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MISSIO DEI; Hilgendorf, S.T.M., 1962

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF
GEORG F. VICEDOM'S
MISSIO DEI

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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June 1962

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PREFACE

If we look at the present world situation, in which foreign missions must deal with religions and cultures that are increasingly aware and jealous of their self-identity and spiritual achievement, and if we look at the dynamic world which, by its values and philosophies, is shaking Christianity to its very foundations, we conclude that, by and large, missions are conceived and performed, whether intentionally or not, in a somewhat haphazard, amateurish way. The church must concentrate more closely on a "theology of missions," by which is meant primarily the theological justification for, and the manner of, presenting the Christian faith to persons of other religions. Without a definite theology of missions established, the church's activity and preaching will be spent in nervous spasms.

The present thesis is offered as a contribution towards the study of a theology of missions. The Translator's Appendix and the majority of the footnotes are the work of the writer; the rest of the thesis is a translation of Georg F. Vicedom's Missio Dei, published by the Chr. Kaiser Verlag of Munich, Germany. Although the work reveals continental flavor and concerns, it is my conviction that by its range and depth it will appeal to a far wider constituency in the West as well as those areas where religion is making a fresh impact.

Obviously, therefore, the writer of this thesis is indebted almost exclusively to the original German author of these thoughts. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Georg F. Vicedom, Professor of Theology at the University of Neuen-dettelsau, Germany.

I also am indebted to Professor William Danker, who was the first to direct me into such a rewarding study and challenging area; to Professor Herbert Mayer, who has spent many hours in the capacity of an advising reader; to the Rev. William Reitz, who has helped tremendously in the basic initial work of making the German language live; and to Mrs. Carl Sachtleben who has generously given of her time and efforts to type my mass of notes into a suitable production.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We live at a time when everything that has developed in the course of history is being devaluated. That holds true in the field of theology. With respect to our theme the question repeatedly arises whether Jesus desired the church and her mission and whether both are legitimate functions of the Gospel. Even though this question has always been raised about missions, it is, nevertheless, significant that today, in this age of "churchianity," the vehicle of that mission should be approached with this question. A discussion of missions is important in its essence because if missions is not an independent factor but only the result of the evangelical conduct of the church in keeping with the Gospel, then calling it into question must also affect the church's right to exist.

Obviously it is impossible within the scope of this assignment to lay down in writing a new, fully authorized justification of the church. But since missions cannot be established as a separate factor, it follows that the justification of missions attempted will result also in references to the establishment of the church and its commission. Thus it remains an open question whether perhaps it would have been better to follow the opposite procedure. However, I feel myself neither justified nor qualified to

do this.

A justification for missions is nothing new. Since the time of Justinian von Welz it has repeatedly been attempted, and has received its classical form in the German evangelical field of missions through G. Warneck and his followers. Missions, hardly noticed by professional theology, constantly attacked by the multitude of unbelieving and indifferent people, made the butt of jokes and ridicule by the sensation-ally minded press, often called into question by totalitarian governments, constantly has had to reaffirm its Biblical authorization. For that reason it has stood until the present day in an apologetic position. But today a great change has taken place. When we hear of justifications for missions today, these no longer attempt to justify missions theologically or establish it according to certain conditions, as G. Warneck did, but they speak of the authorization and commitment to missions. There is an obvious switch from an anthropocentric to a theocentric posture. Without question, this is a result of the rediscovery of the reformation message through dialectic theology. A new courageous job of witnessing has been bestowed on the church.

Nevertheless, it must be recorded that theology in the German realm, in spite of the detailed re-thinking of missions in K. Barth's Kirchliche Dogmatik, has remained sterile and aloof with respect to missions. Theology restricted itself essentially to the definition of the content

of the witness, but did not permit itself to be addressed by God to such a degree that a missionary dynamic would have resulted. Such a subjectivism has made itself felt today that no one can say anymore what the faith of Christendom is on which the church lives (Tambaram).¹ Thus this faith also cannot be passed on. The church's preaching and activity is spent, lost in nervous spasms, so that one finally must ask whether an authorization for missions still exists.

All this has a dire effect on missions. Since missions is not a power sui generis (in a class by itself), but always only an essential trait and expression of the life of the church, the weaknesses of church and theology are evidenced in its mission. Thus every justification for missions must deal with fundamental weaknesses of the church. This task can only be undertaken in an exhaustive way by a universal theologian. Hence we must take the other course: To gain an independent understanding of missions without losing ourselves in limitless dissertations.

Perhaps in this way it is possible to help the church gain a new independent understanding. Scandinavian and Dutch suggestions will help us here. In the following chapters we want to deal essentially with the Dutch findings, because they review with greatest emphasis the weakness of the German

¹This is a reference to the Tambaram Series, The Authority of the Faith, which is a report of the World Missionary Conference, Tambaram, 1938.

theology and the German thinking on missions. Since 1945 we have been under attack. The criticism has been very helpful and fruitful, even though it went too far and was not taken note of by German theology.

We are attacked for a judgment of people and nationality which stems from Romanticism, which led to an ideology sympathetic to nationalism, which resulted in many departures from the basic Biblical position for the church and mission, which eliminated the eschatological factor, and which finally led to this, that the congregation is regarded only as the "extension of the nation" and nationality as a "blessing-bestowing fulfillment of the ethnic structure."²

For these very crude attacks an answer must be found. We do not want to give this answer in such a way that we defend ourselves over against the individual charges. Whoever is interested in this can look that up in the indicated article by Knak. We would much rather take up the very fruitful suggestions and attempt, in a critical discussion of these, to construct a new justification for missions and the other tasks of the church. We thus proceed in this manner, always first of all determining the Biblical setting, and then make the comparison.

²S. Knak, "Oekumenischer Dienst in der Missionswissenschaft," Theologia Viatorum (1950), p. 157.

CHAPTER II

THE MISSIO DEI

Previous justifications of missions were deficient above all in this respect, that they either attempted the apologetic proof that mission was justified on the basis of a mission thought in the Bible, which viewed missions as possible and necessary among the nations; or they justified missions as the work of the church or even deduced it from the spreading of "Christian" culture.¹ We do not wish to discuss these secondary justifications any further. To be sure, the apologetic approach does not do justice to Scripture. It emphasizes missions as a specially designed work ordained by God while according to the total concept of Scripture only an intention is ascribed to God: to save man. Therefore the service of missions cannot be derived from that of the church, but every service of the church only then makes sense and finds its climax in this, that it does promote missions. As much as we rejoice over the fact that the church and mission are ever drawing nearer to each other and in many places of the world missions arises in the church, yet thereby the danger of indolence toward missions is not removed, the misunderstanding of missions not eliminated.

¹Walter Holsten, Das Kerygma und der Mensch (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1953), pp. 24ff. and 32ff.

There exists the danger that the church becomes the point of departure (starting-point), the purpose, the subject of missions. However, this is not what she is according to Scripture. The Triune God is always the One Who acts, Who incorporates His believers into His Kingdom.² The church is merely an instrument in the hands of God. She is merely the result of the action of the sending and saving God. To describe this fact the Conference at Willingen³ took the concept of the Missio Dei into consideration.

Missions is not simply only obedience to the word of the Lord; it is not only the obligation for the gathering of the congregation; it is participation in the sending of the Son, the Missio Dei, with the all-inclusive aim of establishing the government of Christ over the whole redeemed creation.⁴

"The missionary movement of which we are a part has its source in the Triune God Himself."⁵

²W. Andersen, Auf dem Weg zu einer Theologie der Mission (n.p., 1957), p. 30ff. This book has been translated as second in a series of International Missionary Council research pamphlets. See W. Andersen, Towards a Theology of Mission (London: SCM Press, n.d.). This book translated from German by person unknown. W. Andersen is a professor of systematic theology at the Augustana Hochschule in Neuen-dettelsau.

³The fifth International Missionary Council conference was held in Willingen, Germany, in July, 1952. The report of that council is given in Norman Goodall's book, Missions Under the Cross (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1953).

⁴K. Hartenstein, "Theologische Besinnung," Mission Zwischen Gestern und Morgen, edited by W. Freytag (Stuttgart: Evangelische Missions Verlag, 1952), p. 54.

⁵Goodall, op. cit., p. 189.

1. The Concept

The Missio Dei states first of all that missions is God's work. He is the Lord, the Employer, the Proprietor, the Manager. He is the acting Subject of missions. When we ascribe the mission to God in this way, then it is removed from every human willfulness. Hence we must show whether God wants missions and how He Himself carries it out. This is it in a nutshell. Missions, and with it the church, are God's own work. We cannot speak of "the mission of the church"; even less dare we speak of "our mission." Since the church, as well as mission, has its origin in the loving will of God, we can speak of church and mission always only insofar as these are not understood as independent factors. Both are only tools of God, instruments, through which God performs His mission. Only when the church in obedience fulfills His intention can she speak of her mission, since her mission then is included in the mission of God.

At this point our theme assumes a great earnestness. If the presupposition is correct that God wants missions since He Himself does mission work--which is to be demonstrated--then the church can only be God's vessel and tool if she permits herself⁶ to be used by Him. If she

⁶Although the term would seem to imply a Pelagian way of thinking (and well it might in a different context, but see chapter III, section 7, "The Kingdom of God as a Gift"), yet the crux of the matter is that we are here laboring

disassociates herself from this concern of God, she becomes disobedient and can no longer be the church in the divine sense. "There is no participation in Christ without participation in His mission to the world."⁷ Hence the church does not have the option to decide whether she will do mission work or not, but she can only determine for herself whether she will be a church or not. She cannot determine when, where, and how missions will be carried out, for missions is always a divine matter, as it is shown us above all in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. Missions as a matter of God implies that He claims a mandatory right over all His believers in exactly the same manner as He desires to show His love to all men through His believers. This claim God makes clear in that He first and foremost carries out missions through Himself. The church can only follow and carry out what God has done and does, and she can only point to what He will do. Thereby missions is ordained in the action of God Himself.

2. Missions through God

The concept *Missio Dei*, if we want to do justice to the correct Biblical connotation, must be understood as an

under the difficulty of communication. "Laesst sich" occurs frequently in Vicedom's book but must, I feel, be understood in this light.

⁷Goodall, op. cit., p. 190.

attributive genitive through which God not only becomes the Sender, but becomes at the same time the One Who is sent. Thus Catholic dogmatics since Augustine has spoken of sending or *missio* within the Triune God.

Sending is understood to mean, on the basis of an internally divine order of origin, the resultant communication of one divine person through another to the creatures.⁸

Every sending of one person results in the presence of the other. Evangelical theology does not treat these sendings as a separate part of doctrine since there is the danger that God's unity in essence become inconceivable. Rather, it tries to fathom the immanent movements of the Trinity in the relationship of God to man. Through various hymns in Protestant Pietism the understanding of the Trinitarian nature in the sending of God still remains. For example: "He spoke to His Beloved Son, 'The time to have mercy has come'" or "Go hither, My Child, and take upon Thyself" These and other stanzas describe the mission within the Trinity and remind us once more of the real motive for mission.

We thus stand before the ultimate mystery of God, which can be completely understood only in God's dealings with men. The ultimate mystery of missions out of which it grows

⁸M. Schmaus, Katholische Dogmatik (Westheim: Gangolf Ross Verlag, 1948), I, 377. Prof. M. Schmaus is presently rector of the University of Munich, where he gained his education. He is the author of an eight volume Catholic Dogmatics.

and lives is that God sends His Son and Father and Son send the Spirit. Thereby God makes Himself not only the One Who is sent, but at the same time the Content of the sending, without dissolving through this revelation of the Trinity the essence of equality in the divine Persons. For in every Person of the Godhead God works in His entirety. That process of the internally divine sending is of eminent significance for the mission and service of the church. The church's mandate is prefigured in the divine sending; her service is exhibited in the same; the meaning and content of her work is determined by the Missio Dei.

At the same time God reveals Himself as the Sovereign Lord. He does not allow Himself to be dictated to, neither by religions nor by unbelievers, as to what He can and cannot do. It is a very part of the divine Godhead that He is subject to no human limitations. He thus decides for Himself in a manner which is not open to human thoughts. God's action lies extra nos.⁹ Thus the Missio Dei definitely becomes, as set forth in the doctrine of the Trinity, the expression of the special government of God. This is something which Mohammed, for example, did not understand as he attempted to restore God in His unity and transcendence by denying the Deity of Christ and the Holy Ghost. Thus he actually degraded God and took from Him the fullness of His

⁹Holsten, op. cit., p. 44.

revelation and being.

3. God's Action in Salvation and Sending

Since Holy Scripture is not interested in speculation, it always reveals God only so far as it is of importance for His dealing with men. God only makes statements in Scripture concerning Himself as they are necessary for man's salvation. Therefore all revelation of God in His *Missio* always takes place for the sake of the salvation of men. But while He reveals Himself through His action, He at the same time makes statements concerning man, places him under His judgment, and thereby enables His messengers to bring to man both the content of the sending and the salvation of man. Hence missions can be nothing else than the continuation of the salvation activity of God through the imparting of the deeds of salvation. This is its greatest authority and supreme assignment.

This salvation-action of God as it is given through the *Missio Dei*, His relationship to the world and His dealings with men, is described in Scripture with the word "sending." It is in fact the sum and substance of God's effective creating and working so that the entire *Heilsgeschichte*¹⁰

¹⁰The term has been rendered "redemptive history" or "history of salvation," but it is best considered a technical term and left in the original. It stands in contrast to a totally secular view of history and conveys the idea that

presents itself as a history of the Missio Dei.¹¹ We therefore do no violence to the Scriptures if we attempt to outline the assignment of the church from this term. We thereby also remain within the framework of genuine theology, which never can be a system of thoughts concerning God, but which always only has the duty to describe the action of God in history.¹²

If, for the time being, we were to table the special Missio Dei in Jesus Christ and in the gift of the Holy Ghost, as well as the sending of the prophets and apostles, we still would have many passages describing the Missio Dei. God even sends out entirely impersonal realities and thereby tells us that He also, without means, brings His influence to bear on the world. For example, He sends a sword after His people (Jer. 9:16), He sends grain and wine, also oil (Joel 2:19)

God is at work in the events of history to work out His plan of salvation.

¹¹K. H. Rengstorff, "Apostolos" and "Apostollein," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1933), I. K. H. Rengstorff is Professor of Protestant Theology at the University of Muenster.

¹²The statement seems to be too generalized. Genuine theology would seem to have to include both of these. Vicedom is indebted to Oscar Cullmann for this idea. See O. Cullmann, Christus und die Zeit (Zurich: Zollikon, 1946), p. 19. This work has been translated by Floyd V. Filson under Christ and Time, the Primitive Conception of Time and History (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, c.1950). Cullmann is Professor of New Testament Studies at the University of Basel, Switzerland, and at Sorbonne, Paris, France.

and thus reveals Himself in His sending as a God of love. Hence He sends especially to His chosen people goodness and faithfulness (Ps. 57:4), goodness and truth (Ps. 43:3), His word (Ps. 107:20), and a hunger for the word (Amos 8:11), His redemption (Ps. 111:9). Accordingly through His sending He sustains the world and guides men. He reveals Himself as a God Who has not excluded His creation from His care.

In this sending God is always present. Thus sending is an expression of His actual presence in judgment and grace. Thereby the Missio becomes a declaration of His Deity. God would not be the God of man if He would not deal in a relevant way with the world and be near it in His presence. He would be doomed to the same fate as applies to all man-made gods, who at best exist only in the memory of men, but no longer are realities. God, however, has always shown Himself as One Who excludes nothing and no one from His government. Through His sending He confronts all men in His Deity. All people must in fact deal with Him Who sustains the creation by His work. His sending becomes a special revelation there, where it becomes the word to the people (Ps. 19:1-7,8-11), and in Jesus Christ, in Whom He gives to men the Redeemer. Here the same objective fact serves to justify missions from which Holsten infers his justification for the science of missions: "This basis is, briefly stated, the New Testament kerygma, the message of the decisive working of God in Christ and the message which calls for a

decision."¹³

Thus God's Missio is always a call to decision. His action, regardless of whether it happens personally or impersonally, is always a messenger who transmits the call. His impact is always an urgent request which calls for an answer. No one can evade this call or carelessly ignore it. God's action always places man under responsibility (Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:8). Therefore he who refuses to place himself at the disposal of the Missio Dei attempts to limit God in His world-related service for the saving of man in His government. The privilege, full authority, mandate, and obligation to missions always flows from the action of the Triune God Himself.

As long as a cult is being spread only among fellow-countrymen, even though it be outside of the homeland, so long God is Lord only for the one tribe or for the one city. But if mission work is really being done, then the idea of the absolute government is reached.¹⁴

This Missio Dei, which embraces the entire work of God, can thus be made synonymous with the government of God.

¹³Holsten, op. cit., p. 43.

¹⁴W. Foerster, Herr ist Jesus (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1924), p. 78.

CHAPTER III

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD

1. The Motive for Missions

The justification of missions by means of God's Government is old. Zinzendorf already argued from this premise. Through Pietism the line of thought carried over to G. Warneck. For him the rule of God was only one thought from which also missions could be justified. His concern was to extract missions from the Pietistic restrictions, which had interpreted the Kingdom of God idea as being individualistic and thus wanted to gain only those who had been called to the Kingdom. Since the idea of the Kingdom of God was primarily dealt with in American theology and was there applied to the social Gospel idea of missions, German scholarship had become quite cautious in using the term.

One felt restraints concerning the concept of the Kingdom of God--a concept which had been emphasized in a one-sided way for establishing missions. That was a mistake. W. Luetgert is the only one who had made an attempt to show how the Kingdom of God also becomes real in the history of the world, gives to it content and goal, and how God's Kingdom and activity belong so closely together that he who belongs to the Kingdom is also led into social work.¹

¹W. Luetgert, "Reich Gottes und Weltgeschichte," Das

Through an earnest discussion of the concept of the Kingdom of God we would have gained the necessary eschatological aspect which the Dutch have recently set forth. Today, when all motives suggested for missions have proven themselves no longer acceptable,² German mission thinking once more reverts to this subject.³

The motive for missions always deals with the question: "Why must we have missions?" Formerly the simplest answer was, "God wants to save all men." Today this answer still has its value. However, the other religions have also offered themselves for the salvation of man and for the solution of his life's questions, and thus challenge the claim of the Christian message. Thus there arise other questions: "Why does God want to save man? Is His claim justified? What kind of an answer are we to give to the other religions? What are the aims of redemption and missions?" Hence one cannot justify missions as Holsten has done in the establishment of a science of missions. He proceeds solely from the motive.⁴ This can only be supported when, at the same time,

Reich Gottes und die Mission (1927), pp. 97ff.

²W. Freytag, "Vom Sinn der Weltmission," Evangelische Missions Zeitung (1950), pp. 1ff.

³S. Knak, "Oekumenischer Dienst in der Missionswissenschaft," Theologia Viatorum (1950), 16.

⁴Vicedom seems to have over-simplified Holsten's approach. Although the motive does play a major role for Holsten, namely, to simply proclaim the kerygma and let it work, yet Holsten is concerned with the goal of that message

the goal is always kept in mind.⁵

Today one tries to obtain the answer by basing missions on the sovereign rule of God. Does this answer harmonize with the basic concept of the *Missio Dei*? I think one can conceive of God's dealing with man in God's Lordship in the same way as in His dealings with man in the *Missio Dei*. Both ideas obviously do not describe the same procedure, but both have much in common. We see the *Missio Dei* founded in the divine being of God; the rule of God also has its origin there. The aim of the *Missio Dei* is to incorporate members into the βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ --in the dominion of God-- and to convey to them the gifts thereof. Thereby justification, which for Holsten is the point of departure for every mission concept,⁶ will not be depreciated, but comprehended in God's total dealing with man which is greater than the mere act of declaring men righteous and receiving them into His fellowship, for everything is included in the Kingdom that He otherwise does for the justified sinner.

--that it take root. It seems difficult to understand Vicedom's over-simplification, especially when he has quoted Holsten on a point that would disprove Vicedom's criticism. See chapter II, footnote 13.

⁵W. Andersen, "Die kerygmatische Begründung der Religions- und Missionswissenschaft," Evangelische Missionszeitung (1954), pp. 29ff. and Hendrik Kraemer, Religion and the Christian Faith (London: Harper and Bros., 1956), pp. 196ff.

⁶W. Holsten, Das Kerygma und der Mensch (Muechen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1953), pp. 52ff. and p. 61.

Justification consists admittedly in nothing less than reception into the Kingdom of God. The doctrine of justification has no other question to answer than this: How do we enter into the Kingdom of God? Whoever is justified is thereby taken into the service of God.⁷

Thus the Kingdom of God could be described as the goal of the Missio Dei. Another connection is found in the vis-a-vis⁸ which both, the Missio Dei as well as the Kingdom, share, i.e., the nations of the world. It is toward this vis-a-vis that the working of God in His love is motivated and is performed with this in mind. Hence next we want to describe this vis-a-vis so that the goal of the sending and the gifts of the Kingdom will become clear.

2. The Vis-a-vis to God

Christianity is contrasted to other religions in the fact that God created the world and mankind. This creation is not an outgrowth of God's Deity, and therefore is no portion of it. These things also did not come into being through a birth. They definitely did not come into existence alongside Him or against Him so that they would present a counter power. Accordingly neither a dualistic nor an emanating relationship from God is in question here. Both of

⁷W. Luetgert, Das Reich Gottes und die Mission (n.p., 1927), p. 97.

⁸The term "Gegenueber" is rendered vis-a-vis to convey the meaning of "opposite number" rather than equality.

the above modes of explanation as we know them from other religions are completely precluded. The world with man is the creation of God formed in harmonization with His will by His almighty word. Thus He Himself has given Himself a vis-a-vis, a thou, and thereby provided the sphere of action. This was already implied before the Fall into sin, for the word concerning the god-likeness⁹ can only mean that God for Himself created a being that could have fellowship with Him and that in this fellowship found the fulfilling of His life.¹⁰

In this fellowship neither a special sending nor the emphasizing of God's Government was necessary. The latter was simply implied. The fellowship which God provided for man was the Basileia of God. Thus man stands under the rule of God. This vis-a-vis of God in the fellowship is again restored through redemption, without man thereby entering into the Deity as it is conceived in other religions. Redemption is not returning to the nature of God, but rather, to the

⁹The term εἰκὼν implies four definite facets when applied to man of God: (1) Communication with God; (2) A status above animal life; (3) Power of authority to exercise God's dominion; (4) Submission. The last factor must always be there. Man was to realize he was the εἰκὼν and not the thing itself. Failure here is precisely the Fall of Adam. The result was that now man begat man in his own image (Gen. 5:1,3) with the resounding refrain "and he died . . . and he died . . . and he died." Cf. A. Bultmann, "Eikoon," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1933), II.

¹⁰The phrase "fulfilling of His life" dare not indicate a necessity on God's part. "Creation is a free act of God, not necessary on His part." Franz Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), I, 480.

right position to God.

Man has fallen from this vis-a-vis between God and man which came about through creation. The Fall was possible only because man is a creature of God. If man would have been an emanation from God, he could not have transgressed against God or lost his divine nature. Hence, in other religions we find misdemeanors of man, but no sins through which man becomes guilty before God. Here sin is always regarded as the false attitude over against the Divine whereby man harms himself. Sin as offense against God is recognized only there, where man through the revelation of God knows the Creator and Lord; here (with reference to false religions) he also needs a Redeemer.

Through the Fall the relationship between God and man was destroyed. On account of man the mutually related vis-a-vis became a hostile one. Thereby man had severed the fellowship with God. Man fled from God and set himself up alongside Him--as he thinks--as an independent being who has the power to recognize God or not. His entire concern is focused on this--to assert himself as for or opposed to God. He even goes so far that he believes he is showing God a favor if he again returns to Him, so that now God is dependent upon the grace of man! Thus sinful man places God's government into question. But through his being, as tainted by the Fall, man involves also the rest of creation in the enmity against God.

However, since he has his very basis of life in his relationship with God, without which he cannot exist, he searches to provide in his own religion a compensation in that he seeks for himself a relationship suitable to the Deity. For this evolutionary process the religions are, even if they represent ever so deep thoughts, a clear proof. They ever and again make it clear that man, even after the Fall, can deny his divinely intended state of fellowship with God. Thus within the creation there is a realm which permanently desires to withdraw itself from the Government of God and oppose it. To overcome this domain which is hostile to God, to bring man back again into the right vis-a-vis to God, to transfer man anew into fellowship with Him, to liberate him-- this is the aim and the content of the Missio Dei and the rule of God.

Thereby God regards His vis-a-vis as His creation, even after the Fall. For this reason God did not simply destroy sinful man, as his rebellious behaviour had deserved, but He remained faithful in His relationship to His creatures; He endeavors with longsuffering and patience to regain men through judgment and grace and to give them a part in the Kingdom. Already in this attitude of God we must be on guard, that we do not describe God's Lordship in terms of human lordship.

3. The Other Kingdom

In this presentation we have not, however, grasped the immensity and depth of the chasm between man and God brought about by the Fall. Thus we could not unfold the magnitude of God's action for salvation. Even though evangelical theology is quite hesitant to place next to the domain of God's rule the other realm which is hostile over against it, we must realize that one cannot speak of the Kingdom of God without speaking of its counterpart,¹¹ the rule into which man has lapsed. Discussion of these two domains of rule virtually constitutes the theme of the Holy Scriptures. We may not say that this reference is due to the narrow view or out-dated limitations of the writers of the Bible. The worldly domain of lordship is a fact and is presented to us exactly in the same manner as God in His creation. Thereby for each situation the Bible displays a powerful view of history and the profoundest understanding of history which is possible.

Here we do not want to unfold either a demonology or explain the origin of evil. We speak only of the fact. Certainly in this area we are standing before a mystery. The Bible speaks of the devil without giving any explanation concerning his origin. It speaks of him as a reality: He is the enemy of God and men. Therefore the kingdom of the devil

¹¹Not speaking in the sense of synonymous, but in opposition.

is to be overcome (Mt. 4:3 cf. Lk. 4:5). The kingdom is subject to the prince of the world (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). His kingdom is closely entrenched and fortified (Mt. 12:26 cf. Lk. 11:18) because it combines in itself all God-opposing powers. He it is who misleads man and tempts him to disobedience and thus seeks to snatch him from the realm of God (Eph. 6:11; I Pet. 5:8). He is the enemy of the Kingdom of God, and thereby also of the sending, against which he is continually working (Mt. 13:39; Lk. 8:12). As God through the Holy Ghost gives strength to man for a new life which is pleasing to Him, so the devil supplies his own strength for evil (Jn. 8:44; Rev. 13:2f.). Thus he it is who, in the last analysis, leads men into sin and constantly makes them rebels against God. With his kingdom he is the adversary of God.

Therefore Jesus understood the Lordship of God and the meaning of His sending to be to destroy the works of the devil and to judge the prince of this world (I Jn. 3:8; Jn. 16:11). We must maintain this fact, even at the peril of being dubbed "fundamentalists." Whoever does not take this fact into consideration is unqualified to carry out God's command. He also cannot understand the ultimate bondage of man in his sin and take sin seriously in its very real power. He will never escape the illusion that the Kingdom of God might become a reality on earth that could be set up by human means. The other religions also have ties into this other kingdom. They certainly contain much good, but this is

imbedded in the evil, and overlaid with evil. In them the satanic powers opposing God are at work. Only when one sees this does he receive the correct attitude of mercy toward the heathen man who is committed to them.

The kingdom of the world and the kingdom of the devil is even more dangerous as counterpart to the Kingdom of God and the Missio Dei since it never shows itself in its true face. It always tries under the mask of the good--a mask showing that which is proper to man--to disguise itself with ideal aims. For that reason the boundary line between it and God's Kingdom can clearly and visibly be drawn only in rare cases. In this kingdom the good resolutions of man result in evil and damnation. Hence K. Heim says in a discussion of H. Kraemer's book, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World,

Nothing which God has created is protected against these demonic powers. Everything can be seized by them. Thus there is a demonic self-adoration of the I which is the image of God, a demonic sexuality, of which the man is no more the master--the demon of technology, the demon of power, the demonic degeneration of nationality. There is the demon of piety; even prayer can lose itself in demonic contortions. Even the gift of the Holy Ghost, as we have seen it at Pentecost, can become demonic. The satanic in this matter lies in this: The demonic power lives only on God and on that which He created. It has nothing which does not come from God. That which is demonic and will be used against God is always a reflection of the glory of God.¹²

In the book cited above Kraemer repeatedly touches on

¹²K. Heim, "Die Struktur des Heidentums," Evangelische Missions Monatschrift (1939), p. 17.

this depth in the understanding of other religions. He points out that neither man in his deep misery nor religions could be understood without a concept of the power of evil, the devil, who transforms all evil into light and perverts everything that is good.

The world of religion and religions (of culture as a whole) belongs to the realm of the "old man," the unredeemed man, not yet recreated in the image of God in whose likeness man was originally created. Thus the world, with all its marvelous achievements and Satanic deviations, under divine judgment dimly or unwittingly awaits its redemption.¹³

But here we are not to develop the Biblical concept of religions; that would be a task in itself. It is sufficient here if we call attention to the other kingdom which in strongest terms expresses the reality of the lost condition of man. Only he is taken away from the kingdom of this world who permits himself¹⁴ to be saved through the Kingdom of God by the sending out of Jesus Christ. That is the only way. To help him into the Kingdom of God neither the same parentage (Cain and Abel), nor citizenship in the same people (Rom. 2), nor identical occupations (Mt. 24:40), nor the innermost fellowship of people among each other (Lk. 17:34), and we add, nor the adherence to the same church--none of these things will help. The line is drawn solely by faith,

¹³Kraemer, op. cit., pp. 257, 321, 337, 378ff. Hendrik Kraemer is Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Leiden (Holland).

¹⁴Cf. chapter II, footnote 6.

by association with the Kingdom of God. To it (faith) shall men be called through the Missio Dei.

4. The Kingdom of God

The kingdom of the world or the devil is the all-inclusive term for the lost condition of men, who no longer can free themselves from it by their own strength and return to the fellowship in God. Hence it is the determined counsel of God to help men, to snatch them away from the realm of darkness and transfer them to His Kingdom through His Missio. Thus the Kingdom of God becomes not only the counterpart to the kingdom of the devil, but is at the same time the rallying-point for those who are freed from the power of the devil. Alas! Pietism later restricted the concept of God's Kingdom to such an extent that the Kingdom of God and the Government of God consisted only in the sum total of converts.¹⁵ On the contrary, for Warneck the Kingdom of God was the counter-manifestation to the world which, according to the will of God, should include all men. This does not say, of course, that all of them will permit themselves to be called into the Kingdom.¹⁶

Something must still be added to Warneck's definition,

¹⁵Freytag, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁶G. Warneck, Evangelische Missionslehre (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1897), III, 1, p. 170.

for not only the human world is subservient to the Kingdom of God. It also does not confine itself to those who return to the fellowship with God. Indeed, God has not dismissed anything from His creation, from His Kingdom of Power.

There is no world that could exist next to Him. Even the kingdom of the devil must, in the last analysis, serve His purposes. God is King (Ps. 93:1; 99:1) and rules in the whole world and over the whole world (Ps. 103:19). He has the necessary power for it, the glory of royal dignity, the eternal constancy (Mt. 6:13).

However, His Government is not only one which is opposed to the kingdom of the world according to its nature but also its manner of expression, and thus in contrast to the kingdom of this world it can be described as the Kingdom of heaven. Thus it develops itself in a way opposite to the earthly. That will become especially evident when we come to discuss the content of Government and its gifts. He rules in righteousness and from Him the right emanates (Ps. 45:7; 49:4). In His Kingdom the segregation of men is abolished. There are no racial differences; opposing standards are set aside (Mt. 8:11; Lk. 13:29). Therefore this Kingdom contains everything which fellowship with God offers and for which man since the Fall craves. In this Kingdom which God creates for Himself as He deals with men man's redemption is given at the same time. Thus His proclamation through the Missio is the tidings of great joy and exactly as such the

Kingdom is at the same time a call, a claim on men. They are called through His proclamation to God and thereby to a decision, the conversion (Mt. 6:33; Rom. 14:17). The Kingdom is God's destination for men.

5. Jesus, the Content of the Kingdom

This Kingdom of God cannot disappear in human forms but, as long as the kingdom of the world stands, always bears an eschatological character. Since God's church must always live in the world, she can belong to the Kingdom of God only to the extent that she, in contrast to the world, permits herself in her attitude of life to be guided through faith by Him. She always lives in the longing and hope that this Kingdom of God would become reality. God has, to begin with, responded to this yearning in this way that He gave to His church the Messianic promises and taught her to wait and hope for the Redeemer. The Kingdom found its realization through the appearance of the Messiah.

However, this realization was in a contrary position to the kingdom of the world different from what men had thought. The offence for men and the tribulation for His church remains, namely, that the Messiah did not establish an earthly kingdom with the marks of God's Kingdom, but had only let man know the manner of the Kingdom. Only when we keep this in mind, will we be guarded against many wrong approaches in church and missions. The Kingdom of God cannot become a

reality in human forms. But God makes it a reality for men in this way that He lets His Son become man, sends the Messiah, makes Him the bearer of the Kingdom because He stands and lives in fellowship with God and thereby in the Kingdom. He is the One sent in the name of the Lord (Mt. 21:8), to Whom are due all royal honors through the glorification in excelsis. He is the King Who in kingly fashion provides for His own and rewards to them hundred-fold what they have sacrificed for Him. There is no power which is not subject to Him and which He will not destroy at the consummation of the Kingdom (Mt. 28:18).

God's Government and Jesus Christ are therefore identical. Whosoever therefore proclaims the name of Jesus proclaims also God's Government (Acts 8:12; 28:31). Jesus is God's answer to men's questions and therefore the content of the message concerning the Kingdom (II Tim. 4:1). All this is summed up in the Epistle to the Colossians¹⁷ where everything that is ascribed to God in the Old Testament is predicated to Jesus Christ Himself.¹⁸ However, at this

¹⁷No doubt Vicedom has the section of Col. 1:15-20 in mind. Here Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God (note the paradox), the *πρωτότοκος*, the source of all creation from the highest to the lowest level, the factor that holds all together and keeps it together (the meaning of *συνίστημι*), the *κεφαλή*, the *ἀρχή*, the fullness of God. Thus, 3:1, He is at the right hand of God.

¹⁸K. L. Schmidt, "Basileia," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1933), I.

point it must be stated that the Kingdom of God embraces more than Jesus' works of salvation, namely, the entire action of the Triune God with the world. It is primarily the working of the Father and consequently filled with that which we could describe as Godhead. That is made clear by the Colossians epistle.

6. The Heterogeneity of the Kingdom of God

Precisely in Jesus Christ it becomes clear that the Government of God is something different from its vis-a-vis, the kingdom of the world. He does not bring to men a kingdom of external prosperity. He does not even fulfill their wishes, which they as men believe they may indicate. He does not even grant them the illusion that they will have it good with Him, but distinctly tells them that they will have to suffer for His sake. He helps no one to reach his worldly aims, but He is the Helper wherever anything is enclosed in the will of the Father. He does not lead His church out of the position of strangers in this world nor does He grant her her own state or unite her nationally.

Hence He does not rule as an earthly king. His Kingdom is divine and thereby it is withdrawn from the sphere of human and demonic influence. Nevertheless it is operative in this world. It is set against the inclinations of men (Mt. 11:29). Jesus proves Himself as King by bringing redemption to men through His death.

The cross, the accomplished actual real redemption is not only the solution to the question of guilt, but also to the question of power--and this not only then and there, but already here and now.¹⁹

His Kingdom is to be understood soteriologically and therefore a far different ordinance from the kingdoms of this world. Thus no one can enter this Kingdom if he has not left behind all the thoughts of an earthly kingdom. Participation in the Kingdom of Jesus is therefore always connected with *μετάνοια*, with conversion. Whoever does not realize this ever and again will put into the church and missions the false aims and will also, through the most pious work, land in the kingdom of this world.

Thereby the Kingdom of God is removed from every human seizure and stands outside of every natural ethic and legalistic system. It also stands outside of every human ideal. On the one hand, it is brought into being only by God through the spreading of the message and the administration of the sacraments. To both God attaches His Missio in the sending and transmitting through His Church. Also all human auxiliary means, through which we so eagerly coax men and want to make the Kingdom of God palatable to them, are eliminated, for these, too, are subject to the *μετάνοια*, the conversion.

¹⁹K. Hartenstein, "Theologische Besinnung," Mission Zwischen Gestern und Morgen, edited by W. Freytag (Stuttgart: Evangelische Missions Verlag, 1952), p. 60.

On the other hand the Kingdom of God also stands outside of every legalistic system in which man believes that he can be something before God and can win Him over for himself. He Himself has determined for that purpose and which He has given to His own through Jesus Christ. Most unauthorized are the ordinances of the high and mighty as they are emphasized both in the kingdom of the world and also far and wide in the church. Whoever does not humble himself as a child who is completely obedient to his father will not enter into this Kingdom (Mt. 18:4). In the Kingdom of God only he will have a standing who is willing to receive his full authority from this Kingdom.

Furthermore, the Kingdom of God is removed from all human organization in that its Government runs its course secretly in opposition to the government of the world. What would spell defeat for the latter is omnipotence and victory for God's Government. Accordingly, as Luther said, it develops in larva fashion.

And finally, the Kingdom is different also because of its eschatological character. It combines with itself a distant goal so that it enlivens the presence of the Kingdom in Jesus Christ with the great hope of the realization of the Kingdom through the second coming of Christ. One cannot speak of the Kingdom without emphasizing this realization. The Kingdom is in the future in a double sense: (1) Christ

will establish the Kingdom of God at His return in such a way that God will be all in all. That is, He will not only defeat the kingdom of the world and the devil, with all of its ludicrous kinds of powers, but will destroy them so that the counter opposition in God's creation as a result of sin will be abolished forever. In Him there will be only one new creation. (2) Until His return Christ will have His Kingdom proclaimed (Mt. 24:14), will assemble through His Mission members of His Kingdom, will place men before the decision, and will be present in His church with the gifts of the Spirit, until He comes. Thus, through His Kingdom and thereby through His mission, He has a very definite goal in the history which He also leads to its goal through missions. Thereby missions becomes a decisive history-shaping power in the Government of God.

7. The Kingdom of God as a Gift

The heterogeneity of the Kingdom of God applies also to the kind of relationship to men. The Kingdom appears in its inter-relationship to men not as a dominion, compulsion, or usurpation, but as a gift which the Lord of the Kingdom alone can confer. It is removed from the free will of man. This gift always remains under the right of decision of the giver. Man cannot of himself take possession of it. Thereby God ever and again removes His Kingdom from the powerful will of sin. "The Kingdom of God will be taken

away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it" (Mt. 21:43). God elects, but He deposes if His gift is abused. He bestows, but He reclaims His gift if it goes against Him in order to give it to such as use it for the welfare of His Kingdom. He always gives, in His love, the Kingdom to those who permit themselves to be built in to it (Lk. 12:32). He calls them to His royal government and glory (I Thess. 2:12). Basically the Kingdom is a gift. As the Father has given it, so the Son also gives it (Lk. 22:29) so that He can release man from the kingdom of darkness and translate him into His Kingdom (Col. 1:13). Thereby also the work in this Kingdom becomes a gift, a privilege, which is subject to the right of decision of the giver.

Obviously no gift and donation²⁰ can be foisted on anybody. Even here the vis-a-vis of God and man is maintained. Man has full freedom of discretion to accept the gift or reject it. But he cannot exploit this Kingdom, appropriate it to himself, dominate it, as the many secret Christians try in the heathen lands and as the nationals believe, when they think that they can make a national claim on Jesus. The reason is that He belongs to the whole world. The Kingdom of God can only be received according to the rules of the Kingdom. One can permit himself to be called into it, and can

²⁰The German can make a distinction here between "Gabe" and "Geschenk," the former referring to an outright gift and the latter implying a gift as a privilege.

enter it only upon this call, which always is a call to obedience. Accordingly the Kingdom presupposes on the part of man the receiving, pleading, and waiting attitude (Mt. 10:15; Lk. 18:17; Mk. 15:43). Only he who has this attitude shall receive and inherit the immovable Kingdom (Hebr. 12:28; Mt. 25:34). The reception accordingly is likewise connected with the *μεταβολα*, with the conversion. Man must permit God to work on him and for him, must permit himself to be renewed by the Spirit of God, and only then can he become a citizen of the Kingdom (Jn. 3:5).

To every preacher of the Kingdom these fundamental principles of God's government are properly self-evident and yet they are often overlooked. That is why it is so difficult today to come to a proper understanding of the sending and the service. The opposing position against the kingdom of the world has largely been lost. Often the way to men is sought in assimilation, but only by confronting men can we do a true service.²¹

8. The Kingdom as Salvation

Since the Kingdom of God is placed in opposition to the kingdom of the world, God at the same time rescues man in it and thus judges the other kingdom and everyone who belongs to it. It is judgment upon men who live by the rules of the

²¹This decisively attacks any idea of "doing the village."

kingdom of darkness even though they know little about the manner of life in the Kingdom of God (Rom. 1:18ff.). This judgment is already present in Jesus. This judgment is given by the very fact that people already have the possibility of salvation. Thus judgment upon these people comes to pass with their unbelief (Jn. 3:17ff.).

But nevertheless this judgment has a future character and aspect of eternity, for Jesus is simultaneously He to Whom God has committed the judgment at His return. He will thereby, as Messiah and King, reveal Himself also as Judge of men (Acts 17:31). He pronounces the judgment which the people on the basis of their attitude over against the Gospel have pronounced upon themselves, and He executes it (Jn. 5:22-29). Through this judgment the message of the Kingdom becomes existential. The message becomes a message of salvation for those who permitted themselves to be called into the Kingdom, and a message of damnation for those who declined it. Through this judgment the Kingdom as a present force enters into the sharpest contrast to the kingdom of the world. Here there can be no reconciliation, but only separation, which will take place on the basis of the Kingdom-message among people. What has been indicated in the present Kingdom of God (Lk. 17:20ff.) by the line of demarcation between faith and unbelief becomes manifest by the fact that Jesus is the content of the Kingdom as well as the Judge, since through Him hic et nunc (here and now) the Kingdom of

God is judgment over the world. This will clearly be revealed in the future Kingdom.

We must acquire this eschatological viewpoint with its disturbing sharpness if we wish to hold fast to the meaning of the Kingdom of God and the Missio Dei as the salvation by God. God reveals His Kingdom of Glory and salvation in the judgment, not for the purpose of exhibiting Paradise conditions in this world, but for the purpose of destroying the world of sin and through a new creation restoring a new fellowship with His own, who permitted themselves to be rescued through the message of the Kingdom through Jesus Christ. He does not do this prompted by the lust for power, but by the innermost attitude of His being--by love (Jn. 3:16) in which His relationship to the world is described. He does not want people to remain lost in the kingdom of darkness (Col. 1:13). For that reason He sent His Son, who sought and saved what was lost (Mt. 18:11; Lk. 19:10).

Since the Son is the bearer of the Kingdom and gives it its content, the Kingdom can consist in nothing else than the redemption for man provided through Christ and the new life bestowed by Him which is given with justification and regeneration. It is the life eternal which He earned through His death and created through His resurrection. The actual deeds of salvation are the fulfillment of all messages of salvation upon which the future Kingdom is built. Because God through Christ reconciled the world unto Himself, He restored the

fellowship which is enveloped in the Kingdom of God. Hence all promises were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Kingdom of God has come near to men in Him (Mt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mk. 1:15) and has become such a reality in Him (Lk. 17:20) that God in the message of salvation already permitted to be proclaimed what first came to pass in the cross and resurrection.

Although He was the Servant of God and because He was the Servant of God, God made the Son to be the Messiah, i.e., the bearer of the Kingdom-messages and His royal will. But if the Kingdom is eternal life, then also the bearer of this Kingdom must know of this life. A "Yes" to God's government is a "Yes" to the life from God, and thus the Messiah is He Who is headed toward the resurrection. The Messiah is the Kingdom of God which is here, veiled but dawning.²²

We must add that thereby the last word has not yet been spoken about the government of God. He has turned over to His Son the Kingdom; the Son made it a reality through His suffering and death, and in the resurrection has given to men the hope of eternal life. Thereby He has met the conditions which entitle Him to possess the Kingdom through His ascension.

The end and the eschatological turning point (crisis) is not the resurrection, but the enthronement, which gave to the resurrected One all Power in heaven and earth.²³

²²W. Kuenneth, Theologie der Auferstehung (Muenchen: Cladius, 1951), p. 109. Kuenneth is Doctor of Theology at the University of Erlangen.

²³E. Lohmeyer, "Mir ist gegeben alle Gewalt," In Memoriam Ernst Lohmeyer, edited by W. Schmauch (Stuttgart:

Now He is the Lord Who from the right hand of God calls men into His Kingdom and liberates them from the other kingdom.

9. Presence and Future of the Kingdom

Through the completion of the deeds of salvation, through the enthronement of Jesus, the Kingdom of God reached its fulfillment. That must be understood if our proclamation in the *Missio Dei* is to be Biblical. It must always remain in view of the return of Christ and point to the coming Kingdom, but it can do so only in that it testifies of Him Who did come, so that at His second coming He can give men salvation. If we spoke otherwise we would lift the Kingdom out of the history in which it became manifest. But if we spoke only of the Kingdom which did come, then we would take from history its purpose and make the Kingdom-message ineffective because it has no fulfillment. As important as it is to stress the latter, so we must still keep in mind that this hope receives a solid foundation only when we know that the returning Lord will be none other than He Who has come and done everything necessary for our redemption.

Only because of the perfect accomplishment (Jn. 19:30,

Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1951), p. 28. Written in memoriam, this book is a compendium of writings of many scholars appreciative of E. Lohmeyer. Because of his varied interests in New Testament exegesis, liturgics, and missions, the book contains articles from these fields.

"It is finished") the believer can testify of the future of the judgment and of the consummation of the Kingdom. Through these facts concerning the Kingdom and through its aim it can be seen that the Kingdom-message is not without time and history, as the myth of the heathen religions are. For that reason the Kingdom can not be realized through an exhibition of events that took place--something that is possible in heathen myths--but it is a once-for-all in its past and future. The revelation of the Kingdom establishes itself on historical facts. That is its unique character and from that point it lays claim to the truth. This truth gives the right and full authority for the executing of the sending.

For the unbeliever the situation is different. The message of the Kingdom of God must first be proclaimed to him. The Kingdom of God has not as yet arrived for him. At this point in time he still stands outside before the Kingdom. It comes to him through the message of Jesus; through the pronouncement of the Kingdom-message it comes close to him. This is no contradiction; the Kingdom of God can come close to a man only because it has become an established fact in Jesus Christ. Also to the unbelievers the Kingdom can be proclaimed in this wise: The Kingdom is already there and on the basis of this accomplished fact the future will take place. Thereby the Kingdom-message receives its eschatological aspect and serious responsibility, because a rejection of the Kingdom is at the same time a denial of the

salvation that is accomplished. Thus the Kingdom-message becomes a judgment and makes this demand.

10. The Decision-Character of the Kingdom

If the above fact were not the case, the Lord and His apostles could not have made the Kingdom of God the content of the proclamation. When Jesus refers to the message of John the Baptist and by way of command proclaims it to His disciples, this is done in view of His aim of sending and redemption. Hence the same expressions are used in the New Testament for the proclaiming of the Kingdom as for the proclaiming of the message of salvation. The proclamation of the Gospel is the message concerning royal dominion (Mt. 4:23; 9:35). He who proclaims Christ proclaims the King (Acts 8:12). Thus even Paul could call himself a proclaimer of the Kingdom (Acts 20:25). Through preaching the royal government is present.

The accomplished fact of salvation, the occurrence of salvation as history, takes form both in the proclamation of a faith that responds to the proclamation and accepts its testimony and in the sacrament; that is, it becomes the perfect presence through the Holy Ghost Who conveys and accomplishes both modes of presence.²⁴

Whereas the Kingdom of God is different from the rule of the world and since the latter should be overcome by the former, this proclamation forces a decision.

Jesus does not only stand against the demonic attack. He attacks. Hence the Kingdom concept in the words of

²⁴H. D. Wendland, Der Herr der Zeiten (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1936), p. 20. Wendland is Doctor of Theology at the University of Heidelberg.

the Lord has an explicit polemical accent.²⁵

Jesus declares war on the demons and the demonic camp and is determined to defeat them. He is determined to save man from their attack. This is done in that He makes His own followers participants in the battle and liberates the hearers from the other kingdom and places them, through repentance, in the battle. Man must recognize his own slavery in the other kingdom and must sever this bondage through the power of Christ. He is called into the Kingdom in order to desert the other kingdom.

Nobody can become obedient to the Kingdom of God without turning around, repenting, and permitting the royal government of Christ to become effective in him. Its gifts are described in the Beatitudes. Repentance manifests itself in seeking the one thing needful (Mt. 13:44ff.), in parting with the past and with the environment (Lk. 9:62). In addition the *μεταβολή* embraces the whole life and transforms it in such a way that something of the Kingdom of God already becomes evident in the life of him who has been called into the Kingdom, for this Kingdom of God is the life bestowed by God.

The *μεταβολή* is the call to recognition of one's own situation of death apart from the Kingdom of God. It is the radical waiver of man's arbitrary decision for life and a turning towards the heterogeneous quality of

²⁵ Ethelbert Stauffer, Die Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig, 1948), p. 104. This book has been translated by John Marsh under the title New Testament Theology (New York: Macmillan, 1956). Dr. E. Stauffer is Professor of New Testament Studies and Ancient Numismatics at the University of Erlangen.

life in God. If sin as a separation of man from God is death, then a conditio sine qua non for life would be the removal of sin through forgiveness. The Kingdom of God can only commence where there is forgiveness of sin.²⁶

Through the repentance brought about by the preaching of the royal reign, the Kingdom of God becomes so effectual among men that they seek forgiveness and may find it through Jesus Christ.

Only where these premises have been met dare we speak of the Kingdom becoming a reality. Jesus never gives the gifts of His Kingdom in such a way that He supplements and exhibits something human, but that He, through the new life given in repentance and justification, gives to men a new relationship to their surrounding world and a new purpose to their lives. Out of this evolves the service which God would render unto the world through His own followers and which becomes effective in that all areas of life are permeated and renewed by Christ. To transmit the gifts of God to men severed from this new life would mean to place them into the hands of men who are still subject to the other kingdom. Where this is not taken into consideration the activity of the church and mission will ever and again only contribute to the sad fact that God's Kingdom declines through the strong will of sinful man.

²⁶Kuenneth, op. cit., p. 109.

11. The Universality of Salvation

This Kingdom of God with its abundance of divine gifts does not belong to a distinct group of people. It is intended for all people, also the heathen. If this were not the case we could not speak of a government of God; the Kingdom of God could not be the vis-a-vis to the kingdom of the world in which it appears in its universality, unity, and compactness. In God's willingness to transmit His salvation to all people and to save them He reveals Himself as the God and Lord of all people. This was not always recognized in theology.

In the Old Testament the government of God is applied to Israel in a theocracy. In it Yahweh revealed Himself majestically as Lord. In the New Testament Jesus appears as the Son of David and thus as the legitimate successor, as Nathan indicated (II Sam. 7:12ff.), who has a claim on the government. Nowhere does the question arise whether Israel really was under special guidance by God. Israel holds a special position within the plan of salvation. It is the congregation of God among the nations, which becomes the central point in the world of nations so that the heathen could join it and through it could become acquainted with the one God and the true worship of God. That was the calling of Israel, the meaning of its election. In it and through it the Kingdom became evident so that it could be

imparted to other nations.²⁷ Thereby Jesus declares unto the people that not as a people as such on the basis of election do they have a share of God, but only as the congregation of God,²⁸ and only as such, as individual members subordinate themselves to the will of God. Birth does not give the guarantee for membership or association with the congregation of God and thus the government of God. He alone can enter the Kingdom who conforms to the righteousness of the Kingdom (Mt. 5:20; 7:13f.,21). God's government was given to Israel because He chose it, but whether it will partake of the Kingdom depends entirely upon how it accepts the offer of God. God completely rejects the claim of distinction as people of God regardless. He also does not turn His Kingdom over to Israel. In its claim as a nation Israel took a stand against Jesus and thereby against the Kingdom. Contrariwise Jesus at times praises individual Gentiles and promises a share in the Kingdom (Mk. 5:1ff.; 7:24ff.; Matt. 8:5ff.; Lk. 7:11ff.). Salvation is not taken from Israel. It is always offered to them first, but from them it moves on to the heathen. Missions among the heathen

²⁷ J. Jeremias, Jesu Verheisung fuer die Voelker (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1956), pp. 47ff. This book has been translated under the title Jesus' Promise to the Nations (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1958). Jeremias is Doctor of Theology and Philosophy at the University of Goettingen.

²⁸ Holsten, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

is a sign of the last time.²⁹

Although Israel declines salvation, surrenders the Kingdom, and must be rejected by God, Jesus continues to regard Himself as the legitimate bearer of the Kingdom. From the example of Israel it not only becomes evident that Jesus as the representative of the Kingdom belongs to all people, but also that God withdraws His Kingdom from all human wishful thinking, acts in opposition to human free will, eliminates every redemption by self, and relates redemption to the end. It is an eschatological Kingdom, but it had its beginning in time. In it the other eon has already begun although the eon of this world has not yet ended.³⁰ Therefore Jesus as the representative of God's government of the new eon exercises His royal government in this world (Mt. 13:41). In this new eon the citizens of the Kingdom shall be seated at His table and thereby enjoy the greatest preference which the king can bestow; those who believed that they could lay claim to this Kingdom shall be cast out.

The refusal by Israel and its subsequent rejection by God is now the reason why the Kingdom of God goes to the heathen and immediately creates among them the congregation

²⁹Jeremias, op. cit., pp. 40ff.

³⁰O. Cullmann, Christus und die Zeit (Zurich: Zollikon, 1946), pp. 70ff. The book has been translated by Floyd V. Filson under the title Christ and Time (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950).

of God. The Book of Acts offers an unusual illustration for this. Salvation is always first of all offered to the Jews. Their claim of priority is thereby recognized. But their constant enmity is the cause that salvation is proclaimed to the heathen. Through Israel's transgression salvation comes to the heathen (Rom. 11:11). To be sure, the heathen receive salvation as people who, only because of the mercy of God, partake of the salvation, which first of all was intended for Israel. Thus there is no special Kingdom of God for the heathen. God began His Kingdom with His people and therefore the heathen could only be added as wild shoots are grafted into an olive tree. Thus the New Testament congregation of God is not suspended in mid-air; she does not stand disconnected in the history of salvation, but she is annexed to God's historical action of salvation. For Luke in the Book of Acts as well as for Paul in the Epistles it is a matter of great concern to supply the proof that the people of God from the heathen world are intimately connected with God's people in the Old Testament and that this connection agrees with God's will and thereby with the revelation.

The election of the heathen in the last times also has a special purpose. They should bring back to the Jews the salvation in Jesus Christ so that in the end all mankind is under the proclamation of the Kingdom. Thus heathen missions in its final concern aims at gaining Israel. Its reception anew belongs to the signs of the last time (Rom. 11:11ff.).

For that reason Schlier is correct when he maintains, "According to these statements, heathen missions exists between the fall and restoration of Israel."³¹

Before we can establish more closely the position of heathen missions in the history of salvation, we must once again refer to its concrete presupposition within the history of salvation. Through the rejection of Israel God manifests Himself as the Lord over all people. The divine character of His government becomes evident exactly in the fact that it does not confine itself, but desires to embrace all people. Its purpose is to lead all people into the proper relationship to God and add to His congregation those who through the creation belong to God and through the world government of God are forcefully under His control.

God no longer confines Himself to one people. That would contradict the sending of the Son, whose death for redemption and whose resurrection for the world would prove itself meaningless since heathen missions would have no basis. But His death and resurrection are the prerequisites for the proclamation of the message of salvation for all people, which begins with His exaltation. This becomes apparent in a passage like Jn. 12:23f. Jesus sees in the coming of the Greeks a glorification but He also knows that this can

³¹H. Schlier, "Die Entscheidung fuer die Heidenmission in der Urchristenheit," Evangelische Missions Zeitung, VII (1942).

first become a reality when the kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies. Only when His work of salvation is fulfilled will His Gospel be the message for all people. Through Christ's death and resurrection the message of the Kingdom receives a cosmic meaning; it is now the message for all people (Jn. 3:16; II Cor. 5:18,21; Col. 1:10). If this event of salvation did not exist, the message of Jesus would possibly constitute a good system of ethics, but it would not be the Gospel for all people; it would not be able to solve their problems. But now the Gospel is pregnant with the fact of salvation, with the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Thereby all who permit themselves to be called into the Kingdom can now comfort themselves and rejoice. The church is the bearer of this message which is intended for all people, but she is not its lord. She may only place herself in the service of the Kingdom, but may not restrict it.

12. Does Jesus Want Heathen Missions?

In connection with the Jew-heathen problem two areas of questions come to the fore, which constantly play an important role in regard to the motivation of missions and even today make their weight felt. On the other hand, these two areas misled G. Warneck to the idea that Jesus entertained evolutionary thoughts. First of all, He confined missions to Israel and later on He commanded missions among the heathen. On the other hand, the question whether Jesus desired missions

for heathen has been active since A. V. Harnack. This question today is answered in the negative by many exegetes, e.g. J. Jeremias, who believes that Jesus still stood in the Old Testament Zion-Jerusalem tradition. In other words, He believed that the heathen must come to Jerusalem and in consequence of that the heathen mission must immediately precede the coming of Jesus. Thereby heathen missions would, in the fullest sense, be possible only in the coming of Christ, when through the powerful entrance of the Kingdom Jesus Christ Himself would lead the fullness of the Kingdom into it.

These thoughts were already presented by Zinzendorf and Fr. Fabri and led to this, that both men regarded the present heathen missions only as a preliminary work which had the purpose of gaining individuals which had been prepared by the Holy Ghost. This led to the emphasis on the conversion of individuals because the nations were not as yet ready for the heathen missions through God's election. The work of these two men shows that they, as little as the above-mentioned, doubted that the inner urgency of the Gospel pushed towards heathen mission and that the mother church through the gift of the Holy Ghost was led to heathen missions.

There would still be the spreading of the Gospel among the nations--legitimate missions--if Jesus had not given the mission command. The horizon of the Gospel is humanity. Thereby, however, it is not said that Jesus Himself during His earthly life thought of heathen missions. Proof of this

is found in very important, convincing passages in the New Testament,³² e.g. Mt. 15:24,26; 10:5ff.; 10:23.

According to H. Schlier Jesus lived with the expectation that the final judgment was near and believed that, when the end would come, the work with the people of Israel would still be unfinished. Heathen missions first began when, through the resurrection of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Ghost, through the delay of the end of the world, room remained for heathen missions and the prerequisite had been met.

The question arises whether these Scripture passages must be interpreted unconditionally in this way, or whether they do not rather express a more practical concern. The limiting of Jesus' words to Israel could very well have been a self-restricting of His work of salvation for the purpose of a better reception of His message through all men. If this message is to become effective then it must become concrete in a congregation. There must be a congregation present which believes this message and guards and keeps it so that it is not abused by people. The Gospel must take root before it can grow into a tree. It is not a parasitic plant which attaches itself everywhere and sucks from its object. For that reason it must first of all become self-reliant and exclusive before it can become worldwide. If Jesus, as Warneck assumes, was still embroiled in

³²Jeremias, op. cit., pp. 9ff.

particularism (selectivity), one should not use this word in the same breath with the Redeemer of the world. If Jesus entertained a practical concern, then particularism was the presupposition for universality.

By all means, Jesus was not a world evangelist, who through the proclamation placed the Gospel at the disposal of the heathen without compelling a decision. The world movement of syncretism shows how the Gospel, placed into the hands of the heathen through a false program of works, can be abused if no guardian congregation stands behind it, in which the Gospel in an exemplary way becomes obvious in thinking and living. The apostles experienced to their terror the wrong interpretation of the message by the heathen. The Book of Acts reports three incidents: Simon, the sorcerer (chap. 8), the deification of man in Lystra (chap. 14), the adjurers in the name of Jesus (chap. 19). Paul in his letters already dealt with syncretistic tendencies. Jesus accordingly had to create a congregation in which the Gospel according to His Kingdom would become a reality. Couldn't that have been the reason why He confines His activity to Israel? J. Jeremias sets forth that in this self-restriction Jesus took a very special attitude toward the heathen.³³

Also Lohmeyer makes this plain.

The problem of the Gentile world had its fixed place in the proclamation of Jesus (Mt. 8:11; 21:43; 26:28).

³³Ibid., pp. 34ff.

The aim that nations become "sons of the Kingdom" is clearly proclaimed.³⁴

Nevertheless we must also say, on the basis of this conception, that Jesus approved the heathen nations definitely after His resurrection when Israel had rejected Him. The transition to the heathen mission was not a desperate act but, viewed eschatologically, the rejection of Israel had to serve the purpose of making Jesus the Redeemer of men. Only through the deeds of salvation were the prerequisites for the universality of salvation met. This is set forth in many passages of the New Testament. Through the resurrection and enthronement Jesus becomes the Ruler (Acts 2:36).

Through His resurrection from the dead, Jesus, formerly the Messiah of the Jews, has been enthroned as Lord and Savior of the whole world (Rom. 1:11f.).³⁵

Therefore Jesus becomes the Lord over the whole creation and in the same way over the other kingdom which, already in anticipation, He had conquered (Col. 1:13). The Lord of Israel and the Lord of the world is, at this point, identical; thereby the contradiction between Mt. 15:24 and Mt. 28:18ff. is solved. Thus Liechtenhan says to us,

The sending out is a once-for-all act (Lk. 10:17-20). For that reason no far-reaching conclusion is to be drawn from the limiting to the lost sheep of Israel. The purpose is to enlarge the small flock.³⁶

³⁴Ibid., p. 33.

³⁵A. Fridricksen, The Apostle and His Message (Uppsala: Lundequistaka, 1947).

³⁶R. Liechtenhan, Die Urchristliche Mission (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1946), p. 23.

In even more concise fashion Schlier says,

The mission command of the Resurrected One is, through the fact of the resurrection, the legitimate removal of prohibition to go to the heathen, and this prohibition is the legitimate preliminary stage of the mission command.³⁷

13. The Eschatological Place of Heathen Missions

The death and resurrection of Christ is the presupposition for heathen missions. Through these the eschatological turning point dawned, through which the Kingdom marches toward its completion. This Kingdom becomes effective through the enthronement of Jesus. He assumes the government. For that reason the mission command of Mt. 28:18ff. is understood today not so much as a command but rather as the proclamation of the coming Kingdom, the announcement of Jesus' ascending of the throne, His coronation.³⁸ Jesus became the King of the Kingdom and as such He now has the message of the Kingdom proclaimed to men so that they are prepared for His second coming and are saved through this message. Missions is always the sign that the Lord is coming. This sign gives to the work of missions its most profound meaning and final goal.

If the coming of the Son of Man embraces a judgment on all nations, then the presupposition also demands that

³⁷Schlier, op. cit., p. 182.

³⁸O. Michel, "Menschensohn und Voelkerwelt," Evangelische Missions Zeitung, VI (1941); Lohmeyer, op. cit., pp. 34ff.; Jeremias, op. cit., pp. 32ff.; S. Knak, "Neuentestamentliche Missionstexte nach neuerer Exegese," Theologia Viatorum (1953/54), p. 27.

an opportunity for the acquisition of salvation has been given to all and they thereby become responsible. The proclamation of the Gospel to all nations is a postulate of eschatology. For that reason it is the $\delta\epsilon\iota$ (must) of eschatological necessity.³⁹

The church must prepare practically for the coming of Christ through her missions. The end will not come until the message of the Kingdom has been preached to all nations as a witness to them (Mt. 24:14). For that reason the Holy Ghost leads the church as a factor of the end, step by step, to the heathen mission and thus prepares the coming of Jesus. Missions is now the activity of the exalted Lord between the time of His ascension and return. Thus the church has only one assignment--to continue the Heilsgeschichte⁴⁰ (to complete the Book of Acts) through the proclamation of the completed work and through the announcement of the Kingdom in the gathering of the congregation "until He comes."⁴¹ A number of Dutch theologians draw from these events important conclusions in order to gain a new understanding of the church and missions. To begin with, I give a resume of our findings according to the authoritative work of Hoekendijk, who at the same time leads us to the following chapter.⁴²

³⁹Liechtenhan, op. cit., p. 32.

⁴⁰Cf. chapter II, footnote 10.

⁴¹Cullmann, op. cit., pp. 145ff.

⁴²J. C. Hoekendijk, Kerk en Volk in de Duitse Zending-wetenschap (n.p. 1949), pp. 223ff. In addition to Hoekendijk, there is a wealth of information and some

Hoekendijk in his basic chapter on the context of missions makes it plain that missions not only points to the coming end, to the dawning of the Kingdom, but that it already is an indication of His coming. The mission assignment stands in connection with apocalyptic signs and travail. Accordingly it belongs to the last signals which God gives to men before the end (Mk. 13:10; Mt. 24:14). It is itself an apocalyptic event. Hoekendijk adopts the thesis of Cullmann⁴³ that II Thess. 2:6-7⁴⁴ must be applied to missions. Consequently repentance of mankind (which had not as yet taken place) and the proclamation of the Gospel (unfinished at present among the nations) are the restraining forces for the Lord's coming. Therefore this interim is the expression of God's exceeding patience with men.

Through this view missions receives its significance in the Heilsgeschichte. All power in heaven and on earth is now

stimulating avenues of thought, W. Freytag, The Gospel and the Religions (London: SCM Press, 1957). This is the fifth in a series of pamphlets in research by the International Missionary Council.

⁴³Cullmann, op. cit., pp. 145ff.

⁴⁴Commentaries vary widely in regard to what the "restraining power" is. Others' views are that it refers to the Jewish state (Warfield, Moffatt), the Holy Spirit, a limit of time fixed by Divine decree, a personification of traditional supernatural mythology (Neil in the Moffatt Series), Satan (Bicknell in the Westminster Series and Frame in the ICC Series), law and order as personified at that time in the Roman rulers (Tertullian, et al.). The last of these is the most generally accepted. If taken in the sense of "retard," then it could refer to the conflict between missions and the world and point forward to vs. 13ff. Cf. Cullmann, ibid.

given to the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13-14; Mt. 28:18). Now the service of missions belongs to His triumph. His glory has begun (Mt. 16:27; 26:62). The Messianic promise of Is. 2:2 is fulfilled. The faith in Yahweh through the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom enfolds the whole human race, as Isaiah 2 saw in prophetic perspective. Through the proclamation there are no more limits on nations. All are called to the Kingdom. This day dawned with the rejection of Israel. But the heathen mission is definitely dependent on the gift of the Spirit (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8). This Spirit is the great event of the eschaton.

The Holy Ghost leads to the apostolate created by Him, an apostolate which, in plain words, is the apostolate for the heathen. We will discuss this idea more fully at a later time.

On the basis of these presentations it should have become clear that the church can only be understood as an eschatological factor and that missions can be nothing else than the continuation of the Heilsgeschichte through the exalted Lord's effective working with His church among the nations. This is the distinguishing mark of the new eon, through which all believers receive a share and which must be preached to all believers until this mark has passed into fulfillment. Thereby the church receives an assignment which is carried out with reference to the end. The entire operation of the church is determined by these eschatological

marks. Thus the program of the church can only be correct when, in all of its ramifications, it has as its purpose the conquest of the unbelievers. The Missio Dei takes place in the service of the church. It therefore is in place to present the execution of the Missio Dei.

CHAPTER IV

THE SENDING

1. The Meaning of the Sending

The *Missio Dei* is the work of God through which everything that He has in mind for man's salvation--the complete fullness of His Kingdom of redemption--is accomplished. It is offered to man through those whom He has sent so that they, freed from sin and transferred from the other kingdom, can fully come into His fellowship. Thus the sending becomes an act of the love of God to lost mankind. It is the expression of His mercy.¹ This has little in common with the Pietistic motive of sympathy with the heathen. This was not only determined by the concern for lost mankind, but was strongly filled with the awareness of the beati possidentes² --not alone through the command to bring salvation to man, but also to snatch them from their moral and earthly depravity and to help them to an existence worthy of a human being. In order to bring man to salvation, God woos him through His revelation, through His word. Hence the *Missio Dei* is closely bound with revelation. God reveals Himself

¹G. F. Vicedom, Die Rechtfertigung als Gestaltende Kraft der Mission (Neuendettelsau: Freimund Verlag, 1952), pp. 9ff.

²The idea evidently is that the person who possesses something feels that urgency of sharing it with his fellowmen.

in that He performs the sending Himself. If there were no Missio Dei, then we would also have no revelation. He sends His word to man and reveals Himself in such a way that, in His Son through the Holy Ghost, He Himself comes to them (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 1:16).

2. The Sender and the Sent

Through the love of God, which takes form in revelation and becomes man's in the sending, the God who reveals and connects Himself through His word connects His Spirit and work with those who are sent, and through them, with those who hear the message. It was to the credit of the conference in Whitby³ to have dug this out; it is a fact which today in theological findings is hardly even taken notice of.⁴ Through the sending God extends the bridge and establishes the connection with men whom He desires to save. Consequently, God's sending always has a definite command and concrete goal

³This was the site of the fourth International Missionary Council Conference. Following Edinburgh (1910), Jerusalem (1928), and Madras (1938), it was held at Whitby, a little town outside of Toronto, Ontario, on July 5-24, 1947. Although it was called primarily to discharge the necessary business of the I.M.C., it becomes significant because of the great changes brought about during the nine-year interim, war years as they were.

The major literary results of the conference were two-fold: J. W. Decker, Norman Goodall, and C. W. Ranson, "Partners in Obedience," The Witness of a Revolutionary Church (New York: International Missionary Council, 1947) and K. S. Latourette and Richard Hogg, Tomorrow Is Here (New York: Friendship Press, 1947).

⁴W. Freytag, Der Grosze Auftrag (n.p., 1948), pp. 32ff.

which is to be reached. By way of the missions command the church and her mission become a connecting link, not a force for itself nor an independent work. The church has no self-chosen work. Along with her mission she is not an indispensable institution for the sake of man's religious inclination. She is not a dimension of culture and therefore has no obligation primarily toward culture. She also is not an ecclesiastical-political affair. Missions primarily does not have anything to do with a nationalistic thrust toward expansion. The church can accomplish a variety of things, but she must not seek these apart from her one real duty. Separated from this duty, all other concerns belong to the other kingdom.

Church and missions cannot be conceived apart from God and can therefore be understood only from the viewpoint of the existence of God and His mission. Church and missions are nothing more than a means of conduct, a work-schedule of God in relation to His creatures, and a gathering of those who permit themselves to be called to Him through God's definite sending. Thus the accent of the church and missions is always on the Sender Who accomplishes His purposes through the church and missions. Thus each sending is primarily a declaration of the Sender, the God Who is concerned about men (Is. 6:8; Gen. 12:1ff.).

The words which are used in the Scripture regarding the sending speak simultaneously about the absoluteness of the

will of the One Who has given the command. The one who is sent is always the one who by sheer necessity stands under the will of the Sender (I Cor. 9:16ff.). The Sender calls to His service the one who is sent. He gives authority and power of full authority to the one sent because the latter must always act in the stead of the Sender. Thus every self-will and whim is removed from missions, as well as every human or churchly inclination, even though these may be ever so deeply fixed in a certain piety and grounded in firm theology. "At the outset of missions always stands God's 'I,' the only 'I' which has permanence in the holy Scriptures."⁵ Thus the ones who were sent could always only proclaim the message in that they said with the prophets: "Thus saith the Lord!"

3. Election and Sending

The attitude of the church toward the world is determined through the sending. The church must project herself before the world as the carrier of the message. This was developed so emphatically by the Dutch that one asked, "What is the position of the people of Israel in the world in regard to their attitude toward the heathen?" In the following presentations I follow J. Blauw.⁶

⁵Friso Melzer, Ihr Sollt Meine Zeugen Sein (n.p., 1955), p. 7.

⁶Johannes Blauw, Goden en Mensen (Groningen:

To begin with, God carries out the sending into the world in such a way that He elects for Himself from the nations the people that belong exclusively to Him, and calls and sends them. Israel already had a mission call. It would be a grave misunderstanding to see in the election of Israel only an arbitrary act of an autonomous God, Who in His sovereignty leaves all other nations to themselves in order to select a people and show preference to them. Precisely the election of Israel was an action of God toward nations. It was part and parcel of His Missio. Through Israel also the other nations were included in His promise (Gen. 12:1ff.). Viewed from their eyes, Israel was the bearer of the promise and the transfer-agent of the blessing, a projected sign of the fact that they, too, could be saved and partake of salvation.

The God to Whom the world belongs is the God Who has chosen His people The Bible does not begin with the God Who elects, but with the God Who is the Creator and therefore the God Who can elect.⁷

It is the God Who can elect, and Who therefore also does elect the heathen.

Thus God has called His people totally for service to

J. Niemeijer, 1950). J. Blauw is Secretary of the Dutch Missionary Council, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

⁷O. Weber, Bibelkunde des Alten Testaments (Tuebingen: Im Furche-Verlag, 1947), p. 42. Weber is Professor of Theology at the University of Goettingen.

the heathen of the Old Testament. By the attitude of His people among the people of the world, by the faith and obedience of His people, by the dealings of God with them even in their disobedience and apostacy, by all of these examples it should become evident to the other people how God deals in His holiness and love with His people, with men whom He will save. At the same time people could realize how the life of a people could be influenced by their faith in God. Thus Israel became a point of attraction, but also a warning to the heathen.

The stern law of God which separated Israel from the heathen was in force until the day of Jesus Christ in order to frighten the heathen, to hold before them the holiness of God, and to witness to them that one does not become a member of God's people by one's own choice or proper conduct.⁸

God executes the sending in such a manner that He Himself deals with His people and sends men to them who can rule and direct His people in His place. Already here the fact becomes clear that since the Fall men are without leadership and go astray (I Kgs. 22:17; Is. 13:14; Zech. 10:2). The fellowship of the people of the world with God is broken, but God leads His people by free grace. That is why He sends to His people men who are to lead and direct them.

The same thing was true when Israel asked for a king. It is significant that though God permitted the system of a

⁸A. DeQuervain, "Der Ewige Koenig," Theologia Existens, LVIII (n.d.), 23.

kingdom, He first gave them the correct meaning of it: The king is to be the shepherd who leads the people in God's stead. Thus the king had a salvatory duty. God is the Shepherd (Psalms 23 and 80). He sends shepherds who lead the people in His stead (Is. 40:11; Jer. 3:15; Ezek. 34:23). Accordingly Israel is under the special care of God and thereby is given every advantage that among the people of the world she remain the people of God and can through her life and presence bear witness of God. She stands beneath God's guidance. This saving will of God, i.e. to lead His people, deeply penetrates the New Testament (Mt. 9:36; Jn. 10:1; I Pet. 2:25; Heb. 13:20). Above all, God executes the sending in such a way that He serves His people through His leadership.

Israel lived among the nations. There was always the danger that she become as they were. Above all, after possessing the land she got acquainted with the gods of the agrarian culture, without whose favor it was believed to be impossible to enjoy the fruit of the land. The transition from wilderness wandering to residence, from a nomadic life to the tilling of the soil, and finally, the civilizing and cultural upsurge of the time of the kingdom--all of this, truly, was no technical matter, but entirely religious. Thus the reception of the new culture and ways of life became a vital question of life for Israel.

Israel was constantly surrounded by apostacy. For that

reason God not only sent kings but prophets, to whom He made known His will. They are the ones who ever and again drew the line over against apostacy. The prophets indelibly imprinted upon the shepherds of the people of God the divine will and emphasized the demand and promise of genuine divine guidance. The setting apart from the other nations was given through the law. Thus the prophets proclaimed the correct meaning of the Law as well as its correct application. The result was that in spite of much unfaithfulness, Israel could exert an exemplary influence on its environment. By means of this setting apart from the other nations, the particularism of the salvation of Israel became the forerunner for the fact that salvation for others was also possible.

In all this a two-fold fact became apparent--both important for the beginning of missions in the Old Testament and as a prelude of what later took place at the time of Jesus: (1) The mission concept grows under the call of repentance and (2) the prophets receive the world-wide vision to the degree that Israel, because of her apostacy, could no longer be called God's people. When Israel regarded itself secure and identified itself with God's rule, it had to perish. At this point there arises within Israel the understanding of an eschatological salvation and a magnitude of the church of God from all nations. The passing on to others of the salvation by the remnant of Israel, hence, by the

real church of God, is now understood as the genuine calling in the midst of the people. At this point Jerusalem becomes the center of genuine worship of God and all nations should have part in this salvation.⁹

Thereby, however, the real goal of God for Israel has not yet been accomplished and her particular assignment not yet fulfilled. The more the "remnant" recognizes itself as the true Israel, the more does its existence point to Him Who is to come as the promised Messiah and Redeemer, as the Servant of God, Who will bring to all men salvation. Thus Israel remains the remnant church or the people of God, the bearer of the revelation; God likewise identifies Himself with the promises to Israel for the sake of the One Who is to come, Whom God will give to all mankind and Who will bring them into His fellowship. Israel's mission call was finally fulfilled when God sent His Son as the Son of David --the Son of man--in order to reveal Himself to all men in His love and to accomplish His work of grace for all men.¹⁰

⁹J. Hempel, "Die Wurzeln des Missionswillens im Glauben des Altes Testaments," Zeitschrift fuer Altes Testaments Wissenschaft, LXVI (n.d.), pp. 244ff.; J. Jeremias, Jesu Verheisung fuer die Voelker (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1956), pp. 47ff. The latter book has been translated under the title Jesus' Promise to the Nations (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, 1958).

¹⁰O. Cullmann, Christus und die Zeit (Zurich: Zollikon, 1946), pp. 99ff.

4. The Special Missio Dei

Hence God Himself does mission work. He once more makes Himself in His mercy to be the Shepherd and Messenger of His people languishing in sin (Mt. 9:36; Mk. 6:34). He sends the Servant of God, from whose promises the Old Testament church of God had learned that its God is a God of the nations. He does His mission work through His Son, Who Himself becomes an apostle, that is, one who is sent (Heb. 3:1). In Him He made the salvation intended for all men a reality and calls them anew into His fellowship.

The special Missio Dei begins with Jesus Christ, for in Him God is both the Sender and the One Who is sent, both the Revealer and the Revelation, both the Holy One Who punishes and the Redeemer. Through His Son in the incarnation and enthronement God makes Himself the very content of the sending. Through His Son it once for all time becomes clear who God is, what He is, how He works, how He feels in regard to men, how He redeems them, what salvation He has prepared for them, how men may draw nigh unto Him, how they are received into His fellowship. That applies to all men. No one now can seek his own way of salvation. No one can sidestep this Jesus. Everyone must for himself decide for Him and through Him, for in Him the God Who is Lord since creation deals with men.

Thus Jesus has His own mission in this sending, but it

is always the assignment and will which the Triune God Himself gave to Him for the world's salvation. Jesus always acts in harmony with the Father, and He works as if the Father Himself were "on the job." He fulfills the work of the Father (Jn. 4:34) and thus is the proof that God has sent Him and that He is at work (Jn. 9:3ff.). In the sending it should become clear to men that the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father. For that reason there lies behind the sending a grave earnestness. Through this sending men are placed before the only living God; their former gods are declared non-entities and their ways of salvation false, for He alone is Salvation and He alone brings salvation.

This is possible only because Jesus not only delivers a message, but because He Himself is the content of that message and brings about the salvation. Thereby salvation is removed from every human speculation and mediation. The One Who is sent by God accomplishes salvation on the cross and through the message from the cross gives content to every sending. Through the resurrection He overcomes all the worries of men--worries which always revolve about death--and gives the conviction of eternal life. Through reconciliation and the bestowal of eternal life the fellowship with God is perfect and the sermon concerning it receives its urgency through the eschatological emphasis.

Through the enthronement Jesus becomes the Lord over all anti-godly powers which would destroy God's work of salvation

and becomes the Lord over every other world which is connected with the kingdom of darkness. He becomes the Head of the Church. Thus all questions which have ever influenced religion and become its central, vital, cardinal questions have not been solved as man imagined, but after the manner of God, and therefore in an absolute valid manner. Man is lifted out of his self-deification and again made into a creature and vis-a-vis of God. With Jesus Christ the time of darkness and ignorance is closed. Whoever therefore meets Christ is summoned to a decision and thereby to repentance.

With Jesus the work of providing the content--the content of the sending--is completed, and thus to every sending has been given its meaning and goal. Beyond Jesus there is no revelation of God. Even the Holy Ghost derives His existence¹¹ from the same and exactly in this way leads men into all truth. Since Jesus died and rose for the salvation of men, redemption apart from Him is impossible, even if men ever and again strive to classify Christ among many forms which would show a way of salvation. Whoever places Christ's "once-for-all-ness" in question also places the only God Who has sent Him in question. Only through the Son

¹¹The expression would seem to indicate a subordination of essence. This is not the case. The fact that there is an order of operation does not imply that there is a division of essence. The Trinity remains, as the Athanasian Creed affirms, "The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal."

does man learn to know this God and only through Him do they find the way to the Father. Thus Jesus is not only a one-time figure in history, but He is also the once-for-all-time figure in His work and purpose (Rom. 6:10; Heb. 6 passim; I Pet. 3:18). On the basis of this fact all attempts of religions and philosophies to replace Him will be doomed; on the basis of Him every effort of syncretism¹² which wants to supplement Him, or embrace Him, or make Him subservient for self, breaks down. Through Him every redemption by man through his own works, be they ever so pious, becomes a rebellion against the redemption-will of God.

Man's actions once again reveal the fact and the consequences of man's Fall into sin, and thus these will constantly become manifest. Men can only take Jesus as He is or they do not receive a share in Him. They can only take a stand toward His message, submit to it, believe it, and permit themselves to be saved through Him. Jesus' message is exclusive since it is totally tied to the one God. But it is at the same time also universal since it corresponds with the Kingdom and Government of God, which embraces the whole world (Acts 4:12; Jn. 6:68). Jesus' message belongs to all men.

¹²Syncretism is practically a synonym for unionism, for it signifies an attempt to combine unlike and irreconcilable elements in the interest of a false union. This malignant unionism is one of Vicedom's chief targets.

Apart from this Missio Dei in Jesus Christ there can be no sendings today. Everything that has happened since His Missio regarding any further sending has proceeded from Him, has been determined by Him, is encompassed by His sending, and is a continuation of His sending. He is everything that embraces for us the content and purpose of the sending. As we all have become fellow-creatures of Jesus through His incarnation and as we, through His redemption, become brothers (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11) and citizens of His Kingdom, so we have also become such whom He has called into His service, mere fellow missionaries, vessels of His sending. In this way the service of the church and the mission in Him remains God's own work.

Missions to the heathen as we have them today are only possible because God continued His sending and, through the event of the sending of His Son, established a continued mission. Obviously God has united the entire salvation in His Son. Also, in His courtship with men He does not tire. There would be no church, no congregation of God among all nations on earth, and consequently no mission if God did not Himself thus work among all nations through the gift of the Holy Ghost, as Luther described it in the explanation of the Third Article.

The Holy Ghost is the impulse to missions. The apostles are definitely told to begin their work and fulfill their call only after the bestowal of the Spirit (Lk. 24:49;

Acts 1:8). Through the outpouring of the Spirit they are led to the preaching on Pentecost, to the establishment of the first congregation, and from there, step for step, to missions. Wherever they go they are moved by the Spirit, and wherever they deliver their message the Spirit is in the work with them. Without the gift of the Holy Ghost they would never have found the way to the heathen and as a result the redemption earned by Jesus Christ would have remained meaningless for the people. Possibly a Jewish sect would have come into being, but no church which encircled the nations.

The Holy Ghost also is sent (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:17). He proceeds from the Father and the Son and hence in His sending the fullness of the grace of the Triune God is given. Where He works, the Triune God is at work. In Him God, in His relationship to the world, continues His presence among men and imparts to them what has been done for them.

But between His (Jesus') ascension and return, He is with people in that He will be there in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the power through which and in which Christ Jesus, Who sits at the right hand of God, is present on earth.¹³

God is never unmerciful. Whenever He gives to His own a challenge, He always works along and does not stand aloof as a lord would in man's way of thinking. The Holy Ghost

¹³H. Schlier, "Die Entscheidung fuer die Heidenmission in der Urchristenheit," Evangelische Missions Zeitung, VII (1942), pp. 177-178.

brings the presence of God and the certainty of His presence. The Triune God is present in His Spirit.

The Holy Ghost also is Lord (II Cor. 3:17). The Kingdom is given in Him, for He Himself is this Kingdom in the working of God (Mt. 3:11; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5).¹⁴ Jesus makes His promised presence a reality in Him (Mt. 28:20). Whoever therefore is moved and led by Him has the evidence that God wants to accomplish something special through him either in the congregation or through the congregation in the world.¹⁵ The Spirit is always the co-witness in the proclamation and doctrine (Acts 5:32; 15:28). Through His gift and presence the success of the proclamation is determined, for He is the expression used in Scripture for the efficacious working of the word (Acts 10:26;¹⁶ 19:2ff.). In these attributes the Holy Ghost continues the mission which God had begun in His Son Jesus Christ until Jesus Himself will return and terminate the mission. The Holy Ghost does this in such a way that He calls men to faith, leads them to the witness, and puts them to work.

¹⁴The passages cited here do not bear out the point, but simply allude to inauguration of Christ's ministry at baptism. The point that the Holy Ghost equals the Kingdom cannot be maintained. The Kingdom was a concrete term which could not be nebulously attached to anything.

¹⁵Vicedom displays a tendency towards Calvinistic predestination and towards a feeling of "inner light."

¹⁶Wrong reference.

5. The Apostle

Up to now we have described the *Missio Dei* mainly as an immediate action of God through which He reveals Himself as the One who deals with man and saves him. Since the exaltation of Christ this immediate action works through the Holy Ghost in such a way that the Holy Ghost makes men His messengers and tools, and commissions and sends them in the name of Jesus.

Those who were specially called by the Lord and sent out with a definite charge are called apostles in the New Testament. They were chosen by the Lord Himself and fitted out with His power of authority. They could not choose their own calling. They often consented only with inner reluctance and had to first be conquered by the Lord. They were always equipped with a definite commission--to proclaim the message of salvation, in order to lead men to faith in the One who gave the mandate to the apostles, and to gather them into the congregation of the Lord. Thus their work is always one derived from the *Missio Dei*.

We find a double call and commission for the apostles in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus, during His life on earth, selected them from the great multitude of His followers. Therefore they became apostles on the basis of a special act of His will and a special charge. The Lord emphasized this in His prayers (Mk. 6; Mt. 10; Lk. 9).

As most exegetes today have assumed, this first selection dealt with a one-time, closely limited sending, with the same commission which the Lord also had to fulfill.¹⁷ Thus they were also empowered by their Lord to do exactly what He Himself did--to undergird and expand His messianic work-- (Lk. 9:2; 10: 7-9). Seemingly their commissioning was a solitary occurrence because following their return we find them only in company with the Lord in the work. Accordingly we can conclude that they did not have an independent assignment as long as their Lord remained on earth.

As we know, during the ordeal of the Passion the disciples deserted their Lord. Thus after Easter He had to call them together again, equip them anew, explain to them the meaning of what had happened, and call and send them out a second time. This second sending, this time by the resurrected Lord, is the final one (Mt. 28:19; Lk. 24:47ff.; Jn. 20:21; Mk. 16:15). Jesus had forgiven the apostles, restored the former fellowship, and removed everything that stood in the way.

According to His instruction, the proclamation of the apostles henceforth is nothing else but the interpretation of the historical events of His earthly life, especially

¹⁷G. Staehlin, "Die Endschau Jesu und die Mission," Evangelische Missions Zeitung, XV (1950), pp. 99ff. Prof. G. Staehlin is a Doctor of Theology and Philosophy. He is presently Professor of Theology at Mainz, having previously taught at Leipzig (1927-1930), Madras (1932-1939), Vienna (1943-1945), Erlangen (1946-1952).

those events from His arrest to His ascension.

God uses His apostles, their calling in life (their best) and their pledge of loyalty, in order to open the eyes of men to this divine act, so that it also happens to them and they place themselves in His service.¹⁸

For that reason the second sending is no longer modified by space and time, but it leads to every area and sphere of life, i.e., it is universal in a double sense; to the end of time and to the end of the world. Through this mission the Lord lays claim to all of humanity and interprets His acts of salvation in such a way that they become for each man the determining factor for his salvation.

In both commissionings it is noticeable that Jesus only sends men although He had many women as followers and even though He uses also women as witnesses to His resurrection. It must also be further stated that this second commissioning does not synchronize with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The former precedes it and thus it can be said that the call to the apostolate was given by the Lord Himself whereas its execution is derived from the Holy Ghost.

But that means that the apostolate is not derived of the possession of the Spirit given to the Church (as important as the Spirit may be for the execution of her mission) but from the mandate of the Risen Lord. That is clearly set forth in all sources.¹⁹

¹⁸R. Liechtenhan, Die Urchristliche Mission (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1946), p. 74.

¹⁹Schlier, op. cit., p. 179.

Accordingly the resurrection is the necessary antecedent of the sending, the conditio sine qua non, from which the apostles receive their commission. But this commission becomes a reality through the communication of the Holy Ghost.

From thence (Easter, that is, the resurrection, and Pentecost, that is, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost) the apostles first are what they have been designated and commanded to be: Carriers of the Kerygma. From here the church first began to develop from its original form made up of a circle of apostles who believed in the living Lord Jesus, to a church which grows in the world and increases.²⁰

The installation into the apostolic office and the commissioning is based on the resurrection appearances, as the Risen One on the one hand renews and confirms the Apostolic status of His disciples and, on the other hand, confirms it fully anew.²¹

This fact is so emphasized that in the apostolic preaching it is not the cross, but the resurrection which occupies the central position.²² It is the deciding act.

²⁰K. Barth, Kirchliche Dogmatik (Muenchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1953), IV, 1, p. 373. Barth is Professor of Theology at the University of Basel, Switzerland.

²¹W. Kuenneth, Theologie der Auferstehung (Muenchen: Cladius, 1951), p. 79.

²²The resurrection played a very important role. The disciples could now say that He is their Lord, and not only had been their Lord. Now the parables of the servants waiting for their master took on a most profound sense of meaning, for this is what they now were. However, Vicedom's statement in St. Paul's Epistles check the balance in this. "God forbid that I should glory but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14). Col. 1:20 and II Cor. 13:4 underscore the same point. For more on this read Max Warren's The Christian Mission and the Cross (London: SCM Press, 1951), one of the high points of the I.M.C. Willingen Conference. At none of the earlier international conferences on missions did the cross of Jesus Christ stand so much in the center as at Willingen.

Only when there is resurrection, judgment, and eternal life with God, does the cross take on significance. And for that reason above all mission work is founded upon the resurrection. Without the resurrection Jesus would not be the Redeemer of the world.

Along with the spreading of the message of the resurrection another fact also becomes evident: In the question as to who could call himself an apostle the emphasis should not be placed so heavily on the call and commission or on the ability for that call, but rather, that each was a witness to the resurrection. He must be able to witness to the appearances of the risen Savior and thereby also to the vital fact of redemption (Lk. 24:29; Acts 1:22; I Cor. 15:8ff.). Paul, too, could only validate his apostleship by stating that he had seen the risen one (I Cor. 9:1). An apostle was also to be a companion of the Lord (Acts 1:21). Thus they were eye-witnesses of historical deeds such as the life, death and resurrection of the Lord and thereby the apostolic message is guarded against all spiritualizing. The Christian sermon is therefore the recital of the life of Jesus and is not a popularized explanation of a system of teachings.²³

²³The Book of Acts records sermons in which St. Paul spends time on other things than the recital of the life of Jesus, e.g., the doctrine of the nature of God in Athens (Acts 17). Vicedom's point is well taken that it is not a "popularized explanation," as the reception which Paul received at Athens indicates (17:32).

Such a system may be quite important, but it is always secondary.

They (the apostles) have been called by God over against all men as witnesses of God's own works. They can and should declare God before the entire world, that all the world may hear that God has spoken and acted in Jesus Christ and how He has spoken and acted toward people.²⁴

Thus they are witnesses of the acts of Jesus. It is decisive to observe in this connection that not all witnesses became apostles, but only those that received a special call and special mandate. We know that there were many witnesses of the risen Lord, but only twelve were chosen.

As much as the call and the sending of the Twelve by the risen Lord must be emphasized, so much the fact must be maintained that this was done simultaneously through the Triune God. The apostles were sent also by the Father because Jesus as the Risen One in this act represents the Father and identifies the sending of the apostles with His own sending. Thus there are basically not different sendings. It is always the same *Missio Dei* which takes place (Mt. 28:18f.; Jn. 20:21).²⁵

6. The Name "Apostle"

The apostles thus occupy a unique and thereby a basic position in the church. As witnesses of the life and

²⁴Barth, op. cit., I, 2, p. 913.

²⁵Staehlin, op. cit., pp. 97ff.

resurrection of Jesus they are the connecting link between the Lord and His church which no longer knows Him in His bodily presence. There are many witnesses of the earthly life of Jesus, for Jesus had many followers. For that reason other witnesses could be designated as apostles in the early church, e.g., disciples who accompanied the apostles (Acts 14:4,14). James, the brother of the Lord, is also called an apostle at one place (Gal. 1:14).

In general, however, the New Testament writers are quite cautious about calling anyone "apostle." Luke reveals a definite hesitancy with regard to Paul. From the facts at hand we must conclude that neither the church felt itself authorized to call its emissaries apostles, nor that anyone could apply this title to himself. There was no legal claim to this title. When the disciples argued among themselves as to who was going to reign with Jesus, they were rebuked by the Lord Himself (Mk. 9:38f.). One could perform deeds in the name of Jesus and also accomplish what Jesus had commanded of the apostles, but this did not grant one the right to bear the name "apostle" (Lk. 9:49ff.).

In order to be an apostle one had to be personally called and authorized by the Lord Jesus. This becomes evident in the Apostle Paul's discussions of his apostolic office. He lays great emphasis on being completely equal with the apostles. There is no concern in regard to the recognition of his person, but of his work. For that reason he supplies

the proof of having received a special commission for the apostolate to the Gentiles. This is the service to which he has been called and for which he has been set apart while in his mother's womb (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:15). He is certain that he has received his office from the Risen One for he has seen Him. Thus he is a witness to the resurrection and he is fully aware that this is an incredible and incomprehensible fact (I Cor. 15:8ff.). Consequently he claims the same authority and credentials for his office as the other apostles and these accepted him, although hesitantly.

However, he declined the proof²⁶ which was later advanced--namely, the explanation of his ecstatic experience (I Cor. 14:1ff.). He did not appeal to his visions and experiences (II Cor. 12:1ff.). Although they meant much to him, he does not use them to establish his commission. For him the decisive thing was that the Risen One had appeared to him and that He had dealt with him through Ananias and the Church (Acts 9:1ff.; 22:3-16; 26:9-18). Also, he had seen the Risen One (I Cor. 9:1). The co-workers of Paul, both Timothy and Apollos, were not honored with the name of apostle.²⁷

The problem which confronts us here has been taken up

²⁶Vicedom must be limiting himself to the Book of Acts.

²⁷However, it seems from Acts 14:4,14 that Barnabas is called an apostle along with St. Paul, although in 9:27 they are by implication distinguished from "the apostles."

specially by Fridricksen.²⁸ He believes that it can be established, on the basis of the previous observations and from Gal. 2:7, that in reality there were only two apostles-- Peter for the circumcized and Paul for the uncircumcized. Each was surrounded by a group of helpers over whom he claimed authority on the basis of his special call. James was the leader of the Jewish church. Peter therefore proclaimed the resurrection as the fulfillment of the Jewish hope of a Messiah; Paul proclaimed Jesus as the Lord of the world on the basis of the resurrection. The work of the Twelve came to an end at the first sending out. After the resurrection they were no longer apostles. Thus under Peter and Paul the apostolate of the church actually developed. And thus it is thought that Peter was conscious of his responsibility for the advance of the Gospel among the Jews, even though he did not restrict himself to them, and Paul, on the other hand, for the mission to the Gentiles, although he always began with the Jews.

Along side of these there have been numerous other mission endeavors. And thus it is believed that the apostolic office could be claimed only by two but that the work of the office, the apostolate, could be carried out by many. Final authority allegedly only the two apostles have. We can leave it an open question whether Fridricksen rightly

²⁸A. Fridricksen, The Apostle and His Message (Uppsala: Lundequistaka, 1947).

understood the apostolic office, but we accept his second point, namely, that the service of this office can also be performed by others.

7. Apostolic Office and Church

Although Paul had received the authority of the office from the Risen One, he did not question in the least the right of the prophets and teachers in Antioch to commission him. He submitted himself to the leaders of the church in that place who acted in the name and under the direction of the Holy Ghost. This action does not occur with the other apostles. Moreover, with the other apostles we do not find the large number of co-workers that Paul gathers about himself who work under his authority in the churches or among the Gentiles. It seems that the other apostles were more or less "loners" who chose their own work, if they placed themselves at all at the disposal of missions.

It is clear from the Book of Acts that they were very concerned to establish a connection between the Old Testament people of God on the one hand, and the people of the New Testament as embodied in the mother church at Jerusalem. On the other hand Paul regards himself as not only responsible to the other apostles and the mother church, but he concedes at least the right to the church at Antioch to be informed about his work. Thereby the attitude is already found in him which later on is held by other missionaries in the church.

He does his work in the name of the church and the church is responsible along with him for his work. Both are implied in Paul--the apostolic authority and the co-responsibility of the church.

It also is clear from this that Paul alone of those who had been commissioned by the church could bear the name of apostle (II Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25; Acts 13:1-3). Thus the church could delegate the work of the apostles, but could not make anyone an apostle. The apostolic office was not an office of the church. It was unique and basic. The apostles, who were responsible for the administration of the church, did not appoint successors to them, but they created a new office for the care of the congregation (Acts 14:23; 20:17ff.). They surrendered the administration of the church but installed, not apostles, but bishops. The authority of the latter cannot be equated with that of the apostles.

Thus the office of the apostles is viewed as unique and exclusive in the church. The apostles had the duty and assignment to establish the church and they became thereby the foundation of the building upon which all other work was to be based (I Cor. 3:9ff.; 12:38ff.). The beginning is always crucial. The successors can only continue to build as the foundation has been laid, or they must tear down and destroy. The apostles lay the foundation since they are the immediate witnesses of Jesus and could work according to His personal instructions. This gives their work and proclamation

the character of revelation. Such a claim cannot be made by the bishops. "Elders and bishops are only watchmen whose concern it was that the building on the foundation was continued. They themselves are not the foundation."²⁹

Then arises the question whether there actually is a missionary office in the church. In answer to that question we could refer to the Evangelists who already were on hand at the time of the apostles. But then we must immediately ask the question how this office became so solidly grounded. Fact is that the church in every age did mission work and spread it. Thus, in any case it can be said that the mission does not depend on the succession of the apostolic office, but on the missionary attitude which the apostolic service awakened and which was transmitted to the church through the apostles. Through this--the apostolate--the church in the time between the two comings of the Lord is called to the task of bringing to all men salvation in Jesus Christ. All servants of the church are knit together in this task and it is from this task that they receive their significant peak. This would also be true, even if we knew no expressis verbis for the mission command.

²⁹O. Cullmann, Petrus: Juenger - Apostel - Maertyrer; das historische und das theologische Petrusproblem (Zuerich: Zwingli Verlag, 1952), p. 247. This book has been translated by Floyd V. Filson under the title Peter: Disciple - Apostle - Martyr. A Historical and Theological study (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953).

8. Congregation and Mission--The Apostolate

Not only the existence of the Kingdom of God but also the Missio Dei are evidence for the fact that God deigns to be the God of man and wants to deal with him in His mercy. Thus also all God's acts of salvation have been for man's sake and intended for him. The report of these deeds is the Gospel which should be preached to all men. Life and salvation of man in the judgment depends upon faith in God's works of salvation; hence the church has the obligation in the interim between the completion of salvation and the final judgment (during which salvation will be revealed as redemption) to call men to repentance and transmit the saving faith. This she must do until the end of time and world.

In this way the church becomes a traveling church which is always enroute to men who still do not know salvation. Her service is a "going" from people to people, from continent to continent, and thereby ushers in the day of salvation for the nations.

And therefore that which begins with this going and telling is no longer historical, but leads to the consummation,³⁰ based on the eschatological authority of

³⁰It reminds us of Isaac Watts' words:
 Make unto them His glories known,
 His works of pow'r and grace;
 And we'll convey His wonders down
 Thro' ev'ry rising age (The Lutheran Hymnal, No. 629, 2)

Him who now has become the Judge and Ruler.³¹

Through the command of missions the exalted Lord transfers the sending to the church and makes her His messengers to the world. Within the framework of the divine Missio she is the instrument of His mercy. He transfers to her the apostolic function. Thus by Him the work of the apostolic office is passed on, bound in its contents to that which the apostles did and preached. This function of the church--its testimony of what God has done for mankind in His Kingdom and what He is about to do--has been labeled "the apostolate" particularly by Dutch theologians.³² We now will attempt to ascertain what this means, and we will later clarify its significance for the work of the church and apply it on the basis of this understanding.

In discussing this matter we follow Hoekendijk in Kerk en Volk. He combines the two indicatives of the fulfillment of messianic prophecies (with respect to future prophecy and with respect to historical fulfillment) in such a way that he sees indicated in the sending of the Spirit the bestowal of the apostolate. For him the gift of the Holy Ghost is the presupposition for accomplishing mission work among the

³¹E. Lohmeyer, "Mir ist gegeben alle Gewalt," In Memoriam Ernst Lohmeyer, edited by W. Schmauch (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1951), p. 41.

³²A. A. Van Ruler, "Theologie Apostolats," Evangelische Missions Zeitung, XIX (1954), pp. 1ff.

heathen. This is the expression of the divine intention (the possibility bestowed by God) to carry out the promises of the conversion of the world. This becomes a reality in the last days--between the ascension and return of Christ--and thus is an eschatological act of God through which He carries out His plan of salvation.

These previously gained viewpoints are implied in the apostolate. According to II. Thess. 2:6f., missions is the great sustaining power.³³ And thus through it the world must be prepared for the coming of Christ and the judgment. Into this purpose of history missions is fitted. Missions thereby has a history-shaping mandate which is given with the apostolate. Therefore the apostolate can only be spoken of in the interim time. With the preceding sending salvation for mankind had not as yet been provided. Now it is there, and therefore the sending has a universal character and mandate which is embodied in the goal of all history and withal the consummation of the Kingdom.

The apostles are messengers of the last times (Is. 49:8; cf. II Cor. 6:1f.). The apostolate of Paul to the heathen, identical with that to the Jews, is eschatologically orientated. The apostle to the Gentiles received his independent status over against the previous commissionings through the gift of the Holy Ghost³⁴ (Mt. 28:18ff.; Lk. 24:47ff.;

³³Cf. chapter III, footnote 44.

³⁴Although St. Paul does not insist on receiving the

Acts 1:6ff.; Jn. 20:21f.). The apostolate and the Spirit are always so related that the former cannot be thought of without the latter. This is true to the extent that Paul actually speaks of the office of the Spirit (Jn. 20:21; II Cor. 3:6).

The Spirit leads (cf. Jn. 16:12-15) the apostles into God's plan of salvation, moves them into the work, and develops it (Acts 16:6; I Cor. 9:16). The impulse of the Spirit is so strong that all of missions is nothing more than a triumphal march of God in which Paul as a conquered opponent marches along. Thus the apostle becomes entirely God's organ in His plan of salvation. Christ leads the world through the apostles and thus through missions to its goal.³⁵

In a later work Hoekendijk has condensed and defined even more precisely this teaching of the apostolate.

The Gospel is fulfilled in the apostolate (Rom. 15:19; Col. 1:2). It is brought to its goal. God's battle with the world for the world is energetically waged. The subject of the apostolate remains "the apostle" Jesus (Heb. 3:1); the "works of Christ" (Mt. 11:2) are continued in the apostolic "works of the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58; 16:10). The scope of the apostolate is the world. The contents of the apostolate is the lifting up of the marks of the royal salvation³⁶--of

gift of the Holy Ghost, yet he boldly displays himself as an apostle in the opening words of his Epistles such as Galatians, Colossians, and Titus.

³⁵Cf. Acts 16 and 17.

³⁶It would seem that rather than showing these three as parallels one would show the second and third, fellowship

[ἡσυχία] (peace). The apostolate becomes a reality in the
 κήρυγμα (the public proclaiming of the [ἡσυχία]),
 κοινωνία (fellowship, corporate participation in the
 [ἡσυχία] and διακονία (service--demonstration of the
 [ἡσυχία].³⁷

9. The Theology of the Apostolate

From these principles the Dutch theology of mission seeks to construct a theology of the apostolate in which essentially the eschatological place of mission is retained and the preaching of the Kingdom is designated as the task of the church. In order not to make the church the sole mediator of this message, the doctrine of predestination is maintained. Through this doctrine one can behold God's immediate relationship to the world and His controlling power in the world. Today God Himself is still at work.

The apostolate becomes a mode of expression of the church so that missions is at the threshold where God's immediate activity changes over to the mediate. God calls through His messengers those through whom He, through His predestination, has prepared for salvation. Thus the apostolate and the Spirit are viewed together in which the Spirit is understood as the power which always works among man. At the proper place we will have to resume discussion of the conclusions which are drawn from these sentences by

and service, as proceeding from the basis, the first.

³⁷J. C. Hoekendijk, "Die Kirche in Missionsdenken," Evangelische Missions Zeitung, XVII (1952), p. 10.

this theology in order to get the proper understanding of the work of the Church.

I would only like to insert at this point that here a revolution is taking place within theology. The Dutch themselves recognize this.

If one, for example, would place either the Kingdom, the apostolate, or the Spirit in that position which, according to systematics, is held by the church, the result would be an earthquake, the eruption of which would be felt far into Christology.³⁸

Thus they are aware of the dangers which lie in such a dynamic concept. They realize that they can become too one-sided in eschatology or in predestination. They tell us that one must observe that man can act, for example, in confessing. Thus both the spiritual and the human elements must be upheld. Where this takes place even the ethnic and the confessional importance of the church can be established from the apostolate.

But missions sees more than just nature; it sees history. It sees more than the church; it sees people. It sees more than Christology; it sees at least also pneumatology. It knows about the Gospel of the Kingdom, which is not completely identical with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.³⁹ (He is the Kingdom only in a

³⁸ van Ruler, op. cit., p. 3.

³⁹ Vicedom meets opposition here. "The person . . . Kingdom is intimately connected with His own person, It is in His own works and words and person that the Kingdom has come. In fact, we may actually go so far as to say that the Kingdom of God is Jesus and that He is the Kingdom." C. E. B. Cranfield, The Gospel According to Saint Mark (Cambridge: University Press, 1959), p.66.

"Jesus taught a realized eschatology and is Himself

certain sense, namely, as the incarnation and hidden form of the Kingdom.) It understands that the apostle has an office not in the Church, but in the Kingdom. It does not see Jesus Christ and His Church, but it sees behind and through it God Himself and His world.⁴⁰

We notice from these quotes that the theology of the apostolate is still in the development process. We also notice the determined effort to arrive at a clear understanding of the various terms in relation to their opposite meanings.

Over against that we desire first of all to establish what they have found. The sending is, in the first place, a factor not of the last days, but it is based on the operation of the Triune God in His relationship to the world. It receives its eschatological place and urgency through the coming of the Kingdom in Christ Jesus. Also, the sending is not only linked together with the gift of the Holy Ghost. We can also show that it is based on the complete fact of salvation in the resurrection. But it is through the sending of the Spirit that it receives its special power, its full authority, and through the Spirit is identified with the *Missio Dei*.

The commission is an objectively established fact given in the revelation and is not dependent upon the personal

αὐτοβασιλεία . . . Jesus announces that the Kingdom is at hand . . . 'Thou are not far from the Kingdom of God' (Mk. 12:34)." Vincent Taylor, The Gospel According to Saint Mark (London: Macmillan & Co., 1952), p. 114. Although these passages show the "not yet" aspect of the Kingdom, e.g., Mk. 4:26ff; 9:1, that Kingdom is always centered in Christ.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

experience of the Spirit. Through this command the Church gets its direction which indeed it cannot follow without the Spirit. Thus the apostolate and the Spirit can only belong together with respect to the execution of the sending so that the Church is preserved from the stagnation of "churchianity."

It is the Holy Ghost who continually keeps alive the commission of the Church. He calls men to the work of the apostolate and is the equipment for this work, which gift becomes apparent when man obeys the mission command. As equipment for the work, as a share in the plan of God, the Holy Ghost gives the ability needed for the apostolate and gathers through the messengers on earth the church which confesses her Lord until He comes. Through the mandate of the exalted Lord and through the cooperation of the Holy Ghost the church receives her apostolic character and will become an operative power both in her presence as well as her special commission.

10. What Does "Apostolic" Mean?

Karl Barth explains it in this way:

"Apostolic" means on the one hand: she (the Church) exists through the continuing work and word of the apostles, and on the other hand, she exists in that she herself does what the apostles did and by virtue of the nature of their words and deeds continue to do.⁴¹

⁴¹Barth, op. cit., II, 2, p. 477.

Here is where our question arises. If this is the way in which our brethren in Holland understand the apostolate, namely, that in it is seen the continuing work of the apostles (which can only be the work of the Holy Ghost), then their teaching is nothing new. Then they are saying nothing more than what Luther taught concerning the universal priesthood of all believers.

Through faith in Christ's merit we have nothing less than the forgiveness of sins! This was the belief of our fathers, of the prophets, and of all believers from the beginning of the world. This was also the teaching and preaching of Christ and the apostles, who commanded them to carry it into all the world and spread it abroad. Even for today and until the end of time this is the unanimous understanding and attitude of the entire Christian Church.⁴²

Accordingly, through her faith in the deeds of salvation and through her confessional attitude the "apostlization" of the Church is established, regardless where it takes place, either at home or abroad.

This is the same as what G. Warneck expresses in his own way:

Within the Christian's life lies a missionary-minded responsibility and spiritual urge which drove simple disciples of the early Christian era to the spreading of the Christian faith. This drive did not stem from a legalistic obedience to the fixed mission command, but from the new spiritual life which made them witnesses for Christ with an immanent urgency.⁴³

⁴²Martin Luther, Luther Werke (Weimar Edition), XXI, 219.

⁴³G. Warneck, Evangelische Missionslehre (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1897), I, 126.

However, if we understand the apostolate to mean that today the messengers have all the gifts and functions of the apostles, then we have to reject this on the basis of what we said previously. Because in the following we will again and again come into contact with the teaching of the apostolate, we must ask ourselves whether we really can apply the term "apostolic" to the church. When it was done in the Nicene Creed it was with the thought that the church rests upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets and accordingly was the apostolic church, and can be this only in so far as in her tradition she is grounded on the apostles. If we employ this term in a different sense, we first must investigate whether this can legitimately be done. This proof the Dutch theologians have not as yet supplied.

11. The Presupposition of the Apostolate

Since the apostolic office is given only once we ask what prerequisites are required for the carrying out of the missions command so that the Holy Ghost through witnesses and messengers can declare the Gospel to the non-Christians and thus bring into being the apostolate of the church. The answer is usually given somewhat carelessly, e.g., the church has the command to render this service of witnessing. Granted! But this raises the other question: Why is it then that this assignment is so hard for the church to understand and why is it that she feels so little of the authority to do

her work? As a matter of fact, history shows this has always been the case. God has had to wring missionary service from His church. Why is so little reference given in our theology for the authorization and guidelines of witnessing?

Isn't the answer that the church and her theology has understood so little of the purpose of the Gospel and thereby also has no unified program for her work? Isn't it also that she knows too little about the prerequisites which lead to the service of witnessing and thereby to the apostolate and the service of the apostle? Let us not exhaust ourselves in fathoming the fundamentals of the Gospel, arranging our knowledge systematically, and being satisfied with our knowledge instead of working out a definite relationship of the Lord to His own, and carrying out this work.⁴⁴

Only he can become a witness who has met the prerequisites as they were given to the apostles. The apostles were taken from the circle of disciples, thus from a group of people who were in fellowship with the Lord and were shareholders in the Kingdom. These disciples had all the qualifications and potentials for apostolic service even though the Lord only chose a few of them for the office of apostle. The discipleship, fidelity to Jesus, was the sine qua non to their call and commissioning. This presupposition for apostolic service remains. Only he can be a witness who stands in a disciple relationship with Jesus. Where this is

⁴⁴To avoid an extreme, it should be said that both sides are necessary.

the case there comes the urge to witness and the result is spontaneous apostolic service.

Presupposition for the apostolate, for missionary service, is that the Lord creates for Himself a congregation of believers. The church always precedes the mission. She it is who takes the apostolic position. Thus missions is not a single event which proceeds from the Spirit. It has a basis on earth in the discipleship which Jesus still is gathering today and which becomes the carrier of missions. Thus the church can therefore always do her missionary service only in so far as that discipleship exists in her midst. You have to be a disciple before you can be a witness for Jesus.

12. The Discipleship⁴⁵

In the discipleship of Jesus something fundamentally new has come to this world. It is something new in the history of salvation of Christ, for discipleship exists only since and through Jesus. What was labeled discipleship in the Hellenistic world did not correspond to Jesus' definition. The former left it at the discretion of the pupil to look for a master, to honor him, to imitate him, and if possible, to go beyond him. This was similar to the rabbinical system.

⁴⁵For a comprehensive treatment of this whole subject read Martin H. Franzmann, Follow Me: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961).

What we could call a discipleship in the world of religion does not deserve the name because even the most pious saint works for his own ideal of salvation.

There is no discipleship in the Old Testament. This is due to the fact that it is always combined with the act of following. God could not present Himself as a model in the old covenant. Also, He did not call individuals but a people, and individuals only because they belonged to these people. These people were simultaneously His congregation, the holy people of God. All the people were to keep the Law and show themselves to the world as belonging to God. Through this way of life, which was tied intimately to God's will and deeds, they were to transmit this life to the individual members and thus also communicate it to the world about.

In the New Testament this principle that congenital membership is the same as spiritual fellowship is annulled. Thus there comes into being this community of elect into which Jesus called men into His fellowship. Thus Jesus gave the discipleship its true content and from then on there is no discipleship without personal fellowship. In calling the disciples from among His followers the Lord has made Himself the center of the life of this discipleship and formed a fellowship moved and filled by Him.

The new feature of this discipleship is that one is called into it only by Jesus. The call was first issued by Him personally; later it came through His apostles. The

preaching of the Kingdom is always simultaneously a call to a fellowship and a partnership. The *Missio Dei* has no other purpose than to make disciples. Basically this also applies to the service of the church, even to the state church, for every church becomes in some way or other a state church, unless it forfeits its claim on the membership of its children to the congregation.

It is absolutely necessary for every church that he who is born into the church should also be regarded as belonging to it. Evidently no one can become a disciple because the parents decided it for him in infant baptism. That is only the first step.⁴⁶ Each person will be confronted with the personal decision since the church continually proclaims the call and seeks to lead the one to whom it has been spoken into a personal relationship with the Lord. The initiative for the call always lies with the caller. I cannot become a disciple because I desire it, but because God speaks to me. Where the wish arises, it always originates from being spoken to by God so that an answer must follow. Thus the disciples were called into the fellowship (Mk. 1:17; Mt. 4:19;

⁴⁶Vicedom is making a legitimate emphasis here. Baptism is the first step in the growth of the Christian life. As Luther says, "When we became Christians (speaking of infant baptism), the old man daily grows weaker until at length he is altogether subdued. This is, in the true sense, to plunge into baptism and daily to arise again." Martin Luther, Large Catechism (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1935), p. 169.

Mk. 2:14; 10:21; Jn. 1:35ff.).

The same thing is basically true of the larger circle of Jesus' followers who were accosted by His preaching and drawn by His actions. They also could not enroll in the fellowship through their own initiative (Jn. 15:16). This becomes very evident in the case of the one possessed of a devil (Mk. 5:18ff.) who was sent home by Jesus, or the three followers (Lk. 9:57ff.) to whom Jesus gave such strict conditions that they quit following.

Whoever enters into the discipleship must have cast away his own ideal of life, for in it only the life of the Master counts--thus, total devotion. Hence Jesus demands at the very outset a break with all former ties. The followers should be at His disposal completely and should listen to no other voice. Words even clearer than those put to the three followers are the words which practically set aside the Fourth Commandment (Mt. 10:37; Lk. 14:26). At this point all other ties must fade into insignificance, even such as are bound in respect and piety. The disciple should without reservation belong to the Lord.

The call to discipleship dissolves former affiliations for these men and turns them over to the Lord. Jesus will be their *Κύριος* (Matt. 24:45ff.; 25:14ff.; Luke 12:35ff.; 42ff.). The disciples are received as servants and should subordinate themselves to the Lord: for hearing, obeying, and keeping His word (Jn. 8:31) is the essence of discipleship.

As disciples they are so dependent upon the Lord that apart from Him they cease to exist. In all matters they are directed by Him and filled with His essence. Apart from Him they are nothing; with and through Him they are everything (Jn. 15). Hence they must be on their guard that nothing draws them away from the Lord, nothing places them on a par with Jesus, even if they suffer because of their attitude or are misunderstood and hated because of it (Mt. 10:17ff.).

Their life is so intimately bound up with that of their Master that personally they can travel no other way than that which their Master traveled (Jn. 15:18; 16:1ff.). That would not be possible unless also this life, which appears to the average man as unjustified and difficult, would be a gift of the Master. Jesus gives them everything that qualifies them for discipleship. He communicates His life to those in His fellowship (Jn. 14:4f.); and with that also His power. Whatever they have surrendered for His sake He replaces many times so that they experience no loss and consider themselves richly blessed by Him. Thus they can serve Him unreservedly (Mt. 19:29).

These disciples undergo the same change through the death of their Lord as is reported to us of the apostles. They too, to begin with, looked for the earthly goal--the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. Through the resurrection they first grasped the significance of discipleship (Jn. 2:21f.; Lk. 22:38). They also must be gathered anew by

the Risen One and thus, through the resurrection, the first congregation is formed (Lk. 24:36ff.; Jn. 20:24ff.; Mt. 28:17). Thus it is obvious that upon entrance into the discipleship there is not only a break with one's environment, but a conversion of the heart (Mt. 19:28; Jn. 3:5), a regeneration to a new Christ-given life so that the man appropriates internally the goals of Jesus with his discipleship.

Discipleship always claims the total man and has as its goal the new man. From these disciples the Lord selected His apostles and sent them out for service into the world. Thus the presupposition for the call to the apostolate was that the man was and remained a disciple. Not every disciple was called as an apostle. But every apostle was a disciple and every disciple is a witness of his Lord in whose complete charge he is.

13. Discipleship and Apostolate

The question here arises whether the name "disciple" and what we have said about the discipleship can also without exception be applied to Christians, and whether the prerequisite for the apostolate is thereby stated. Christians had various names in early Christianity. They were usually referred to as those who had come to faith, who possessed the way, namely, those who knew of salvation and the course of the Kingdom of God. In both expressions it is implied that these people are in personal contact with the Lord and have

personally accepted what Jesus has done for them. But in many places the believers are denoted as disciples while the apostles are referred to as the Eleven.⁴⁷

Thus the name "disciple" for the followers of Jesus is also applied in a general way to the Christians who were brought to faith through the work of the apostles. They do not regard themselves thereby as pupils of the apostles but as followers of the Lord Whom the apostles proclaimed (Acts 1:15; 6:1,7; 9:19; 11:26; 11:29; 13:52; 15:10; 16:1 and elsewhere). The name is later applied to Christians, and above all, to martyrs.⁴⁸ That is significant. Thus also such Christians are called disciples who did not personally know Jesus, to whom the distinguishing marks did not apply as we noted with the apostles.

Consequently what we have described above concerning the disciples of Jesus can also be accordingly applied to the apostles, witnesses, men in the fellowship; thereby it is also

⁴⁷ A distinction can be made between the Gospels' narrow and wide application of the term "disciple." The former refers to the Twelve (Mk. 9:28; Jn. 13:5); the latter to a multitude of followers (Lk. 6:17; 19:37; Jn. 4:1; 8:31). In Acts "disciples" is the most distinctive term for those who believed in Christ (6:1,2,7; 9:1; 11:26; 19:1).

The small group of a dozen men are also called "apostles" in the Gospels (Mt. 10:2; Mk. 3:14; Lk. 6:13; Jn. 13:16). In Acts all but two of the twenty-six occurrences of the word mean either the Eleven or the twelve after the election of Matthias. The two exceptions refer to Paul and Barnabas. The term "the Eleven" is used in Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:9,33; Acts 2:14.

⁴⁸ K. H. Rengstorff, "Matheetes," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1942), IV.

true of Christians what was said before concerning the disciples of Jesus. Jesus' servants stand and act in the place of their Lord. They transmit the discipleship by calling people into the fellowship (I Thess. 1:6; 2:14; Phil. 3:17).

These disciples are certainly not apostles, but they should and may exercise their apostolic functions. For that reason they are called to participate in this work of witnessing. As a matter of fact, already at the time of the apostles we find a large number of such assistants,⁴⁹ entirely irrespective of the fact that the congregation through their presence witnessed to the death and resurrection of Jesus (I Cor. 11:26; 15:3ff.). Each of these disciples is equipped by his Lord with gifts which he needs for his discipleship. Paul describes the Christian with such indicative sentences that we can only stand in amazement.⁵⁰ They have the gifts which they need for their service in the world. They can live in the world only in such a way that they remain in the fellowship (Jn. 17:13ff.). They, too, have received the mission command and should therefore be co-workers in the Kingdom of God (Col. 4:11).

⁴⁹Acts 14 and 15 speaks often of apostles, elders, and brethren. Towards the end of the New Testament we hear mention of bishops and deacons (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8). The accepted interpretation of I Cor. 12 (esp. v. 28) is that St. Paul is not enumerating ecclesiastical offices but is describing the variety of functions and kinds of service in one body (cf. vvs. 12-27).

⁵⁰Cf. Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:15-23; 4:1-16; et al.

E. Lohmeyer⁵¹ examines the term discipleship more deeply than anyone else. He points to the meeting of the disciples in Galilee and has the missions command issued there,⁵² not in a resurrection appearance, but by the Lord who reveals to His disciples⁵³ how his Kingdom shall be carried forward. He sees the disciples as the continuation of the Old Testament people of God and interprets their existence as purely eschatological.

They consider themselves as God's flock of the last days, almost as it were, as the true Israel, and thus offer themselves for world mission, thriving on the holy past of the people of Israel and for that reason dedicated to the immanent and holy future with the Lord.⁵⁴

Accordingly they receive the missions command as disciples and not as apostles. For that reason all disciples are called for the spreading of the Kingdom. "Thus, to be a disciple means to become a messenger to all people. They

⁵¹Lohmeyer, op. cit., pp. 22ff.

⁵²Vicedom gathers his information from a short article printed in a book in memoriam of Lohmeyer. However, Lohmeyer has written a book on the subject of Christ's resurrection appearances in Jerusalem and Galilee and this ought to be cited here. Ernst Lohmeyer, Galilaea und Jerusalem (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1936).

⁵³Lohmeyer is using the term "disciples" in the wide sense of all followers of Jesus, and not to the small group, as one would gather by simply reading this quote. The large group is meant, as can be seen by his illustration of Ananias (Acts 22:12ff.) which immediately precedes this quote.

⁵⁴Lohmeyer, "Mir ist gegeben alle Gewalt," In Memoriam Ernst Lohmeyer, p. 49.

become such, not by their own power, but in His name and through the power of His Kingdom."⁵⁵

With this Lohmeyer has unintentionally supplied the proof for the apostolate of the church. Thus we rightfully assert that the disciples have or are to fulfill apostolic functions. Thereby the apostolate also belongs to the distinguishing marks of a genuine discipleship. Whoever allows himself to be put into the work of spreading the Gospel is a disciple. He brings the fruit which the Lord expects of him.

In order to do the work, the Lord also equips the disciple with the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost gives testimony of Jesus Christ and promotes the mission through this testimony (Jn. 15:26f.). He makes the disciple a missionary (Acts 9:17). During persecution the Spirit fills the disciple with joy (Acts 13:52) and gives him the courage to speak with joy even under these circumstances (Acts 4:31). The Spirit speaks and works in Jesus' place. Because of this Gift a disciple can do nothing but spread abroad the Word.

14. The Work of the Discipleship

Through the Spirit the disciples become the Lord's witnesses and co-workers. They are to make the people to whom they bring the Gospel into what they themselves have

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 38.

become.⁵⁶

That, to begin with, is a very debatable sentence. We know that there are no copies in the Kingdom of God. Up until now we have been careful not to make missions a subject of propaganda since the essence of propaganda is to make people to be as we are. However, that only applies to the transmission of the church tradition and for traits of Christianity as conditioned by the civilization in which it is and has no bearing on true discipleship. Every man has the right to draw so near to Jesus that he does not have to first become a Westerner before he can understand Him. But one thing he must always be--a disciple of Jesus. Otherwise he cannot be a witness for Jesus.

Thus our service should confer upon this man a direct relationship to the Lord.

The ultimate goal of the message of Christ is not to communicate Jesus' teachings or ethical sayings, but to bring men into association with Jesus Himself, and thus to lead them to an inexhaustible Fountain.⁵⁷

They are to be disciples of the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt. 13:52).

Therefore we dare not Christianize--which always means

⁵⁶This sentence can be very deceiving as it stands. One must read on.

⁵⁷K. Heim, Leben aus Glauben (Berlin: Im Furche Verlag, 1934), p. 69. It is difficult to tell what Heim's main thrust is here. However, a very important and pertinent exhortation can be found in such a sentence. What is our faith grounded in? Haven't we verged at times to the point of bibliolatry--at least to dogmatism? Our faith is in Christ, not in the Bible. When this is realized, then an even more intensive and rightly motivated study of the Word results.

to place the people into a cultural society. Rather, we are to missionize, which means to bring men to the Lord so that their lives will be determined by Him (Acts 14:21; Mt. 28:19). We do not want to make Christians, but disciples. When they are disciples, then they will be witnesses. As witnesses they have received the full measure of that which Jesus gives and cannot but lead people to salvation and place them under their Lord. Where this immediate relationship is replaced by a dependence on the missionary, where the mission is determined by the western image, there are no disciples who with the power of the Word are messengers.

In this discipleship the apostolate of the church is set. Such a discipleship is its native soil. Discipleship as the innermost communion with the Lord--a discipleship which places itself in His service and waits for His nod--is the presupposition for the apostolic service of the church. Discipleship cannot be directly equated with the church since there are within every church more people who outwardly go along than there are those who are definitely unfaithful to their discipleship. But discipleship is always present in the church and will always, even if in a very beclouded way, be an expression of that which we have established as marks of true discipleship.

However the church also includes many hypocrites and today the church, in her understanding of people, has an image of people which has come to her from Rationalism

rather than from the Word of God. So the question arises whether the church can still be regarded as the bearer of the apostolate. Much of what the apostolate demands of man is not declined today because people do not want to serve God but because man believes he is entitled to special rights and claims according to which the work of the apostle is to be done. Thus the rebelliousness of man manifests itself in the very essence of the church. Nevertheless the fact remains that the church must fulfill the apostolic service if she is to remain true to her nature and does not forsake her eschatological place in time.

The church must do this through people who permit themselves⁵⁸ to be called into active discipleship and thus are willing to be enlisted for the spreading of the Gospel. Thus it ought to be the concern of the church as an institution always to represent those who are willing to enter the service. The church also must always set up certain standards and align itself with the church which is given through the discipleship. With this orientation concerning the essence of the church the command to missions will no longer be a special command for a restricted circle nor a legalistic compulsion for the undecided. Rather, missionary performance will flow from faith and by means of the working of God in the *Missio Dei* and will become a definite expression in

⁵⁸Cf. chapter II, footnote 6.

one's life.

15. Missions and the Church

We now touch the question of how missions is related to the church. A two-fold answer must be given. To begin with, the church is the result of the apostolate. The mission which God performed through Jesus Christ and which continues from the time of the apostles up to the present day has led to the establishment of the church. If God had not sent His Son, there would be no church, apostolate, or mission. The fact that Jesus Christ permitted His Word to be proclaimed through men and that men have been called out of the world through the message of salvation is what has established the church.

Thus the church is the strongest proof that the Gospel also belongs to the heathen. Consequently we do not have to do mission work because we possess the Gospel, but rather, we have the Gospel only because it is intended for the heathen.⁵⁹ Otherwise we would make ourselves lords of the Gospel and abuse the ministry of reconciliation. Because God wants heathen missions, we are the church. Since we are the church apart from the heathen we cannot avoid being a member

⁵⁹ Surely anyone who has seen the Gospel at work in the upbuilding of a Christian's life and in the vitality of a congregation must take exception to this blanket statement. The Gospel is the power within the church as well as from the church. We excuse Vicedom's over-concern for the heathen, but we cannot overlook the "only" in this sentence.

of the *Missio Dei*, a tool in the workings of God, a sign that God leads His world to its ultimate end.⁶⁰

As God continued the work of His Son through the apostles, so He carries forward their activity through the result of their works until He has reached His goal (Mt. 24:14). Thus the church's mission is at the same time the *Missio Dei* in the present time, surrounded and fostered by the *Missio Dei* in history (Mt. 10:16; Lk. 10:1; 9:2; Jn. 17:18). The mission of the church is not an independent, arbitrary, optional work of the church. It likewise is not based on circumstances. Instead, missions is the work which lays the foundation--in its inception, essence, and mandate it is God's own work. God also remains the One who sends, who leads, and who decides in the mission of the church.

There would be missions even if we did not have a missions command. The reason for this is that God always grants to His disciples through the working of the Holy Ghost a faith which produces in the Christian a restless concern for the salvation of others. It is a faith that is not calm, dumb, simply contemplative, or selfish, but a faith which is a "living and active thing,"⁶¹ a faith which lifts the

⁶⁰This seems to be argument in reverse for the fact that "he that is not with Me, is against Me."

⁶¹Although Vicedom does not acknowledge it, this is a quote from Luther's introduction to the Epistle to the Galatians. Martin Luther, Luther Werke (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1892), VIII, 1358.

believer out of his own building and makes him a construction stone and a construction worker. Thus the apostles "could not but speak" (Acts 4:20). But this speaking is always an expression of their certainty of redemption and salvation (Rom. 10:8ff.). They also preached through their lives (II Cor. 4:11; 5:15). Through faith the disciple constantly stands in the service of reconciliation to offer to man the news of salvation.

The congregation can only do this when the Holy Ghost equips it (II Cor. 3:5f.). He transmits to the church the urgency to witness and thus constantly drives it from its complacency. Through the Holy Ghost the church is privileged to act in the stead of God even as God sent Himself in His Son.⁶² The first example of this is in Acts 13: 1-3. The Church performs the sending and through this the *Missio Dei* becomes visible to the world. God decides thereby who is to do the sending and who is to be sent. This sending is described in Acts 14:26, "where they had first been commended to the grace of God for the task which they had now completed." (Phillip's translation) The final meaning of the sending consists in this, that the messengers had been placed at the disposal of God for service among the heathen.

⁶²Vicedom certainly cannot mean "in the place of" for "an Stelle handeln," which is the common usage. Rather, he must mean "in the stead of" in the sense of a mirror reflecting, a public address system proclaiming, or an empty channel conveying the real and important thing.

This not only means that the missionary finds in God his help, joy and comfort, but also that God could fully claim him. The life of the missionary was laid completely in the hand of God, from which there was no retreat. So, as the disciples with everything that they were entered into the service of the Lord, so in like manner they could now be turned over to the service of the Lord.

All this we can clearly see in the life of the Apostle Paul. For him there was no side-stepping. He must, "whether it be through life or through his death, praise Jesus Christ with his body." (Phil. 1:20) Even the congregation could not recall these messengers. They had to leave them to the grace of God. How seriously this is meant we gather from the fact that we hardly know, concerning any of the apostles, the exact circumstances of their death. For that matter, the life of the majority of them is veiled in darkness. They were in the grace of God, and that was sufficient.

Today man no longer regards himself as responsible for his life, nor does he consider his life as dedicated to God; therefore man does not grant to the Lord of life that He utilize his life until death. Today neither the will of God, nor the purpose of the sending, nor the course of the Kingdom of God is considered decisive, but rather the well-being of the messengers, the security of life, and the financial coverage. When that is the case, the sending comes to a halt,

as if the individual of the congregation could decide concerning the *Missio Dei*. Today man has to ask himself in a situation which demands the ultimate sacrifice if God could carry out His mission program according to the principles which are dictated by such a human viewpoint.

16. Church and Apostolate

Here we must once again ask just what place does the church have within this definition of the apostolate of the church. Hoekendijk's definition is radical.

Where does the church stand in this framework? Certainly not at either extreme or end. In a somewhat exaggerated way we could say--the church stands nowhere; she unfolds herself; she happens; she becomes as the Gospel is delivered to the world. The church is only in the working of Christ, that is, in the working of the apostles. Therefore the church has no designated place, but is a temporary home, a settlement which never really becomes home, enroute towards the end of the world and forward to the end of time. The church only remains firmly established on the foundation of the apostles and prophets as long as she goes along with the apostles, that is, to advertise the Kingdom To bear testimony of the Kingdom of the world is her real work (*opus proprium*); but it is not really her work, but the work of the Lord [ἐργον κυρίου]. As long as the church has part in this work--the apostolate--she is "the church."⁶³

As much as we can subscribe to this last sentence, yet we have the feeling, that from the point of this concept not only the whole thinking of the church from time past has been called into question, but also that the church is absorbed into an event, into an incomprehensible force, that reveals itself

⁶³Hoekendijk, Kerk en Volk in de Duitse Zendingswetenschap, pp. 10-11.

continually in the apostolate.

Thus the invisibility is discarded, of which, for example, Bonhoeffer⁶⁴ speaks so passionately. Thus also that is rejected, what we in the foregoing noted as discipleship, which not only manifests itself in the fellowship, but also in the sending. Dare the essence of the church be described in this manner? Obviously the church also, according to the Augsburg Confession, Article VII,⁶⁵ is not an institution. However, if the word is to be properly proclaimed and the sacraments as ordained are to be administered, a congregation must become visible, an office must be present. Isn't the church much more than the apostolate?⁶⁶ Even if we restrict it to the true Christians, even if we strictly apply the term discipleship to it, the church nevertheless is not only sending and kerygma.

Certainly the Lord here in His working must be everything.

⁶⁴Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Die Nachfolge (n.p., 1940), p. 66.

⁶⁵" The church is the congregation of saints in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered. To the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies instituted by men should be everywhere alike."

⁶⁶Certainly the church is more than the apostolate. The church is apostolic. How can the church be able to be more than this or afford to be less than this? In the word "apostolic" we not only look back to the early church but forward to the new and full expression of the total apostolate of the church. "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (Jn. 20:21).

But where the Lord is, there the visible church comes into being and lives⁶⁷ not only in the proclamation, but above all in the hearing, which is the presupposition for the witnessing. She also lives in the love which through Christ becomes active in her precisely through the hearing. She lives in adoration and doxology. She lives in the Sacrament and thereby in fellowship with her exalted Lord. In these areas she exhibits herself and unfolds herself in like manner, because in these the witnessing is also connected.

Against this new connotation of the church-concept two men have taken a stand. They must be considered here. Johannes Blauw maintains that the essence of the church consists in fellowship with Christ, and that *Κήρυγμα*, *Διακονία*, and *Λειτουργία* must be viewed together and performed in close relation to each other.

How easily Missio loses the connection with the other vital expressions of the church! Admittedly one can say that there is only one function of the church: the Missio or the apostolate; but one knows that it is not so and cannot be so. That all vital expressions of the church must be directed to oral and effectual witnessing is quite another matter But with the same right one can say that everything in the church should be directed to the eulogy of God, to the cult, hence also to mission.⁶⁸

⁶⁷W. Elert, Der Christliche Glaube (Berlin: Im Furche Verlag, 1955), p. 419.

⁶⁸J. Blauw, "Mission Lebt von der Kirche," Die Botschaft von Jesus Christus in Einer Nichtchristlichen Welt (n.p. 1952), p. 16.

Moreover, it is mainly van Ruler who recognizes the weaknesses of the doctrine concerning the apostolate, is aware of its discrepancies in the proper understanding of the church, and seeks to investigate the whole matter anew.

The essence of the apostolate of the church does not consist in this, that it goes out into the world, there gives its witness, occupies a position in the world, but it consists in that it is used. She (the church) is an instrument.

Here the church is presented as a divinely ordained force in contrast to the apostolate. But the latter is further defined by him from the viewpoint of predestination: It (the apostolate) is not an attribute; that would be an ecclesiological narrowing down. It is more than a mandate, for then the church would lapse into activism. It is more than witness-bearing, for then the church would be subject to becoming humanly-activated. "The apostolate is the essence of the church," it is God's tool.⁶⁹

However desirable these limitations are, they do not as yet hit the nail on the head. If the essence of the church actually consists in its purpose or in its being, hence, in that Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church has made it His body, conferred upon it His fellowship, joined the members unto Himself, permeated in word and sacrament to a church which is created and given force by Him, which bears on herself all the marks of discipleship and is given a purpose, then, from all of these gifts bestowed by Him and from this

⁶⁹van Ruler, op. cit., p. 7.

life in Christ there arises the apostolate, which certainly has no other goal than to lead the church to the work for the salvation of mankind.

She has been chosen out of the world for that very purpose, that it render unto the world that service which the world needs the most and which consists precisely in that she give to the world the witness concerning Jesus Christ and call it to faith in Him. She would have forgotten her election and forfeited it if she had existed only for herself and neglected this service, if she did not actually transmit.⁷⁰

Our objections are furthermore confirmed by another line of thought which is of great importance to the Dutch brethren as well as to K. Barth, but which is also fully thought of in the light of election. Here, too, to begin with, we want to study the Biblical facts.

17. The New People of God

Missions devoid of a clear concrete sending does not exist. Sending takes place, not in a dynamic working of the congregation, but in the concrete transfer of the service and in the instruction. On the one hand, this is bestowed in the priesthood of all believers through baptism, but it becomes an actual sending into the world when messengers are called and commissioned. The congregation would not be entitled to this commission if she were not, as already indicated, a member of the *Missio Dei*. The latter fact, i.e., that the church is a member of the *Missio Dei*, is the

⁷⁰Barth, op. cit., II, 2, p. 217.

same thing that we have already established in the introduction, when dealing with God's position.

As God Himself in His Missio confronts the world and yet through His sending establishes His relationship to the world, so He now gives to His church the same position which He holds. The church is always in danger of identifying itself with the world, being absorbed by it, or establishing its oneness with the people. The danger is especially great because of the following reasons: All religions think that fellowship of religion is fellowship of culture and people and, secondly, all countries endeavor to guarantee unity of people through unity of religion. The danger is always immanent in the church because, by sheer necessity, she becomes something into which a person is born.

The church can avoid this danger if, on the one hand, she realizes that through the Missio she is placed completely on the side of God and, on the other hand, she realizes that she is fully directed to the world. She is placed on the side of God because her members have through Christ Jesus been "loved out"⁷¹ of this world and placed together in the congregation of the new people of God. To this new people of God all the attributes apply just as the people of the Old Testament had them (I Pet. 2:9). Through

⁷¹"Herausgeliebt." A typically rich German word! A man can say to his in-laws, "I loved your daughter so much that I "loved her out" of your home. In the same way Jesus has loved us out of this world.

these attributes she sets herself apart from the world.

The church in its life and in its attitude is different from the world. She does not belong to herself or to the world, but to God. In her the life that flows from Christ is manifest. For that reason she is an epistle of Christ to the world, visible and legible to the world. In the midst of the world of darkness she is the light; in the rottenness she is the salt. But she is not this of herself, but of God. And she is this not for herself, but for the world. For that reason a person can only speak of the essence of the congregation when he looks at it from God's position and determines from God's side what the church is. Thus and thus only through the Missio Dei can the true nature of the church become evident.

Thereby it is said that the congregation in the world must function primarily through its presence. The church is either a congregation for witness, work, and doxology, or she is no church of Jesus Christ.

She is the one which with her knowledge and experience of God's grace becomes proxy and stands for the remainder of the world which has not as yet become partakers of the testimonies of the Holy Ghost. Over against the world the church in her special character for her role is placed into the service of reconciliation, a witness of the grace of God.⁷²

The gathering and renewing of the church is not an end in itself or for itself, but promotes the sending of the church into the world--the church which is the light of the world and the salt of the earth, not by the might of man but by the power of Christ through the world-shaking dynamic of the Kingdom of God that came into the world,

⁷²K. Barth, op. cit., IV, 1, p. 166.

still comes, and will come.⁷³

The whole congregation, through its life, through its word from person to person, through its contacts which the individual member has with his fellow beings, passes on the word and should be a magnetic point for all.

For this reason it is clear that Christ has not given a special missionary office. He did give her an office which should lead to missionary service--namely, the ministry of the divine Word in its fullness. Included in this is the missionary witness. For that reason everything that the church has been told concerning her pastoral office can be applied primarily to the missionary service of the church (II Cor. 3-5). Accordingly the pastoral office in the congregation in all its branches can have no other purpose but to lead the congregation towards the influencing of the world and to make her fit for missionary service. Everything which has been offered to the congregation for edification should serve that purpose. All other offices which center around the real office find in this one office their joint performance, their mutual subordinate position, and their climax--that they serve the sending. Where this is clearly understood, missions is no problem, but is the fulfillment of every service which takes place in the congregation and thereby for the congregation.

⁷³H. D. Wendland, Die Kirche in der Modernen Gesellschaft (n.p., 1956), p. 103.

But when this office in dogmatic limitation serves only the concern, management, and self-support of the church, it is humanly limited in a self-centered way. When the congregation endeavors to edify and bestow salvation only to an individual member, it is questionable whether the goal of missions is realized because this does not provide the members with the chance to find joy in their faith through service and sacrifice. When the opportunity for obedience and service is missing, the living stream of the word cannot flow. This is often the reason why the individual members themselves do not appreciate this word. Thus the pastoral office, without intending it to be this way, becomes a hindrance for heathen mission work instead of a missionary impulse. The incumbents of the office are the ones that close the door to heaven (Mt. 23:13).

The real form of existence of the congregation becomes visible where it is clearly understood that the word and the congregation are an insoluble unity. They are so closely related to each other that the spoken word is readily applied to the congregation. The report of the conference in Whitby⁷⁴ clearly set this forth.⁷⁵ The Word of God and the church are often treated in Scripture as such a unity that that which is said to the church is also predicated about the word. This

⁷⁴Cf. chapter IV, footnote 3.

⁷⁵Freytag, Der Grosze Auftraug, pp. 32ff.

already becomes clear in the parables in Mt. 13 and Mk. 4 and especially pointedly in the book of Acts, where the growth of the word is even explicitly mentioned when the growth of the congregation should be spoken of (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20). This can only mean, first of all, that along with the congregation also the working power and the working area of the word grows because the Holy Ghost receives increasingly more possibilities through the multitude of witnesses. Secondly, this means that the office which has to proclaim the word must always keep in mind the expansion of the church. The word itself takes on form in the congregation and becomes in the congregation a vital and self-propagating word.

18. Church and World

When the *Missio Dei* becomes so evident, as previously pictured, then the operation of the congregation must be understood as the spreading of the word in her relation to the world. In order to be able to spread the word the congregation must recognize the fact that in the world among the unbelieving fellowmen there is always the other side which she must confront with her life and faith. Where the church recognizes her unique character and preserves it, the right attitude will follow spontaneously. The greatest weakness of Christianity today is that the Christian does not know that he is a Christian. He has lost his power as salt.

But as concrete as the difference between the church and

the unchurched is, so long as this world exists, so little can this difference between the two be dismissed in spite of all fluctuations of that relationship. In the same way the relationship between Israel and the other people remained. In this difference between two nations God speaks to the world. He speaks to her in such a way that His word creates the church in order that then, through the service of the church, that word becomes the word to the world.⁷⁶

We are here facing the vital question concerning the true relationship between church and people, respectively, church and world--a question which constantly confronted evangelical thinking in Germany and a question which they could not entirely handle. Already before the war a new look at missions took place concerning this facet. Since G. Warneck constantly sought a Christianization of people as the goal of missions and identified Christians with the state church, this new look was absolutely necessary. Hartenstein and W. Freytag had, already prior to the war, tried to seek new approaches to the problem. The former preserved in his theological writings a clear distinction between the church and people; the latter points to the congregation as the point at which the Holy Ghost crashes through to the world. Church and congregation have the duty to lead men to the obedience of faith. For both of them the service of the congregation is determined by the Kingdom as it comes.

Hoekendijk's criticism above began with this concept of nations and national characteristics. This concept was promoted by various theologians and mission scholars and was

⁷⁶Barth, op. cit., I, 2, p. 769.

influenced by Romanticism. In order to determine the right position of the congregation in the world and over against the people the Dutch mission scholars made inquiries into the propaedeutic significance of the people of Israel, the Old Testament people of God, for the essence of the church and its position over against the world.

Sad to say, a contribution not sufficiently recognized was given by A. Oepke.⁷⁷ Even though he was not interested in laying down guidelines for the *Missio Dei* from his knowledge, nevertheless he said something vitally important to the church. He showed how the thought of God's people was a determining factor for the proper understanding of the New Testament church, showing through this concept that the early church had a proper understanding of itself.

J. Blauw⁷⁸ gave to us the most thorough work concerning this question. In his work he investigated what the Holy Scriptures understood by the word "heathen." Since the heathen are the vis-a-vis of God's people, it was necessary to investigate just what Scriptures mean by "God's people."

The surprising thing is that the various men who investigated the problem in question came to the same conclusions. Israel's election was a call to service. She was to meet the world that, by the example of Israel, the

⁷⁷A. Oepke, Das Neue Gottesvolk (Guetersloh: C. Bertelmann, 1950).

⁷⁸Blauw, op. cit.

rule of God over all people would become evident. Thus the election of Israel already at this time had world-wide significance and eschatological implications. From this understanding and through the self-knowledge of the church as the new people of God, the church's position to people and the world is established. She stands over against the world and therefore is sent to the world. Her service is therefore unlimited quantitatively. She must embrace all people. Admittedly, a qualitative limitation arises in as much as the church as the bearer of revelation must stand for the truth and must confront the world with the question of truth. Only if the church in all things desires to be God's people, and thereby also to be the church of Jesus Christ will she be able to make the strongest impression upon the world.

Therefore her special position becomes the presupposition for the universality of her task of bringing salvation. From this it follows that the church is the only one that can be God's people among the world.⁷⁹ These thoughts were most strongly presented at the World Mission Conference in Willingen,⁸⁰ where people came to the understanding of missions

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 63ff.

⁸⁰It is at Willingen that the I.M.C. developed the little boat afloat as the symbol of the Ecumenical Movement. "It appears to be adrift on the open sea with no land in sight, utterly at the mercy of the wind, wave and storm. What port is it making for? From which port did it set out crewless and forlorn? What haven will give it shelter? It appears to be abandoned: but it is the right side up still, and plumb in

as here noted and designated the church as the wandering people of God, who live in tents and do His service until He comes.⁸¹

On the one hand, through the principles set forth in this chapter, the thought was set forth that predestination and the apostolate are interrelated⁸² and, on the other hand, the danger of thinking of the church as a completely overpowering unit was pointed out.⁸³ In other words, when the church regards itself as God's people, we must understand that she is NOT to be understood as an institution, as entrenchment or permanent residence and immobility, as being hemmed in by national boundaries, BUT the meaning is that the church must somehow take form in order to be able to make a witness of herself to the world.

Exactly when she fulfills the apostolate the church must become a power of its own special kind. These thoughts are usually pushed into the background because of the fear

its middle is the Cross braving the tides and currents, and obviously giving guidance to the little boat, not just rocking at its moorings but out on its voyage across the oceans of time." Cecil Northcott, Christian World Mission (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), pp. 53ff.

⁸¹Hartenstein as quoted in W. Freytag, Mission Zwischen Gestern und Morgen (n.p., 1952), pp. 53ff.

⁸²This is a reference to the discussion beginning in chapter IV, section 9, "The Theology of the Apostolate."

⁸³This is a reference to the discussion beginning in section 15 of this chapter, "Missions and the Church."

that on the basis of this understanding of the church as an organization she would concern herself so much with her own affairs that she would no longer properly give a witness for Christ. The danger obviously is evident in every form of the church. No church organization gives a guarantee that she will not put on the armor of organization and thereby not become sterile. She should always, through her service in the world, enter into her own ghetto (her own special place). When this takes place through the influence of the world, then this ghetto becomes a place where the church shows its influence in public.

If on the basis of such dangers one would eliminate the idea of the church, then one also loses the thought of the apostolate. True genuine apostolate is only possible where the church is visible as a fully earmarked, visible power which expresses itself in its confession. Through this the catholicity of the church is not limited. She receives her world-wide many-sidedness which is given through her ethnic background. The apostolate accordingly does not lead to something shoreless; it does not eliminate boundaries. When we look at the essence of the church in this way, then the apostolate results in the distinct characteristics of the individual churches.

It is significant that in the framework of the special position of the church there is no mention of the importance of the sacraments. However, the true church always maintains

her place in the world in that she gathers herself together for her divine services, permits herself to be drawn into fellowship with her Lord in the sacrament, and works on the world with this power received through the word and sacrament. She can only hand on life which she let be⁸⁴ given to her. By all means she must pass it on if she would keep it, otherwise it will die. The position of the church to the world, therefore, is shown in this, that God entrusted her with the treasure of the word and sacrament in order that through these she preach reconciliation to the world. This service, which makes her a member⁸⁵ of the Missio Dei, gives the church the position which she needs in order to reach her mission goal.

⁸⁴Cf. chapter II, footnote 6.

⁸⁵Vicedom means by member the person who is a shareholder in the Missio Dei, as he has often said, "ein Anteil haben."

CHAPTER V

THE MISSION GOAL

Much that could be said under this heading has already been said and indicated, for one cannot speak of the motivation for missions without at the same time having its goal in view, which influences all of its motivation. Thus we will endeavor to restrict ourselves to that which has not as yet been said, especially to the church's coming into being.

1. The Conversion of the Nations

The church is placed into the world and sent by her Lord into the world. This is her environment; with respect to it she has her assignment. She is to proclaim to the lost world, the non-Christians, the message of redemption and through the reception of the message on the part of the hearers gather a congregation of the redeemed, God's people on earth.

Who are these non-Christians, the heathen? The mission command points the church with her message to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, to all nations. This term has posed several big questions for missions. In German missiology especially it became a central concept. G. Warneck had defined the purpose of missions entirely in opposition to Pietism's idea

of gathering only such as would let themselves be converted. According to Warneck individuals were not to be gained, but nations. His followers included J. Richter, H. Frick, S. Knak, and also missionaries B. Gutmann and Ch. Keysser. All of them understood "nations" to mean, not a casual number of people from a certain group, or one language, or a distinct state, but they saw in "nations" the organized groups which were influenced by nationality, religious fellowship, and membership ties, and thereby organizations with solid sociological backgrounds and ethnic characteristics.

Thus the individuals in Pietism were supplanted by ethnic individualities. Thus each nation is, in its specific characteristics, to be christianized and these peculiarities are to be placed into the service of the Gospel so that the nation can be transformed into the church.¹ The ongoing process of converting individuals was not meant, which through correct administration could also gradually lead to the gaining of all the nation's members; rather, the conversion and christianizing of the communities as such.

The above mentioned men were sober-minded enough to know that the goal could only be reached by stages and only to a certain degree. Each of the men, primarily the two missionaries, tried the way which appeared most plausible to

¹This may be understood as a reference to the diversity of gifts in the Ephesians Epistle and Article VII of the Augsburg Confession.

him and this was to proceed from the point of nationalism. None of the men wanted to eliminate the preliminary missionary work which consists in the proclamation; none thought of bypassing the individual decision. That must be kept in mind because it is so easily overlooked in the critique.

One must add the positive note that exactly the thus formulated mission goal compelled the missionaries to emphasize the other side very much and thus to make possible for the individual an independent decision for the Gospel. They also knew that man can never be gained as an individual entity. He is always somehow influenced in his decisions by his fellow-men, regardless of whether he belongs to an anonymous multitude or an organized community. Consequently the fellowship must be penetrated by the message if the individual is to be gained.

The strategy of the conversion of the nations gave to missions a tremendously rewarding mission goal which lifted missions from its narrow confine and gave it a great pedagogical assignment. This assignment was that, with utmost regard for nationality, missions would lead people to Christian objectives so that out of the synthesis of Gospel and nationality there arises a self-sustaining culture. The results seem to justify the spokesmen for this goal, for where it was eagerly applied, there arose energetic, vital churches, deeply rooted in the people. The christianizing of people or nations thereby became the goal of mission work

and as such was largely taken over by the continental mission, even though carried forward under various modifications. Especially German thinking on missions was influenced by this "ethnic fervor" (Hoekendijk).

Both the increasingly stronger spreading of western civilization with its demoralizing phenomenon among the nations and the emphasis on the norm of Christianity through the Anglo-Saxon mission led to the result that the German science of missions became more and more the defender of a Christianity conditioned by nationality in which the dangers were not always seen and regarded--the dangers of placing nationality above the Gospel or of reading more into the Gospel than was said about the nation. Finally, through Hartenstein and Freytag the previously mentioned new concept was introduced, in which the congregation was sharply distinguished from its natural environment.

The last war provided powerful illustrations of the dangers of nationalism. Therefore nationalism was also subjected to a severe criticism which had its spokesman in Hoekendijk.² German missions has permitted itself to be called to its senses through Hoekendijk's publication; he deserves the credit of being acknowledged by German evangelical theology. He has supplied sufficient challenges

²J. C. Hoekendijk, Kerk en Volk in de Duitse Zendingwetenschap (n.p., 1949).

from the fields of church history, exegesis, systematics, and the science of missions. But sad to say, his book, with its profound and fundamental dissertations has been ignored until this day. Either German theology has lived such an introverted life that it has not observed such events or it regards itself beyond anything that a man of missions has to say.

2. The Concept $\tau\acute{\alpha}$ $\epsilon^{\prime}\delta\rho\eta$

In the critiques of Hoekendijk very much is justified, primarily the rebuke (p. 229f.) that German mission theology has translated too naively the concept of $\tau\acute{\alpha}$ $\epsilon^{\prime}\delta\rho\eta$ with "nations" and moreover by this translation has still applied the meaning of the concept "nation" which was determined by Romanticism in which, through Pietistic influence, the individual characteristics of every nation were still stressed. On the other hand, it appears to us a bit hasty for Hoekendijk to make Luther and Lutheranism responsible for this understanding of the concept, even though Hoekendijk can appeal to two important research scholars.

Here John Duerr³ is fairer concerning Warneck and German theology of missions when he attempts to prove that

³Johann Duerr, Sendende und Werdende Kirche in der Missionstheologie G. Warneck's (Basel: Basler Missionsbuchhandlung, 1947), pp. 146ff. Duerr, presently Professor at Basel, was missionary to the Mohammedans in Indonesia.

G. Warneck--although himself a biblicist and friend of the Pietists--sought to set forth in contrast to the Pietistic goal of missions of gaining the individual soul and its gathering into Christian affiliation, the winning of nations, hence all men, and the establishment of a national church. He also confirmed this goal not only with Scripture passages, but also with historical and missionary data.

Further, it must likewise be regarded as unfair when Hoekendijk feels himself constrained to establish that Warneck and his students did not regard the church as a historical factor for salvation, but rather permitted her to be determined by the people so that she would be understood more or less as a cultural factor. In the thinking of Warneck and his pupils the eschatological boundary was not as sharply set forth or constituted in the clarity with which we could do it now since K. Barth and the works of O. Cullmann. However, in view of the fact that G. Warneck, in spite of his world-wide conception of missions, always understood the specific congregation in the Pietistic sense as the group of believers, Hoekendijk could have said that Warneck already knew of the confrontation of the church and the nation. Thus on these points Hoekendijk goes too far.

As much as we acknowledge valid points in Hoekendijk's critique, we must now, on the other hand, examine to see how far, in view of our subject, he is correct. Thereby at the same time we must first administer to him the same rebuke

that he expresses toward the German mission scholars. If these German scholars translate too naively τὰ ἔθνη with "nations," so Hoekendijk somewhat too conclusively renders the concept of humanity or πάντα τὰ ἔθνη as "all men" without its nationalistic background, and understands by this concept all people outside of the nation of Israel, thus using the term exclusively in the historical sense.

Without here entering upon a detailed study of the term--we here refer to the Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament⁴--we must first of all raise the question: Even if ἔθνη is to be understood from the standpoint of Heilsgeschichte, is it possible to think of men without their ethnic setting? Also from the viewpoint of Heilsgeschichte man is still seen in his natural reality. ἔθνος is always used in Scripture for the union of people and was applied to Israel. ἔθνη means, when it is connected with πάντα, the nations in their common bonds as well as in their differences (Mt. 24:9; 24:14; 25:32; 28:19; Mk. 11:17; 13:10; Lk. 21:24; 24:47; Rom. 11:25; Gal. 3:8). In other places the term is used in the exclusive sense in Heilsgeschichte, namely, in contrast to the people of Israel (Mt. 6:7; Lk. 12:30; Mt. 10:5; 20:19; Acts 14:16).

⁴K. L. Schmidt, "Ethnee," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1933) II.

Mt. 28:19, on which Warneck bases his mission goal, is not included here.

Among the differences within the nations is also included the heathen religion. However, this does not prove that ἔθνη can be translated directly as "heathen" or "men," just as πάντα τὰ ἔθνη cannot be used as the equivalent for πάντα κτίβις or πάντα κόβυος as Hoekendijk assumes. To be sure, the question arises whether German mission science was correct, since ἔθνη already in the Old Testament is a very elusive term which no longer transmits the meaning that the plural must denote the majority of the nations in their unique characteristics. Thus the term ἔθνη means the people outside of Israel without regard for their sociological character.

Also in the New Testament the term was thus understood in the Greek world. The Romans used it to designate the non-Romans, as well as strangers and barbarians. Thus the term could also express the cultural contrast. Therefore we can say that ἔθνη is a term which includes men and nations outside of God's congregation or outside of the dominant culture. We must leave it an open question whether they are to be viewed in their sociologically and nationalistically determined background. Warneck's goal of missions, that the nations are to be christianized, can therefore not be established from the missions command. Also the idea that ethnic groupings ought to be maintained cannot be established

from the mere concept ἐθνη.⁵

3. The Mission Goal

We must first of all describe this as the winning of all men and the gathering of them into the church of Christ. No one stands outside of the Kingdom of God.⁶ The Gospel is intended for all men. The nations as ἐθνη form a unity over against the congregation of God because they are lost in sin. The lost condition which all men have in common ties them together, as they are also united in the promise that all men are to be saved. They all should come to the knowledge of the truth (II Tim. 2:4). This bond was already present in Israel. She has received the revelation. Hence Israel is not included in the heilsgeschichtlich sense of the ἐθνη, which would be the case if Israel were only spoken of as a nation. This heilsgeschichtlich contrast is thus determined by the revelation. It is decisive

⁵Vicedom is correct in stating that the Gospel crosses ethnic lines, but I do not think that this can be established etymologically from the word "ethnee." On the contrary, the term "ethnos" originates from "ethos" which means the multitude bound together by like habits, customs, peculiarities. This is the sense in which Paul uses the term at Athens (Acts 17:26). The term does establish boundaries and barriers. However, as Paul shows in the same verse cited, these ethnic lines are used to an advantage through God's redemptive action. "God has made of one blood all nations" Cf. Schmidt, *ibid.*

⁶The Kingdom of God cannot be made synonymous to the established church. God as King is over all men. The very fact that certain people resist this Kingdom is evidence that the power of that Kingdom is touching them.

(I Thess. 4:5, cf. Jer. 10:25).

The "all" in the mission command is very clearly underlined by Mt. 24:14. Thus no one is excluded from among the heathen. The message is to be proclaimed in the entire ecumene, which is the living space of the nations and thus the sphere of the proclamation of the church. Thus the ecumene and the cosmos⁷ become correlates of the Kingdom and vis-a-vis to the Missio Dei and apostolate. Therefore the goal of missions is the proclaiming of the message to the entire mankind and the gathering of them into the church.

However, Scripture does not say that this goal will be reached.⁸ It lies in the nature of the revelation and thereby in the nature of God that every person will be spoken to. The possibility of believing and of the redemption is given to man. On the other hand, Scripture is crystal clear in that only a portion of mankind will accept the message. Since one cannot ascertain who this portion is, the church has the responsibility for the entire humanity.

4. The Peculiarities of Nations

After we have arrived at this clarity we may at once raise the question concerning the meaning of the term "Volk"

⁷Ecumene: The permanently inhabited portion of the earth. Cosmos: The universe.

⁸Vicedom hastens to guard against universalist tendencies.

as an organized union within the sphere of the goal of missions. We cannot avoid the question since man, viewed from the point of Heilsgeschichte still is the creature of God and the object of His love even though he does not belong to the congregation. To begin with, a weighty question arises in Mt. 28:19. If one understands $\epsilon^{\prime}\delta\rho\eta$ purely from the viewpoint of Heilsgeschichte, is the mission command still intended for Israel? Is missions among the Jews still justified? We know that the revelation of God in Jesus Christ was assigned to Israel, and she is therefore in the first position. Then what becomes of the apostate Israel when only the heathen are meant by the term $\epsilon^{\prime}\delta\rho\eta$?

If one understands $\epsilon^{\prime}\delta\rho\eta$ as humanity in its national differentiations, then it can in no case be doubted that "the nations" are a unity in their lost condition of sins. They must be saved exactly as they are one body. Dare we carelessly place the differences as they exist in language, in sociological and social customs on the level of the heathen religions, and thereby label them as expressions of apostacy and rebellion? Can't many of these customs be thought of alone without the respective religions? Aren't they, under the circumstances, a reflection of man's dependence upon God? Weren't these linguistic differences, for example, at the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, taken seriously? Isn't it true according to Scripture that man sins precisely in matters which are most natural and familiar

to him and thereby transgresses against God? It is striking that according to Romans 1 & 2 the heathen stand responsible before God in the same degree as the Jews, and of course as heathen! They know about the mores of family-relations, marriage, the parent-child relationship, and the protection of human life.

When we study the so-called catalog of vices it strikes us that the trespasses of the heathen against God are at the same time trespasses against their own regulations. Thus man sins against the ordinances which God has given to him. They are, to be sure, laws which are also laid down in God's revelation.⁹ J. Blauw maintains that the Bible always speaks of the heathen as it speaks of the natural man. The latter sins without revelation and, in fact, in such a way that he transgresses against his own laws. The revelation is not invalidated because man does not know it; neither are the ordinances set aside because the conscience is offended. One cannot in his own understanding write a theology of ordinances, as has repeatedly been done; the base is too narrow.¹⁰

⁹Vicedom describes both the divine law of God and the human mores with the same word "Ordnung." Luther does the same thing, e.g., Rom. 13:2 (of God) and I Cor. 15:23 (of man).

¹⁰The idea can best be explained by quoting a portion of the Willingen I.M.C. Conference statement: "We summon all Christians to come forth from the securities which are no more secure and from the boundaries of accepted duty too

In this case Hoekendijk is right when he takes to task this kind of theology. God has in His revelation set up other ordinances which are to come into force through His congregation. However, He has also sanctified existing laws and placed them under His command.¹¹ Therefore it can be decided only from Scripture and resolved by the congregation as to what concerns of nationality can remain standing for the time being under the application of the Gospel.

God has also given to the congregation the law of love and thereby all ordinances in the human realm have taken on an entirely new meaning. A certain background is also connected with the term *ἔργον* which through the law of love is not invalidated. Where should love reveal itself if not especially in the obligations which affect men's living with one another? Thus we must be clear that a number of the ordinances which we regard as self-evidently Christian are not rooted in the Scripture, but have their origin in the modern image of man and therefore often run counter to Biblical thought without our feeling the authority to take action

narrow for the Lord of the earth, and to go forth with fresh assurance to the task of bringing all things into captivity to Him, and of preparing the whole world for the day of His coming." Cecil Northcott, Christian World Mission (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), p. 34. "Cancelling the bond of ordinances that held us, He set it aside, nailing it to His cross" (Col. 2:14).

¹¹All existing laws are placed under His command. However, many human laws cannot be sanctified and incorporated by God into His plan. In many areas there will be an irreconcilable clash between Christ and culture.

against them.

However, from the standpoint of Scripture, the same thing holds true whether one adopts old ordinances or introduces those that have come into being in a different nation. Both offer the congregation no guarantee of a genuine confrontation. Ordinances emphasize at best the strange character of the church. Every ordinance is basically a danger to the church if it is not fostered by men who through regeneration know that Jesus makes all things new.

5. The Christians from the Heathen

In two places Christians are called heathen, ἔθνη (Rom. 11:3; Eph. 3:1). That does not mean that these Christians stand outside of the revelation of God, as the other ἔθνη, and that they have no claim to this revelation. All that can be gathered from this is that, in contrast to Jewish Christians, they have other patterns of living and that through the grace of God they are counted among God's people. Paul with great passion wages his attack against the Judaizing of the heathen Christian congregations. They would have laid a yoke upon themselves through the adoption of Jewish patterns of living. Paul would not have been this vehement if he had had the conviction that one could become a Christian only by way of Judaism. It is precisely this that he negated.

The majesty of the Gospel is that man under the word of

God may be fully that which He inherited by birth. Paul also permitted the social relations as adapted to the people to remain in the congregations. He accordingly did not see in the transmission of new social patterns of living the marks of Christianizing. Rather, he had the conviction that the new life created by the Gospel would find for itself a place in these ordinances and would penetrate it. When Hoekendijk concludes that one cannot appeal with "ethnic fervor" to the Old Testament, where national and religious fellowship in Israel are identical, he is right. If one does this, one overlooks the fact that Israel is a class by itself where in an extraordinary way that which is understood by the people, a nation, has been formulated by God.

Nationality does not determine religion, but religion determines nationality. It is formulated by revelation. Besides, a distinction must be made between God's covenant with the tribes and the political organization of Israel, which is something else. The rise of the prophets proves that the national fellowship and the congregation of God were not identical. We can recognize all this and yet must ask: Didn't also the ordinances of the heathen nations have a right to be placed under the judgment of God, and couldn't they also, under the judgment of God, be completely determined by God? Certainly we do not have the political charge to rule the nation, but we do have the command to call the nations to repentance so that their relationship with God may be

regulated. Can the result be other than that the life patterns of the nations are made new by the Gospel?

Hoekendijk would agree with us in all of these questions, but he would object that the yardstick for this chance could in no case be taken from the nations (which we, too, do not desire). Hoekendijk would rather say that the congregation could only receive its special position when it founds itself purely on the Gospel. It thereby would always bear the tension of its environment because the Gospel always gains form in the environment, but the ordinances are not indicated for it in the nation. To this problem Hoekendijk suggests the concept of ecumenicity. With this he offers the solution to the problem. He says thereby, that every nation presents its own environment for the Gospel and for the congregation. The Gospel will adjust itself to the environment just as an animal or plant. The environment exerts a certain influence, but nevertheless, does not change the Gospel. It is similar in the Christian church. The church will have a local color, but it will nevertheless remain faithful to herself and not betray herself to the nation.¹²

¹²One could pursue this question further by looking at the Batak Protestant Christian Church, the largest Lutheran Church outside the Western world. It is a member of the Lutheran World Federation but has never adopted the sixteenth century Lutheran confessions. Rather than adopt the Augsburg Confession, the Bataks have drawn up their own, the first Asian church so far to do this. The Confession of Faith of the Huria Kristen Batak Protestant was adopted

6. The Educational Boundary

When Warneck recommended national education through missions, and thereby sought a gradual christianizing of the ordinances, he wanted to bring these ordinances entirely under the judgment of God; but the presupposition was that they could for the time being remain. He was aware of the dangers. It is rather unusual that on the basis of experience he did not believe in some sudden rupture and thereby limited his Biblical convictions. Thus a certain dual attitude is evident in Warneck which, theologically viewed in his teaching on missions, is a weakness. When men as S. Knak --in his theoretical knowledge--and B. Gutmann, as well as Ch. Keysser, in their congregational practice, whether consciously or unknowingly, ultimately seek a synthesis of Heilsgeschichte and secular history, there certainly is the danger of stripping Heilsgeschichte of its ontological character and of setting up a kind of theocracy of secular history.

There are many young churches in the world concerning

by the Great Synod in the November, 1951, meeting at Sipholon-Tarutung.

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has used this as one of its reasons for not joining the L.W.F., basing it on a charge of unionism. Cf. "Committee of the Lutheran World Federation," Proceedings of the Forty-Third Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, June 20-29, 1956 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), p. 530. However, viewed from the standpoint of Missio Dei, the writer questions whether The Missouri Synod has been justified in its stand.

which one asks himself whether it is a question of a Christian nation or a popularized Christendom. But on the other hand, these methods offered great opportunities to bring all branches of life under the word of God and thus permeate the entire life. Hoekendijk has recognized these weaknesses, but desires to hold fast to the latter through ecology. Viewed as a whole, the question forces itself upon us whether Hoekendijk, in his concern to preserve the special position of the congregation, has not fallen into a Pietistic limitation which is not removed by the recommendation of the "comprehensive approach."

The questions concerning people and nationality, the indigenous character of the church, are of eminent importance today for the young churches which must suffer under nationalism and thereby under the reproach of a strange, foreign element. Their striving for independence, however, is not only a reaction against church expansion and colonization, but a struggling for their own development in their area of life.¹³ Certainly this whole matter must be further considered and the discussions continued.

This concern was urged anew through the essays of

¹³This facet is often overlooked because of so much stress on the other side.

MacGavran¹⁴ and Sp. Trimmingham,¹⁵ who demonstrated¹⁶ that the church and mission could only then have success in expansion if they offered their message through the natural channels such as kinship and friendship, where it is passed on from one to the other. Thus no social break is created; the convert has connection with his family and kin; the church and its organization would become a social force, which supplies security, and also in this way a congregation can function in a reforming way. One of the burning questions today for the young churches is whether they could make a contribution to the culture of their nations so that Christian principles would function decisively toward an upbuilding. Whether that is possible will depend to a large extent on how deeply the church has considered the problems of its own distinctive, inherited culture, and has come to grips with it.

¹⁴Dr. Donald A. MacGavran has been educated in the United States, has served in India since 1923, and is presently stationed at Jabalpur and Mungeli. He is recognized as a prominent spokesman for the missionary strategy of winning people for Christ by families and groups rather than individuals. Cf. MacGavran, The Bridges of God (New York: The Friendship Press, 1955).

¹⁵The Rev. J. Spencer Trimmingham, who is presently serving as lecturer in Arabic at Glasgow University, has been a missionary in the Sudan and Egypt. He is most widely known for his study of Islam. Cf. The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa (London: SCM Press, 1955).

¹⁶MacGavran, op. cit.; Trimmingham, op. cit.

7. Missions and Civilization

Didn't Hoekendijk go too far in his critique? Hasn't he written too much from the standpoint of the present man? In every case he makes it plain to us that, due to the tremendous influence of civilization, the national characteristics no longer have a future today. Man does not want to identify himself with his own forms anymore, but seeks contact with the "great society," the family of mankind created by civilization. At the time of the publication of his book, Hoekendijk was generally right. In the meantime nationalism has changed the nations.¹⁷ It seems that the crisis has been passed and the ethnic characteristics are again very strongly emphasized.¹⁸ Thereby the previous questions once more become decisive issues for every young church and mission.

Hoekendijk recommends the "comprehensive approach" in this situation. Accordingly all areas of man's life are to be permeated with Christian thoughts so that men learn how, in all things, one can be and act as a Christian. He has basically assumed the same goal as the strategy of

¹⁷Cf. Rajah B. Manikam, Christianity and the Asian Revolution (New York: The Friendship Press, 1954), pp. 118ff. Manikam characterizes the resurgent movements as reform, revival, renaissance, and revolt.

¹⁸The statement holds true that you cannot have strong internationalism without strong nationalism.

nationalism, namely, to permit nothing to remain extraneous to God.¹⁹ The main question here is just what does one understand by "Christian." Only in a few cases does the Bible give concrete directions. The result is that through the "comprehensive approach" that is passed on as Christian which is thought best, viz. our civilization. But do we have a right to transmit this? Is it Christian for the reason that it was formulated through centuries of history with Christendom? Doesn't actually the same thing happen here which the other methods based on nationalism want to accomplish? I fear that the problems arising here are worse than those in connection with work in relation to nationalism.

The problem in this "approach" is not the existing, indigenous factors, but the inability of the missionaries to recognize their value and to come to terms with these problems through the congregations.²⁰ As long as the missionary with his alleged Christian way of life stands above the people he will hardly consider the "raw" material on hand as useful and capable of further development. He

¹⁹E. Jansen Schoonhoven, "Wort und Tat im Zeugendienst," Mission--Heute (1954).

²⁰Cf. Vicedom's most current word on the subject in "Der Innere Wandel der Religionen als Frage an Unsere Verkuendigung," Theologische Literaturzeitung, LXXXVII (January, 1962), pp. 15ff. Here Vicedom makes the two-pronged thrust of first knowing the essentials of the religion one confronts and then making a connection between Christianity and the native religion and culture.

will, accordingly, decline it. Thereby, however, definitely no genuine confrontation takes place! This confrontation then comes to be called, not "Gospel-nationalism" but "civilization-nationalism," and the latter is worse than a program related to the people's way of life.

Up to the present day very few missionaries have understood what genuine contact and confrontation is. This can proceed in no way other than the way in which God through Jesus Christ had made contact Himself. He came as a man to a very definite people and lived under the same conditions as this nation had to live. Thus He shared in bearing the misery of the nation and, under the same conditions in which the people had to prove their faith in God, showed His fellowmen how one in all conditions in life could be and remain a child of God. He subjected many interpretations of the ordinances of His people to criticism. He came to grips with the leaders of the nation. He ever and again confronted the congregation of God, the Kingdom, with what the Jews thought of it; but in all He remained a fellowman. Where the missionary succeeds in becoming that, many questions are solved by themselves, which in a theoretical way receive a monstrous weight.

We may not emphasize the social regulations of a nation to such an extent that they resist the law of love in the church. We also dare not present them as original forms of the church. We also dare not despise or underestimate them.

We can only ask ourselves what God's word says concerning this and how we can formulate these ordinances from its position. We must also realize that every nationally-determined peculiarity of the church is an earthly dress. The relationship to nationality will only be right where one knows that this dress also belongs to transient time.

This dress will be cast away by the congregation when it lives towards the Lord and permits itself to be fashioned by the new life determined by the Holy Ghost. The church must realize in every case that she dare not stress these peculiarities, for the church of Christ is composed of members from all nations and their one unifying bond, their communal relationship, is the law of Christ²¹ under which she lives.

National membership appears neither as a preliminary stage for the reception of the Gospel, nor is the effectual working of the Gospel the unfolding of national individuality . . . the characteristic thing is rather the intention of the Christian message which is universal and above nations and races.²²

8. The Unfolding by Degrees

The Gospel of the Kingdom should be proclaimed to all.

²¹"Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). This is "the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ," as Rom. 8:2 speaks of it.

²²W. Kuenneth, Politik Zwischen Daemon und Gott (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1954), p. 194.

All men should hear the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Thereby the immediate action of the missionary is indicated and the immediate goal of missions outlined.

G. Warneck justifies this proclaiming by the missions command and in the phrase *μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη* places the emphasis on the *μαθητεύσατε*. He understood this as a great pedagogical order; the hearer must be trained as a pupil to be a disciple.

Thus it was naturally up to the teacher to decide when the learner was to receive the diploma signifying maturity. Therefore Warneck does not understand the disciple relationship as a direct one, as we have described it. He knows that genuine disciples of Jesus would issue from mission work only in rare cases because many men became Christians for secondary motives, often remained standing at the beginning of their disciple relationship without any progress, and sometimes defected again. Thus all that was necessary to become a Christian was a sincere intention.²³ Every one thus enrolled can grow and be trained into the disciple relationship. Whether this is to take place through the congregation or is brought about in that the convert will be sustained onward in the Christian ordinances of his people remains quite immaterial.

Warneck is here thinking totally from the point of

²³ According to Warneck, if the intention was there, everything else could be trained and taught.

practice and is universal. Thus he is concerned not so much with missionizing and thus with conversion, but with Christianizing and the national church. He would like to provide immediately a sphere of life influenced by a Christian atmosphere for the convert. To be sure, he uses the concepts such as to save, to convert, to become a believer, and to cling to the Lord. However, strange to say, he doubts that heathen Christians can at once experience the full faith. It is difficult to understand Warneck's reservation here since the heathen, still untouched by the word, certainly are confronted with the Gospel at this time. These heathen will, in fact, be affected by this word whereas such a thing already becomes much harder for the second generation.

Behind this stands the concept of the national church according to which one must be drawn into Christendom--the idea that the heathen Christian has as yet no tradition and thus could not be a Christian in the full sense of the word. Warneck is here thinking very pedagogically. He views the Christianizing of a nation in such a way that, to begin with, only individuals are converted and these transmit the word and their experience to others.

In this way the entire nation is gradually encompassed. It results in a development of tradition. That obviously requires a long time, even generations under the circumstances. Warneck has also here remained a Pietist, even though

he advocates the national church. He cannot conceive of the conquest of a national tribe or a nation where it in its entirety is called under the Gospel so that the congregation of the baptized in Him becomes active in the people and thereby determines the life of the people.

9. The Evangelistic Method

According to Hoekendijk the church has the duty to proclaim the Kingdom, to erect the signs of the Kingdom,²⁴ to preach the Gospel. He naturally is aware of the immediate goal of establishing a congregation, but does not mention this. He leaves it an open question whether and how the preaching becomes effective. This may be linked together with predestination, according to which God on the basis of election decrees who comes to faith through the Kingdom-preaching. Nevertheless it is possible that Hoekendijk espouses the evangelistic method of missions which, on the basis of Mt. 24:14, is satisfied when entire nations are brought under the witness. The realization of the message is not a goal to be sought after, but one leaves to the working of the word whatever comes to pass on the basis of the sermon. Thus one is naturally grateful for every convert.

Through this method of proclaiming the Gospel to the

²⁴Hoekendijk is basically Barthian in his view of the Church. In his view of the church the word is only effective when proclaimed.

heathen as quickly as possible, and through the spreading of the Bible the word was transmitted to the heathen without realizing that decisions are going to have to be made. The word of God is turned over to the heathen without anyone watching over the correct interpretations and applications or guarding it against abuse. In this way the evangelistic method prepared the way for syncretism. Underlying is the misunderstanding that the word of God itself works and that the Holy Ghost through the word speaks to the heathen. That is not to be doubted. However, whether one realizes that here a magical conception of the word is implied,²⁵ which can in no way be justified from Scripture, is an open question. The minimal results of the evangelistic method prove that the word of God stimulates no magical power.

When people come to faith in this manner, it always takes place in this way that they come into contact with witnesses. It is a fact of Scripture, as well as of missions, that the Holy Ghost always works through witnesses. The proclaimed word which becomes evident in the hearer's life, which is at the same time recognized in his personality, has made a definite impression on that hearer. Seeing the example must always accompany the hearing. Without witnesses, therefore, no one comes to Christ in the full sense.

²⁵This can very easily be the case or become the case for Bible-reading Christians. The question whether your faith rests in Christ or the Bible is a most basic one.

Therefore Christendom always expands itself most energetically where the working of the Gospel becomes evident in a congregation or in one's life.²⁶

It thus becomes clear just how important it is that the message by means of the sending becomes a reality. Hence the message is also a part of human activity and capability in which, self-evidently, the working of the Spirit in the messenger is not questioned. The messenger himself, however, must also be obedient to the message and permit himself to be influenced by it. Certainly no one as a human being can make anyone a believer, but nevertheless, very much depends upon the conduct of the messenger. When Paul says in I Cor. 9:19ff. that he had become only a servant in order to gain some, or when he declares in Rom. 1:5 that he had received his office in order to effect obedience of faith among the nations, so, at the same time, he is saying to us that the missionary must have a very concrete goal and that, of necessity, he will strive to remain faithful through his own conduct unto this goal.

Accordingly one must exercise caution with the fundamental and justified saying: "God must do everything." There is no question concerning this, but God does His work only

²⁶Vicedom has made the excellent point that proclamation of the word and demonstration of that word's teaching in one's life must go hand in hand. Vicedom must be understood as emphasizing the spoken word; he is not ignoring the efficacy of the written word as a Means of Grace.

so far as His messenger has become His instrument. It is always decisive whether the messenger subordinates himself to the working program of God. It is an open question as to how far the hearers accept the message and how this demonstrates itself in their lives. From the descriptions of the life of the church in the letters of the apostle, from his exhortations, from his comparisons of the church with the heathen we can, in every case, conclude that also the churches of the New Testament were far from perfect, and yet Paul speaks in complimentary fashion of them.

10. The Process of Becoming a Believer

If this subject heading suggests a contradiction, then we must ask whether we correctly understand the process of becoming a believer. Don't we operate too much with theories based on one's own perfection or from our own understanding of faith and Christianity, and thereby make ourselves the norm for the heathen Christians? To begin with, conversion and faith consist among all heathen Christians in that they no longer do certain things because they have placed themselves under God. But these never include the total life and thinking. However, the fact still stands that Christ has become their Lord and that they also desire to claim Him for their Redeemer. Therefore on very definite points where the convictions have been given to them they have become obedient and believing. Here the word

has driven them to a decision. As a result, a conversion has taken place which, however, in other points, still must become evident--a conversion which can grow to the degree that the hearer is guided through the word.

On the other hand, it is a different story in the case of faith itself. Faith is first bestowed in the conversion as confidence in God. Confidence in Him, dependence on Him, joy over the forgiveness of sins and certain conviction of redemption can be present without man realizing everything that may contradict God or gainsay God in his life. Through this gradual progress in the new life, which always is founded upon faith and which is given through the operation of the Holy Ghost, the man becomes more and more glorified into the image of Christ.

To be sure, this faith can be violently shaken; it can be led into doubt. It undergoes changes. For that reason it is not said that in the meantime the new life must also fluctuate. Man can cling to his conviction. His life can be stamped. According to Scripture there is a little faith and a great faith; there is a weak and strong faith. But we don't hear that the weak faith is not a faith and that this faith could not be deepened. A great deal of our church practice is carried out with this false assumption. In all these degrees of faith God is seen as a reality to the believer, always according to the measure of his faith. Nevertheless that does not alter the fact that also the

person with a small or weak faith has become a believer. Consequently, in our judgments concerning conversion and faith we ought to be very cautious. They are not such a simple process that one could pass judgment upon them.

Also, it certainly is not left to the option of man as to what he believes. In all these forms of faith a relationship to Christ and therewith to God is established! A man who is far from God has no faith. The believer can be led always farther by God in obedience to obedience.²⁷

Along with this his faith also grows. He can let himself be saturated by Jesus and become active in love. He can let himself in faith be given the measure of the Spirit and lead a new life in trust in God. However, where there is no faith, everything else is missing. Faith is always the "Yes" to God's gracious working and thereby everything is encompassed by God. How much more joy we would derive from the life of the heathen Christian if we would have a correct understanding of faith.

11. The Means of Missions

In order to lead men to faith, the messengers must fulfill their commission and thereby take up battle against the other kingdom. The mission charge mentions the word as the

²⁷Vicedom employs a term here that could be used oftener in our theology. Both St. Paul and St. Peter speak of "obedience to the Gospel," meaning a life of sanctification. Cf. I Thess. 1:8; I Pet. 4:17.

only means of missions (Mt. 10:7; Lk. 9:1f.; Rom. 10:17). The proclamation is defined more exactly in II Cor. 5:19 as the preaching of reconciliation or paraphrased, "to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). The apostles did not proclaim this preaching as a system of doctrine, as a philosophy of life accommodated to human wisdom, but they always testified to the saving work of God with men.

With the Jews they always began with the dealings of God with Israel; with the Gentiles they began with the creation and with the good things God had done for them. The central point of the preaching was the resurrection. He for whom God has not become a reality may harbor within himself ever so much yearning for salvation, yet he will never be able to grasp the fact that he cannot save himself. He who knows nothing of the Creator will decline God's demand. He who does not have the faintest inkling that there is a resurrection and judgment will never understand his sins as a transgression against God, nor will he regard himself responsible, and therefore also will refuse Jesus Christ as the Savior.

In Corinth also the resurrection stood at the center of the sermon. If Paul, however, knew nothing else than the cross, then it was for this reason: because they, that is, men influenced through Greek philosophy, believed they could be saved by human wisdom. He could preach no other

salvation than the one based on the standpoint of the resurrection.

Accordingly faith in the resurrected Christ is an important moment for faith not only in Christ, but in God. The death of Christ alone is the crisis of faith because it (the death of Christ) could have caused doubts in either Christ or God. The resurrection is faith's victory because in it the Father identifies Himself with the Son, as we are accustomed to say in human analogy.²⁸

Only through the proclaiming of the total working of Jesus Christ do men become fellowmen of Jesus Christ and participate in His history. Thus faith is not an opinion, a conviction gained by logical conclusions, but the assurance of the Heilsgeschichte. This is what the apostles had to proclaim. We also could do this only in so far as the Heilsgeschichte has become our history through Christ, the history of God's dealing with us.

However, therewith only the one side of the mission mandate and the mission means has been set forth. The kerygma must always be viewed in such a way that men hear it. They cannot of themselves come into the Kingdom, but they must be called in. They cannot become disciples if they have not heard the call to follow. Thus the message must be presented in such a way that it will be heard and understood. The proclamation of the facts of salvation always refers the hearers to God and compels them to let

²⁸W. Elert, Der Christliche Glaube (Berlin: Im Furche Verlag, 1955), p. 302.

their relationship to God be regulated by Him. God does so in that He bestows upon believers the forgiveness of sins, justification, conversion, and thus a new life, and keeps them in it through sanctification.

Where God's revelation strikes the hearers, something new always arises, i.e. a full share in eternal life which consists in faith in Christ (Jn. 17:3). Thereby the immediate goal of the proclamation is attained. Man is saved, snatched from the other kingdom; he has received a new existence. Even if we believe that this hearing is wrought by the Holy Ghost, yet it is valid here what has above been said concerning the self-efficacy of God. The hearing also proceeds from the witness. The hearing is at the same time understanding. When the preacher proclaims the word in such a way that men cannot understand it, it remains a hollow sound. If it is not brought to men in their language, they cannot grasp it. Through the foreign language it does not become for men God's own word. The hearer must painstakingly seek to get the meaning.

But God wants to speak to man, and thus it is absolutely necessary that the language of the hearers is spoken by the messengers. The story of Lystra is a pertinent example of what takes place when one gives an opportunity to the hearers to misinterpret the message through the foreign language. God wants to draw nigh to man in His proclamation so that the entire man will be apprehended. Consequently the

messenger must take pains to recast his sermon in foreign thought forms, to carry out a discussion within the heathen environment completely internally, in order that he can proclaim the message of joy.

12. The Mission and the Miracle

The sending commission of the apostles has still a second aspect: "Heal the sick; raise the dead; cleanse the lepers; drive out evil spirits!" (Mt. 10:7, cf. Lk. 9:1f.; 10:9; in addition, the second Markan ending).²⁹ Here we meet a very difficult question, which just today again is keenly felt. As we know, the apostles took this charge very seriously, for it is actually part of the preaching of the Kingdom. This preaching is not fulfilled if the charge to perform miracles is not carried out.

They (the miracles) are to be understood as manifestations of the actual present government of God in Jesus and as such, eschatological signals of the coming working of God through the resurrection. Opposed to the effective establishing of the Kingdom are the forces of this world, the demonic-satanic power, sin, sickness, death.³⁰

These forces of the other kingdom are to be overcome because Jesus has conquered them.

²⁹Mk. 16:9-20. In view of substantial evidence both external and internal it is almost universally concluded that this section is not an original part of Mark. However, this does not negate the authenticity of this section.

³⁰W. Kuenneth, Theologie der Auferstehung (Muenchen: Cladius, 1951), p. 110.

The service of proclaiming is only fragmentary if it cannot be certified through the work of salvation. The miracles, as the apostles performed them, certainly were not limited to time (dated) on the basis of a stronger faith of the apostles or because at that time no other means were known against these powers except magic. It also is not true that we are far superior to that time and thus such acts of salvation are no longer necessary. We know that uncounted, deeply felt sorrow exists and that man even today also needs a Savior, just as at that time.

Our medical science has not made the miracle superfluous nor replaced it. It has not only brought healing of sicknesses, but it has also introduced new sicknesses. Progress has not only enlightened man, but at the same time entangled him in worse demons. The trial of sickness and death has remained. Thus obviously we cannot substitute the sciences as a gift of God for the supernatural conquest of human woe. They will never succeed in warding off sicknesses and death and eliminating the demons. In Christianity, in works of mercy, in the outward mission, we have sought a connecting link with scientific progress, thereby believing that we could replace the authorization for healing, and often do not realize how we have submitted ourselves to their laws.

Also missions has thought that through medical missions, school, education, and social work it could carry out the

second part of the mission command. These endeavors were to prepare the way for real missionary service--to gain men to hear the message, and did not consider that this second part of the missions command already presupposes faith. From the Anglo-Saxon viewpoint people even thought that it was possible to make the Kingdom of God a reality on earth. Men were offered false hopes. In some missions the proclamation was only a supplement for social work. Thus, of necessity it came to pass that these arrangements in missions contributed towards giving man everything without his thereby being pledged to God. Missions had cooperated in the spreading of secularism. Moreover, the second part of the mission command may not be replaced by the erection of pilgrimage shrines. When faith in saints results in an expression of the continuity of the church (without regard for religious historical context), they are not living witnesses but dead people, who are active here.

Isn't the basic curse exactly this, that though the church believes in the Holy Ghost, He is not a reality to her anymore? Aren't checks being applied continuously to Him by our theology, because we obviously think that the Holy Ghost is only capable of that which is in harmony with our stereotyped church ordinances and with science.

To be sure, today the church has realized that here is an evident deficiency, an apathy in its service. For that reason the discussion about the healing ministry has arisen.

However, this second part of the mission command must not be wrongly understood. The word "all" which we find in the first mission command is missing in the second. That is significant. Jesus Himself neither healed all the sick nor raised all the dead; nor did He give the command that this be done. He also did not drive out the devil from every possessed man. If we would strive for a general application, we would drag the command into the human realm.

In Jesus' day life played a much less important part than it does with us, where it has now come so far that the bodily well-being is regarded as more important than God's law. Instead, Jesus took suffering, in its meaning for man, much more seriously and of greater importance. For Him it was a channel for the salvation of man. He also knew that with the removal of suffering the other kingdom had not as yet been eliminated. It could at any time break in again if the presuppositions³¹ for the miracle had not been given. But what He aimed at and what His disciples should do was to erect signs of the Kingdom and thereby make evident to the world that the other kingdom had in reality been conquered. Through that proclamation it was verified that He

³¹If Vicedom means that a confession of faith or a proclamation of the Kingdom always preceded or accompanied the miracle, this cannot be substantiated. Neither in all miracles of healing, as the possessed man of the Gadarenes (Lk. 8:26ff.), or of providing for a need, as the feeding of the five thousand (Lk. 9:10ff.), can we find a sermon or a confession of faith.

is the Lord of lords and at the same time the Lord over human life.³² He does not use the miracle in order to enable men to make man an autonomous human being, but precisely to break through the autonomy of a world separated from God and to bind men to God. The second part of the mission command must be viewed within these limitations.

13. The Church as Goal

Thus the clear line of faith has been drawn. Where there is no faith, opposition against the successful execution of the missions command erects itself. Not all men let themselves be led to faith, and thus be saved. As long as the Gospel will be preached, it will always be thus, that through the word of God men must be called out of their environment out of their fellowship. Thereby Christianity moves into opposition with all other religions.

Where fellowship in religion and natural birth are synonymous, no special congregation is necessary for

³²Vicedom's main point is that the miracle is being used as a channel for His message. In this sentence he touches on another facet of this huge concept "miracle." Jesus is Lord. Man's life itself, as we have it, is an image of the Lord. Thus the Lord performed miracles also because man was not created to be sick.

This leads us into an entirely new area of discussion, namely, that the miracles are also signs of the coming Kingdom and of the Messianic Age that had already dawned. And last, but not least, the miracles of Jesus are not only *τερατα* (wonders) for the first century Pharisees or for twentieth century sceptics, but *σημεια* (signs) for those who have the eyes of faith to see.

religion. That is also the case where the religious fellowship is greater than the national fellowship. But the preaching of the Gospel erects a barrier between men because all those who have come to faith are gathered into a special pattern of living--the church. The Christian congregation is something unique in the world of religions. Through it a sign of the Kingdom of God also comes into being on earth. The congregation is the fellowship of those who, in faith, have placed themselves in the confidence of their Lord and who live in anticipation of Him.

Her members also belong to the nation. She partakes of this life; she influences the nation through her proclamation and through her other life; she vicariously brings the nation to God and nevertheless she is a factor sui generis with her own laws for growing. She belongs to the Lord and yet He has placed her so that her allegiance to the nation is also important. If she would and could detach herself from Him, then immediately she would be a political-social body and would no longer be distinguished from the heathen forms of religion. However, if she would become a fellowship of faith with the nation then she would no longer be a congregation of Jesus Christ. Her dual membership constitutes her sui generis.

Through God's word and through the fellowship of the disciples among one another she is subordinate solely to

the Lord, and from His position she must now go her way under the judgment of God either with the people or even against the people. But she cannot detach herself from Him. She has a part in the national life and yet as a congregation she cannot accept for herself the nation's boundaries, for she belongs to the one church of Jesus Christ and has her brothers and sisters among all nations. She has to suffer in the course of world's history, but she is not subject to this as are the other nations, for she always stands in the status of continuity which proceeds from Jesus Christ and leads to His coming.

In her are gathered the children of God from all lands, joined in faith to the one Lord (Jn. 11:52). There are people of different races in her midst, but these differences do not assert themselves. Even if she can assemble into local congregations and thereby bear special, local characteristics, yet she lives according to the laws of the one church. The peculiarities of her human dress are not the deciding thing, but the common faith and the one Lord, Who has riches for all (Rom. 10:12; Col. 3:11). She is in this life and cooperates in this life's formulation according to its own laws, but she does not accommodate herself to that life as men would desire to formulate it according to their own ideals.

And if the church has become a body in which the old

national and social differences have been abolished, then she anticipates the new people of God who are under the government of the heavenly *Κύριος*, and who await His *ἑαρουσία*, His triumphal royal entry.³³

14. The Significance of Baptism for Missions

The appropriation of salvation always takes place in such a way that a believer is enrolled in the church and through her enlists a group of believers who with him serve the same Lord. This union with the church is given through the one faith as well as through the one baptism, through which the church on earth visibly takes on form. Not faith alone, not the word alone, not the worship of Christ alone makes clear the special position of the church in the world, otherwise the millions of secret worshipers of Christ in India or Japan or among Mohammedans would have to belong to the church--but baptism is the one thing that accomplishes this. Secret "Christians" immediately forfeit baptism for the reason that they do not want to give up the union with the nation and its religion. Baptism will separate them from both. It is the sign of the Kingdom among the nations and this makes it an act of confession to Christ before the world. Through it it becomes clear to all the world that the believers were willing to be joined to the Lord and

³³R. Liechtenhan, Die Urchristliche Mission (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1946), p. 46.

thereby effected the separation from the old religious fellowship.

It is significant that baptism is understood exactly in this way by the heathen while we Christians have always been hesitant to recognize this external side of baptism as important. The heathen generally do not object if their countrymen hear the word of God or if they worship Christ. For that their religion has room. However, when anyone permits himself to be baptized, then they become intolerant. Then the resistance sets in. Thus baptism becomes for the heathen the evidence that the persons baptized have made inroads into heathendom and the nation. Through baptism the Lord makes His church a special power in the world.

It appears from the beginning as a decisive act for enrollment³⁴ in the congregation and as a self-evident, non-debatable fact. Therein also lies a permanence of surrender which refers them back to the will of the Resurrected One.³⁵

While G. Warneck lays emphasis on baptism as the means of missions, even if in a very unclear way, because on the one hand (as Duerr points out) he wants to recognize the objective power of baptism and, on the other hand, he stresses the conversion more emphatically, Hoekendijk hardly mentions

³⁴If we accept Liechtenhan without modification baptism would lose its Means of Grace aspect here. Vicedom is perhaps once again restricting himself for the sake of clarity.

³⁵Liechtenhan, op. cit., p. 46.

the sacrament and ascribes to it no constructive character whatever. That is certainly surprising, since exactly through baptism, which through the teaching produces the discipleship, the congregation becomes evident as an eschatological factor. Through baptism the church of the last times will be set up in all nations. The apostle places heavy emphasis on this (I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28).

The believers belong to the body of Christ through baptism; unbelievers and un-baptized do not have a share in this body. Through baptism the congregation of Jesus Christ comes into being among all nations and thus becomes the proof that mankind as the property of God, in its sin and redemption, is a union. Through it the congregation becomes at the same time the token of the promise that God will restore this union, even though it be through judgment.

Thereby we have made vital statements concerning baptism, for this external human sign is only an emanation of that which Christ gives to His believers. The point is raised that this gift of Christ in baptism can also be nothing else than what has been communicated through the word. Everything that is ascribed to the sacrament in Scripture is also given to the word. But thereby the other kind of communication is bypassed. The word can be heard and ignored, taken seriously or avoided. But in the sacrament every individual is fully placed in a position of decision

and must permit God to deal with him.³⁶ He can pretend; he could, for the sake of tradition, do this, but he cannot avoid the dealing of God. Through this dealing of God, the sacrament always becomes the effectual word which has the distinguishing marks of grace and judgment.

Baptism is at the same time the token of a new covenant and incorporates the baptized into the new nation of God. It is not a superficial act of reception into the congregation, which is what many missionaries have made it. It took the place of circumcision (Col. 2:11). It is exactly the heathen Christians who emphasize the covenant character of baptism. It is for them a sign of the faithfulness of God Who has visibly received the believers into His fellowship. They know that in their total personal appropriation of the reconciliation through Christ they have become God's own (Eph. 1:14; Tit. 2:14). Because all this is done in baptism by God, no one can pluck the baptized out of His Hand. Nobody can annul baptism or replace it. The baptized can only decide whether the act of God on him should be an act of grace or judgment.

However, it is through the blood of the covenant that the baptized person becomes the property of God. In baptism

³⁶Such a statement would raise doubts concerning infant baptism. Vicedom's concern is that even in the case of an infant the parents must make a decision in the face of their non-Christian environment.

everything that Christ through cross and resurrection has done for him is given to the believer. The baptized have put on Christ, i.e. they now have part in everything in Christ. The history of their new life is actually their history with Jesus (Rom. 6:3-5), and because they, in faith, permit this history of Christ to be repeated in them, they may also fully rejoice, as redeemed, in the consummation (Tit. 3:5-7; I Pet. 1:3f.).

For the purpose of this faith remaining and for keeping the faith in the new life, baptism creates the fellowship of the baptized, the church. They have become through baptism the body of Christ or a temple in which, through Christ's act of salvation, they are so intimately connected with Christ that they can also among themselves have that fellowship in which the new life makes a place. Here they are under love so that one member bears the other and becomes for him a helper to life. As a congregation they are ever and again hearers of the word; they assemble for prayer and doxology. The new life is deeply rooted. It must constantly be nourished by the gifts which God offers to His church. Through its divine services the church places herself again and again on the side of God in a hostile world. In the church of the baptized the government of God and the new life connected with it becomes visible (Hebr. 9:4; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:12; Gal. 3:27).

To become a believer is therefore only the first goal. The next step is to live in the church as a believer and in it and with it to serve the Lord. Thereby it is implied that the Kingdom of God can exist only in actu. The word of the covenant, the sign of the covenant, are constituent factors. Thereby self-evidently it is not said that the Kingdom is identical with the church. Quite apart from the fact that there are also hypocrites among the baptized, the Kingdom of God is much larger than the tentative church. This church can, to be sure, always only be a previous form or an interim state. If she would understand this, she would conduct herself more according to the coming Kingdom, and not exhaust herself in "churchianity."

15. The Lord's Supper and Mission

In order to nourish the new life created in baptism, to keep the believers in the gifts of salvation, to strengthen their fellowship, and to bind them closer to the Lord, Christ has given the Lord's Supper as a covenant meal. We would, however, not understand this adequately if we saw in it only the means of edification. Also the Lord's Supper bears the mission character.

Jesus would, through the act of Holy Communion, not only interpret the meaning of His death and reveal the universal meaning of the covenant based on Him, but would also pledge the partakers, when they receive and enjoy the bread and wine, to faithfulness and to the subsequent expansion upon the many. To that extent

Holy Communion can be designated as the hour of birth for heathen mission.³⁷

A fact that seems to be even more important than this daring accent of the Lord's Supper is the fact that the Lord's Supper sharply offsets the church of the Lord's Supper from the world and from the nation with its religion. The Lord's Supper is not only the expression of the innermost fellowship between the exalted and returning Lord with the members of His body, it is also a fellowship of the members among each other which is based not only on the forgiveness so that in the highest degree it constitutes the congregation but it also distinguishes the believers from the rest of the people. Among all people the joint-eating is the expression of fellowship of those who have the same faith and on the basis of forgiveness live at peace with one another.

In the Lord's Supper it becomes plain that fellowship with Christ excludes every other fellowship. Therefore Paul according to I Cor. 10 and 11 could use the Lord's Supper in order to combat heathendom,³⁸ the fellowship with the demons,

³⁷Liechtenhan, op. cit., p. 40.

³⁸Vicedom sees the proximity of St. Paul's exhortations against heresies and divisions to the references to the Lord's Supper as being more than accidental. Thus, for example, the exhortations against heresies (I Cor. 11:18f.) immediately precede St. Paul's fine commentary on the significance and meaning of the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:20ff.). Thus the point can be made that the Lord's Supper can be used as a means for exhortations against heathendom.

and thereby the other kingdom. At the same time through the Lord's Supper the church again and again becomes the confessing church. Through this celebration she makes known to the world the perfected redemption (I Cor. 11:26). Thus the gifts of God in the sacraments also have a dual aspect: They serve the salvation of men and are at the same time the contents of the witness of the saved. Therefore the sacraments are of great significance for mission work among the nations.

16. The Church as a Power Sui Generis

All these mission means, these gifts of God, set the church apart from its environment. It is a mystery that through these mission means the church actually makes an impression on its environment when she herself desires to be nothing else than a church of the Lord which came into existence through these mission means. The more she desires to be this and only this, the more she will make her influence felt upon the world. Through her witness the nations will gradually be christianized.

Hence the question arises here: How does the church conduct herself before people who have been christianized? Even when all members of the nation have been baptized, the boundary between church and nation is not abolished in the national church, for the outward appearance will not only disappear between Christians and non-Christians, but

between faith and unbelief and hence within the church. Through sin which also works its way into the congregation, it will always be the case that there are tares among the wheat. Therefore the congregation will also be compelled to ever and again draw the line in a Christianized nation, when a Christian life does not appear. She confronts the people in such a way that she again and again woos the lukewarm and indifferent.

However, the strongest line of demarcation ensues through the discipline which, to be sure, is never to be regarded as a punishment, but as a means of love. Church discipline is not a legalistic action, but it is care of souls in concrete form. Through church discipline the church confronts herself not only over against unbelief, but she thereby always assembles herself about the Lord. For that reason discipline is at the same time an expression of the witness. It is not surprising that discipline and missions are intimately connected. Where through discipline the knowledge is kept alive that men must be saved, it is not difficult for the church to confront herself in the apostolate to the world. Thus missions also receives from the congregation the desire to have regard for the erring and indifferent.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH OF SALVATION

1. The Church and the Kingdom of God

The Lord gathers His believers into His congregation and keeps them there through Word and Sacrament. Thus the congregation becomes the bearer of the revelation in this world. She possesses something that others do not have. She knows the will of God. She knows about the power of prayer and has the gift of eternal life. This congregation receives also through baptism the authorization for testifying of God to fellowmen. To that end God gives to her the gifts.

God forces no one into His new creation. He begins with something that He has placed in men in His creation and now makes use of this gift through the operation of His Spirit for the church and for the welfare of men. Thus there are within the congregation a multiplicity of gifts and talents. None of these gifts, however, are to serve to exalt the one and to enslave the other. In the Kingdom of God this law of the world is no longer valid. The more gifts one has from God, the more he is called into the service and witness. All that we can do in the Kingdom of God is to express the gratitude to God in that we return in service the gifts which He has given to us.

Through baptism we have also become citizens of the Kingdom. But we must never make the mistake of equating the church with the Kingdom. We must be aware that this Kingdom still is concealed among us. The church belongs to the Kingdom, but it does not present it in its greatness, fullness, and glory. The Kingdom is much greater than the congregation because to it belongs the church of all times, the angels, and the whole world of God, and yet also the congregation may be included (Rev. 1:6).

One must not expect that the Kingdom of God can be made visible through the congregation and that everything that the church does and represents is an expression of the Kingdom of God. As far as Satan may break into the church, she also belongs to the other kingdom; and yet also the Kingdom of God is present in her if she lives in faith in the death of reconciliation and in the resurrection. In the faith and in the witness the victory of Jesus Christ becomes evident, and yet it is also concealed in it because only the eyes of faith can see it.

As much as the Kingdom is still hidden due to the weakness of the congregation and the heterogeneous action of God in the Kingdom, yet it may still experience that it is the Kingdom of power because it creates new life in the person who has come to faith (I Cor. 4:20). It is present in the congregation to that extent, and thereby among men, as God works directly and men permit themselves to be called

to Him. But it will first become fully present then, when Jesus Christ shall return with might (Mk. 9:1). The congregation always lives in the prelude of the Kingdom. Therefore her witness and service must be performed under the sign of the coming Kingdom and in hope.

2. The Church of the Apostolate

Through the endowment of the Holy Ghost the church has been called to a witness for the coming Kingdom. Every baptized person has the duty and authority for such witness. The tension between missions and the young churches could only arise as an issue because the mission did not take seriously the gifts of baptism and therewith also declined to those baptized members the equal rights to service. Missions did not understand that baptism equipped the heathen Christians with the same gifts as the other members of the Kingdom of Christ and that these consequently had the same rights and obligations.

It was therefore practically a divestment and subordination of the young churches that they were not trained and admitted by missions for the spreading of the Kingdom.¹

¹The concept has too often been promoted that the mission "has arrived" when a foreign mission station has been built and the missionary is preaching there. Missouri Synod missionary policy in New Guinea has been the direct reversal of this trend. It works heavily with the native lay-worker, emphasizes the constant outreach of the word, and

They were deprived of their mission work, as if the Kingdom of God was dependent on the proof of a definite level of culture! In this way missions had to appear as a privilege of the old Christianity and therewith as the churchly expansion of the western world. Many complaints against missions would not have arisen if it had understood that in mission service, and therewith in the apostolate, the vital expression of the congregation as a member of the body of Christ had been given.

Where the congregation is not permeated by the apostolate, where authority to witness is denied to her and no freedom of service granted to her, there she cannot return the gifts which God has bestowed on her. She must therefore famish in her life and must continually struggle for the retention of these gifts. In other words, the mystery of these gifts is that she only there puts on her appearance where she may fulfill her duty.

The result is that the hearing and worshiping congregation continually prays for these gifts and has no inkling that God answers these prayers in over-abundance if her faith would be allowed to be obedience. Because this is the case, we have actually a pleasure-seeking (epicurean) Christianity, which exhausts itself in building and

de-emphasizes permanent structures as prerequisites for preaching. The result has been the promise of a wonderful future for the New Guinea church.

and constructing, but never becomes the living building. As long as the service of the office is performed only under the aspect of the care of the church, it can have no influence on the outside world. For that reason one experiences so little of the power of the Kingdom. As much as the hearing of the word and the doxology of the liturgy belongs to the proper worship of God and thus to the faith, so much do these really receive their fulness and purpose when they permit themselves to be used in the sending. Where the potential of service and thus of obedience is hindered, there the life is crippled.

The service of the congregation is the counterpart to its salvation and its position in the world. Both are given from the viewpoint of eschatology, determined by the return of Christ and the Judgment. Salvation is there because there is a judgment and damnation. Therefore the congregation must constantly call attention to that whereby salvation is given. She is in Jesus Christ the decisive factor in the history of mankind. We can therefore fulfill the witness of the Kingdom only in that we proclaim the promise of the Kingdom in such a way that it already has come. Therefore the church with its knowledge of salvation is placed in the service of revelation and salvation. She has become the church of salvation through Jesus Christ and can therefore bring salvation also to the nations.

3. The Witness

Through baptism Christians receive the same characteristics of witnesses that were given in the early Christian church. Certainly we cannot be witnesses of fact in the sense that we would be if eye-witnesses. We can only witness to what has been given to us in faith. But faith is the assurance of that which we hope for. Therefore Christians are true witnesses of the truth to whom that which according to the Scripture has been accomplished through Jesus Christ has become an incontrovertible certainty and thus their own conviction. Thus Christians can through their living conviction in faith pass on as a truth that which has come to pass in Jesus Christ and confer it to the world. Where the congregation proclaims the truth, there she must also be conscious of the fact that she thus confronts the world with the truth and is placed in a position of life or death.

Precisely in the witnessing of the truth it becomes clear that in the last analysis it is God who carries forward His mission and uses the congregation in the service of salvation, for it is He who through His revelation enters into judgment with men. Every earnest proclamation leads the messenger into a situation of judgment. He must in this appear as God's witness. This leads to a judgment over man. God reasons with men (Is. 43:9-13; 44:7-11). He summons the

nations into court² where it will be decided whether He is God. In this trial the members of God's congregation will be His witnesses (Is. 43:10; 44:8). The witness of the congregation makes the hearer of the message the accused, who now comes under the accusation.

This situation became evident in the Passion of Jesus and in the court proceedings to which the apostles had to submit (Acts 4:5; 7:12). Primarily the apostles appear as the accused; but they always make themselves (because they cannot assert anything else but what they appeal to the Lord and His revelation) accusers so that the ones who judge become the judged. Accordingly in the last analysis it is God who leads men into judgment through His congregation and who announces the verdict. Thus, already in the judgment which it conducts, the message of the Gospel becomes the message of salvation.

4. The Church of Suffering

God's entering into judgment with man is, as His other dealings, a sign of His royal government over men. He could as King and Lord destroy men, but for the time being He only summons them to an accounting. Also here He takes the road of foolishness and weakness, which in this case again proves itself wiser and more salutary than all the wisdom of men.

²Vicedom contributes a very good view of the Judgment which opens up a whole new concept of the Christian's life on earth.

God leads the men whom He desires to gain into judgment in this way,³ that He leads His church into suffering. But in the suffering of the church the depravity of men, their lies, their selfishness, their brutality, the power of sin and the prevailing demonic power ever and again become apparent. The Lord of the church reveals Himself in such a way that He Himself suffers with His own and in this suffering permits men in their wickedness and ungodliness to come to naught. For that reason in the suffering of Christians their message becomes a proof of the truth (the message itself being one to martyrdom).

Thus Christ's death for redemption becomes a witness for God (I Tim. 2:6). Viewed in such a way, the suffering is not a defeat, but the aggressive accusation which God raises over against the world and therewith becomes the most powerful attack on the world. The tribulations of the church are a proof that God in His mission is at work in a special way to gain men. In times of suffering God desires to use the church in a special way as a tool of the apostolate. He would advance His Heilsgeschichte with men a step further.

Therefore the periods of suffering are also periods in which the promises to His church find fulfillment in a special way. These periods make it possible for the church

³As the statement stands it can be taken with a Calvinistic double predestination sense. One must refer to chapter V, section 3 ("The Gospel is intended for all men.") to avoid this conclusion.

to enter into suffering and to be used. It is an essential part of the sobriety of revelation that God has not permitted any illusions for His church; He has given no promises that redemption should run its course in a supernatural spiritual sense so that the Christian may expect a good life on the basis of his conversion. On the contrary He did not leave the church in the dark as to the fact that His church must suffer for His sake and He therein reveals Himself as the true God in this, that He tells her this (Mt. 10:17ff.; Mk. 13:9-13; Jn. 16:1ff.).

Thus God enters into a contrast to other religions which promise their followers well-being and regard suffering as a proof that man does not stand in the favor of the gods. In all heathen religion, life is a result of religion, and in nearly all of them fortune is equated with salvation. God however does not redeem from suffering, but He redeems in Jesus Christ through the suffering and thereby gives to suffering a special meaning in His plan of salvation, also with individuals. Thereby He makes suffering a special privilege to His church, a co-suffering with Christ (I Pet. 4:12ff.; Acts 4:41). We know that the suffering of many may also have another meaning. It could have been brought about through sin. It could be caused in that the Christians are involved in the fate of their nation. We need not examine that here. Suffice it to say that the suffering of the church always has a special meaning because she is God's property and tool.

She can travel no other road than the one which the Lord Himself traveled (Rom. 8:17). Through this suffering the church takes part in the government of Christ and thereby becomes an eschatological force in which the signs of the last time especially become evident. She is not removed from these signs, but she receives in them her mandate to vicariously co-suffer for the world. She is reconciled with God and therefore always stands in the service of reconciliation. It is precisely in suffering that she repeatedly exhibits her special position in the world and proves that she is willing to subordinate herself with her whole existence unto the Lord.

The suffering of the church has a larger power of witnessing than the word alone. It becomes the witness of fact, a confirmation of the word. For that reason the martyrs always occupy a first place among the witnesses. The flight from suffering was therefore always rightfully regarded as apostacy, as a denial of the Lord. The refusal to suffer is equated with the rejection of the sending of the church. She thereby separates herself from the body of Christ (Lk. 24:14ff.). Therefore the churchly office has the mandate to prepare the church for the times of suffering (Acts 14:22), even as the Lord pointed His disciples to this ultimate witness.

In this suffering the church may have the certainty that the Lord Who preceded her on the way of suffering will

bestow His presence in a special way. In this way, in conjunction with her, He directs the sending of the church to a special performance within the framework of the *Missio Dei* (Jn. 15:28f.; Mt. 10:20-21; Jn. 14:26; Lk. 12:11f.). He does this in that He is near her with His Spirit and thereby places Himself ever and again before judgment, and enters into suffering along with the church.

It is significant that recent mission theology refers to the suffering of the congregation and endeavors to clear up the understanding of the church, but yet it hardly enters into a discussion of the meaning of suffering in the *Heilsgeschichte* and eschatology. We today have a Christianity that shies away from suffering, which always dreams of a Christianized world, appeals to the rights of men and the freedom of conscience and makes a claim for their validity in order to escape suffering, to make that suffering impossible instead of recognizing their call to suffer. Suffering does not fit into modern man's need for churchly security and the modern philosophy of men. It also does not agree with the thoughts which most people have of the Kingdom of God.

The thought of suffering appears in contemporary theology only where there is an occasion to speak of the small flock of the remnant which the church will represent in the last time. Here only the apostolate is spoken of, but not of suffering. Therefore the question arises whether the

reference to the remnant, which really looks at reality as it is, is not a desperate flight to the last possibility of the existence of the church.

The Lord has not left us in the dark over the fact that the world will always challenge the church's right of existence. The Book of Revelations shows in an overwhelming way the way of the church in this world. She will always be a congregation that is persecuted, attacked, and experiencing suffering. She will always find herself in the status of a foreigner, and on a pilgrimage (I Pet. 2:11). For her the wandering people of God are the prototype. Exactly through this pilgrimage God with His church arrives at the goal of the *Missio Dei*; precisely on this pilgrimage it becomes clear that God daily bestows upon His congregation His presence to the end of the world. There are, above all, three essential characteristics of the message which makes the congregation appear as homeless and dangerous for the government of the world.

1. The congregation is, through the special position given in baptism, a proof that there is another lord--a Lord of heaven and earth, Whom all men must serve and according to His will carry out their own government. Thereby the congregation becomes a witness against every government which would conduct itself in an absolute way. The congregation, through its existence and through the ordinance of its life, always points to the one Lord to Whom also the government is

responsible. Thereby she destroys the dream that the welfare of the fellowship of the people in the last analysis could be a determining factor and that this alone could only be brought about as the rulers, on the basis of their position, would have it.

2. The congregation is the body of Christ and thereby has fellowship with all members of His body. Whoever does not identify himself with the congregation of the Lord in the whole world and opposes it cannot belong to the body of Christ. The congregation cannot take into consideration any national, ethnic, and racial judgments. On the contrary, she must destroy these if she would not become unfaithful to the brotherhood founded through the death of Jesus.

3. There is an eternal accounting and, through the government of Jesus and His return, a judgment. Man can only regard himself as an autonomous lord so long as the return has not become an established fact.⁴ When he tries to hinder the proclamation of judgment and damnation he can thereby only reject Christ and His salvation. Through the judgment message every self-redemption, every nihilism, and every damning of men collapses.⁵ It opens the eyes to the

⁴The writer senses a note of satire. Certainly Vicedom would agree that even at this point man is under the judgment of God. It is just that the "Day of the Lord" has not as yet arrived that man can deceive himself and consider himself an autonomous lord.

⁵It is impossible to tell whether this is an objective

real relationships.

For these reasons no other alternative is left for the world but to take a stand against the congregation and to lead her into suffering in its rejection, limitations, and assaults. The world believes that through these means it is able to thwart the message of the congregation, the proclamation of the truth, which for the world is foolishness. God is so great that He makes also this attitude of the world serve His mission. Because His government is different than that of the world, the witness of the congregation precisely through the suffering must shine forth so much more clearly.

In the last analysis this is the point where the decisive battle between the government of God and of the devil, which reaches its apex in the anti-Christ, is waged. In this discussion which, with all the joy over the success of missions, gives us the necessary sober look, missions becomes the counterpart⁶ of the anti-Christ (II Thess. 2:6). Therefore the suffering of the church must constantly become evident in a special way in the mission.

This suffering the congregation can endure cheerfully

or subjective genitive. In either case, whether it be man's damning of other things or the damning of man himself, it is applicable.

⁶Here again the elusive "Gegenueber" is used. The idea is that the Anti-Christ and the suffering of missions are a vis-a-vis to one another.

and thereby give effect to her witness because she may have the certainty that God through His mission is leading her to her final goal. Through this hope the congregation is internally separated from the world in which she must live in order to give her testimony. She knows that in this struggle the world shall not have the last word, but the Lord will, Who suffers with His congregation and terminates the battle through His intervention. Therefore the congregation does not battle for the world, but for the Kingdom to which she already belongs through the death and resurrection of Jesus. She is already translated to the heavenly Kingdom (Eph. 2:5). Therefore she seeks the things which are above (Col. 3:1) and seeks the heavenly Jerusalem as her home (Hebr. 12:22). She is thereby placed into the church of all eons which has already traveled this way with her. This overwhelming hope is the supporting foundation for the attitude of the congregation.

The suffering of the congregation culminates in the redemption which, with the establishment of the Kingdom through Jesus Christ, is given. With this God concludes His Missio. Then the congregation has fulfilled her mandate. Then she may sing the song of victory of the redeemed, not as a ruling congregation, not as a congregation which can report great mission results, not as a triumphant congregation, but as a congregation that has overcome, which has a full share in the victory of Jesus through redemption (Rom. 8:31ff.). Then also

she may with her Lord Who in His Missio traveled the way of the cross, have a full share in His glory. Then the perfect fellowship with God will be restored again. Then God has come to the goal with His Missio. In the new Jerusalem no mission will be necessary. But the church is now, in the interim between the ascension and the *παρουσία*, all the more urgent; she alone can proclaim the way into fellowship with God and, before the Judgment comes, can save many people who stand outside the congregation of Jesus.

TRANSLATOR'S APPENDIX

A Theology of Missions

The title is not to suggest that this is the final word on such a difficult topic. Certainly after men such as Wilhelm Andersen admit, even in the title of one of his books and a subsequent article, that many questions are not yet answered, it would be fool-hardy for the writer of this paper to state that he now has the last word.¹ It is rather with the idea that Georg Vicedom has something valuable to offer to the discussion that the writer has attempted to make statements regarding a theology of missions. The following statements, consequently, are not original with the writer, but have been conceived by either picking up an accent mark or accepting an exclamation point in Georg Vicedom's Missio Dei. The writer holds that these statements cannot actually be appreciated or accepted without the context of the preceding six chapters.

At the heart of a theology of missions is the question of the potential universality of the Christian faith and the right view of the confrontation of Christianity with other living world faiths. These two concerns are the unifying thread in the statements that follow.

¹Wilhelm Andersen, Towards a Theology of Mission (London: SCM Press, 1955) and "Further Toward a Theology of Mission," The Theology of the Christian Mission, edited by Gerald H. Andersen (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1961), pp.300ff.

God is a Sovereign God, the Creator and Ruler over individual, tribe, nation, world, nether-world, and cosmos.

The Sovereign God is a loving and faithful God Who remains true to Himself and the covenant He has founded. In the missio of His Son, in which He shows that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, is found the content and model of the Missio Dei to the world.

Mission is completely the work of God. He has carried and is carrying it out in the world to all men without restriction. He guarantees and is responsible for its final success.

Man, the creation of God, is of value to God and is not allowed the possibility of neutrality. He records and displays either a positive or negative position through his reception and use of the word, baptism, and communion.

The Holy Spirit-filled new man, the apostle, the disciple, the missionary Christian, everyone is entrusted with a responsibility to God and is a representative of Christ. Thus functioning as a means for God, the Christian's witnessing in the language, culture, environment, and actions of the people becomes his very breath and life. The crutch of dependence upon "church officialdom" is discarded.

The church is not a self-sufficient and self-preserving ecclesiastical machine, but as the new people of God, it is the pilgrim people of God. It is the event as well as the institution, the function of the apostolate, the sign and

pledge of the Kingdom of God. God founded the church to free and claim men for His Kingdom and thus it is the Kingdom of God, and not the church, which is the goal of the Missio Dei.

The church misunderstands its purpose and essence if it does not see itself as both a coming together and a sending out.

In the church's sending forth and in the resultant clash between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, fortified as it is on all sides with all other religions, it is the Kingdom of God which attacks and moves on the offensive. Thus, in a seemingly sluggish and complacent world, there smolder the flames of a battle that promises and will bring inevitable suffering to the church.

Nevertheless, the writer feels compelled to introduce one final facet. A "theology," if really of fundamental significance, is a most practical affair demanding new decisions and followed by new strategy of action. A sound theology is not simply a matter of intellectual delight and enjoyment, but is the most practical thing in the world. A marriage of clear thought with vigorous action is the essence of a true theology, especially in relation to the church's missionary calling. To be sure, the absence and consequent formulation of a theology of missions is of fundamental concern to missions, both for sound missiological thinking and for missionary strategy. However, when "theology" comes to mean merely a "theoretical formulation" then it is nothing but a repetitious affair without much effect.

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