[44] I was privileged enough to have been there, and will be

referring to the page numbers of the transcript of this address as found in Appendix 4.[45]

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[40] See my comparison below ....
[41] He refers here to Paul Avis, *Church, State and Establishment*, SPCK, 2001:2
[42] Citing A.M. Hunter, *P.T. Forsyth Per Crucem ad Lucem*, SCM Press, 1974.
[43] Once again citing A.M. Hunter, *P.T. Forsyth Per Crucem ad Lucem*, SCM Press, 1974.
[44] See Appendix 4 for transcript.
[45] Quotes are from a transcript and are therefore not good grammatically.

He began by stating that the MSC Report had caused the C of E to ask the hard questions concerning why and what the church itself is, and what it was that made it so distinctive right at the beginning of its existence (i).

5.1.3.3.1. Did Jesus Start a Church?[46]

In answering this he wanted to avoid the extremes of thinking, on the one hand, that Jesus founded an institution and on the other, that he simply proclaimed the possibility of salvation for individuals, and that it was quite useful later on for them to get together and compare notes (ii).

By 'institution' he meant the view that Jesus ended his mission by laying down principles for an institution, organized a hierarchy, structured a community, governed, ruled and organized in certain ways, much like a political party is founded (i). Rather, the story as he sees it is that Jesus created a set of relationships with the twelve disciples that survived 'the most traumatic interruption that could possibly be' – he was betrayed by them, their relationship and everything he had built into it was shattered (ii). However,

> … that is the set of relationships that is restored immediately when Jesus rises from the dead and appears not simply to individuals, but to the apostolic company. He brings himself back into that network of relationships which he had created in his ministry and in so doing enables those people to understand the saving reality of his death …
>
> But the point is simply that the church may not be an institution founded by Jesus in the simple sense, but neither is it an afterthought concocted by individual believers who happened to like each others company. The church would be in a very sad state if it was dependant on that!
>
> <div align="right">(ii)</div>

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[46] This and the following headings in this section are mine in an attempt to analyse what he was saying .

5.1.3.3.2. First Principle of a Missionary Theology: understand the Church

In his opinion, the first principle of a missional theology is that the church is 'the event of the new creation'(iii). Seeing the church in this light is in his opinion, 'the principle against which we have to try and test all our attempts to be the church' (iii).

With this he dealt with the structures of the church, which need to serve the essence of what it really is. And so he asked some very clear and important questions for those looking at criteria for the structures of the church (iii):

- Is the church organised in such a way that it looks as if the new creation is happening?

- Do the ways in which people behave, relate, make rules or worship in the Church speak of the new creation?

- Do the ways in which people behave, relate, make rules or worship in the Church let the event of encounter with Jesus happen afresh?

- Are our structures and patterns letting that basic event of encounter with Jesus happen again and again?

He continued by cautioning that if our Churches are not shaped in this way,

> … the church has become something very different from where it started. It's become a community which says once there was an encounter with Jesus and we like to remember that … Now I think the very opposite of that is asking how we have structures that allow the basic event to go on happening. And neither individual conversion alone nor institutional extension alone deals with that. We have to ask much more radically, how do we structure a society in which it goes on being possible, even likely that people will meet Jesus and in meeting Jesus will want more people to meet Jesus?
>
> (iii)

5.1.3.3.3. What is the essential nature of the Church?

His definition of what the Church is could be summed up as, relationships of people gathered

by Jesus – the effect of Jesus being amongst us, the start of the new creation … the

reclaiming of his creation. Or in his own words,

> Not an institution designed to further a programme, not an association of
> people who happen to have the same ideas, but the beginning of God's
> reclaiming of the territory of human life and not just human life either,
> God's reclaiming of creation as his own and God's pouring into creation of
> his saving and transfiguring power so that the world, human and non human
> will once again show radiantly who and what he is as God.
>
> (ii)

5.1.3.3.4. How do we best ensure a continuing encounter with Jesus?

He placed much stress on the preaching of the Word and celebrating the sacraments (iii)

because he recognises the concern in some quarters over 'fresh expressions' of church living

too lightly in regard to these.

Why does he stress these? Because it is in these activities where, 'that living and

transforming encounter with Jesus goes on happening' (iii).

> The point of celebrating Holy Communion is not to remember an encounter
> with Jesus that happened to somebody else long ago, it is to be
> contemporary with Jesus, to share his table and to share his life … As we
> read the bible as we hear the word preached … that is encounter.
>
> (iii)

Williams also urged them to realise that the encounter with Jesus needs to also happen

outside of the regular internal life of the church. He called for,

> … structures that enable encounter for the first time, that enable encounter
> that cuts across people's expectations and loyalties, encounter that really
> creates new community … We're not too bad at the conservative structures
> of word and sacrament, we are learning rather slowly about the structures

that enable utterly fresh encounter, utterly unexpected transforming creative encounter.

<div align="right">(iv)</div>

5.1.3.3.5. What if it is not particularly Anglican?

Concerning Anglicanism and these 'fresh encounters', he encouraged delegates to challenge their 'self-protective nervousness' where they first want things to be 'co-opted into our culture' (v), where other people must use words and do things that are similar to us and to rather start thinking more missionally.

5.1.3.3.6. Second Principle of a Missionary Theology: be patient

His second missionary principle, if the first was the recognition that the Church is the event of the new creation, is patience (v). He made the distinction between proper patience and proper impatience. There ought to be a proper impatience about mission because 'we really want the encounter to happen' for people. But it must be mixed with patience because of the,

> … extraordinarily complex ways in which people move into [an encounter with Jesus] and discover this and test the words on their tongue and find their way into a conversation with each other and with their living God which is real and authentic.

<div align="right">(v)</div>

This patience also includes a patience in mixing in a missional church with people who are very different from ourselves. He encouraged a healthy understanding of the catholicity of the Church when he said,

> In the church we neither say well you go your way and I'll go mine. Nor do we say there is one way of worshipping the Lord and its mine and you have to learn it. In the church, we are always uncomfortably watching and listening to each other worshipping, encountering … we ought to be doing it, not just with discomfort but with that hopefulness that says when you encounter Jesus Christ, there will be something that I wouldn't have known for myself … "I couldn't possibly take in the riches of Christ, it is

<div align="center">177</div>

unthinkable therefore I need as many people around to listen to as I can find".

<div align="right">(vi)</div>

It is in remembering this second principle of mission, what he provocatively calls 'passionate patience' (vi), that he finds the balance of the continual renewal in encountering Jesus. This patience will be passionate about three things:

- discipline

- the regular life of the community

- the external encounter, 'that first generates the excitement and the muddle sometimes, of the new community' (vi).

The balance of these three things in passionate patience is where the life and health of the church lies, he says (vi). It is related to what Williams called, 'mixed economy' church[47] – churches that are not all of one tradition or expression, living and working in the same area for the Gospel. This takes us to the next question.

5.1.3.3.7. How do we Structure a Missional Church?

To structure a church like this, he admitted, calls for a high degree of discernment in order to not simply tolerate one another, but to recognise 'Christ-like holiness … across the different styles, emphases and priorities around in the church. So that we can recognise the kinship of those who have met Christ' (vi). He knows that it is not structures, but only God who can do away with these problems. However, he believes that structures can help the lines of communication so that 'mainstream' churches will not feel threatened by fresh expressions

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[47] A phrase coined by him earlier (MSC, 2004: 26), in an article entitled, *Good News in Whales*.

and that the wheel will not need to be reinvented by the newer churches. These structures need to be, 'more permissive than prescriptive' (viii). This is where he believes the good ordained minister can help – a minister who can 'interpret people and communities to each other, one who can sustain a relational unity rather than just a legal or formal one …' (vii).

5.1.3.3.8. Concluding Concerns

One notes an element of apprehension in some of his closing statement concerning some of the 'fresh expressions' of church that could perhaps be a little too vague in their orthodoxy, promoting a mystical experience and nothing more. He wanted to promote a conservatism which ensured that all encounters with Jesus are encounters with the real Jesus of Galilee and Jerusalem – an encounter with,

> … a highly specific cluster of events - a life, a death and a resurrection - not just a generalised spirituality … We are not out to make people feel better, to make people feel spiritual, to give people a set of experiences that will enable them to do their daily jobs less stressfully. All that would be very nice but that is not actually what the gospel says. The gospel says that you are, we are, profoundly at odds with … what the Gospel says we are meant to be …and that only by listening and absorbing into our very being the love of God in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness and absolution it involves. Only by that do we overcome the enmity of ourselves and to our maker. That is not guaranteed to make you feel better overnight but it is guaranteed to transform you.
>
> <div align="right">(viii-ix)</div>

He closed by stating that our confidence ought not to be 'in ourselves or the Church of England or in the establishment institutionally or in new churches or old, emerging or retracting churches but to be confident in the love of God in Jesus Christ' (ix).

5.2. The Church of Scotland (C of S)

The second case study of a National Church, or denomination, within a post-Christian environment that I will include in this final chapter is of the Church of Scotland (C of S). I will not go into the depth I went for the C of E for two reasons: My church roots were in the C of E and it relates to my point of departure in my Introduction; and the theological basis of the C of S report is a lot simpler.

The shape of the missional Church initiatives that have come out of the C of S are similar to their Episcopal neighbours in England[48]

5.2.1. The Mandate from the General Assembly

In 1999 the General Assembly appointed a Special Commission, 'to re-examine in depth the primary purposes of the Church and the shape of the Church of Scotland as we enter into the next Millennium; to formulate proposals for a process of continuing reform; to consult on such matters with other Scottish Churches; and to report to the General Assembly of 2001' (CWW: 6)[49].

The result was the publishing of the report called, *A Church without Walls*. The metaphor of 'Church without Walls' conveyed many things to many people, liberating the church to find its identity as a Christ-centred community, rather than institutional boundaries[50].

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[48] Accounts of these can be found at http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/churchwithoutwalls/cwwstories.htm
[49] Sourced from http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/churchwithoutwalls/cwwreports.htm#2001
[50] A definition found on the official Church Without Walls website
http://www.cwwresources.org.uk/ng/about/index.htm

5.2.2. The Theology Behind the 'Church Without Walls' Report

I have sourced the theological thinking of the Special Commission from the report itself, as it permeates the entire document.

5.2.2.1. The Primary Purpose of the Church

The first section of the report is entitled, *The Primary Purpose of the Church.* It refers to the core calling of the church as Jesus' call to us all to 'follow me' (CWW: 8). It seems very simple, but as the report says,

> That core calling takes us back behind the secondary identities of denomination or tradition and calls us to turn again to be people with Jesus at the centre, travelling wherever Jesus takes us.
>
> (Ibid)

It is here that we find a remarkable fact, a National and complex Church was willing to consider a simplification of its ancient structures. For this to happen, the Commission admit it is a risk, but it is a call to 'risk the way of Jesus' (Ibid). I will simply highlight and summarize salient points from the report.

The calling would involve eight facets (CWW: 8-9):

- *personal:* He calls us out of individualism, but our individuality is affirmed. He calls us to personal discipleship.
- *local:* As Jesus came to a place, at a particular time and into a culture, we are to follow Him in the place, time and concrete situations we are in as a local church.

- *Relational:* Rather than institutional, we are called to follow Jesus as he 'leads us into love for God and love for our neighbour, expressed in communities of worship and mission'.

- *Sacrificial:* The call to 'Take up your cross and follow me'. is a costly calling. 'We cannot save and be safe at the same time. The love of security is addictive'. 'The only way to Resurrection is by way of the Cross'.

- *Radical:* Referring to the Sermon on the Mount, the question is posed, does 'our congregational life support us in living out street-level examples of God's Kingdom'? Christians should look more saved if others are going to believe in our Saviour.

- *Global:* As 'Matthew's Gospel begins with representatives of the Gentiles coming to the Messiah and ends with the representatives of the Messiah going to the Gentiles', the local church shares in an international partnership of mission.

- *Eschatological:* 'God's Kingdom is breaking in on us and is coming. The church is a sign and pointer. It is never the end in itself'.

As this is a key component in this dissertation, I will enlarge on this from the report.

> The church shaped by the coming Kingdom will live less by historical precedent and more by the future expectation of becoming part of God's new creation. We participate in God's mission for a redeemed planet and people, and the church is created on the way. It is not that the church 'has' a mission, but the very reverse: the mission of Christ creates his own church.
>
> The eschatological perspective challenges our obsession with buildings and money, releases us from our "structural fundamentalism" to sit lightly to inherited structures. It frees us from anxiety about our changing place in society. According to J.L. Segundo, "it is the situation of Christendom that represents a distortion, or at least an abnormal condition, in the understanding of the church's role in history. The normal condition and the one that is coming back into focus today is that of a creative minority dedicated to the service of the vast majority."
>
> (CWW: 9)

- *Doxological:* 'The church exists by the grace of God and for the glory of God. People worship in response to God's grace. We love because he first loved us'. Therefore, 'the worshipping church is a church soaked in the grace of God'.

Hosea 1:10 is alluded to in the report at this point to remind the C of S that God called them out of nothing and made them His people. Therefore, the church does not exist because there was a 'market' for the perceived needs of society or because of 'favourable conditions'. The important thing is that the people of God are there, they exist because God has done it and this is grace (Ibid).

> This reminder of the church's continued existence by grace alone - a divinely given fact in any cultural context - challenges us to do as the Jews did in Exile, to rebuild God-honouring community in an alien environment, but to do it non-anxiously.
>
> (CWW: 9)

There is a strong sense within the report of the similarity between the age we are living in and the situation of the exile and prophets of the exile (CWW: 12f). In this regard it becomes obvious that there is a resistance to, 'The seductive danger of our managerial culture … to imagine that we are involved in the re-engineering of an organisation' (Ibid). God forced them into an exile away from the structures and safety they were used to, so that they are forced, amongst the idols of a foreign culture, to turn back to God and find 'new ways of expressing that relationship in an alien culture' (Ibid). With this, practical advice is given as to what must be 'broken down' and what must be 'built up' in its place for the C of S (CWW: 12-14).

5.2.2.2. The Shape of the Church

Although this section deals with recommendations of the structure of the Church, local, regional and central, it is nevertheless couched in theological thinking. The fact of the Church being the Body of Christ (CWW: 15) with Him as the head, is the initial point of

departure. This, to the Commission means trusting Jesus as they follow Him and are sent out into the world, as the seventy were in Luke's Gospel, with limited resources (Ibid).

Beside this trust, the Commission suggested a few other things that will shape the Church. I will only mention the things that contribute to this present dissertation:

- *Shaped by the Gospel:* This means 'living out the story of Jesus'. This is not about structures, but about the lives of individuals and congregations being shaped by the 'mind of Christ' which is primarily one of grace. The commission believed that changing structures without changing mindsets achieves little (CWW: 16). In a society where 'you tell me your truth and I tell you mine' is normal, Christian people are called to live differently by 'doing the truth' with compassion, courtesy and courage. It also means 'Living out the spirituality of grace' (Ibid: 17).
- *Shaped by locality:* Amongst other things it means that locality contributes in giving it its 'identity' – 'The local congregation stands as a sign of God's commitment to that place'[51] and is a servant of the Kingdom of God (Ibid: 18-19). And so, 'Without a Gospel community, there is no communication of the Gospel' (Ibid). The last sentence is possibly a little exaggerated, but the sentiment is understood. As Newbigin and later the GOCN have said, 'the church is the best hermeneutic of the gospel'[52].
- *Shaped by friendship:* 'In a society that is riddled with conflict, is the local church known as the model of mediation – friends of the crucified mediator? Grand schemes

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[51] Once again one can feel the influence of Newbigin who constantly taught that the church is the church of God *for* that place (Newbigin: 1975 'Reflections on an Indian Ministry' in *Frontier* 18 Spring, 25 and 1960 'The Pattern of Partnership' in *A Decisive Hour for the Christian World Mission*, 39 etc.)
[52] Newbigin: 1987 'The Pastor's Opportunities: VI. Evangelism in the City' in *Expository Times* 98 September, 356 and Ofstad: 1993 'The Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America--Chicago Consultation' in *The Gospel and Our Culture (U.K.)* 16 Spring, 7, etc.

of church renewal fail at the simplest level of an ungracious word, a dismissive look or an unforgiving heart (CWW: 22). It is a call to reflect God's concern for the struggles of the world as seen in the incarnation (Ibid: 23).

Concluding this section, the Commission stressed three important theological notions:

- 'If the Church is the community of the Cross and resurrection', then decision making will be marked by humility and integrity which will call on them to have courage, compassion and companionship to dare to follow Christ together (Ibid: 30).

- 'If the Church is the community of the Spirit', then they will be 'alert to the charisms of the Holy Spirit in individuals and in congregations and learn to function as the Body of Christ', enjoying unity within diversity, 'including other neighbours of other denominations' (Ibid).

- 'If the Church is the community of the New Creation', then they will be 'a sign to a divided and broken world of how to mediate in conflict and to thrive on the chaos of change' as God beckons his Church into tomorrow (Ibid).

In conclusion, the Church as people of grace, following their Lord in His incarnation, needed to become more missional in thinking about who they are as the Church for that place and to become people who relinquish power and, like their Lord, trust God and serve others.

> If the Church is to follow Jesus on the way of grace in the Incarnation, then its primary question is what aspect of the Word of God is to be made flesh in this place at this time, not a legal question of administrative functions.
>
> (CWW: 30)

> If we are to follow Christ, we will be led to the place where we release our power into the hands of God, put power at the service of others, and face the future with a trusting powerlessness.
>
> (Ibid: 45)

We now need to close the circle in this dissertation by taking us back to Schweitzer and others to see the connections between the developments in the re-opened eschatological office and the theology of the case studies we have just outlined. I will do that in a separate conclusion.

CONCLUSION[1]

As we conclude I need to draw some connecting lines between the two case studies from chapter 5 and the conversation that Schweitzer and others have had in chapters 1-3. As the reports in chapter five are not specifically dealing with the themes of the earlier chapters in this thesis, but are case studies of the proposals for a contemporary missional ecclesiology, I will conclude by:

- grouping certain concepts that arise more frequently in the case studies under a few major headings

- highlight the concept as found in the case studies

- make the connections with Schweitzer and others to determine if he was a catalyst[2]

1. An Overall Eschatological Orientation

It would have been noticed throughout the final chapter how eschatology has been fundamental to much of the theology of the working committees without them needing to constantly mention it as a topic.

In The Theology Behind the **'Measures' Report** (5.1.3.1), Brown immediately makes reference to this in his first section on 'a theology of the interim' (5.1.3.1.1), as well as in his treatment of the Nicene statement on the Church (5.1.3.1.3) where he says, 'Unity is a mark of the Kingdom fulfilled – a central element in our eschatological hope' (Appendix 3: 110).

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[1] In this conclusion, unless specified, my references will be to earlier chapters in this dissertation.
[2] It will be impossible in a conclusion to repeat all of the work in the previous chapters, but I will reference the more relevant sections.

Cray does the same in The Theology Behind the **'Mission-Shaped Church Report**

(5.1.3.2.3) when he says it is 'integral for the Spirit's eschatological ministry – to carry the

church forward in mission, anticipating here and now in ever-fresh ways the Father's final

eschatological desire' (MSC, 2004: 90). Quoting Newbigin the report (5.1.3.2.5) says,

> … the nature of the church is never to be defined in static terms, but only in
> terms of that to which it is going. It cannot be understood rightly except in
> a perspective which is at once missionary and eschatological.
> <div align="right">(Newbigin, 1953: 32)</div>

In The Theology Behind the **'Church Without Walls' Report** (5.2.2.1), the report states that

one main aspect of the primary calling of the Church is to be eschatological when it says,

'God's Kingdom is breaking in on us and is coming. The church is a sign and pointer. It is

never the end in itself' (CWW: 8-9). Later, as an implication of this it states,

> The eschatological perspective challenges our obsession with buildings and
> money, releases us from our "structural fundamentalism" to sit lightly to
> inherited structures.
> <div align="right">(CWW: 9)</div>

Schweitzer as Catalyst?

In observing the 'theological fabric' (chapter 1.1) at the time Schweitzer began his work on

Jesus and Paul, we heard Ernst Troeltsch say of the 19th century liberal theology that the

'eschatological office' was mostly closed (Bosch,1991: 498). This was the world Schweitzer

found himself in. Eschatology stands for hope, but the Enlightenment of the 18th century for

all intents and purposes, destroyed the category of hope (chapter 1.1). For the church to lose

the eschatological element, is to lose her identity and gospel mission. As Ernst Käsemann so

correctly says, 'It is the Gospel which is at stake in the enlightenment'(Käsemann, 1964: 59).

We have seen how Eschatology was the major ingredient Albert Schweitzer drew upon in

engaging and twisting the fabric of the theological world from the 19th into the 20th century.

Michael Goheen, we saw (chapter 1.1), was of the opinion that nineteenth-century liberalism had, 'effectively eclipsed the eschatological dimension from the mission of Jesus by interpreting the kingdom as a worldly and ethical order' (Goheen, 2000: 138). This had turned the Kingdom into a 'universal moral community which could be achieved by men working together in neighbourly love'. He then mentions Schweitzer's role at this crucial time:

> … The books *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* by Johannes Weiss (1892) and *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* by Albert Schweitzer (1901) marked the first signs of a dramatic shift that led New Testament scholarship to interpret Jesus in terms of the apocalyptic kingdom of God … New attention was focussed [sic] on the eschatological message of the New Testament. Not until several decades later was the liberal notion of the kingdom finally shattered by the trauma of two world wars.
>
> (Ibid)

Bultmann and Schweitzer seemed to have established the fundamental hypotheses for us to test, elaborate and modify. However, Bultmann's thesis disengages us from Jewish and eschatological roots, leaving us with a more individualist and existential Christianity (chapter 3.1.2). By the time we reach the end of the 20th century, we have an entirely different scenario, as can be seen by chapter 3.3 and in the reports of chapter 5.

2. Mission Belongs to God - The *Missio Dei*

The **'Called to Live'** essay of Lambeth (5.1.1.2) makes it clear that the Church is 'caught up' in God's own 'movement of love by being called to be with Jesus' (Called to Live, 1998: 1.2)

Key to the '**Mission-Shaped Church'** report (5.1.3.2.5) is the undergirding understanding that this is indeed God's mission – *Missio Dei*. We see this in the introduction when it says,

> We have entitled this report *Mission-Shaped Church*. This echoes two themes within this report: that the Church is the fruit of God's mission, and that as such it exists to serve and participate in the ongoing mission of God.
>
> (MSC: xii)

Also throughout the report there is a reminder of this fact. The report says that: the Church derives its 'self-understanding from the *missio dei*' (Ibid: 20, 81), that *missio dei* expresses the triune nature of God (Ibid: 85) as creator and redeemer; the Church comes into being because of the *missio dei* (Ibid); church planting must be an expression of the *missio dei* and not about perpetuating an institution (Ibid).

The **'Measure for Measures'** report (5.1.3.1.5) reminds us from Shigeko Masumoto's 'triangle' that the Church often busies itself with projects outside of itself aimed at closing the gap between the world and the Kingdom while the *missio dei* is concerned mainly with closing the gap between the Kingdom and the Church itself. 'Whilst the world remains fallen', he says, 'and Christians remain in the world, the Church must attend to its failings and be radicalised by visions of the Kingdom presented afresh' (Appendix 3:121). The gap between the Kingdom and the Church is addressed when the Church works on authentic discipleship and theological reflection on its essential nature instead of focussing outside of itself. The *Missio Dei* then is concerned with the Church being the sign and instrument in the mission.

The **'Church Without Walls'** Report (5.2.2.1) gave as a basic orientation the fact that the primary purpose of the Church is to 'follow Jesus' (CWW: 8). It reminds us that the 'mission of Christ creates his own church' (CWW: 9). In other words, the report says that the important thing is that the people of God are there, they exist, because God has done it, and this is grace (Ibid).

Schweitzer as Catalyst?

For Schweitzer, the fact that it is God's mission and not ours is as fundamental as the argument between Hellenistic and Jewish roots of mysticism (chapter 2.2.4). He understood the Jews to believe that God and the world were being held 'firmly apart' (Schweitzer, 1953: 10). They were not one, as some Hellenistic religious ideas held. He understands that angelic powers stand between man and God and make that union impossible. It is only in Christ that Paul can include a hymn of joy, as he does in Romans 8, concerning the relationship of the elect – nothing, including angels, stand between us and God now (chapter 2.2.4) It is the work of God in Christ that enables the elect to no longer be natural men but, as Christ, supernatural beings although this is not yet manifest (Schweitzer, 1953: 109f). It is God's mission of love to the world.

Schweitzer emphasizes the work of the Spirit in Paul and in the Church and reminds us that it is the work of God and not men (chapter 2.5.3). He says that if Paul's preaching is effectual,

> … that is because it is done in the power of the Spirit; if signs and wonders proceed from him, they are wrought by the Spirit. In the same way all the gifts which manifest themselves in believers, however various they may be, are due to the Spirit.
>
> (Schweitzer, 1953: 169)

Even ethics in the Christian life are absolutely attributed by Schweitzer to God (chapter 2.6.2). Ethics are not the fruit of repentance, as if men can produce works acceptable to God, but of the Spirit. It is 'produced by Christ in the believers who attach themselves to Him' (Schweitzer, 1953: 294).

God's mission and activity in the world includes the resulting corporate nature of the Church in Christ (chapter 3.2.6) which is seen by Schweitzer as a typical eschatological thought for

Paul. The 'predestination of God' whereby 'the saints are united with one another and with the Messiah' (Davies, 1948: 56) is God's doing.

Bosch could concluded chapter 3.2.7 for us by stating that 'we must define our mission – with due humility – as participation in the *Missio Dei*.

3. Mission Creates and Shapes Church, While Church is Key to Mission

The **'Five Marks of Mission'** of the ACC in 1984 (chapter 5.1.1.1) were considered in 1988 at the Lambeth Conference and passed in a resolution (44). The resolution calls for the life and shape of the Church to be governed by her mission.

In the **'Lambeth invitation essay'** (5.1.1.2), ecclesiology is placed second to mission as mission shapes our understanding and practice as the Church. As an outworking of this, the Gospel is seen as translatable, not only in language, but as the Church reshapes itself in different contexts.

In the **'Measure for Measures'** report ecclesiology is seen as important to our missionary undertaking as God's people (5.1.3.1.2). The Earliest Church in Acts were a people on mission as they formed their ecclesiology. And so 'Mission comes before ecclesiology' (Appendix 3: 109). Brown doubts that God had a 'blueprint' of the shape the church should take, safely guarded and passed on to the Apostles.

> Ecclesiology is nothing more or less than the way the people of God work out their relationship with Christ, with each other and with the world. Without a framework on those issues mission cannot happen (Whose mission would it be? And how would we know?).
>
> (Ibid: 109)

The entire **'Mission-Shaped Church'** report (5.1.3.2.4) leads to the inevitable missional posture the Church needs to have in post-Christendom environment – an identity 'in Christ' and not a national or ethnic identity. This mission is from the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Spirit. But the place of the Church in this mission is expressed by him as 'both the fruit of God's mission – those whom he has redeemed and the agent of his mission – the community through whom he acts for the world's redemption' (5.1.3.2.1)

The Archbishop's **'Supporting Theology'** (5.1.3.3) urges the Church to shape herself by her eschatological hope (the goal, or mission of God's activity in the world), because the Church is, 'the event of the new creation'(Appendix 4: iii).

The **'Church Without Walls'** report was all about restructuring the Church around mission as it dealt with the 'Primary Purpose of the Church' (5.2.2.1) and then the corresponding 'Shape of the Church' (5.2.2.2).

The **Nicene Creedal statement**, as used by the 'Measures' and 'Mission-Shaped' reports, was used to emphasise the apostolicity of the Church as the element that makes sense of the catholicity, the holiness and the unity (MSC: 96, 98; Appendix 3: 112).

Schweitzer as Catalyst?

One has got to realize that for Schweitzer, to be justified was a work of God that brought the man of faith into a new mode of existence – he was in the risen Christ who was already part of the new creation, or age of the Spirit (chapter 2.4). So as Seaver explains Schweitzer,

> … Righteousness by Faith is not a condition of passive receptivity, still less is it a proposition for academic debate; it is the mystical experience of being-in-Christ in action and in passion.
>
> (Seaver, 1959: 246)

I raise this because those who are in Christ are his Church. For Schweitzer they were brought there as a consequence of the work of God alone and were a people of action and passion – of participating in that mission by the Spirit of Christ.

In chapter 2.5.1 we heard Schweitzer speaking clearly on the 'community of the saints' as the constant principle in the Scriptures – that God would always have for himself a people brought into existence by Him and kept by Him. In fact the Church Schweitzer expressed as the eschatological hope was 'catholic' – not disconnected local congregations. For Paul he says, community in a particular place is the general community as there locally manifested. Therefore God's mission has produced a Church.

In chapter 2.6.3 Schweitzer shows how Paul understood himself and all believers in Christ. This self-awareness led to an ethic characterised by love. Paul is, 'conscious of desiring to realize in his own conduct the being-in-Christ and the sincerity, peaceableness and humility of the Spirit of Christ' (Schweitzer, 1953: 330). Paul thereby models to the Church what it ought to look like – eschatologically free men, but not free from their humanity, rather for that humanity to become more profound. They have become men in the highest sense of the word (Ibid: 332-333).

Leaving Schweitzer, we see too in chapter 3.1.3 that the notion of the Kingdom having an eschatological overlap gave the Church an understanding of herself that was particularly missional as she participated in the coming in of the nations (see Figure 5). The church's existence is given meaning and a calling at its very heart because she is part of the story of God's mission in this world and not merely a collection of righteous people (the debate on the

'centre – 3.3.2). And so the connections with Schweitzer and others on this theme become apparent over a large range of related topics (chapter 3.2.4 – 3.2.7).

Perhaps we can end with Newbigin who was thoroughly convinced of this when he said that when the Church becomes settled and thinks of her election as a privilege instead of missionary responsibility, then she comes under God's judgement as Israel did (Newbigin, 1953: 176).

4. The Corporate Nature of the Church

The **'Lambeth invite'** (5.1.1.2) reminds us that the credibility of the church is compromised by its disunity, thereby promoting the corporate witness of the Church. It also spoke of living the Good News by modelling a full humanity (Called: 2.1) which can only be done together.

The **'Measures'** report (5.1.3.1.3) understood a 'holy' Church in the Nicene phrase to mean a corporate, not individualistic, setting aside for the mission of God. The different ages Brown spoke of in (5.1.3.1.6), drawing on Dr John Atherton's book, *Public Theology for Changing Times*, understood the importance of the corporate nature of the church. The 'Age of Atonement' it speaks of, saw the Church community as a foretaste of the Kingdom, but in a post-Christian age especially where church life together is not seen by the world, a time came for the Church to engage in 'incarnational rescue'. However, the corrective was a right one in that the 'incarnational rescue' needed to include the corporate element once again by taking small communities of believers into the world – missional communities (Figures 12-14).

The **'Mission-Shaped'** report (5.1.3.2.1) also stressed that the very DNA of the Church is to be a missionary community (Ibid). The Church's missionary posture (5.1.3.2.4) entails a 'three way conversation' which a lone evangelist cannot do – it must be a 'community process' (MSC: 91). In (5.1.3.2.5) Cray showed how God's Salvation History has always had at its centre a people - a family who are together a blessing as a restored humanity in Christ. His caution in chapter 5.1.3.2.6 is that our relationships within a community of whatever size should express the nature of God or it will only be held together by 'organizational artificial glue' (MSC: 99). This speaks to us of the organic, spiritual nature of the corporate body which is not a task-oriented team.

Schweitzer as Catalyst?

In his Mystical Doctrine of dying and rising with Christ (chapter 2.5), Schweitzer speaks of the Elect and their relationship together with the Messiah (2.5.1). Schweitzer was comfortable with this idea of a corporate identity or union in Christ, because this was always the principle in the Scriptures – a nation belonging to God, then a remnant despite unfaithfulness, but always a people kept by God (Schweitzer, 1953: 101)

This community, this concept of the mystical body of Christ, cannot simply be explained away as, 'a summation of the being-in-Christ of the multitude of believers', says Schweitzer (Ibid: 117). As if desperately seeking to ensure this is grasped he continues,

> The mystical body of Christ remains an enigma so long as it is not understood in the light of the fundamental concept of the community of God, in which by preordination the Elect are closely united with one another and with Christ. The "Being-in-Christ" is in fact inexplicable until it is made intelligible by the concept of the mystical body of Christ.
>
> (Ibid: 117)

Again in chapter 3.2.6 Davies agreed with Albert Schweitzer that Paul's concept that the Christian's solidarity with all other Christians and with Christ comes from his eschatological

background (Davies, 1948: 56). Davies carries this through in his understanding that the corporate nature of the Church makes sense as the Adamic speculations of first century Judaism spoke of the whole world of nations being one in Adam. So it becomes obvious to Davies that Paul would speak of us all being one in Christ, people from every nation (Ibid).

Tom Wright can call Schweitzer's work 'monumental' especially in the area of being-in-Christ. In Wright's words,

> He [Schweitzer] understood 'in Christ' against the backdrop of apocalyptic Judaism. The God of Israel had acted in the world dramatically, apocalyptically, through Jesus the Messiah. The true people of God were now somehow bound up with this Messiah. They were incorporated into Him.
>
> (Wright, 1997: 12-14)

Newbigin's passion for the corporate nature of the Christian can be seen everywhere in his writing.

> … of course the individual believer is not a mere individual. Every Christian has his life in Christ only as a member in the body of Christ. He shares in the life of Christ only by sharing it with all His people. The new birth, the new man in Christ, is a social reality. The ego which is crucified with Christ is the independent, self-sufficient ego. The life of Christ in the believer is a corporate life in which he can only share by sharing it with all.
>
> (Newbigin, 1953: 155)

5. Participation in Christ and His Mission

The Lambeth invitation essay of 1988, 'A Call to Live and Proclaim the Good News' (5.1.1.2), showed clear signs of engaging in the developed theology we are concerned with. In the essay we found a strong underlying conviction that to be 'in Christ' means to participate in the mission of Christ (Called to Live, 1998: 1.2). It stressed that the work of the Spirit from the day we are baptized into Christ must me seen as God's mission going on in all of us constantly. A great emphasis was placed on letting 'this divine action through in

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our plans, words and acts' (Ibid: 1.3). The overall tone of the essay was one of the identity of God's people as a missionary identity because we receive our new identity in Christ.

Malcolm Brown, in the **'Measures'** report (Appendix 3) while dealing with the Nicene formula of the Church (5.1.3.1.3), reminds us that to be 'Apostolic' means continuity with the apostles who responded to the crucified and risen Lord and received the Holy Spirit, but then also participated in Christ's role of being 'sent'(Ibid:112). In the word 'Apostolic', according to Brown, is a dynamic implication – it implies 'action, purpose and place' (Ibid). 'Sent' is explained in terms of 'apostleship' being extended to include Paul and the church in their mandate to the world and not only the original twelve (Ibid).

Later (5.1.3.1.4) he urged the C of E to 'enable change and experiment' in the Church's mission and ministry (Ibid: 118) because it is,

> …less about what we do than about opening up new possibilities for God to work in us. Mission may be less about building up the temporal, empirical, church (although that is a vital means) than about participating with God in making the Word incarnate.
>
> (Ibid: 119)

The **'Mission-Shaped Church'** report (5.1.3.2.1) quoted James Torrance,

> The mission of the Church is the gift of participating through the Holy Spirit in the Son's mission from the Father to the World.
>
> (MSC: 85)

For Cray, church planting should never be a device to perpetuate an institution for that institution's own sake. Rather it is to be an 'expression of the mission of God' (MSC: 85).

The **'Church Without Walls'** report (5.2.2.1) also speaks in terms of the Church participating in Christ's mission when it says that 'The church shaped by the coming Kingdom will live less by historical precedent and more by the future expectation of

becoming part of God's new creation. We participate in God's mission for a redeemed planet and people and the church is created on the way' (CWW: 9). Notice too the consistent manner in which the working groups down-play 'form' or institutional structure for a freer following of Jesus on His mission.

Schweitzer as Catalyst?

I begin by reminding us of a quote from Schweitzer's biographer, Seaver, who highlights for us something of the self-identity the Christian discovers in Christ that works itself out in God's mission. He reported of Schweitzer,

> The stimulus which drove Schweitzer out of the cool, sequestered vale of life into the heat and dust of the arena, which impelled him to abandon further prospects of a brilliant career in science and music and letters in order, as he put it to himself, "to try and live in the spirit of Jesus," may well strike the reader as a strange one; yet it demonstrates how deeply the recorded sayings – even the "hard sayings" – of the historical Jesus had woven themselves in the very fibers of his being.
>
> (Seaver, 1959: 53)

Schweitzer was emphatic about this at the start of *Mysticism* when he defined what he meant by 'Christ-Mysticism' or 'Being-in-Christ'. He began by explaining that this participation begins with our participation in Christ's death and resurrection (chapter 2.2.4 and 2.3) and being 'uniquely Jewish' in its eschatology, leads to every other aspect of life. Because 'Being-in-Christ' is seen as being in Adam, and when this is the focal point or 'centre' of Pauline theology, there is an inclusiveness of the nations which forces mission to be a non-negotiable participation with Christ and expression of the Christian identity (see chapter 3.2.6).

In chapter 3.2.7, we heard Schweitzer say that to be in fellowship with Christ was to guarantee future fellowship with the 'Son of Man' (Schweitzer 1953: 105) and that whoever accepts the disciples accepts Him. The places that refuse them are unwittingly refusing

Christ. In his view, they are an extension of His personality in some way. Of course, his explanation for this solidarity he found in eschatology (Ibid: 101). It is commonly accepted today that the idea of Messiah, in apocalyptic, closely involves the community of the Messiah (Davies, 1948: 98f).

As Sanders revived much of what Schweitzer had been saying (chapter 3.1.6), he called this a 'participation eschatology' - through union with Christ (Sanders, 1977: 552). As the believer exercises faith in Christ as the fulfilment of the covenant, he participates in the Spirit, or in Christ (Ibid: 459). Sanders could say, 'we nowhere have in Paul a simple soteriology of eschatological expectation divorced from the present reality of participation in Christ or in the Spirit. Rather, the two go together' (Ibid: 461).

We can also take note (3.2.7) of Sanders equation - 'righteousness by faith' is 'participation in Christ' (Sanders, 1977: 506), remembering that by this he means 'the goal of religion' for the Jew and Gentile is 'to be found in Christ' and to attain, by suffering and dying with him, the resurrection' (Ibid). This is an active participation.

In chapter 3.2.7 we heard Wright summarizing Sanders' view by saying,

> The center of Paul's thought (here Sanders sides very firmly with Schweitzer) was not Justification, not his critique of Israel; the center was what Sanders calls 'participation', Sander's word for the complex of Pauline thought which focuses on 'being in Christ'.
>
> (Wright, 1997: 19)

In this 'being in Christ' or 'participation' concept of Paul, we are partakers in Christ, not as individuals, but as a collective whole. Concerning this, Sanders himself asserted, 'The main points of Schweitzer's analysis seem to me to be precisely correct' (Sanders, 1977: 549).

This participation has real implications for the identity of the church. Newbigin, who has mission at heart, makes the point that we need to participate in this sense with Christ or we are not His Church (Newbigin, 1953: 167).

> We have the sacrament of the supper as a real participation in Christ: yet at every supper we are to remind ourselves that it is 'till he come'. Once this tension of longing and hope, this pressing forward to the goal which is still beyond our sight, goes out of the Christian life, we cease to be – in the apostolic sense – partakers of Christ (Heb 3:14).
>
> (Ibid)

In the end (chapter 3.2.7) Newbigin could say with confidence and with much the same force, that our fellowship in Christ is a participation in his apostolate to the world (Newbigin,1953: 192).

6. Christ as Pre-Existent Church: A pattern of Church life

The **'Mission-Shaped Church'** report (5.1.3.2.2) spoke at length about the pattern of Jesus life – His incarnation, the cross and the resurrection as a pattern for the corporate mission of the Church. See especially his stance on being counter-cultural even as the Church seeks to incarnate herself into a particular culture (*The cross – a world to counter*). Therefore an incarnational church,

> …imitates, through the Spirit, both Christ's loving identification with his culture and his costly counter-cultural stance with it. His announcement of, and promise of, God's kingdom cannot be separated from his call to repentance, as the price of entry. Following his example, his Church is called to loving identification with those to whom it is sent, and to exemplify the way of life to which those who repent turn. Otherwise its call to repentance is reduced to detached moralizing.
>
> (MSC, 87-88)

Talking about the incarnation and cross as a 'missionary exchange', Cray reminded us of Philippians 2 where Jesus' act of 'missionary exchange' is both a subject of praise and is commended as a pattern of relationships. Relationships surely not confined within the

church, he said, but between the church and the world as well – that is why the Son of God took flesh (Ibid).

> If it is the nature of God's love to undertake such sacrifice, it must also be the nature of his church. The Church is most true to itself when it gives itself up, in current cultural form, to be re-formed among those who do not know God's Son. In each new context the Church must die to live.
>
> (Ibid: 89)

The **'Church Without Walls'** report also spoke in these terms in their call to follow Jesus (5.2.2.1). They called it a risky way. It is the way of the cross. We cannot save and be safe at the same time. Also seen in chapter 5.2.2.2 – a Community of the cross and resurrection.

Schweitzer as Catalyst?

In chapter 2.5.2 and 2.5.3, Schweitzer clearly teaches that the normal life of the believing community is a life marked by dying and rising. We partake in the death and resurrection of Christ in our daily lives. The Spirit animates this corporate entity to be what it is and thereby they have a part in the Spirit of God and become 'vehicles' of that Spirit. These are not natural men anymore. They are actually engaged in the saving work (dying and rising) of the Messiah (Schweitzer1953: 165).

As others engaged with Schweitzer in chapter 3.2.6 on the Corporeity of the Church in Christ, Moffatt said, 'There is more than half a truth in Dr Schweitzer's contention that the so-called mysticism of Paul really amounts to his statement of the truth that the preexistent church is manifested in appearance and reality through the death and resurrection of Jesus'. Schweitzer then, was seeing the person and life of Christ as a pre-existent church and being taken up by the elect in an extreme way.

Sanders (3.2.7) spoke of the Church's close 'participation in Christ' (Sanders, 1977: 506). He meant that righteousness in Christ is not only the truth that we have faith in his death and resurrection and thereby be found in Him, but that we participate with Him in his death to the power of sin and rise with him to the new life of the Spirit (ibid).

This is a pattern of life the Church participates in, so that not only the incarnation and human character of Jesus, but the fighting with sin - the crux of the mission of Jesus - becomes a taste of the life and mission of the Church in advance.

7. Salvation History and the Present Age

We saw how the **'Measures'** report (5.1.3.1.1) understood the Church to be living in the period of the 'interim', a period of 'tension' between the now-but-not-yet of the Kingdom. Brown was placing the Church within the Salvation-historical activity of God in redeeming the world, but also within the present eschatological age.

In chapter 5.1.3.2.5 of the **'Mission-Shaped** Church' report, Cray draws on the Salvation-historical approach and reminded the C of E that God's intentions were to create for Himself a people who would be a restored humanity reproducing themselves for the sake of the world (MSC: 93-96). He used Newbigin to remind us that the Church is part of God's history of salvation for the world when he said that, 'the nature of the church is never to be defined in static terms, but only in terms of that to which it is going. It cannot be understood rightly except in a perspective which is at once missionary and eschatological (Newbigin, 1953: 32).

There was a clear understanding that we are living in an 'overlap of the ages' when the report at that point also stated that the Church is to be a foretaste of the coming Kingdom – 'an imperfect anticipation of God's future world' (MSC: 85). As the Church participates in salvation history it is not only a sign and an instrument of the truth of the gospel, but a genuine foretaste of God's Kingdom, 'called to show forth visibly, in the midst of history, God's final purposes for humanity' (Ibid: 95).

The **'Church Without Walls'** report (5.2.2.1) showed clear signs of seeing the missional Church in Salvation-historical terms when it spoke of the Church as eschatological and explained it in terms of the now-but-not-yet. 'God's Kingdom is breaking in on us and is coming. The church is a sign and pointer. It is never the end in itself' (CWW: 9).

Schweitzer as Catalyst?

While dealing with redemption as an eschatological hope and debating the Hellenistic/Jewish influences (chapter 2.2.4), Schweitzer talks of a 'world-process' which is directed towards God (Schweitzer, 1953: 11). For Paul, the world is not Nature (as in the Hellenistic world), but,

> … a supernatural historical process which has for its stages the forth going of the world from God, its alienation from Him, and its return to Him.
>   This dramatic view of world history is also in its own way a kind of mysticism, a mysticism which can assert that all things are *from* God and *through* God and *unto* God … It is only when the end comes, when time gives place to eternity and all things return to God, that they can be said to be in God.
>
> (Ibid)

Here was Schweitzer's early concept of a salvation history which others built upon. In its seminal stage (later to be developed by Cullmann and others) he saw it in terms of the eschatological 'schema' of the apocalypse of Baruch and the fourth book of Ezra as they in turn attempted to bring the eschatologies of the prophets and Daniel into harmony. Therefore

the Messianic Kingdom anticipated by the prophets is seen as something temporary. In this period, the natural and the supernatural worlds meet one another – they telescope into each other (Ibid: 86).

Because Schweitzer spoke in such clear and dramatic terms, let me include more of what he said in that previous chapter in this conclusion. At the resurrection of Christ this overlap begins and those belonging to Him participate in his resurrection (Ibid: 90). It is they 'on whom the ends of the world have come' (1 Cor. 10:11). If the elect have risen with Christ, then they are also sharers in this new mode of resurrection being. 'Behind the apparent immobile outward show of the natural world, it's transformation into the supernatural was in progress, as the transformation of a stage goes on behind the curtain.' (Ibid: 99). In his typically powerful style Schweitzer stated, 'the springtime of super-earthly life has already begun, even though elsewhere in the world the winter of natural existence still holds sway.' (110).

With others, in the 'Thy Kingdom Come' debate (chapter 3.1.3), Salvation history took centre stage as Cullman was thoroughly convinced of the importance of what he called '*heilsgeschichte*'. In debating the midpoint of history it was him who coined the phrase 'now-but-not-yet', or 'inaugurated eschatology' (Cullmann, 1951:86). We dealt with this more specifically in chapter 3.2.4 and 3.2.5 where the debate of many over the century as whether the kingdom is present or future, Ladd summarizes for us when he says that if a majority of scholars have approached consensus, it is that the Kingdom is in some real sense both present and future (Ladd, 1993: 56f).

8. The Church Embodies the Gospel and is a Foretaste of the Kingdom

Although this theme has arisen already in my conclusion, it is worth mentioning separately as it is so important to missional church thinking.

This was seen in the holistic nature of the **'Five Marks of Mission'** (5.1.1.1), but was more specific in the **'Called to Live'** invitation to Lambeth essay (5.1.1.2). The essay called for the Church to not only proclaim a message, but to become a message (Called: 1.1). The second heading in the essay, *Called to Live the Good News*, says it even clearer. This would be done by modelling a full humanity (Called: 2.1). It includes some challenges to modelling Jesus in his interaction with a broken and lost world (Ibid: 2.2f).

In the **'Measures'** report (5.1.3.1.1), Brown said that in this 'interim' where human endeavour even in the Church is corrupted, Christians are still called to 'seek the Kingdom, to prefigure its life in their own lives and to bring its values closer on earth as in heaven' (Appendix 3: 107-108).

The **'Mission-Shaped Church'** report (5.1.3.2.1) said that it is the work of the Spirit to empower the Church to preach and embody the Gospel in ways appropriate to each cultural context (MSC, 86). This is clear in chapter 5.1.3.2.2 in terms of the Church patterning its life after the life of Christ.

The **'Church Without Walls'** report (5.2.2.2) explicitly urged the C of S to shape the Church by the gospel. This meant living out the story of Jesus. This was not about structures, but about the lives of individuals and congregations being shaped by the mind of Christ which is

primarily one of grace (CWW: 16). It also stated that the Church is a 'community of the new creation' (CWW: 30).

Schweitzer as Catalyst?

We have already seen the connections in this regard under points 5 and 6, where a close participation in Christ's mission is to be done in a way that embodies the Gospel. In chapter 2.5.2 and 2.5.3 Schweitzer clearly teaches that the normal life of the believing community is a life marked by dying and rising. The Church partakes in the death and resurrection of Christ in their daily lives.

However, in chapter 2.6.1 Schweitzer was dealing with ethics when he said that we are already in the age of the Spirit (Schweitzer, 1953: 311) and that this happened through suffering or dying with Christ, whereby the believer has a new ethic which comes into play. 'Really, and in principle, they are a new creation because the powers of death and resurrection … have begun their work in them. But at the same time this fact is only in process of being realized. Here ethics comes into play' (Ibid: 301). And again:

> It is only in so far as a man is purified and liberated from the world by that which he experiences and endures, that he becomes capable of truly ethical action … The being "not as the world" in action is the expression of the being made free from the world, through suffering and dying with Christ.
> (Ibid: 302)

Therefore to not live as the world does, is an 'expression' of being made free from it, and that through suffering. In this way Schweitzer was talking of the Church looking so evidently animated by the Spirit as part of the new creation that in this fallen world it, by necessity, needed to be an expression of the Gospel – how it became a new man – by dying and rising. Thus we see the Church embodying the Gospel and being a foretaste of the Kingdom at the same time. This is worked out further in the same section (chapter 2.6.1 – 2.6.4).

9. Mission is Universal and Restorative

Two of the **'Five Marks of Mission'** (5.1.1.1) state that the Church's mission is to seek to transform the unjust structures of society and to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Cray points out in the **'Mission-Shaped Church'** report (5.1.3.2.1) that God's mission is 'cosmic in scope', concerned with the 'restoration of all things' – the renewal of creation as well as 'the redemption of fallen humanity and the building of the Church' (MSC: 85).

In the same section of the report Robin Greenwood said,

> What is mission if not the engagement with God in the entire enterprise of bringing the whole of creation to its intended destiny? A local church cannot claim to be part of this if it only serves itself.
>
> (Ibid: 85)

The **'Church Without Walls'** report (5.2.2.1) also stressed the universal, or global, dimension of the Church's mission. In fact it places this dimension of the mission within eschatological thought when it says, 'The church shaped by the coming Kingdom will live less by historical precedent and more by the future expectation of becoming part of God's new creation. We participate in God's mission for a redeemed planet and people' (CWW:9). In section 5.2.2.2 the CWW report calls the Church a 'community of the new creation'.

Schweitzer as Catalyst?

In chapter 2.1 Schweitzer sees redemption as being 'cosmological' because of its eschatological orientation in Paul. Taking us to Romans 8:19 on Creation yearning for the day of revelation of the sons of God, Schweitzer claims that Paul never, throughout his

writings, slacked in 'eschatological expectations' (Schweitzer, 1953: 54). The enormity of

What Schweitzer was saying is best repeated here.

> The conception of Redemption which stands behind this eschatological
> expectation is, to put it quite generally, that Jesus Christ has made an end to
> the natural world and is bringing in the Messianic Kingdom. It is thus
> cosmologically conceived. By it a man is transferred from the perishable
> world to the imperishable, because the whole world is transferred from the
> one state to the other, and he with it. The redemption which the believer
> experiences is therefore not a mere transaction arranged between himself,
> God, and Christ, but a world-event in which he has a share.
>
> (Ibid: 54)

For Schweitzer then, individual redemption is possible because the universe is being

redeemed. I don't think the same emphasis is found in the theology of these reports, but this

concept has played a part nevertheless.

Later (3.2.6) the universal nature of redemption is covered while Davies is talking about the

'in Christ' and 'in Adam' of Judaism including all nations. Talking of this 'universalism' of

Paul, Davies pointed out that Albert Schweitzer takes 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 to mean 'all'

the elect, but that Dodd was right in taking Paul to mean all of creation (Ibid: 58n4). On the

same issue and in relation to Schweitzer, Davies made the statement, 'It is not insignificant

that to be converted had meant for Paul to be a missionary to the Gentiles. Universalism was

involved in his conversion' (Davies, 1948: 58n7).

Bosch, in chapter 3.2.7 said '…we must define our mission – with due humility – as

participation in the *Missio Dei*. Witnessing to the gospel of present salvation and future hope

we then identify with the awesome birth pangs of God's new creation' (Bosch,1991: 510).

Finally

Was Schweitzer a catalyst in the resurfacing of a more missional ecclesiology through an eschatological self-identity by re-opening the eschatological office?

Thiselton said that Schweitzer had an 'enormous influence on subsequent writers' (Thiselton, 1978-79: 135) and that Martin Werner raised the strengths and weaknesses in the eschatological approach to Paul as early as 1941 in his, *Formation of Christian Dogma*, where he referred mainly to Weiss and Schweitzer. His achievement was to show even more clearly than Schweitzer had, the far-reaching consequences which follow from this eschatological approach and the neglect thereof (Thiselton, 1978-79: 135).

G.E. Ladd was also of the opinion that, 'The history of criticism since Schweitzer may be described as a struggle over eschatology' (Ladd, 1974b: 5) and after a lengthy survey of the eschatological debate, says that, '… the growing consensus is supported by the almost universal modification of Schweitzer's Consistent Eschatology' (Ibid: 39).

Amos N. Wilder goes so far as to say that, '…few will disagree with Schweitzer on the main point, viz., that Jesus taught an imminent judgment and world renovation' (Ibid: 125).

In Blauw's opinion, those who have advocated the eschatological foundation of missionary work should receive lasting credit for, 'drawing the conclusions from the academic theological discussion in favour of missionary work' (Blauw, 1962: 109).

Lastly, Thiselton says, 'With Schweitzer he re-captured something of the sense of urgency and fire of the primitive eschatological faith' (Thiselton, 1978-79: 135).

Therefore I conclude that the eschatological proposals of Albert Schweitzer, developed while critically examining the works of others, showed more insight than has generally been acknowledged today. The place of the doctrine of justification by faith and an understanding of our mystical union in Christ are immediately affected by his proposals as developed or rejected by others. These influences cannot be ignored.

Although we are far from unanimous agreement, it seems to have contributed to a healthier Biblical basis for mission and indeed a missional Church. This in itself is reason enough for attempting to trace its influences and findings in order to discover the validity of what could be a return to the centre of the earliest church's theology.

> Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.
>
> (Paul, *Philippians 3:8-11*, RSV)

> In the hearts in which Paul's mysticism of union with Christ is alive there is an unquenchable yearning for the Kingdom of God, but also consolation in the fact that we do not see it's fulfillment … Three things make up the power of Paul's thought. There belongs to it a depth and a reality which lay their spell upon us; the ardour of the early days of the Christian faith kindles our own; a direct experience of Christ as the Lord of the Kingdom of God speaks from it, exciting us to follow the same path …Paul lead us out upon that path of true redemption and hands us over, prisoners, to Christ.
>
> (Schweitzer, 1953: 396)

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Cape Imbizo – The 'gospel strategy for the Western Cape' Elective

(Minutes of the discussions chaired by Rev. Colin Banfield

and recorded by the Rev. Mark Dickson on 10th May 2003)

Colin first looked at 1 Peter 2:9f for the nature and role of the church.

The meeting then paused to thank God for the privilege.

Colin then asked the question, 'who do we see from Table Mountain?'. The comments were:

Many lost people, diverse cultures and economically, Students, poor, Muslims, wealthy, uneducated, illiterate, farming communities and workers, Prisoners, Children, languages - eng/Afrikaans/Xhosa etc with their traditions, refugees, elderly, foreigners, dying people in hospices, yuppies, alternate thinking groups (new age), small dorps etc, ganglands ....

?[1] - does CESA cater for this diversity?

? - it's always changing, so what we see from Table Mountain today will not be like that for very long!

? - Yes, so we must avoid historical stereotypes.

Colin then took them to 1 Cor 9:19-23; 11:1 to see how Paul could help with this diversity.

? - Is the church willing to make sacrifices to meet this diversity?

John Scheepers - not just a sacrifice by one or two people, but a bigger willingness to change and adapt.

John Child - Yes, to reach people near by and also unreached communities.

Colin - the cape mission work group used to help with this, we need an ongoing think tank like we are having today!

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[1] Question marks indicate that there was no record of who the speaker was.

The meeting then did two SWOT sessions.

SWOT #1 GETTING FAMILIAR WITH THE WESTERN CAPE

* HAVE WE BEEN <u>S</u>TRONG IN DOING THIS? HOW?

Trevor - we've been biblically based and theologically strong

David Seccomb - there is strength wherever the church is!

John Scheepers - yes and no, some churches are not located as strategically as they could be.

Colin - And they are not always a good witness in an area.

David - a church is never a weakness

Mark - the question is, what would people expect to see of us if we really were familiar with the western cape?

Duane - can we become like Paul as a denomination? CESA cannot be all things to all people since we have traditions and style.

Ernie - what's more important, your identity as denomination or your effectiveness. We must not change doctrine but we must move.

Duane - in England we planted 4 churches from an Anglican church which were not Anglican in style. Our challenge is to plant churches and let them take on their own style, be it CESA or otherwise.

* WHAT <u>W</u>EAKNESSES HAVE WE PERCEIVED?

Trevor- what do we call ourselves? I get the 'grils' when I hear that I am an Anglican - it has connotations today that we can't get away from. If we define ourselves too much as Anglican we will miss the boat and miss a lot of people.

David – Focus! We have 3 Xhosa Churches … one of which is under threat. We planted 4 on the Cape flats … it's been 16 years since one was started. What is North of Atlantis?

John Child – Look at us today … mostly white.

Ernie – look at synod, still mostly middle class white

John Child – We need to do demographic research, but our weakness is that we don't work together on this. We need Xhosa men in training. Also we as leaders lack enthusiasm to do the work.

David – a lot of ministry is bound up in the church building … no open air things. We are afraid to step out of our comfort methods. Do we need to worship only on one day of the week and in church buildings?

* WHAT OPPORTUNITIES OR WAYS DO WE HAVE TO GET TO KNOW THE CAPE?

Alan Noble – schools and campuses.

Vuyani – Sports friendships – via sports

John Child- Christian teachers in schools – they can help.

Colin – That's a point, we can ask the teachers to help us get to know how the various groups think and the things they are battling with etc.

David – we need to ask what the most strategic thing is to do – start Christian schools, or are state schools the most strategic in accomplishing this? STRATEGY

Colin – There are also doctors out there, and lawyers who we could equip, or get into regular small groups to think through their professions as Christians as Leslie Newbigin did in India.

John Child – There is the need for the training and use of evangelists. This was the success of St James and Pinetown. Or perhaps employ ministers of evangelism more so that he can concentrate on the training of people to communicate the gospel.

STRATEGY

John Scheepers – we could use literacy classes. Also audio and visual is big in some communities.

* WHAT POSSIBLE THREATS ARE THERE TO THIS TASK?

David – it's not a problem seeing the opportunities, but we may be making the wrong decisions and choosing the wrong opportunities.

John Scheepers – lots of undereducated people, perhaps our methods are too sophisticated. Also, in our own schools, reading is under threat, people are not reading as they ought.

SWOT #2 GETTING ACTIVE IN THE WESTERN CAPE.

* WHAT STRENGTHS DO WE HAVE FOR DOING THIS?

Duane – we have had good denominational training at GWC.

David – We've got a good pool of Bible teachers and preachers in the denom.

John Scheepers –We have good work on the campuses and among students. Also camping ministries. There is also the GO mission; we have good evangelists and EE III trained people and 2 ways to live.

Vivian – Good people resources.

? – we have buildings etc, perhaps under-utilised.

David – We have various people with expertise in the churches such as doctors, business, education experience etc. They could be used among the other culture/religious groups, and use halls or churches in their areas as bases.

* WHAT WEAKNESSES DO WE HAVE AT PRESENT?

John Child – We don't have any students from the Cape Flats. We don't have single coloured pastor.

? - There is also a lack of accountability in our evangelism and outreach. A lack of passion in spreading the Gospel. People at their work don't even think of starting Bible studies at their work places.

John Child – Perhaps our worship is not passionate enough, it does not enthuse people. There is a mobilizing aspect to worship. Also a lack of prayer.

? - our churches are too intellectual. In other words teaching oriented and not passionate enough.

David – We don't have our own mission society. So if we wanted to plant a church in the Cape Flats, who will do it? We need such a society with a budget who will fund and support such a church plant for at least three years with a pastor.

John Scheepers – There is a mindset on too much dependence on the preacher. Perhaps or weakness is in the style of leadership in that there is a reticence to partner with like-minded congregations in places like the schools. We think that because another church is working in an area, we can't help them.

Vuyani – Our churches are led less like brother and sister and more like boss and servant. In other words a lack of relational side in the churches and between churches as well.

John Child – Also the disparity between black and white congregations needs to be seen to be lessening.

* WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DO WE SEE?

Colin – seeing as we are strong on the Bible and have people out there in the work place, we should try and train people to run short lunchtime meetings. We could help our congregations to do this.

? – If you plant a new church in the Cape Flats, who would come? But if you open an aids centre, people from all backgrounds would come

? – prison ministries. In this we should look to partnering with others as there are already people working within them, but perhaps not too effectively. Also the homeless and street people and involvement in local politics.

? – Ministers should provide opportunities. I did not know how to share the gospel until a minister took me with him.

Colin – Yes, perhaps we could invite our ministers to our work places, or get them to small meetings of people in a particular vocation in our congregations and let them guide the people in being Christian teachers, doctors etc.

Vuyani – when planting churches perhaps we can use local social worker's buildings for ministry or services etc. We must get away from church building in some areas if we want to reach some people.

John Child – Cell churches are the way to go in achieving this as well. We should foster the mentality that you can start a church in your home.

Colin – Yes the house is a great place to minister from in this way but it needs to be organised by a local church and monitored well. The leaders need constant training as well.

* WHAT COULD THREATEN THE SUCCESS OF THESE IDEAS?
None (time not allowing)

STRATEGY
Conclusions:

Co-ordinate our efforts to plant churches by looking at the most NB places on a map. Not only planting in affluent white areas. We must expand out influence and thus reach a lot more people.

Sports ministries. There are many youth in the coloured and black areas who are mad about sport and training. Most of or country are children and youth!

Train our school pupils better. There are many teens in out youth programmes who are mixing with countless kids daily. We should train them better to reach their friends and listen to their difficulties.

Encourage the work on the campuses, but prepare local churches for these student ministries.

Schools. Prepare and train the students to reach their own friends and ask the teachers in our congregations to feed back news on the areas that their students come from – what are the main things that are troubling them and their areas. How are the Muslim kids thinking etc. Also better equip the teachers to do a difficult task as Christians in schools today – pray for them as well.

Evangelists. Train and deploy evangelists more effectively. Get ministers of evangelism into church ministry teams so they can be set aside to train the people to share the gospel.

Adult education. We could plan literacy classes etc in areas that need it in order to meet people and help them. Also witness to them in doing so. We could use our building more effectively for this and other things.

Partnership. We should work alongside other ministries and not always want to start our own. We could partner with churches or clinics etc in areas where we do not have a church in order to minister to a wider community than we would if we simply church plant there.

Discipling and training of coloured pastors. An effort must be made to correct this problem.

Lunch time meetings. Train and equip lay people to run lunchtime meetings at their work places.

Social involvement. By getting involved in social projects and meeting the communities that are hard to reach in this way could be effective. We could also offer help at local trauma units etc.

House Churches. This is a cost effective and relational style of church planting and evangelism. The house churches would need special training and be proactive in evangelism.

Coordination and accountability. Either a mission society be set up, or a regional body to coordinate, advise and train in house churches/church planting/evangelism etc. This would also invite representatives from local churches to think-tank evenings and report back meetings for prayer and encouragement in this task.

3 Key things to work on:

Enthusiasm - arrange prayer and teaching days for this. Speak to the Pastors about this.

Accessibility - Work on making CESA more accessible to a wider variety of people who may not appreciate or understand our English middle class traditions. Be prepared to get out of or 'comfort methods'.

Accountability – Work on becoming more accountable to one another in the region in being the church and engaging in the task of the church.

THE FIVE MARKS OF MISSION

Anglicans In Mission

(MISSIO report 1999)

The Mission of the Church is the mission of Christ

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
To respond to human need by loving service
To seek to transform unjust structures of society
To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth
(Bonds of Affection-1984 ACC-6 p49, Mission in a Broken World-1990 ACC-8 p101)

Reviewing the 'Five Marks of Mission'

At its second meeting (Ely 1996), MISSIO began reviewing the *'Five Marks of Mission'* as developed by the Anglican Consultative Council between 1984 and 1990. We recognise with gratitude that the Five Marks have won wide acceptance among Anglicans, and have given parishes and dioceses around the world a practical and memorable "checklist" for mission activities.

However, we have come to believe that, as our Communion travels further along the road towards being mission-centred, the Five Marks need to be revisited.

Mission: Announcing good news

The first mark of mission, identified at ACC-6 with personal evangelism, is really a summary of what *all* mission is about, because it is based on Jesus' own summary of his mission (Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 4:18, Luke 7:22; cf. John 3:14-17). Instead of being just one (albeit the first) of five distinct activities, this should be the key statement about *everything* we do in mission.

Mission in context

All mission is done in a particular setting - the context. So, although there is a fundamental unity to the good news, it is shaped by the great diversity of places, times and cultures in which we live, proclaim and embody it. The Five Marks should not lead us to think that there are only five ways of doing mission!

Mission as celebration and thanksgiving

An important feature of Anglicanism is our belief that worship is central to our common life. But worship is not just something we do alongside our witness to the good news: worship is itself a witness to the world. It is a sign that all of life is holy, that hope and meaning can be found in offering ourselves to God (cf. Romans 12:1). And each time we celebrate the

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eucharist, we proclaim Christ's death until he comes (1 Cor. 11:26). Our liturgical life is a vital dimension of our mission calling; and although it is not included in the Five Marks, it undergirds the forms of public witness listed there.

Mission as church

The Five Marks stress the *doing* of mission. Faithful action is the measure of our response to Christ (cf. Matt. 25:31-46; James 2:14-26). However, the challenge facing us is not just to *do* mission but *to be a people of mission*. That is, we are learning to allow every dimension of church life to be shaped and directed by our identity as a sign, foretaste and instrument of God's reign in Christ. Our understanding of mission needs to make that clear.

Mission as God-in-action

"Mission goes out from God. Mission is God's way of loving and saving the world... So mission is never our invention or choice." (Lambeth Conference 1998, Section II p121). The initiative in mission is God's, not ours. We are called simply to serve God's mission by living and proclaiming the good news. The Five Marks of Mission could make that clearer.

The Five Marks of Mission and beyond

We commend to each Province (and its dioceses) the challenge of developing or revising its own understanding of mission which is faithful to Scripture. We suggest two possible ways forward.

- The Five Marks could be revised to take account of comments like those above. This has the advantage of retaining the familiar shape of the Five Marks.
- Alternatively a holistic statement of mission *actions* could be strengthened by setting out an understanding of the *character* of mission. This would affirm the solemn responsibility of each local church to discern how it will most faithfully serve God's mission in its context. An example of such an understanding is given below.

   Mission is the creating, reconciling and transforming action of God, flowing from the community of love found in the Trinity, made known to all humanity in the person of Jesus, and entrusted to the faithful action and witness of the people of God who, in the power of the Spirit, are a sign, foretaste and instrument of the reign of God. (Adapted from a statement of the Commission on Mission of the National Council of Churches in Australia.)

Whatever words or ideas each local expression of our Church uses, MISSIO hopes that they will be informed by three convictions:

- We are united by our commitment to serving the transforming mission of God.
- Mission is the bedrock of all we are, do and say as the people of God.
- Our faithfulness in mission will be expressed in a great diversity of mission models, strategies and practices.

http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/mission/fivemarks.cfm

Whose Church? Which Culture? : Discerning the Missionary Structures for Tomorrow.

The Revd Dr Malcolm Brown. Theological Consultant to the Review Group.

Sourced from http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/papers/pmreview/

What is the role of theology in the context of a review like this? Surely a tidying-up exercise on the laws surrounding the structures of the Church of England is essentially a pragmatic, rather than a theological, matter? If the task was to rethink the theology of the Church, surely the proportion of lawyers to theologians on the Review Group should have been the other way round…

The Review Group at least demonstrated that Christian lawyers are as concerned about theology – thinking about God – as the clergy or academic theologians. It was essential to reflect on the nature of God because we quickly discovered that we did not agree about much else. Around the table, there were widely differing perspectives on crucial questions: What is the Church called to be? How should we analyse the wider social context? Are church structures means to an end, or can the medium sometimes be part of the message? We found ourselves saying that if only the Church of England would make up its mind where it was going we would deliver the structural and legal framework for getting there. And yet, for a church to make up its mind in that way would mean that it had foreclosed on a number of equally authentic Christian understandings of what the church is called to be. Theology mattered. This chapter represents only a small element in the theological thinking that lay behind the discussions of the Review Group.

A Theology of the Interim

The respectful exploration of theological difference, which characterised the Group's work, led us to some very important emphases in the report. For instance, we became aware that fear of 'getting it wrong' should not be allowed to paralyse the church. We came to see that the possibility of change – especially of experiment – was a central expression of the kind of dialogic church we sought to model in our own work together. A key concept here is the idea of the theological interim – the age between Pentecost (with the saving work of Christ culminating in the Resurrection and the Spirit present within the created order) and the Parousia when God will bring all things into fulfilment in Himself. In the Interim, grace is a present reality yet sin persists. The Kingdom of Heaven is inaugurated but not yet comprehended in its fullness. In the Interim, human endeavours fail and are corrupted, but it remains that Christians are called to seek the Kingdom, to prefigure its life in their own lives, and to bring its values closer on earth as in heaven. And a central expression of the Kingdom of God is the possibility of repentance and forgiveness. The way back is not closed. If this is true in the spiritual life, it is no less true in the material – how the affairs of Christ's

people are ordered can reflect, or contradict, the nature of God's Kingdom, and whilst it may sometimes be obvious that change is, or is not, 'with the grain' of Christian virtues, it is not always so. Actions taken faithfully can turn out to be in error. That is why, at the structural as well as the personal level, there must be room for repentance and restoration. That is why, in our work on the apparently mundane legal structures surrounding the parishes, dioceses and buildings of the Church of England, we have tended toward permission rather than prescription (acknowledging that the hand of God may be present in the unfamiliar and innovative) whilst keeping open the way back, so that the known and familiar are not obliterated and responses to changing contexts do not themselves become sclerotic or damaging to the wider witness of Christ's people.

But in order even to begin the work, it was important to explore what we meant by The Church. One could use a number of typologies to explore the nature, characteristics and functions of the Church.[1] But I have tried here to develop a model from an earlier source – the Nicene Creed.

'One Holy, Catholic And Apostolic Church'

Whenever we recite the Nicene Creed, we apply these four adjectives to the Church.[2] Between them, they offer us a series of 'windows' into the nature of the Church and its contemporary calling.

In the light of the Interim, a discussion of the Church has to hold together its divine vocation and its flawed reality – and its paradoxical ability to reflect the former through the latter.

To describe the Church as 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic' is to enunciate its vocation and to remind it of its aspiration – not to define it empirically. Inevitably, in pursuing its vocation, the Church has frequently allowed its focus on one or other of these adjectives to become unbalanced. The tension between 'holiness' (variously interpreted) and 'catholicity' seems to recur throughout our history.

So the empirical Church is demonstrably not one, its holiness is often suspect, its catholicity damaged and its apostolicity questionable! And yet it is in the striving after these virtues that its character becomes clear.

The Importance of Ecclesiology

The conduct and beliefs of the New Testament Church offer a fundamental model for all Christians. Whilst it is open to us to reason deductively from the text to the contemporary context, when we turn to the texts themselves we find a group of people frequently reasoning inductively from the experience of their context to the discovery of truths about God[3]. The earliest Church explored its own context in the light of its convictions about

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[1]   For instance, Avery Dulles' five models (Institution, Mystical Communion, Sacrament, Herald and Servant).   A Dulles, *Models of the Church*, Gill and Macmillan, 1974.

[2]   See: Paul Avis, *Church, State and Establishment*, SPCK, 2001.

[3]   In the life of the Church, those whose theological reasoning is predominantly deductive tend to be at odds with those who reason more inductively, and vice versa. But both approaches are necessary if the ambiguities of living in the theological Interim are to be satisfactorily addressed. Inductive and deductive

Christ and His living presence with His people. Its members were bound together by their experience of the Holy Spirit and their understanding that this was rooted in the teaching, the death and the resurrection of Jesus. All that they did sprang out of that identity as a transformed people.

One view that surfaced in the work of the Group was that mission must come before ecclesiology. But it is hard to see how this can be true in anything other than a rhetorical sense, unless ecclesiology is assumed to mean a fully worked out and immutable doctrine of the church. The apostles were only able to add to their number because they were certain of their relationship with the crucified and risen Christ and convinced that that relationship had consequences for all their relationships. Ecclesiology is nothing more or less than the way the people of God work out their relationship with Christ, with each other and with the world. Without a framework on those issues mission cannot happen (Whose mission would it be? And how would we know?). And for us, so many centuries later, working out relationships cannot ignore the way that our brothers and sisters in Christ through the ages have tried to make sense of them. In a predominantly consumerist age (of which more will be said later) it is tempting to talk about mission as if individuals choose Christ then choose a church to belong to. But this is a very thin understanding of being human with no 'story' of how the Holy Spirit works through relationship, neighbourliness and context. Christians have a rich story of community to tell in a fragmenting world and our understanding of the Church – our ecclesiology – should reflect that richness.

Having, I hope, made the case for the primacy of an ecclesiology of some sort, I am going to make the deliberate jump to the wording of the Nicene Creed. The credal formularies have persisted for a very long time and continue to form the crux of the Church's statement of belief about itself.

The Church Is One

The Church is one because God is one (Deuteronomy 6: 4) and because Christ prayed for his disciples that they might be one (John 17: 22). That the Church is divided is scandal and short-falling. Yet, from the very earliest times, there were divisions among Christ's people about the nature (and direction) of The Way. The issues of circumcision, of clean and unclean food – all the cultural difficulties encountered in the transition from a mission to Judaism to a universal mission – had to be negotiated (e.g. Acts 10: 44 – 11: 18, Acts 15: 1-11), clearly not without difficulty. By the time of Paul it was clear that the growing Christian community was feeling strains of loyalty (to different schools of apostolic teaching) and of social difference. Paul's careful work with the Church in Corinth shows the hand of a subtle peacemaker and unifier (1 Corinthians 1).

From the earliest times, the Christian community had to develop ways of discerning between rival interpretations of God's will and the pragmatic issues before them. To appoint a twelfth apostle, they drew lots (Acts 1: 23ff) – an acknowledgement that human discernment of God's will can be so limited that the Holy Spirit may work more effectively through chance. The circumcision issue was debated in a Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15) involving all the apostles and elders. Taken together with the practice of equality among

theologies are almost impossible to synthesise – but both need to keep the other clearly in view as a vital corrective.

members of the Way expressed in Acts 2: 44, this is perhaps the earliest assertion that the Holy Spirit can work through the democratic process. At other times, contentious issues were referred to one of the leading apostles, thus establishing a principle of charismatic (in the sense of personal) leadership.

The great schisms of the Church between Constantinople and Alexandria, between East and West, between Rome and Geneva, Rome and Canterbury, etc, are now part of our scenery. Internecine war between Christians is not quite over yet. Unity is a mark of the Kingdom fulfilled - a central element in our eschatological hope. But, in the theological Interim, unity is like many virtues – its nature uncovered in the act of pursuing it. That is not to acquiesce in disunity. Schism is a stumbling block to faith. But until all things are made clear at the coming of God's Kingdom, faithful Christians will come to different conclusions about the Christ-like life. Unity, then, may sit in tension with holiness.

The Church Is Holy

Holiness is about reflecting the divine nature ('For it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy"' [1 Peter 1:16]) and so, in its fullness, is beyond human attainment in the fallen world.

Holiness is reflected in ways of life, although with a very strong corporate framework rather than an individualistic or consumerist one. The words are from the ordinal, but the exhortation to 'frame and fashion your own selves, and your families, according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make both yourselves and them …, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ', is surely apposite to all Christians.

What does holiness entail? Since the Christian consciousness of being a holy people stems directly from a conviction of the saving love of God, revealed in the crucified and risen Christ, a relationship with God and a sacrificial way of life must be central. Worship, then, is at the heart of holiness, as is a willingness to let go of self in obedience to God and to commit one's self in service to others. A further characteristic of the holy life is its collective dimension. Worship and the Christian life have always involved a mutuality and solidarity (Acts 2: 44f – but also many other passages). Even the solitary, such as Julian of Norwich, is acutely aware of being surrounded by, and bound to pray for, the rest of the Christian community. What is less clear is how solidarity among Christians translates into a relationship with others. Paul's letters frequently involve a negotiation around the complex boundary between the Christian community and the wider world, including the world of state power. In Pauline teaching, the Church is never a holiness sect which withdraws from contact with a profane world. The complexities of a Public Theology, expressing the Christian concern for the welfare of the whole created order and recognising that the faithful remain citizens of this world, are essential elements in seeking holiness.

It is interesting that contemporary trends within Christian Ethics are reaffirming the nature of the Church as a place of holiness. Voices such as those of Stanley Hauerwas and John Milbank[4] call the Church to live its distinctive lifestyle – characterised by peace and the renunciation of violence – untroubled by concerns for 'relevance' or 'engagement with the secular'. It is, for both of them in their different ways, the sheer attractiveness of the Christian life that will draw others to it, rather than any effort to embrace contemporary

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[4]   See, for example, S Hauerwas *With the Grain of the Universe*, SCM, 2002; *The Peaceable Kingdom*, SCM, 1983; *Resident Aliens*, Abingdon, 1989; J Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, Blackwell, 1990.

styles or issues or to argue the Church's case. Both use concepts of postmodernity to free the Church from any requirement to make itself understood on others' terms. Milbank, as an Anglo-Catholic Augustinian and Hauerwas, the Texan Southern Methodist inspired by the Mennonite/Anabaptist tradition, both call the Church to find its authenticity in holiness.

Milbank and Hauerwas offer important correctives to the Church today[5]. Hauerwas in particular is appalled by the simplistic correlation of Christian vocation with the 'American Way'. Liberals in theology and Church life (the objects of much of their criticism) should be reminded by Hauerwas and Milbank that the call to holiness must mean that the Church is more than an alliance of the well-meaning.

But there are problems with holiness presented in this way. The flourishing of the Church (and the ability of theologians to promulgate their ideas) relies upon a civil society of complexity and balance – a holiness that withdraws from the world is parasitic on others who struggle with the persistence of sin[6]. And there is an authoritarianism in both Milbank's and Hauerwas's work which could lead very quickly to the advocacy of a single authentic holiness and the denigration of others (thus offending the principle of catholicity). The search for Christian distinctiveness easily slides into a belief in Christian exclusivity. One helpful way through this is the notion of authenticity[7]. The Church's task is to live authentically in the light of its knowledge of God and its grasp of scripture and tradition – even if that does not cause Christians to stand out as uniquely different. This is helpful, offering a rich and rooted understanding of the holy life. Agreeing what authenticity requires does, however, require discernment – which re-opens questions about the structures which can enable Christians to think theologically together.

The Church Is Catholic

'Catholic', in credal terms, involves embracing difference – the conviction that understanding the demands of the gospel differently for different contexts does not mean separation from the Body of Christ. In historical terms, of course, there have been severe limits to such catholicity. But, again, the New Testament gives us clear pictures of the earliest Church recognising that different approaches – not least different understandings of what was essential and what peripheral to the gospel – were inevitable but that the essential bond between Christians should not be broken.

Catholicity, then, is about boundaries but with a clear knowledge that human judgements in such things are likely to be flawed. Paul wrote that we see through a glass darkly and not yet face to face (1 Corinthians 12: 12). A contemporary version of that metaphor might be the picture on a badly tuned TV. We may disagree about the face we are looking at but we all know if it is the image of a person rather than an elephant – Paul's metaphor is not the backdoor to unrestrained relativism. In institutional terms, boundaries can be renegotiated but boundaries there must be. The process for deciding the degree of diversity which can

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[5]   Unfortunately, neither Milbank nor Hauerwas give the impression that they could accept a corrective to their own theological positions from anywhere else.

[6]   See: Alan Suggate, 'Whither Anglican Social Theology?' in *Crucible*, April-June 2001. Also Raymond Plant, *Politics, Theology and History*, CUP, 2001.

[7]   The words 'authentic' and 'authority' are, perhaps, a reminder that behind both lies the concept of 'authorship' – that is, rootedness in God, the author of all things. See Esther D Reed, *The Genesis of Ethics*, DLT, 2000.

authentically be represented within the Church must be participative, deeply careful and prayerful, if it is not to fall into the trap of capricious authoritarianism. An example would be the *status confessionis* – an instrument deployed twice in the twentieth century by the Reformed and Lutheran traditions: once in the face of Nazism and again in the context of South African apartheid. The *status confessionis* is the assertion that some things are utterly, and beyond reasonable doubt, incompatible with membership of the Church. To make such a pronouncement, an exhaustive process of discernment is necessary. But the *status confessionis* becomes problematic if an attempt is made to apply it to areas of life where the distinction between the Kingdom and the works of darkness is ambiguous and where faithful Christians may honestly disagree[8].

The catholicity principle itself is theologically well-founded. It reflects the insight that, whilst God may embody absolute truth, no human being or human institution can grasp God's truth absolutely. The Holy Spirit moves within the community and is not the possession of any grouping. God continues to be revealed in the created order and God's 'prevenient grace' touches where the empirical Church often does not. Christians will always have need of each other, even – or especially – when they are most at odds with one another in their discipleship.

This suggests a presumption that all who own an allegiance to Christ are vehicles of the Holy Spirit – a presumption that is tested by the extent to which the themes of unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity are held together. It is one task of Christians to redress that balance in each other and to be open to having the balance redressed in themselves through fellowship with other Christians.

The Church Is Apostolic

The apostolic nature of the Church has two strands. On the one hand, apostolicity is an expression of continuity with the first apostles - those who responded to the crucified and risen Lord and received the Holy Spirit. On the other, the Church is identified with the apostolic role – that is, one who is 'sent'. The dynamic of the word implies action, purpose and place.

An apostolic Church, therefore, is the vehicle for that sending. But 'are all apostles?' (1 Corinthians 12: 29) – clearly not, according to Paul. In New Testament times, the terminology had not yet crystallised. Where the original twelve were 'the apostles', Paul's insistence on applying the term to himself extended its meaning. The Church as a whole is charged with continuing the apostolic role of 'being sent' – alongside many other equally authentic roles – and so mission must be one of the authentic marks of the Church.

But the other sense of 'apostolic' is also of enduring significance. Continuity with the first apostles, expressed, literally or symbolically, through the idea of apostolic succession, emphasises the enduring yet evolving nature of the Church. Even if apostolic succession, communicated through an unbroken chain of the laying-on of hands, turns out to be a picturesque fiction, it is nonetheless a meaningful myth which tells the Church something

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8   An example here might be Ulrich Duchrow's argument for a *status confessionis* on global capitalism. Ulrich Duchrow, *Global Economy: A Confessional Issue for the Churches*, WCC, 1987. See also the comprehensive rejoinder to Duchrow in: Ronald Preston, *Confusions in Christian Ethics: Problems for Geneva and Rome*, SCM, 1994.

important about itself. Apostolicity, in this sense, makes continuity with the Church of history a point of discernment for the authenticity of the Church of today. If we want to judge whether a particular development in Church life is authentic, one measure is the degree to which change can be seen as building upon, rather than devaluing, what has gone before. This is not just about an innate conservatism. Rather, the apostolic principle involves a radicalism which recognises the good faith and Christian commitment of every generation, each of which sought to continue the apostolic mission (which from the beginning was adapted to new contexts) and each of which was flawed in some respect. In that sense, the apostolic principle is like an imaginative conversation between the Church of the present and every previous generation of Christians. That image - of a people in conversation with each other, over time, about who they are, how they live and how they relate to others - is very close indeed to the concept of a 'tradition' developed so fruitfully by the moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre[9].

For MacIntyre, a tradition dies when it ceases to be an on-going debate about what it means to live within that tradition. It becomes merely the repetition of decontextualised habit. But the kind of vibrant tradition that forms community is simultaneously in touch with its roots, aware of the story of how it got from there to here, and argues within itself about where to go next.

A further expression of apostolicity (which builds a link with holiness) lies in the Church's remembrance of that decisively apostolic event, the Eucharist. Where the Eucharist is celebrated, there the Church most explicitly is. The definitive narrative of the institution of the Eucharist comes as the climax of Paul's mediating letter to the divided Church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 11: 23-26). The apostle Paul passes on to that local Church the tradition that he himself received, and he does so in order to seal their unity in that unique act of remembrance. So the Eucharist brings together the Church as one, holy and apostolic.

So, what might it mean to live today as if the Church was one, holy, catholic and apostolic? Certainly, those four adjectives throw up some common tensions – between mission and structure, between different models of authority, etc – as well as being in tension with one another. If the creeds themselves suggest that it is of the nature of the Church to live with tensions and never to find final solutions this side of the eschaton, then perhaps the peculiar tensions at the heart of Anglicanism mark it out as authentically a Church. Anglicanism, of its nature a Church living with, and alive to, dynamic tensions, is thereby living out a theological and ecclesiological truth.

Being The Anglican Church

Anglicanism is invariably described as catholic <u>and</u> reformed, and the desire to be both those things is evident in its history. Whatever the *realpolitik* of the sixteenth century, Cranmer made a theological case that the newly created Church of England maintained continuity with the life of the Church in the land over the centuries but, nevertheless, embraced the best of the contemporary reforming zeal without the more openly schismatic tendencies. The legacy is found in a Church which does not neglect the search for holiness but seeks also the catholicity of being the Church of 'the people'; which understands authority as

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[9]   Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Duckworth, 1985 (2nd edition),   *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, Duckworth, 1988.

simultaneously charismatic, apostolic and democratic, and which still understands itself as part of the one, global and historic, Church rather than a sect defined by 'purity' (whether of doctrine or life style). Moreover, historical continuity as an element of catholicity is, for the Church of England, expressed most particularly in geographical continuity – enduring as the church in and for a place.

The classic statement of Anglican identity is also set within a dynamic of virtues in tension. Anglicanism is described as holding together scripture, tradition and reason (sometimes extended from a triangle into a quadrilateral by the addition of experience). Thus there is, in Anglican ecclesiology, a well-developed theology of 'correctives' – the belief that, whilst there are authentic strands which are to some degree at odds with one another, the inherent tendency of any tradition to lose track of its 'internal dialogue' is countered by a sense of belonging to one another across the divide of difference. Anglicanism recognises that personal and community history will dispose some people and groups to find God more helpfully through a particular emphasis within the quadrilateral; that each emphasis is 'true' in so far as humankind can apprehend the divine at all; that each represents an authentic (apostolic) understanding of being Christian and being Church, and that each needs the corrective of the others in order to comprehend its contribution to, and place within, the Body of Christ.

That is a very short and less than adequate account of Anglican diversity. But it is precisely that diversity which gives Anglicanism its mature grasp of the nature of a Kingdom Church within a fallen world. Whilst a snapshot of the Church of England might suggest irresolvable civil war, a longer historical view will suggest a constant corrective dynamic in which reformation continues to require counter-reformation if the shadow side of reform is not to become devilish.

It is worth noting that the ability to hold the triangle (or quadrilateral) in tension has depended upon a number of structural safeguards and guarantees which ensure that neither the personal allegiances of those holding ecclesial power nor the vagaries of fashion can eliminate any of the traditions which embody the different emphases within the Church. Thus, whilst one or other tradition may fade from view, become defensive, uncreative or reactionary, it is protected within 'the body' so that revival from any of the four directions remains a possibility. That is one important argument against an excessively managerial understanding of the church, for bureaucratic neatness does not easily accommodate the diversity which a centuries-long perspective requires.

There is an important 'settlement' within Anglicanism between the local and the central. The structures seem designed to recognise that holiness and apostleship are most effectively pursued in local forms, responsive to context and embodied in the lives of groups which are small enough for the 'face-to-face' dimension. Yet, acknowledging also that such a dynamic can focus so sharply on one context that it becomes narrowly particular, there is a central and institutional element to the Church, whose task is to maintain the wisdom of 'the Body of Christ' by holding up to the local Church the discipleship of other localities, placing the contemporary carefully within the historical, and reflecting the divine vocation of the Church (as well as it can be understood) to the empirical realities.

The local/central motif must not be pushed too far. In Anglicanism today, there are many liminal structures which are 'connected at both ends'. Nevertheless, Anglican ecclesiology

gives real salience to the local Church, by which is meant not simply the congregation meeting under one roof but the communities which come under shared episcopal oversight. The diocese, then, draws together disparate parishes and congregations in a shared identity which expresses the tensions already noted within the Creed and reflects very strongly the doctrine of the Body of Christ.

A crucial point (particularly in the context of this report) is that participation in the structures of Episcopal oversight and of the 'democracy' is extended to all members of the Church. In Anglican polity, the principle of being 'the Church for all in the land' has predisposed us toward a geographical model of participation. By virtue of where we live, our access to the Church in its local manifestation is assured, our participation in the catholicity of a diverse Church is mediated through the Diocese, and our unity within the national Church and the global Anglican communion is secured 'upwards' from the Diocese. But, as the evidence presented to the Review Group has shown, there is now a serious question about whether this is good enough as a structure for maintaining the balance of 'virtues in tension', which characterises a theologically alert Church.

Seeking to express virtues in tension must mean that the church is open to change as its members pray and reflect upon the authentic claims of the gospel in the cultural context which they inhabit. Institutionally, then, the church should not only be open to, but should positively nurture, its members who seek renewal in its words, works and ways. This is, inevitably, a difficult role for an institution since analyses of change and responses to it can be wildly at odds and even the most responsible pressure group does not easily embrace the wide picture or the long view. This is precisely the balancing act which the Review Group has faced.

Theology and Contemporary Culture

The earlier reflections on the nature of the theological interim, and the discussion of the nature of the Church, approached through the formularies of the Nicene Creed, come together when we ask questions about (and make judgements upon) contemporary culture. It is to be expected that Christians will disagree about which aspects of culture point to Christ and which point away from Him. Many aspects of culture have the capacity for both, since sin can corrupt the best intentions and structures can be used for good and for ill. The relationship between Christ and culture has taken many forms in the history of the Church[10]. The spirit of the age can oscillate between shallow optimism (everything is getting better and closer to the Kingdom of God) and cynical pessimism (nothing ever improves) both of which deny important truths about God and the created order. But discerning those cultural motifs which are of God and those which are snares and delusions is a task for the whole people of God in prayerful exploration and, sometimes, learning from errors committed in good faith.

How, then, might the Church begin to read the signs of *these* times - the culture and priorities of England in the Twenty-first century?

It has become a cliché that we live amid rapid change. The trajectory of change is less obvious. The Review Group listened to many respondents who wanted the various

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[10]   See: H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, Harper and Row, 1951 for a typology of five ways of viewing the relationship.

measures changed to enable the church to respond more quickly and thoroughly to social change. But how is the church to discern where social change potentially reflects the nature of God and where it contradicts the insights of the gospel? It was striking how many respondents spoke with confidence about the nature of life in postmodernity. And yet a key characteristic of the very word 'postmodern' is that it deals in concepts that have been usurped rather than ones which hold. In the wider academic field, terms like 'postmodernity' are not used with any one clear or agreed frame of reference. It is, for instance, not always clear whether the characteristics attributed to postmodernity are being advocated or merely described nor is it easy to agree which cultural characteristics are essentially postmodern and which are features of (perhaps degenerate) modernity. Amid such problems of discernment, too much enthusiasm for everything postmodern can be premature.

Consumerism: The Chosen and the Given

Perhaps the most significant cultural phenomenon with which the Review Group has had to grapple is the anthropology of consumerism - the tendency to define being human in terms not of what we produce but of the lifestyle choices that we make. The American Lutheran theologian, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda has summed up this world-view as *homo economicus, consumens et dominans*[11] - expressing the narrowness and unsustainability of this perspective on the human condition which denies so much Christian insight into our relationships with God, each other and the rest of creation. It is worth exploring the nature of consumerism and faith a little further.

It is sometimes argued that consumerism is so entrenched in contemporary human affairs that the Church has no option but to work with it and present itself and the Christian faith as another lifestyle choice. The notion that people go to church because of a sense of obligation is claimed to be limited to an ageing sector of the population and those brought up in the boom years since the '60s are said to be immune to the concepts of social duty, communal responsibility or sacrificing anything which does not yield an immediate return[12].

There is enough that is recognisable in this picture to make the most conservative Christian pause. Such an analysis has profound consequences for the shape of the Church and the structures that should be promoted. The question is: what should be the church's stance toward consumerism?

John 15:16 is crucial here: 'You did not choose me; I chose you'. The predominant Biblical understanding of choice focuses on God's choosing of His people. Turning to Christ is presented less as an act of will than as a response to the unconditional love of God which cannot be refused. But this is not totally to reject the notion of human choice as part of the relationship with God. The human response to God's love is indeed felt as an obligation, but that love can also be rejected.

That is a very different matter from treating the supermarket as the paradigm of all human decision making. (And it is worth remembering the illusory nature of supermarket choice - a plethora of brands and products available from a tiny number of suppliers: dozens of olive oils but no decent Kentish apples... Supermarkets offer the simulacrum of choice rather

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11   Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, *Healing a Broken World: Globalisation and God*, Fortress, 2002.

12   For a very interesting analysis of this trend see: Grace Davie, *Europe, the Exceptional Case*, DLT, 2002.

than its reality). Creating models of church which collude with consumerism by mimicking the operations of the marketplace risks destroying the church's capacity to uphold the richer, Christian, anthropology or, pastorally, to say anything prophetic about the oppressive power of market economics on the lives of the peoples of the world.

In the faithful congregations of the Church of England we frequently meet with the reality of sacrificial loving, of selfless living and of social solidarity. Such congregations often have an impact on their communities disproportionate to their size, not least because they offer a precious counter-cultural insight that may be more powerful for being understated or inarticulate: that the good life, in the love of God, is not about getting what you want but doing what faith, conscience and love compel.

Nevertheless, the imperatives of mission mean that the church is obliged to take account of the consumer mentality in its encounter with contemporary culture. If the gospel is to be heard, it must connect in some way with the categories and vocabulary of people as they are, and yet it must also call them to a more abundant life and to richer, truer, stories about being human under God. The church's stance toward ambiguous social trends needs to bear in mind the 'interim' requirement for correctives. Many trends can assist mission or hinder it – but when a trend has become socially dominant the proper theological stance is one of suspicion that important aspects of the nature of God and of being human are being obscured.

For this reason, the Review Group was cautious, but not entirely dismissive, of calls to remodel the church in the light of the dominant culture of consumerism. The case for religious resistance to consumer culture is ambiguous and discernment of the gospel's requirements is a perpetual task. It is right that voices within the church continue to reappraise the potential for contemporary culture to communicate Christian truth as well as its limitations. But the Review Group's brief was to reorder the structural legislation of the Church of England and, mindful of the moral ambiguity of consumerism, it was right to be cautious about making that a governing metaphor for the structures of the church or for life in Christ.

Urban, rural and suburban

One reflection in the middle of all the controversy about the future shape of the church is that, often, what is not made specific can be covertly dominant. Slightly tongue in cheek, it can be observed that whilst the Church of England in the 1980s published the influential reports *Faith in the City*[13] and *Faith in the Countryside*[14] it never got around to completing the trilogy with *Faith in Suburbia*. Many of the social analyses presented to the Review Group, and many of the accompanying models of the church, seemed based on a predominantly suburban conception of a highly mobile, largely individualistic (even atomised), consumer-minded society. Models of community and church life that would be familiar to those in rural or Urban Priority Areas seemed no longer to be of much interest. Yet those communities have not gone away. It would be a great shame if the church's current missiology was focused so much on 'what works' in a culture where suburban values predominate that

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[13]   *Faith in the City, The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas (ACUPA)*, Church House Publishing, 1985.

[14]   *Faith in the Countryside: The Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas (ACORA)*, Churchman Publishing, 1990.

these should be allowed to become the model for all mission, and the different mission fields of the inner city and isolated village (where other criteria of 'what works' might apply) should be seen as irrelevancies from the 1980s. In reviewing the structural legislation for the church's mission and ministry, the vocation of the Church of England to be active in every community of the land had to be clearly held in mind. Hence the Review Group's desire to enable change and experiment. But we were wary of adopting an over-simplified analysis which mistook cultural uncertainty for a call to constant managerial change. So our permissive streak was tempered by the desire not to swallow the propositions that change always points in a particular direction, that the church must follow or be lost, and that those who maintain unpopular positions are committing a kind of spiritual suicide. We remain very conscious that, sometimes, to do familiar things in a changing context is to do something radically new.

Through all this, we were driven back to the truth that reform and new insight come frequently from unexpected places. This connects precisely to the Pauline theology of the Body – that each member has need of the others and is nothing without them (1 Cor 10: 17; 12: 4-31). It is not especially easy to legislate for mutuality and respect, but in as far as it is within its power, that is what the Review Group has attempted. This is to be seen in the concern to create a permissive attitude towards pastoral reorganisation, coupled with the insistence that mission initiatives are held within the theological understandings, and the governance structures, of the Church of England.

Mission and the Changing Church

A central part of our brief was to help orientate the Church toward mission. Underlying much of our discussion was the fact that there are many interpretations of what that word means. It may be that the very important re-emphasis on mission in the last decade or so has begun to lose focus – the word's meaning extended so far that it may be in danger of losing any content, needing to be reclaimed for a more specific usage. That said, the 'Five Marks of Mission' adopted by the Anglican Communion are a good starting point for considering the missiological task.[15]

All five of the Marks of Mission involve a conversation between the eternal insights of the Christian gospel and a sustained attempt to understand and analyse the cultures of contemporary societies. To proclaim the Good News involves an act of translation – not only from the original languages of scripture but into the idioms of current times, recognising that meanings are not static where living languages are concerned and that perspective can alter meaning drastically. Similarly, the needs of new believers, who are drawn out of contemporary cultures and will minister as disciples of Christ within those cultures, will change over time if the unchanging act of baptism into the living church is to be understood correctly. The Christian is called always to love, but the demands of love must

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[15]   The Five Marks of Mission of the World-Wide Anglican Communion –
         To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
         To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
         To respond to human need by loving service
         To seek to transform unjust structures of society
To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth.
         (www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/fivemarks/html   Accessed: 09/05/03)

be worked out in every situation and human need must be interpreted in the light of a Christian understanding of what it is to be human rather than by the shifting canons of perceived neediness (love must hear the silent cry of the obscure as well as the strident claims of the vociferous). Throughout, it is important to recall that mission is grounded in God and being open to God's loving relationship with us. It is less about what we do that about opening up new possibilities for God to work in us. Mission may be less about building up the temporal, empirical, church (although that is a vital means) than about participating with God in making the Word incarnate.

One aspect of mission which is not explicit in the 'Five Marks' is the reform of the Church in the light of the demands of the gospel. Yet without the challenge of those through the ages who have struggled to call the Church back to its true calling (its balance of unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity) the mission of the Church in the world would be infinitely more problematic. Innovative approaches to church life are always needed as correctives to the propensity for established models to become fossilised. But innovation is not without intrinsic problems.

Business and commerce have never cracked the problem of innovators. If the 'innovations unit' is located within Head Office, no-one ever breaks out of the corporate culture to innovate. Put the innovators in a dedicated space and they innovate like mad but they have no impact on the culture. It is like that in Churches too …[16]

One story might illustrate this. In the 1940s, Bishop Leslie Hunter set up Sheffield Industrial Mission. The primary objective was not to bring pastoral care to the workers or to persuade them to come to Church. Hunter believed that the Church had become apostate, mistaking bourgeois values for Christian virtues and that it would only be recalled to its vocation by listening to the lives and stories of those it had neglected – in this case, working-class men. IM did much that was impressive but it never radicalised the Church in any effective way. Why?

First, it is a very rare thing for an institution to give succour to 'authorised subversives'. It either freezes them out or cuts them off. Both happened to IM, in that Hunter's successor as Bishop tried to turn the venture into a more traditional ('get them into Church') mission, and, because IM sat outside the parochial structure, few listened to its critique of the Church's systems.

In an influential analysis of IM in 1985, a Japanese Christian, Shigeko Masumoto, developed the concept of the 'missiological gap'.[17] She described a triangular relationship between the Kingdom of God, the Church and the World, each axis being a 'gap'. Which 'gap' does mission seek to address?

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[16]   The Christian management consultant, Dr Graham Guest, first alerted me to the significance of this commercial dilemma for the mission of the Church.

[17]   Shigeko Masumoto, *A Critique of British Industrial Mission*, MPhil Thesis, University of Leeds, 1985.

God's Kingdom

The 'ecclesiological gap'   The 'theological   gap'

The Church _____ **The World**

The 'sociological gap'
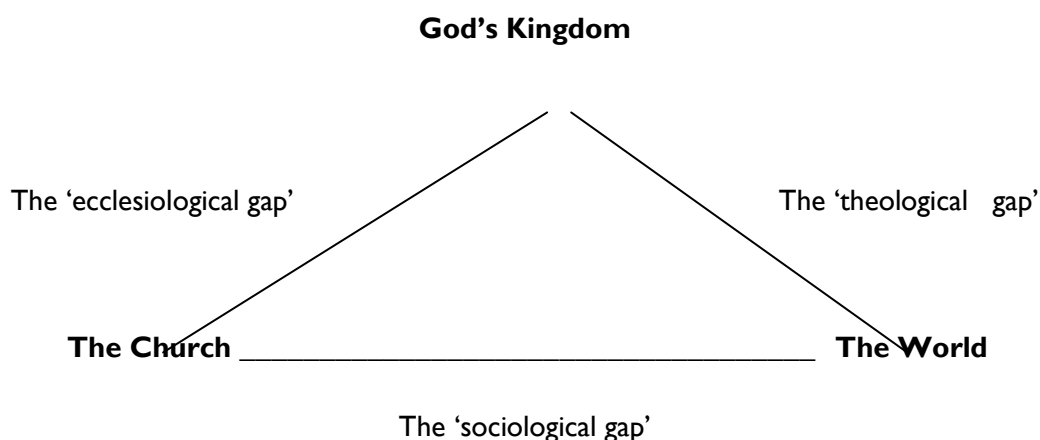
Mission in the sociological gap between Church and World is concerned to ask how the Church can attract people to it, and how it can make the gospel intelligible. The ecclesiological gap between the Kingdom and the Church, however, is the recognition that the Church fails to mirror the values and nature of the Kingdom as well as it could – its one, holy, catholic and apostolic nature is unbalanced. Mission in the theological gap is about helping God's Kingdom to come on earth as in heaven. When we ask how Churches change, the interesting gap is what Shigeko Masumoto called the ecclesiological gap. Most Christians would agree that the ultimate purpose of mission (the *Missio Dei*) is to bring the Kingdom to fulfilment in the world. But whilst the world remains fallen, and Christians remain in the world, the Church must attend to its failings and be radicalised by visions of the Kingdom presented afresh.

In the discussions of the Review Group, much of the concern was for experimental mission initiatives which risk either being enculturated into the Church-as-it-is, or dying for lack of a wider community of faith, if they are not understood as having a role in calling the Church to its authentic vocation.

Territory and Networks

A great deal of discussion centred on the challenge posed to the parochial system by the concept of the church as network rather than territory. This is both a theological point and a question of social analysis. It is true that, in many (but not all) communities, the way people relate to the geographical surroundings of their home is changing. Many people are members of numerous overlapping communities, often living by different stories of value, virtue and identity in different phases and modes of life. The ideal of the parish as the geographical frame around which the complex tapestry of a community's life was woven may always have been a model rather than an accurate description but is barely viable even as a model today. From a social point of view, then, networks are a fair image of the modes by which people today relate to one another. The question remains whether the image of the network is congruent with Christian insights into the nature of human community under God. Here it is

important not to let the familiar become confused with the God-given. Nevertheless, the wholesale replacement of the territorial conception of the local church by a networked model seemed premature. The great difficulty was in identifying what would be the warp and weft of the network. In other words, which, among the many strands of human connectedness, would identify the Christian community? Social divisions and distinctions have too often been imported into the territorial structures of the Church –shaping the Christian community along the lines of self-chosen networks risks entrenching, rather than confronting, such distortions of the gospel. And how would resources flow through a network in ways that would reinforce the mutuality of differing approaches to discipleship? In short, there are hazards in choosing the network as the model of the church in an age when networking has been used more for creating the divisions beloved of marketing theories ('grey panthers', Dinkies, Yuppies[18], or, more worryingly, underclasses) than for expressing the inter-dependence and mutuality of the gospel's social vision.

That said, all structures which attempt to mirror the Kingdom of God will fail, or at best offer incomplete hints of gospel values, so anxiety about the weaknesses of new models does not constitute a defence of the status quo. The church has always to live with the tension between its counter-cultural calling and its mission to make the gospel known to all. There is a grave danger, to be held over against the anxieties just expressed, that a single structural model of church risks speaking with only one voice in a culturally polyglot world. The fragmentary and individualistic society so prevalent in the prosperous West today, will not go away because Christians wish it, however faithfully they speak among themselves about other values. Crudely, the Christian vocation is to 'mix it' in a troubled world, risking corruption by the world's values (although, naturally, taking such wise precautions as are possible for retaining an authenticity in the faith). In other parts of the Anglican Communion (and even within the Church of England, as witness the chaplaincies of the Diocese in Europe) the parochial system is not even part of the immediate inheritance. Nor should it be forgotten that the inadequacies of the parish system have been recognised for a long time and supplemented by other mission activities. Non-denominational networks (the Iona Community, New Wine, Greenbelt and the other festival networks, groups such as Church Action on Poverty) are a vital part of the spiritual diet of many Christians – the church as network is a present (and established) reality.

It is possible that the networked church in fact communicates important theological insights that are lost in the parish structure. Might it be, for instance, that as the ties of establishment weaken, and authentic Christian faith becomes less and less in tune with the assumptions and patterns of contemporary culture, the network could be an appropriately subversive model reflecting the increasing riskiness of being identified publicly as Christian? There would be good New Testament precedents. But there would be 'false consciousness' in adopting the models and structures appropriate to an oppressed church when the empirical reality is that English Anglicans continue to wield considerable social and political power.

The above debate is inconclusive because it touches on the contentious and inconclusive nature of social analysis today. The only obvious truth is that we live in a state of transition and it is unclear which of our inherited ways of doing and understanding will endure, which must be renewed and which jettisoned. In such a climate, an ever deeper exploration of roots must be combined with a vulnerable willingness to explore the new. Discernment

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[18]   Double Income, No Kids Yet, and Young Upwardly mobile Professionals, respectively.

becomes the central, and most elusive, Christian virtue – reading the times whilst inhabiting them is fraught. Our concern has been to avoid premature certainty, to be open to alternative readings of the times and to enable the church to be light-footed enough to respond without sitting too light to the perplexing, serious, and uncomfortable demands of living by the gospel.

Participation, Identity And Structure

This uncertainty in the face of change tests existing models to the limit. In some places, the experience of social fragmentation suggests that approaches to being the Church cannot maintain 'catholicity', in the widest sense, and effectively reach certain groups in society. To attempt to incorporate some social groupings into the Church as it is would be to attempt too many steps at once. First, the new social grouping (be it based on age, class, ethnicity, gender or whatever) needs to be able to find its theological, liturgical and ecclesial voice. It is also important to be clear what we expect such mission initiatives to become? Like all innovative ventures, there is uncertainty about whether they are about modelling a future norm or filling a present and future niche. In other words, is it the 'Orange' effect ('the future is bright, the future is Orange') or the 'Heineken' effect ('refreshes the parts other Churches don't reach') that we are anticipating when we open the way to new mission initiatives?

The proper answer is surely that we start with the 'Heineken effect' whilst leaving open the possibility that it will lead to the 'Orange' effect

However, if the initiative is expected to remain outside the mainstream, it has to grapple with the question of catholicity and apostolicity from the start. In what way is this experiment Anglican? As a stand-alone venture, these things would go unaddressed. Somehow the initiative must find a place within the structures and be located in relation to the rights and responsibilities of Anglican membership without sapping its vital creativity.

Many initiatives and networks have remained resolutely ecumenical (or non-denominational), partly in order to secure their innovative freedom. If an initiative is promoted from within the Church of England (especially if it seeks to radicalise the denomination) how is its continuity with Anglican history expressed? Such an initiative, even if focused on a specific context or grouping, has an obligation to look beyond itself if it is to be an authentic part of the Church. Accepting the responsibilities of an ecclesial community which is national/global as well as local requires compromise and 'moderation' of the local will.

'Permissiveness' in ecclesiastical structures, then, has limits. The autonomy of the local sits in tension with the demands of being a Church. A degree of local freedom is essential if new responses are to flourish. But freedom for the currently marginalised is hard to secure without creating freedom for the powerful to entrench their power. As in political life, libertarianism proves to be severely damaging to minorities and, paradoxically to curtail freedom by suppressing variety and generating monopolies of the powerful. True freedom in Christ, in the earliest Church, seems to have led Christians to renounce self and seek the welfare of each other. Mutuality is not well-served by libertarianism.

The Diocese: organisation and mutuality

It has helped that the Pastoral Measure and the Dioceses Measure were scrutinised together. Although the most interesting and contentious discussions centred on the Pastoral Measure with a great range of models of the local church vying for our attention, we were more easily able to see the virtues of having many approaches because, in Anglican ecclesiology, the local church is manifested in the diocese as well as the parish. It is the theology of oversight – or *episcope* – which binds the body together, the different emphases and approaches helping to sustain the idea that all contribute to the whole and need one another. Although, of course, dioceses differ markedly, it is to be expected that within any diocese, a wide range of theological and ecclesiological emphases will be represented, social and cultural contexts will differ markedly and, in consequence, a number of mission strategies will need to coexist, complement and learn from each other. The bishop (or, more properly, the dynamic relationship inherent in the idea of the bishop-in-synod, nationally and in the diocese) is most explicitly a sign of the unity which binds together different ways of being the church into one body. It was accepted that the current diversity of practice within the Church of England was a strength and a blessing provided that it took place within a wider polity which could embody the respectful nature of Christian discourse and make visible the theological truth that the church as it is, the empirical human institution, does not in itself fully embody the Kingdom of Heaven.

And so the Review Group's stance toward diocesan organisation was to seek to make possible a number of organisational models, provided always that the diocese was a focus of unity which embraced plurality. In other words, the diocese, like the parish, is understood to be much more than an administrative convenience or a managerial tool. The diocese is a very visible expression of Anglican ecclesiology, not just as the vehicle whereby a bishop can exercise *episcope*, but as a body to which people belong and have an allegiance which binds them into fellowship with Christians with different theological emphases or different social contexts. Moreover, the diocese is an essential tool of mission. There is much which is missiologically essential which few if any parishes are equipped to undertake alone. These are, essentially, episcopal functions.

So the diocese has an important role in enabling the Church of England to witness to the call of Christ. But how that role is lived out is as subject to re-evaluation and change as are models of the local church within the parish setting. It is important that, in an age which places so much trust in managerialism, the church retains the capacity to witness to other virtues - most specifically to the idea that ends and means must be considered together. The aim of the Review Group has been to enable diocesan structures to be flexible enough to enable the bishops to discharge their episcopal ministry imaginatively and faithfully. Especially when material resources are under pressure, the temptation to see the bishop as manager and the diocese as a quasi-firm is strong but should be resisted. Nor do we subscribe to the view that the parish is the only authentic manifestation of the church and that the diocese is just a convenient (or inconvenient) mechanism for equipping the parishes. Rather, we understand the diocese and the parishes to be expressions together of the nature of Christian community. Diocese and parish together are called to do theology both deductively and inductively – not only seeking the application of the truths of scripture and tradition in the contemporary setting but asking also what the contemporary context (informed, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit whose activity is by no means confined to the

church) might be telling us about the nature of God. These two approaches cannot be synthesised – they go together in an uncomfortable but necessary tension.

Church Buildings

The Bible presents us strongly with the belief that fidelity to God entails a "sitting lightly" to place. And yet the Bible is full of significant places. This tension continues to underlie our difficulties with church buildings.

"A wandering Aramean was my father" is a formulation of intense significance for members of the Abrahamic faiths. The faithfulness of Abraham is epitomised in his setting off from Ur of the Chaldeans (along with his wives, children and servants, who, it has to be said, seem to have had little say in the matter!) (Genesis 12). The wandering life of the Israelites after the Exodus is more ambiguous: those forty years were profoundly formative of the cultural identity, yet the wandering years were sustained by the hope of a Promised Land – the dream of settlement. These two motifs remain held in tension for a long time – the Ark of the Covenant seems always to have been conceived as portable, temporarily laid up in the Temple, yet by its nature, a reminder of the wilderness years.

Nevertheless, the Temple became an embodiment of the community's sense of the presence of God. As intrinsic qualities became attached to the building, the sense of locatedness and permanence deepened to the extent that the fall of the Temple in 587 BC was interpreted as the withdrawal of God's favour, presaging a period of exile and diaspora. Insofar as the prophets understood the Exile as a cleansing period, in which the true nature of God's relationship with God's people might be rediscovered, the loss of the Temple proclaimed a theology which eschewed holy places in favour of a God, at once personal and omnipresent, who accompanies us in our journey and dislocation.

The New Testament maintains elements of this ambiguity about place. Perhaps most explicitly, in St John's Gospel, Jesus discusses the point with the Samaritan woman, saying, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem … God is Spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth". (John 4: 20-25 NRSV)

Yet this does not quite preclude the idea of specially holy places. When Jesus turns the money-changers out of the Temple, he uses the term "My Father's house" and asserts the inappropriateness of trading therein (John 1: 13-16). Here, the Temple is called "a house of prayer" but that does not (in the light of the later passage) imply that only here should prayer be offered. The key may lie in the expression, "the hour is coming". The eschatological theology of Jesus is a subject of controversy, but John 4: 20 seems to allude to the condition of the Kingdom of Heaven, when the compromises and inarticulacies of the former times have been transcended, whilst the episode with the money-changers emphasises that, in the present dispensation, those things which, however inadequate, help to focus people on the relationship with God are not to be sullied or treated with anything less than reverence.

So church buildings are essentially of the Interim. They do not embody or represent our best understanding of the relationship of God to the world. We remain called to be a nomadic people, who have, here, no abiding city. Yet focal points remain helpful to our

limited understanding. Setting a place, a building, apart as a location for religious observance does not imply that God is uniquely or particularly in that place, but may assist us, who so easily forget God, to make prayer and worship a part of life. The significance of the church building is thus real but incomplete as an expression of what we know about God and we should not treat them merely as utilitarian shells. The concept of "hallowed ground" is not the same as idolatry, although the boundary between the two may be hard to police. The point is to distinguish the special nature of places which enable worship and help build relationships (with God and with others) and to recognise the significance they hold for many people and groups.

The way in which the Church was shaped in New Testament times may, interestingly, have left us some unhelpful legacies for our times and culture. As the theologian Andrew Shanks notes[19], a persecuted Church must give priority to questions of boundaries, authority and pastoral care, but in a freer, more open society, or one in which the Church numbers among the powerful, obsession with these issues makes the Church defensive, controlling or even oppressive, generating a "pastoral monoculture" which neglects the wider role of Christians in shaping culture and society.

This could have important implications for our use of buildings (where "defensive architecture" so often exemplifies just such an obsession with boundaries and authority). If our buildings have become refuges from the changing culture in which they are set, then there is a liberation for the Church if we can be freed from them. Moreover, opening up church buildings for other uses in the community becomes expressive of a free, confident and missiological immersion in wider civil society. Were the Church able to renounce its sense of being a persecuted minority and own more confidently its crucial, and still residually powerful, role in the world, opening our buildings could be an eloquent expression of Christian identification with community and, indeed, redolent of the prophetic injunction to seek the welfare of the city, even when in exile within it, to marry and invest in the life of the place (Jeremiah 29: 4-7).

Church building has reflected the guiding principle of every community having an Anglican place of worship. The notion of community is notoriously slippery (as A.H.Halsey and others have observed) but is nonetheless meaningful to people 'on the ground' as an expression of something they identify with and cherish. In many areas, churches represent one of the few public spaces available (in theory) for people to meet. The church is often realising the precious asset that this represents. This reflects the old function of the nave as the people's space. The tangible and intangible contribution of church buildings ('live' and redundant) to 'social space' is aptly described as 'social capital'[20]. Maintaining that social capital in ways which are achievable from the church's limited and declining resources must involve wider partnerships and the kind of compromises which come from careful conversation with those who do not necessarily share a theological perspective.

The desire to enable the church to find the most appropriate structures at the most local level possible informed the discussion of the redundant churches section of the Pastoral Measure as much as the others. Here, the tension between the church's desire to be

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[19] See: Andrew Shanks, *Civil Society: Civil Religion*, Blackwell, 1995.

[20]   See the 'Commedia' report, *Spirit of Place: redundant churches as urban resources*, 1995.

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mission-oriented and the complexity of the ways the church may inadvertently communicate very different impressions in the wider community was especially apparent. The Church of England's embeddedness in the fabric of community life is brought to the fore when a much-loved building, which contributes intangibly to the sense of local identity, is under threat. So whilst the issues around redundant churches seemed, at one level, relatively self contained, in fact they raised crucial questions about the way the church approaches mission. Again, the transitional nature of the times must be understood. The fragmentation and marketisation of public life has not yet gone so far that the church building is perceived as 'plant' devoid of meaning in itself. Indeed, the vehemence with which buildings are defended within communities suggests that much social anxiety (often fairly inchoate) about the deleterious effect of social fragmentation is projected onto the church as a symbol of deeper human values. And yet the seamless identification of the whole population with the Church of England is manifestly weakening with a consequent waning of practical and material support for the church and its buildings. The problems about redundant churches are an important reminder that the church is not (yet) just another voluntary society which can do what it likes with its property. It still plays a profoundly significant role in expressing human community and belonging, even for people who have difficulty articulating their need of these things. The Review Group has sought to ensure that the many stakeholders in church buildings have their proper roles in questions of future usage. But it has also been a reminder to the other parts of the review process that missiological effectiveness is not simply about the church doing what it feels called to do but also how, in a confused and complex social context, it is perceived to be speaking by its actions and seen to be attentive to human longings.

Incarnation and Atonement

In every aspect of the group's work, the ambiguity of the times was very close to the surface. The substance of this report only makes sense in the context of the immense difficulty which attends Christian discernment in rapidly changing and nervous times. This is why it remains crucial to start and finish with theological reflections on the task.

I am indebted to Canon Dr John Atherton for the insight that, in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century history of the Church of England, the Age of Atonement gave way to the Age of Incarnation[21]. The focus on atonement caused the church to preach a 'drawing out' of the faithful from a corrupt and corrupting world into a church that sought to be a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven. The world-denying consequences of that theology brought about a reaction which emphasised the equal truth of the Incarnation – a world so loved by God that He sent His only Son to be its Saviour. A world in which the Holy Spirit is active in creation even before the church has the wit to perceive what God is doing. It may be that we are now experiencing a second Age of Atonement as the counter-cultural nature of Christian discipleship is thrown into sharp relief by the knowledge that God's hand can too quickly be identified in the mirage of cultural 'progress'. The truth is that both insights are essential to the Christian life and to the ordering of the Church. Changing times require a church that is responsive but is nonetheless deeply rooted in the Christian identity. Uncertain times require that we are a church which maintains the conversation about what that Christian identity entails – a conversation conducted not just in words but in action,

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[21]   John Atherton, *Public Theology for Changing Times*, SPCK, 2000.

ways of being community, and 'practices of piety'[22]. That means a church which is not threatened by difference but is nonetheless attentive to its mutuality and shared belonging under God. Alive to the persistence of sin, the church will need structures which are eloquent of its beliefs and concerns even as they are contingent and, to an extent, artificial, since structure (to steal a phrase from the Book of Common Prayer Solemnisation of Matrimony) may be given to us as 'a remedy against sin'. This report represents a cautious step toward freeing the Church of England to become more structurally adaptable whilst retaining the virtues perceived to subsist in the structures it already has. That caution is a measured response to the uncertainty of the age and the difficulty of reading the times accurately in the light of the gospel. And it is offered as a report that should be revisited frequently and not claimed as the last word on the subject. Pleasing everyone is not only an unworthy ambition for a Christian but a theological absurdity as long as the church is alive and the Holy Spirit active among its members, for only in disagreement, debate and conversation can the church express the interdependedness of the many parts of the one Body.

'We are the Body of Christ – by the one Spirit we were all baptised into the one Body'. The members of the Body bring with them their uniqueness, their perspective, their partiality and fallibility – and, most fundamentally, their faith in the crucified and risen Christ. Changing, uncertain and unsettling times will generate wildly diverse opportunities for mission and ministry. Fragmenting times will mean that no one size fits all. Yet we are still members of one another, expressed in part by membership of one Church of England. It is the intention of this report to make a contribution to the liberation of church structures so that ways forward may one day become evident from a plethora of possibilities. Possibilities which are properly constrained by a theology of the One Body, which recognises the propensity of churches to the sin of division. But possibilities also which might wean God's people away from unworthy dependency on outward manifestations of church life which no longer communicate properly the inward spiritual reality.

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[22]   See: Timothy Sedgwick, *The Christian Moral Life: Practices of Piety*, Eerdmans, 1999.

Transcript of Keynote address by Archbishop of Canterbury:

Mission Shaped Church Conference – June 23rd 2004

Now one of the great advantages of the mission shaped church agenda is of course that it obliges us to some hard thinking about what the church itself is. And it wouldn't be too unjust I think to say that over the centuries, a lot of Anglicans have tended to think that the question of what the church is will somehow look after itself or solve itself. As if we have our theology of the church on the National Health.

Now we have to think harder, now we have to ask more searching questions about why and what the church is, and we have to do harder work on what it is that was distinctive at the very beginnings of the church, about its existence. When I used to teach early Christian theology, I often said to my students that the problem of approaching the history of the early Christian church was that we thought we knew what a church was, but nobody much did in the first century of the Christian era. You didn't begin with a cultural concept of going to church; you didn't begin with a building that immediately flashed up on people's inner eye when you said the word church - a building with straight lines of seats, a table at the far end, and probably some slightly unfashionable architecture all around the outside. You didn't begin by knowing the answers, you were responding rather at the very beginnings of the church's history to something that had happened and working out bit by bit, not very easily, not always very clearly what the kind of difference was that Jesus had made, and what life together expressed that difference. And so I hope you'll pardon me if I begin by doing a bit of theology about the church, looking at its beginnings, looking at the New Testament concept of church and seeing where that leads us in our thinking today.

One of the sometimes helpful heritages of Anglicanism is of course the idea that it's a middle way between two mistakes. So whether that constitutes a third mistake is of course open to endless discussion, but it's a useful tactic to begin lectures with. So I'll begin like that with the two mistakes. Did Jesus found a church? is a question which sometimes crops up in discussion doesn't it, and if you pick up that great doorstop of a book by Hans Kuhn on The Nature of Christianity you'll notice that one of the things that Hans Kuhn says as a good liberal Roman Catholic is that Jesus did not found a church. And he's responding of course to the idea that somehow the mission of Jesus finds its culmination and its essence in Jesus laying down principles for an institution, organising a hierarchy, structuring a community which is governed, ruled, organised and structured in certain ways. And the reaction against that, the reaction which says of course Jesus didn't found a church is in many ways a healthy reaction. It reminds us that if you read the gospels with open eyes and hearts, it's quite difficult to draw from it a picture of a Jesus who's main priority is founding an institution. as people found a club or a religious order or a political party or whatever else.

If I say that in the 20th Century, Saunders Lewis was the founder of the Welsh Nationalist Party in the 1920's, most of us know pretty much what's involved in that. Saunders Lewis had a bright idea about Welsh political independence

– very bright idea! and he set about creating the structure which would draw people into that, a programme to which people signed up with membership lists and meetings. Now, that's not quite the impression you get from the gospels I would argue. Jesus is not implementing a programme to which people sign up with regular meetings and structured societies. So the pendulum swings, but it swings as usual, rather too far to the idea that Jesus simply proclaimed the possibility of salvation for persons and that it was quite useful later on for them to get together and compare notes. Jesus told people how they were to become right with God and because of course it helps to hear it from other people as well in due course, something emerged that we call a church which is the assembly of individuals who have beliefs about Jesus. I think that is equally hard to map onto the New Testament and specially onto the gospels. Jesus begins by creating a set of relationships with the 12 apostles and that set of relationships survives the greatest, the most traumatic interruption that could possibly be. The betrayal of which the apostles are guilty and the death of Jesus, a shattering of everything that had been constructed in a long relationship of shared work and prayer and speaking and listening over the years of Jesus' ministry. And that is the set of relationships that is restored immediately when Jesus rises from the dead and appears not simply to individuals, but to the apostolic company. He brings himself back into that network of relationships which he had created in his ministry and in so doing enables those people to understand the saving reality of his death. And according to St Paul, he also appeared to much larger numbers of people and at the very end of Matthew's gospel we have what does seem a fairly substantial public meeting in Galilee as Jesus makes his farewells.

But the point is simply that the church may not be an institution founded by Jesus in the simple sense, but neither is it an afterthought concocted by individual believers who happened to like each others company. The church would be in a very sad state if it was dependant on that! Jesus creates relationships because of course that is what the God of Israel has always done. Not giving a message from on high only, but creating a people. And by his presence and work among that people, shaping their relations with each other through law and prophecy, Jesus is the living presence of Israel's God, the Word made flesh does what God habitually does, creates relationships, shapes them by his will and his love and his presence. And so from the start, where Jesus is, there is the church; the church as the assembly of those who are finding their relationships, their lives transfigured by the presence of Jesus; the assembly of those who are finding their lives transfigured by the presence of Jesus. Church is the event of Jesus' presence with its characteristic effect of gathering people around him and making them see one another differently as they see Him. The church is the immediate effect of Jesus being there. And hence St Paul can write about the new creation which happens when people are drawn into fellowship, into relationship with the risen Jesus and encourages us therefore to think that the church itself is the beginning of the new creation. Not an institution designed to further a programme, not an association of people who happen to have the same ideas, but the beginning of God's reclaiming of the territory of human life and not just human life either, God's reclaiming of creation as his own and God's pouring into creation of his saving and transfiguring power so that the world, human and non human will once again show radiantly who and what he is as God.

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So I think if I were to try and identify the first principle of a real mission theology, it might be somewhere in that area - the event of the new creation. The church is the name we give to those networks, those places, those relationships which embody the event of the new creation. The church is what happens when Jesus is there, there received and recognised. I begin with that theological picture because I do think its important that we get back to the fundamentals of the church in its earliest days and try from time to time quite seriously to imagine what that beginning of the church was like in terms of the recreation of the world. The apprehension of new creation, new relationships. The sense that the presence of Jesus transfigured an environment, human and non human. Only as we see the church in that event light do we see I think what the principle is against which we have to try and test all our attempts to be the church.

So let me move on from that to the churches structures. In any community, any institution, any society, good structures are those which serve the essence of the community which help it to be faithful to what it really is and so when we ask about the structures of the church, we must surely ask if these are structures which allow that fundamental reality I've been talking about to be visible and real. Is the church organised in such a way that it looks as if the new creation is happening? Do the ways in which people behave, relate, make rules, worship in the church, do all those things speak of the new creation? Do they let the event of encounter with Jesus happen afresh? Well that's one way of looking at criteria for the structures of the church. Are they structures and patterns which let that basic event of encounter happen again and again? Because if not, the church has become something very different from where it started. It's become a community which says once there was an encounter with Jesus and we like to remember that or in the terrible words of a well known hymn, "and still the Holy Church is here although her Lord has gone!" Now I think the very opposite of that is asking how we have structures that allow the basic event to go on happening. And neither individual conversion alone nor institutional extension alone deals with that. We have to ask much more radically, how do we structure a society in which it goes on being possible, even likely that people will meet Jesus and in meeting Jesus will want more people to meet Jesus?

But before we too hastily move that into an agenda for reform, it is worth remembering that of course Jesus is met, Jesus is encountered in more than just one way. In the regular life of a Christian community, we ought to be encountering Jesus again and again. The transforming encounter with Jesus that transforms our encounter with each other ought to be a possibility daily renewed. And therefore the regular worshipping life of the church. The prosaic, dare I say it, worshipping life of the church is not just some boring bit of detail we can leave behind. The point of preaching the word and celebrating the sacraments is of course precisely that living and transforming encounter with Jesus goes on happening. The point of celebrating Holy Communion is not to remember an encounter with Jesus that happened to somebody else long ago, it is to be contemporary with Jesus, to share his table and to share his life. And when theologians of Catholic and orthodox backgrounds say the Eucharist makes the church, that I think is what they mean. If the church really is transforming encounter, well where else, where better, where more fully than where we sit at a table with the risen Jesus and

take his risen life to ourselves, breath in the Spirit as we take the bread and the wine that have been given over to the hands of Jesus.

So what I'm talking about is not some anti-sacramental picture of the church, quite the contrary, it's nudging us, driving us to rediscover what the sacraments are about and to say that one mode of encounter with Jesus is quite simply that recurrent, that regular, yes if you like, prosaic renewal, again and again. As we read the bible as we hear the word preached, as we receive the sacraments, as we initiate people into fellowship, all of that is encounter. Internally then, the structures of the church are bound to be structures which take seriously the need for stability and continuity. They are bound to be in a very important sense, conservative structures, by which I mean that if somebody comes up tomorrow with a bright new idea about encountering Jesus which involves us in leaving behind holy communion, I have some very unfriendly questions to ask and I hope others have too. They are conservative these structures simply in the sense that Jesus said this is what we were going to do in order to encounter Him. And it's always worth taking Jesus seriously! So the conservatism of structures, which put sacrament and word at the heart of things, that's the conservatism if you like of Jesus our contemporary. But externally, the encounter has to happen as well and outside that regular and prosaic internal life of the church, we have to ask, what are the structures that enable encounter for the first time, that enable encounter that cuts across people's expectations and loyalties, encounter that really creates new community. And that of course is where the challenges lie for us. We're not too bad at the conservative structures of word and sacrament, we are learning rather slowly about the structures that enable utterly fresh encounter, utterly unexpected transforming creative encounter. And what has been so extraordinary, so life giving and wonderful in the last decade or so in this context is more and more stories coming in of how those fresh encounters happen.

If church is what happens when Jesus is around, if it is the event of new creation, then we have vast numbers at the moment, thank God, of worked examples of this living encounter, of this new creation. God is showing us examples of what the church is in startling new ways, because we are seeing what corporate forms of life actually happen when people meet Jesus. One of the great books of mission theology in the last couple of decades known to many here I'm sure is Vincent Donovan's great work "Rediscovering Christianity" about his experience in East Africa as a primary evangelist. There is much in that that's of great help, but one of the interesting principles on which he works or worked in East Africa was that he would go, he would tell the story, he would sow the seed and leave some suggestions, and go away somewhere else and come back and see what had happened. What had actually been created as a result of that encounter? And of course, what he found, not wholly surprisingly was that it was the sort of thing that you might very well call a church. It was a community which struggled to keep itself open all the time to the action of God in hearing the stories and breaking the bread. It was a community that struggled to show in its neutral relations what kind of God it was who was believed to have acted to bring this about. And I think it's that kind of model, that kind of principle that we are more and more being driven to. Here is God doing something, here is God in Christ drawing people together in a certain shape of community of common life.

IV

What are we going to make of it? And the challenge as you all know, the challenge that's been put to us in the last decade very specially is, do we approach this with a kind of protective or of self protected nervousness, or do we approach it first with gratitude. I like to think that we're learning gratitude. But the self protected nervousness means approaching these new things and saying well, is it Anglican? Prod prod, does it move?! Does it correspond with what we think really matters? Is it co-opted into our culture and it's that last question which I think is the most fishy of all. Is it co-opted into our culture? Do these people know the right words and moves to make? Do they know the rather curious technical language that we use? Can they apply it fluently and confidently? And frequently of course the answer is, no they can't. And it does interest me that if I can be a little bit polemical for a bit. It does interest me that even some very very bold and imaginative mission ventures have still not quite understood that the way they talk takes masses of stuff for granted. We do not know how strange our words are. A few years ago I was writing a little book of family prayers with a priest friend and set myself as part of the preparation for that to see if you could put things like the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimittis into plain English and really plain English, you know plain English that didn't require you to make any footnotes at all. It is vastly difficult, it really is, and my versions are not particularly successful but it's worth trying. What am I really trying to say in words that don't need footnotes. For a professional academic, this is torture! But it's back to this question. How do we approach? Do we first ask do they know the dialect, or do we say, here are people learning the language of Jesus. And what they say is bound to be at some point very importantly, very significantly meshing in how we talk about Jesus, but it will take a little while to get the languages if you like working together, fully to understand each other. And so the second great mission principle here, if the first one is the recognition of the event of a new creation, the second I think is patience. In the activity of mission, I would say there is a proper patience and a proper impatience.

There is or there ought to be a huge impatience about mission because we really want in the words of the chorus "to see Jesus lifted high". We really want the encounter to happen because it is the most significant and the most life-giving and transfiguring reality that there could conceivably be in this world or the world to come. Absolutely central, an impatience about getting people to share that joy and that vision is a perfectly proper impatience. We ought to be boiling with that impatience. But it has to be balanced by the patience as the work begins with the extraordinarily complex ways in which people move into this and discover this and test the words on their tongue and find their way into a conversation with each other and with their living God which is real and authentic. And to be personal I like many of you I guess sometimes find this very hard. I am an Anglo Catholic by upbringing and part of my upbringing was welsh non-conformist so I have a very rich mixture of conservatisms in my being - a conservatism of the welsh revival and the hymnody of welsh Protestantism (this is a very deep and important thing and is the thing that stirs my centre more than anything else) and a conservatism of a pattern of liturgy, and contemplation and theology which enriched my imagination both verbal and visual throughout my formative years. Naturally, I would quite like everybody that calls themselves Christian to be an Anglo-catholic who likes welsh revivalist hymns and I will accept subscriptions to my new movement later…

But the experience of the real church is one in which of course you can't impose. You have to listen and you have to be enormously patient and the conservatism that says "well this is where I met Christ" becomes (immensely important) only one element in responding to another person's encounter with Christ. In the church we neither say well you go your way and I'll go mine. Nor do we say there is one way of worshipping the Lord and its mine and you have to learn it. In the church, we are always uncomfortably watching and listening to each another worshipping, encountering and we ought to be doing it, not just with discomfort but with that hopefulness that says when you encounter Jesus Christ, there will be something that I wouldn't have known for myself. I think that is the most wonderful thing about the church, that we are all listening to one another's encounters, saying, " I couldn't possibly take it in the riches of Christ, it is unthinkable therefore I need as many people around to listen to as I can find". And in that, I won't master the whole thing. I'm not there to master Jesus Christ but to let him master me. Therefore I need to hear about him, again, again, again and afresh, afresh and afresh. So patience (what I provocatively call "passionate patience" in something I wrote a little while ago) becomes a mission principle. And its that balance of the eternal renewal of encounter with Jesus in yes the discipline, the regular life of the community and the external encounter that first generates the excitement and the muddle sometimes, of the new community. The balance of those is where the life and health of the church lies.

Some years ago in Wales, when we were discussing all this, I coined the phrase "mixed economy". As with any phrase you coin, you live to regret it but I still think it has some meaning, if what it means is that the church is always a mixture of the disciplend regularities of the prose and the unpredictable encounters, the new creation beginning to happen afresh somewhere, the poetry. There is no point in either looking down at the other. We need to learn what a church would look like in which both were taken absolutely seriously.

That takes us right back to the question of structures. How does the church organise itself in such a way that it doesn't simply send out the message that new expressions, new encounters are a kind of tolerable eccentricity on the edge but neither does it send out the message that everything people are doing as the moment is wrong and they need to forget it. We need a huge amount of discernment, above all, about the nature of Christian maturity. We need to have in our minds, healthy, vivid pictures of what Christ-like holiness is like so we can recognize across the different styles, emphases and priorities around in the church, we can recognise the kinship of those who have met Christ.

Structures won't do a lot for that but they can at least take away some of the obstacles. They can help the (what might think of itself as the) mainstream church to understand that it is not just threatened or annihilated by fresh expressions. They can help those struggling with new stories, new encounters to realise they don't have to reinvent the wheel. In other words, they are structures of communication and perhaps that is the challenge before us today, not only structures that enable fresh things to happen but good structures of communication between the old and the new, the conventional and the not so conventional. It is odd, isn't it that the church is meant to be a communion, that is a place where sharing happens, and yet it is so uncertain or bad at communication. Some kinds of communication in and about the

church of course spread like wildfire and that is usually the communication about what bad Christians, some Christians are. Other kinds of communication spread much more uncertainly. So we need to ask "how do we keep those channels alive?".

And it is at this point that I want to touch one further matter that preoccupies me quite a lot and that has to do with the training of ministers, not just ordained but the training of ministers in general - those who are given some responsibility for servicing the health and communication systems of the church. The good minister, emphatically the good ordained minister in this context, is one who can make communication, contact and communion a reality, one who can interpret people and communities to each other, one who can sustain a relational unity rather than just a legal or formal one, someone who can hold the ring, who can say "hang on, we need to listen to that" or "we need to stay with that." Someone who can sometimes say "we need to move on", but who will always be saying "listen to that", "have we heard this?" and himself or herself absorbing and listening a great deal. That as I say is true emphatically of the ordained ministry and I would say it is the rationale for having an ordained minister at all, that there should be people in the church whose jobs is virtually nothing but facilitating, through worship above all, that sort of communication. But everyone who ministers in the church needs those skills of listening and interpreting. Also, because this is part of the listening and interpreting, they need more than ever that particular kind of entrepreneurial skill and gift which allows them to do new things, to learn new languages and (if you understand this expression) to "baptise" new languages and cultures into the fellowship.

For me as a Bishop and a teacher of the faith that becomes a very serious question of how we form ministry and not all our structures of ministerial training are orientated very effectively toward that, I guess a lot of us will recognise. That's not to say that our training structures are useless or misguided. We need again to avoid the silly mistake of saying we are doing it all wrong, we need to start afresh and start with nothing but there is of course a culture of training for ministry including ordained ministry which can get bogged down with the servicing of the community full stop rather than animating of relation in the community and therefore the animating of relation beyond the community and if we are testing structures against the kind of criteria mentioned, that is the sort of test we have to apply I would say to ministerial training.

So moving towards some sort of conclusion about all this, I think that what I am suggesting is that in the future of a mission-shaped church we need first of all that powerful and clearly biblical sense that church is an event before it is an institution. The "spirituality" (if you'll excuse the word. It is not one I really like but let it stand) of a mission shaped church will be one primary grounded in that recognition and that recognition is simply a way of saying we are renewed, restored, redeemed not by the absorption of ideas but by becoming members of Christ, that is, by coming in a fresh relation with the living Jesus and thus, a fresh relation with each other - event before institution.

Secondly, our spirituality in this new age of the church has to be one which repeated, gently, persistently questions, whether and how the way we do things is somehow enabling that encounter. As I said early because structures

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themselves can't deliver that encounter only God do that, often we are asking what gets in the way. What structures we are setting up or not will be structures guaranteed to produce this series of results but quite light structures which will allow things to happen - more permissive than prescriptive.

It is this second thing which is often more difficult for the church because I suspect that quite often a lot of us work with an unspoken models or ideals of the church which take for granted that a real church is one in which authority and control are simply and effectively exercised. If that were the case, of course, there have not been many real churches throughout history of the Christian enterprise and I'm not here talking about the exercise of discipline in a local congregation but simply about that pervasive, seductive idea that the church, the real church, is one where the lines go clearly downwards. I think God is saying to us, as I think He has been saying to us for the last 2000 years, beware of that.

Authority happens in the church and is real but as soon as you try to link it with a structure without asking the question "does it serve encounter with Christ?" just beware. A church like the Church of England which is in many ways quite tightly wedded to legal provision and regulation, has got some giving away and giving up to do and learning about permission rather than prescription. The deeply encouraging thing I find in the present climate is that I see a lot of this actually happening. The message has been heard and we are not simply struggling against an uncritical control mentality. As I've said on another occasions, I think it is an enormous gift of providence, that the report on Mission-shaped Church came before the Church of England came at the same time as proposals for loosening up some of the administrative structure and I think there is plenty more work to be done there.

A spirituality then rooted in the sense of an event, the event of a new creation. A spirituality which is not too afraid of giving away, of permitting. A spirituality which therefore involves the gift of listening and gift of thanksgiving because to be able to give thanks is, I think, a gift of God and to give thanks for new expressions of the body of Christ on the grounds that they are part of what you need to be the Christian God wants you to be, that I think is one of the graces we need to pray for in our new setting.

I began by trying to steer my way through two errors - Jesus founding the church as the kind of institution that we would found if we were founding a church and, on the other hand, a church as an afterthought. I hope I can draw to a close by similarly suggesting we need some kind of breakthrough in the standoff between conservative and radical here. What I think I'm proposing seems to me to be deeply conservative in some ways with the conservatism of Jesus Christ, that is the conviction that what Jesus was in Galilee and Jerusalem and is what Jesus is today, yesterday, today and forever. We need therefore encounter with Jesus is always encounter with that highly specific cluster of events – a life, a death and a resurrection - not just a generalised spirituality and I think that is important. We are not out to make people feel better, to make people feel spiritual, to give people a set of experiences that will enable them to do their daily jobs less stressfully. All that would be very nice but that is not actually what the gospel says. The gospel says that you are, we are, profoundly at odds with ourselves because of what the gospel

says we are meant to be and that only by listening and absorbing into our very being the love of God in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness and absolution it involves. Only by that do we overcome the enmity of ourselves and to our maker. That is not guaranteed to make you feel better overnight but it is guaranteed to transform you.

So that is where our spirituality has its heart but it enables us I would say to break through that deadlock, that standoff. Is that version of the gospel conservative or radical? I hope neither or both. I think the future of the church must always be a future that is faithful to that hardcore of conviction about Jesus and in its way faithful to those histories, all those various people who have absorbed and learnt that across the centuries. We don't tear up the history books. Radical also though yes because we have to look to our roots in scripture and we have to look at criteria against which developments can be tested. That again may not make us feel better instantly but it will, please God, open the door to transformation. So lets try and get away from the idea that taking about church planting or fresh expressions of church is a massive sustained assault against everything Christians have ever done just as we have to ask some in the church to get away from the idea that fresh expressions is just that and therefore the bastions have to be manned and the position defended. No. We are trying to rediscover that reality that in fact is at the very centre of what the church has always done, the event of Jesus in word, sacrament, proclamation. Wherever we put ourselves on the map, whatever particular calling we have in the body of Christ to service that reality, which remains the one central thing. The church happens where the living Jesus is. Everything we say and everything we do has to point to that centre and be tested by it. And because that is where it all points, because it is the act of Jesus where is matters here, we have every reason to be confident, not in ourselves or the Church of England or in the establishment institutionally or in new churches or old, emerging or retracting churches but to be confident in the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Archbishop of Canterbury's Keynote Address to the Mission-Shaped Church Conference. 10th Annual Anglican Church Planting Conference. Kensington, London: 23rd June 2004. Sourced from www.acpi.org.uk/index2.htm on the 14th August 2004