

THE DRIEBERGEN PAPERS

Mission - Worship and Mission - Zone Humaine

Upon the invitation of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Western European Working Group of the Department on Studies in Evangelism met March 15-18, 1965 at the Pastoral Centre Hydepark in Driebergen, Holland. It was the fourth meeting of the Group following conferences at Bossey (February 1963), at Villemetrie near Paris (October 1963) and at Esslingen, Germany (September 1964).

The Driebergen papers follow up the so-called Esslingen papers which were published in CONCEPT VIII, November 1964 (the German version appeared in CONCEPT, Deutsche Ausgabe IV, December 1964). There is one exception! Work for the paper on Mission started in Driebergen only, although the Group had continuously dealt with the theme since its beginning. Working papers had been prepared by Martin Conway, J.G. Davies, J.C. Hoekendijk, Hans Jochen Margull, Mady Thung, and Theo Vogt.

The papers are written for further discussion in the churches. They are working papers. The late John Baillie once remarked that "working papers are to be chewed upon, not to be swallowed".

A.

Mission

Steadfast love and faithfulness
will meet; righteousness and peace
will kiss each other. Faithfulness
will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down
from the sky. Yea, the Lord will
give what is good, and our land will
yield its increase. Righteousness
will go before him, and make his
footsteps a way (Psalm 85:10-13).

1. The present discussion about the renewal of the Church begins from the question of mission.

It has been our task, in our study on "The Missionary Structure of the Congregation", to understand the church in the light of mission. The New Testament talks of the church in various contexts and with various emphases. Today we are discovering anew that it is always a question of the church caught up in mission. The New Testament, we would say, is a missionary document.

The aim of our study is to make mission a fruitful impulse for the renewal of the church. We are after possibilities of discovering and developing structures of missionary congregations.

2. What does "mission" mean?

- a) Missio Dei - In the mission of Jesus we recognize God as a sending God. God's people experiences God's Lordship in being sent. The witness and obedience of the church are determined by this experience.¹
- The world is recognized by the church sent in Christ, is experienced and accepted as creation in movement, as the content and the goal of God's act of sending.
 - The church of Jesus Christ stands in the service of the sending God. This mission is always determining her commission and constantly shaping the forms in which she lives and works.
- b) Missions These are missionary forms of the church in the past, the present and the future, historically determined and therefore transitory forms of obedience in reference to the missio Dei.

3. The missio Dei is manifest in history

- a) The missio Dei is experienced in both the Old and the New testament as the epiphany of God. The apostles receive their commission in the event of their exalted Lord's appearance to them.² While the church awaits the epiphany that is yet to

¹D. Stoodt sums up his article on "Mission in the self-understanding of the early church" (EMZ 21, 1964, 1-21): "How they are to organize themselves, which forms of life and which languages are appropriate, even who God is, who Jesus Christ is, who the Holy Spirit is; these are questions whose answers cannot be known as it were in themselves or of oneself, they can only be discovered in the missionary situation, in regard to it and as a consequence of it. The early church cannot be understood within the history of ideas but only in the history of mission.

The New Testament is a missionary document. Not just because it teaches about mission or because it lets us see into the missionary forms of the early church but because it owes its existence to mission, to the proclamation of Jesus Christ and to the movement of mission that inevitably grow from that. It is witness to the life of the early church, and therefore to the life of every church as life in mission. We correspond to the New Testament when we ourselves are a missionary document."

come in the Parousia of Christ, her life is determined by the tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet'. For the church it is this tension which produces the dynamic of history and brings on historical change. History thus becomes an irreversible process and one directed by its goal. Men are brought out of their isolation from history and are introduced into the multitude of possible ways of taking up their historical responsibilities. Blessing and curse are placed before them. (Deut. 5)

- b) The missio Dei, with the cross and resurrection at its centre, brings world history into a crisis; it is always leading history out of the old and into the new. Hope is thereby created, an active expectation of good in the transforming of the world for Christ's sake, a distinguishing of the good from the evil, of the old from the new.
- c) Christians then know and grasp the changes in history in the perspective of the missio Dei, since in faith their actual past and their actual future is presented to them.

- Since faith trusts in God's promise it can dare to involve itself in actual history. New forms of responsibility for the world will arise. It becomes urgent for faith to act towards change in the history of the church and of the world.

- - Since faith lives from God's faithfulness it can dare to expose the inherited and existing forms and contents of church and world to the testing of history. In this the central question will be whether what exists is still serving the missio Dei or not. What is useful can then be constructively taken up; that which is a hindrance cannot be abandoned. In such a way the necessary process of tradition can be critically carried further.

4) The missio Dei compels the church to take a historical form.

The church, obedient to the missio Dei, can only realize its commission in the form of missions conditioned by their own age. These forms, if they are to be able to set up signs of 'Shalom' (3) in the world, must have the form of a servant (Phil. 2.5ff.). This involves a certain proper institutionalization but demands

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In a study of "The Passion and Easter Narratives in Matthew" (Dasileia. Walter Freytag zum 60. Geburtstag, Stuttgart 1959, 41) H.W. Dartsch reaches the following conclusion: "The missionary commandment is thus not only the consequence of the epiphany; in his epiphany the Kyrios reveals himself as the Lord of the whole world."

at the same time a constant readiness to abandon institutional forms and replace them with new ones. This leads naturally to the question whether the church is ready in this respect to accept the implications of Jesus' saying "He who loses his life will find it." (Mt. 1039).

a) If we examine traditional understandings of the aim of mission(s) (and the forms which follow from these) to see how far their purposes can today serve the *missio Dei*, we can see the following:

- "Mission(s) are really aimed at the conversion of individuals": The gospel demands and brings out the personal response of individuals but forbids all one-sided concern about the salvation of one's own soul because it is after shalom as a social event.
- "Mission(s) are really aimed at the "planting of churches": As they respond to the gospel men gather in churches, but these churches are caught up in the further process of mission. Moreover not all the fruits of the gospel are found in the churches - the gospel aims at shalom in the transforming of the world.

The following other traditional aims of mission would have to be similarly examined - the christianisation of a people, the building of the Kingdom of God, the calling to the obedience of faith, the call to individuals and groups to make decisions and come apart, etc. Since shalom is a social and many-sided event, and since modern society leads us into pluralism we shall have to formulate the aim of our mission(s) in such a way that the manifold involvements and various commissions of Christians in the world are recognized as genuine forms of obedience to the *missio Dei*.

b) "He is our peace." We understand our missions to be movements that participate in the *missio Dei*, which is to sum up all things in Christ, - and are therefore led to set up many signs of God's shalom in the world. Shalom is salvation, peace...

Today, we find examples of the setting up of 'signs of shalom', among other movements, some of which take place quite without notice, in the racial freedom movement in the USA, the Aktion in "Suhnezeichen" in Germany, in the presence of the worker priests in France, in the venture of interconfessional groups in Holland, in the industrial missions of England, or America, in the work at Riesi in Sicily, in the Telephone Samaritans, in the involvement of Academies and lay institutes, in many sorts of service for peace.

5) The *missio Dei* embraces both church and world

The *missio Dei* is at work beyond the church (and its various missions). It embraces both church and world. The church serves the *missio Dei* in the world as the basis of the revelation it points to God at work in world history and names him there. The word, baptism, and eucharist, prayer and fellowship are not the instruments of ecclesiastical self-preservation but dynamic pre-

figurations of that which God intends for all men in his shalom. The church exercises therefore the critical function which liberates the world into becoming the kind of world God wills (Rom. 12,2).

The expectation that God is shaping his church anew⁴ compels us to put the following questions; they must be openly and honestly faced.

- How can we accept as genuine forms of church that are new and hitherto unknown to us?
- How can we meet this challenge of other people's view of the church?
- How can we take into the processes of our church life discussion -in-partnership with non-Christians?
- How, when we see a failure or weak point in society, can we fill the gap in an exemplary way?
- How can we gain courage to set up projects shaped to the world, and which are deliberately institutionalized for a limited period?
- How can we be ready for provisional forms, even in the case of church buildings?
- How can we make room for the future in our present decisions and thus arrive at rational planning?
- How can our services of worship, in the light of 1 Corinthians 14, be now at last changed so as to participate in the missio Dei?

4

Walter Freytag (Reden und Aufsätze II, Chr. Kaiser Verlag München 1961, 121) said: "All preaching of the Gospel is a step towards something new.... Of the proclamation of the Gospel something new always comes into being. There always comes into being another church."

5 We recall the questions raised in the Report of Section I of the Montreal Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order:

1. If the Church is the body of the crucified Lord, can it ever expect to be more honored than he?
2. If the glory and victory of the Lord is seen in his being exalted to the cross (Jn. 12, 28-33), can the Church attain a greater glory or exhibit a greater power than by following gladly, even into suffering at the hands of men?

(footnote to be continued on next page)

B.

WORSHIP AND MISSION

I.

The Unity of Worship and Mission

In the New Testament the life and work of Christ are spoken of in terms both of mission and worship. In John 12:49 we read: "The Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak", while in John 6:51 cultic language is employed: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven ...and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." In the same chapter at verse 57 both mission and cult appear together: "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me."

So mission and worship refer to a single totality. This same unity is to be observed in the Pauline epistles. Paul can describe mission by using cultic terms and can equally describe cultic acts in terms of mission. So in Rom. 15:16 he speaks of himself as a "minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the Gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." In Phil. 2:17 he says: "Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith I am glad and rejoice with you all." Paul is also able to employ cultic terms of daily life and of ethical conduct e.g. Rom. 12:1: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." This approach is not peculiarly Pauline, we find the reverse i.e.

(footnote continued)

3. If the Church consists of the followers of the Lord who spent his time with publicans and sinners, why does it look so much like a congregation of scribes and pharisees?
4. If the Lord of the Church was crucified outside the camp (Heb. 13:12) why is the Church so often comfortable within its walls and so hesitant to emigrate to new areas to risk bearing its witness within endeavours to establish justice and mercy, and even where the powers of destruction are at work?
5. How can a Church which tolerates the barriers which separate men today, whether east or west or black and white, face its Lord who has broken down the wall of partition (Eph. 2, 14)?
6. If Christ has set us free to be truly men, how can we escape solidarity with all men, whether they live as if there were no God, or confess Him, whether they do good works or live beyond good and evil?

the cult spoken of in ethical terms, in James: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world" (1:27). As an example of missionary terminology being used of the cult, we may cite 1 Cor. 11:26 where Paul says of the eucharist: "As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Worship therefore is a term which is to be applied to the whole of life and is not to be restricted to specific cultic acts. Conversely, mission embraces not only daily life but also worship services. It is therefore possible to define worship and mission in identical terms. So, to take various phrases from 1 Peter 2, we may say that worship is to "declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called you" - but so is mission. Christians are called to be "a royal priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." This dedication to God, this self-oblation, is both characteristic of true worship, in cult and daily life, and of mission, in cult and daily life. The whole life of the Christian is thus worship and mission.

Because of this virtual identity of worship and mission we are bound to say that only that is authentic worship which combines both the vertical and horizontal dimension i.e. both communion with the transcendent God and mission in the world. In making this affirmation we are not condemning many acts of worship out of hand; we are not sitting in judgement upon others; we are simply saying that for us, who have now appreciated the dimension of mission, worship can henceforth only be authentic if it embraces both the vertical and the horizontal. Such a view seems to be involved in Matthew 5:23 ff. "If", says Jesus, "you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." Here the two dimensions are inextricably linked and the horizontal is represented as necessary to the vertical. Just to enter into the vertical dimension of worship, to offer thy gift, i.e. to commune with God, is not sufficient; brotherly love is an essential part of the whole act.

Nor are cultic acts to be regarded as an escape from the world and so from mission. Worship is not something that happens between the church and God, but between the world and God, the church being no more than an instrument. The church worships, in Christ, on behalf of the world, and indeed as the world (pro-existence, first fruits etc). For we both share and understand the joys, aspirations, failings, and uncertainties of the whole world and are to offer them within the adoration, confession, thanksgiving etc. which the mighty acts of Christ call forth from us.

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7. If Christ was flesh and blood and if he is to be the Lord of all creation, how can we, his followers, so often flee into a spirituality that divorces God from earth and its possibilities?

The worship of God, according to some members of our group, is not to be confined to the church. Insofar as the activities of non-Christians declare the wonderful deeds of God, insofar as their lives bear the marks of self-oblation, some of us wish to recognize there the signs of incipient worship, which becomes fully articulate only through the exercise of the church's royal priesthood. Other members, however, hesitate to use 'worship' for anything other than a conscious response in Christ.

This totality, this unity of worship and mission, of which we have been speaking, has through the centuries become disrupted. Worship ceases to describe the whole of life and is restricted to cultic acts; mission is regarded as an extra activity independent of worship. So the theological investigation of the meaning of worship has gone on apart from a consideration of mission and the modern study of the meaning of mission has largely disregarded worship. Thus arises the problem of the relationship of worship and mission - a problem of our own making which is the consequence of rending the original unity found in the New Testament. We have to re-discover and re-affirm that totality and at the same time enrich our understanding of it by the theological interpretation of worship and mission arrived at independently of each other. Hence our understanding of worship must be given a missionary dimension and equally our understanding of mission must once again be anchored in worship.

II.

Elements in Worship

Cultic acts may be investigated not only from the point of view of sacramental theology i.e. of the specific meaning of baptism and the eucharist, but also from an examination of the separate elements or ingredients that are to be found within them. These elements too demand a missionary interpretation. We would advance the following suggestions, while emphasizing that not all these elements are necessarily to be found in every worship service.

1.

Confession of Sin - Instead of being merely individual, it should be collective. The private sins of each worshipper as well as his social, economic, nation etc. sins should be presented to God.

Absolution - This should not be static but dynamic and outgoing, in the sense that it is only as we forgive others that we ourselves are forgiven. Thus in the absolution is involved the ministry of reconciliation.

2.

Bible Reading - This is not only reading but proclamation. It is both the record of the divine mission and a summons to participate in that mission, hence it is further as proclamation, a means of mission. It must therefore be intelligible to the hearers and the use of modern translation is important.

Sermons - This is an attempt to announce the Gospel message in the thought forms of its hearers. It should contain elements of dialogue, either explicitly or implicitly. It can be prepared by teamwork, taking into account the concrete situations of the contemporary world. It should lead to decisions on precisely defined problems and should issue in a clear message to be passed on to others.

Psalms - The Psalter contains material so diverse that no single statement can cover its context. There are, however, Psalms that declare the universality of God, the suffering of his servants, the hope of divine activity, the importance of secular life etc. All these have relations with the concept of mission.

3. Concerns - This giving out of notices or the making of announcements is an opportunity to bring before the congregation the news from the world, the needs of mankind and of members of the community. It is by these that the context and scope of the church's commission can be defined.

4. Prayers -
(a) Intercession - when both prepared and expressed by a group this will hold the real world before Him who is its origin and end.

(b) Praise and thanksgiving - Praise, which is vocal adoration, acclaims the acts of God in his mission to the world through Christ and the Spirit. Praise declares the wonderful acts of Him who called us, and for those acts we also express thanks. This praise is to be expressed not only by our lips but in our lives i.e. in mission.

(c) Silence - This may allow for reflection, for voiceless wonder and love or for intercession with a missionary intent.

5. Benediction or Blessing - This will not be a cosy rounding-off of the worship service but the sending out of God's servants in mission.

6. Music - What is sung will not be the archaic and individualistic hymns found in most of our collections but the expression of a community which out of a living relationship with today's world worships its Lord in contemporary forms and phrases.

The whole service should have the character of a joyful festival celebrated by the community which worships the risen Lord and Saviour of the world.

III.

The Reformation of Worship for Mission

Hitherto we have been discussing the meaning of worship in terms of mission and the missionary dimension of certain ingredients of worship services. Acceptance of all this need not affect the actual forms of worship currently in use. Nevertheless we are bound to raise the question: Are there not forms of worship services which are archaic, lacking in vitality and are impediments to a realization of the unity of worship and mission? We suspect that there are, and would wish to suggest certain guidelines for producing new models of worship and for its practice.

We would affirm that Christian worship services in the 20th century should be:

1.

Corporate - They must therefore allow for the active participation of all present, they must not be clericalized, they must contain elements of dialogue, they must include actions and not just words - this last involves gestures of adoration familiar to contemporary man as well as sacramental actions as in baptism and eucharist.

2.

Flexible - They should contain both fixed and free elements. Each has its dangers and advantages. Fixed forms can become vain repetitions uttered by rote. Free forms can become clerically dominated and restricted in their scope to the individual taste and capacity of the leader. Fixed forms can provide balance and breadth and continuity and bring something to the worshippers in addition to what they bring themselves. Free prayer can be spontaneous, relevant, and congregational. Either may exert a tyranny; a judicious use of both can help to revitalize worship.

3.

Relevant - Reformation of worship is not primarily a question of liturgiology although the history of one's tradition is not lightly to be disregarded. The worship service must comprise the whole life of the congregation in its missionary outreach and the entire context of that life, if worship in the widest sense is to be maintained. To confine oneself to liturgiology is to be shut up in one part of the life of the church, whereas cultic acts as parts of the whole of life should be open-ended and all-embracing.

4.

Intelligible - All we would need here is to quote I Cor. 14:9. 16.25: "If you in a tongue utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into

the air...how can anyone in the position of an outsider say the 'Amen' to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying?...and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you." In effect, Paul is saying that when worship is intelligible, it is also missionary. But these verses also raise the whole question of the part the 'outsider' is to play in the critique of existing forms of worship and in the creation of new ones. If worship and mission belong together and if the 'outsider' is the one who must judge whether worship is intelligible or not, then it is the church's duty to ask these 'outsiders' to criticize all the elements of worship (confession of sin, sermon, etc.). It may be that the 'outsider' will speak on behalf of many Christians who do not know or who do not have the courage to say that they do not understand. So, if worship and mission belong together, if the liturgical and the profane are interwoven in the New Testament, if we are ready to accept I Cor. 14 as a sign-post for our reflection on worship, we must ask: how can we enable these concepts to take visible and audible concrete form in our patterns of worship? We are indeed faced with a number of questions to which we cannot pretend to have immediate answers: what is the role of 'profane' makers of liturgy (journalists, dramatists, radio artists etc.) who may help us to discover worldly forms for our worship? How can we assume that the outsider (before, during and after worship) may express his critique and say that he does not understand? What structures in the preparation of worship, of worship itself, in the designation of money, in the building of worship-centres, must be changed in order that the requirements we have specified might be fulfilled?

5.

Ecumenical - Patterns of worship which reproduce only the liturgical inheritance of a single church may be parochial and impoverished. We must learn from each other.

6.

Timely - Services should be held at times when people are ready to come together. Social habits must be known and allowed for. No particular day or time should be accepted as sacrosanct; only that hour and day is to be approved when most people can and will come together.

7.

Not necessarily confined to church-buildings - Worship is now in Christ; it is no longer shut up in the Jerusalem temple. Christian worship is therefore independent of bricks and mortar. Nevertheless, the gathering in churches is a right and proper means of bringing the community together, but this should not preclude meetings for worship in other places such as the home, factory, etc.

IV. The Cultic Dimension of Mission

The emphasis in this report has been upon the recovery of the missionary dimension of cultic acts ; we must in conclusion say something about the cultic dimension of mission. If we are to reintegrate worship and mission, we must acknowledge that the latter is open to correction through the theological understanding of the former. Just as Paul interpreted mission in terms of cult, so must we. Indeed we can say that mission without cult is not possible. Cult prevents a one-sided involvement in the world for the world's sake instead of for God's sake. It can be easy for an individual or a group to be so completely taken up with their involvement in the world that he or they lose the central recognition that what they do, they do within and because of the work of Christ. To participate in cultic acts and so to concentrate attention upon God in Christ and to see this as a dimension of the whole of life recalls us to the sovereignty, the freedom and the accomplishment of Christ which is at the heart of the assurance that we need in mission.

Conversely, our cultic acts are saved from introversion and a fallacious rationale by perceiving their unity with mission. Worship is not a means to mission, it is mission. We must not prepare for mission through worship but be missionary in in worship. The cultus is not an isolated act but part of something bigger - even the expression of something bigger - and is part of the whole movement that can be called both worship and mission.

We wish to affirm, that, following the New Testament, the eucharist, in which the word is proclaimed and the sacrament received, is and should be the norm of Christian worship. We wish to affirm further that its celebration should not be occasional but frequent.

If we accept the Lord's Supper as the norm of worship and if we further acknowledge that its meaning can only be properly understood in its interdependence with the proclaimed word and baptism and that both are to be interpreted in relation to the church which administers them, we can make certain tentative statements about the missionary dimension of the cultic acts. We must in fact engage in certain closely reasoned theological reflections to make this clear, but at the same time restrict ourselves to only two of the New Testament images of the church in order not to extend our report too much.

* The following was an integral part of the report when presented. It met with severe criticism by some members of the Working Group. The attempt at being theologically precise shows that the Working Group did handle the problem of worship with great care. The criticism, however, makes clear that even this third attempt at understanding worship and mission was not successful.

* APPENDIX: WORD, BAPTISM, EUCHARIST

The clearest expression of the unity of worship and mission to be found in the proclamation of the Gospel. It is the task of the church at all times and in all places to proclaim and bear witness to God's love for man in Jesus Christ. In worship, proclamation takes place in the preaching of the word, in the celebration of the eucharist and in the administration of baptism.

The missionary dimension of the proclaimed word is stressed by Paul in his statement that "faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). In preaching, the church not only expounds the biblical word but is itself called to new faith by its Lord, and the church points to the way of faith to those who hear the word.

In the preaching of the word, Christ himself is truly present and active. When the good news of the cross and resurrection is publicly proclaimed, Christ himself enters into and renews the life of men.

By the word preached man is called to decision and repentance; personal communion with the risen Lord is established and this issues in consolation and joy. So the sermon in the cultic assembly performs a prophetic role - it prevents the congregation from celebrating the sacraments in a spirit of self-indulgence.

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If the church is understood as the Temple of the Presence, the naos of the Holy Spirit, then baptism is the means of bringing the individual into that presence and of receiving the Spirit who is the first fruits of the final consummation. But to become a partaker of the Spirit is to enter into the church's apostolic mission. This mission has a two-fold basis - it derives from Christ and from the Holy Spirit. Christ is "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (Heb. 3:1). He bears this first title because he has been sent into the world by God. This sending or mission of Christ is succeeded by the sending or mission of the Holy Spirit - "God sent forth his Son...God sent forth the Spirit of his Son" (Gal. 4:4,6). The church in which the Spirit tabernacles is composed of those who have been also sent and their mission is inseparable from their reception of the Spirit. "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (Jn. 20:21 f.). Baptism with the Spirit is therefore the association of the converts in the church's apostolic mission, and their commissioning as participants in the missionary enterprise.*

Baptism is further, under this head, ordination to the priesthood of the church; hence James speaks of "lay priesthood (sacerdoti laici), that is, baptism. "Baptism is the rite whereby the individual enters into the royal priesthood. This priesthood involves the exercise of mediatorial and representative functions vis-a-vis God and the world. In the eucharist the church identifies itself with the self-offering of Christ for the world and consecrates itself for His mission, so that the consecration of the part may declare and demonstrate the destiny of the whole world in Christ. Thus the church's worship, which is its offering of the whole world to God through the self-offering of Jesus Christ, is the beginning, expression and end of the mission of the church to the world. The baptismal ordination or consecration is renewed in the eucharist, which is at the same time the means of the bringing of the world to God, both in the eucharistic elements, since the bread and the wine are the product of the whole industrial society, and in intercessory activity in union with the eternal intercession of Christ at the right hand of the Father.

If the church is understood as the Bride of Christ, then baptism is the instrument of regenerating the individual. The eucharist, which is an anticipation of the messianic banquet, is also both the feast that celebrates the marriage and the means whereby the offspring of that union receive the necessary nourishment. It is important here to recognize a movement of thought that has been and is taking place. Frequently in the past baptismal

*If this theological statement be correct we must ask: how does it compare with the realities of church life? What change must there be in the current practices of the churches in order to bring them into close correspondence with this theological truth?

rebirth and eucharistic nourishment have been interpreted in terms of individual salvation. The appreciation of the corporate nature of the church, recovered over the past decades, has led to an enrichment of the understanding of baptism and the eucharist in relation to the whole company of the faithful. We are reborn into God's family and the nourishment given is not just for private sanctity but to enable each member to assist the building up of the Body. It is however also important to go beyond this in terms of our study and to recognize that this rebirth and food must also be related to mission. We are reborn and nourished not for ourselves, not even for the church, but for the world. "It would be strange if Jesus compared himself with bread, saying: 'I am the bread of life', if he only intended to affirm this relates exclusively to the members of the church" (A. de Robert: Predications de careme, 1963). The gift which Jesus gives of himself is not for the individual use, nor just for the church, but for the world, and therefore for mission.

We would stress the importance of baptism and the eucharist for mission because it is here that decision is presented. Worship should be radically open in the sense that we never prevent anybody from attending or try and make any mystery of what we do, but precisely because of this openness it is vital that the centrality of baptism and the eucharist should be seen to rest upon commitment. In other words, the open community is open because it has a definite center, and the worship of the sacraments allows the need for commitment to that center to find its proper place in an open community.

In the past the churches expressed their proper concern with the whole of life through parish and congregational structures. By these means the influence of the local church spread naturally in all directions. But in today's extremely complex society these traditional structures can only deal with a limited number of human activities. They can no longer express the original intention of concern with the whole of life. This function can now be fulfilled only if the churches base their action on local or regional levels.

3. Continuity

In the process of re-structuring the churches there is a real danger of abolishing those concepts which prove most useful. It would be fatal to regard local structures as having some absolute value. A further fallacy would be to think that the churches become a missionary church, responding to the needs of the world, merely by adapting its existing structures to fit a social basis. It cannot be over-stressed that detailed plans for new church

C.
ZONAL STRUCTURES FOR THE CHURCH

The origins of this paper lie in the discussions and reports of the Western European Working Group meeting at Esslingen in September 1964 and Driebergen in March 1965. At these meetings, the concept of zonal structures was expressed by the term 'zone humaine'. * This term has now been discarded for two reasons. There was an ambiguity about the sense of 'humaine'; and there was a danger that by emphasizing one particular term in the singular, attention would be distracted from the fundamental principle of a wide range of plural structures.

1. Argument

If the churches are to become effective instruments of mission in the world, then radical changes are necessary in their existing structures. These changes should spring out of a perspective of society which requires the churches to face areas larger and more complex than in former times. As the churches come to grips with these broader areas or zones, so zonal structures become highly significant for planning, coordination and integration.

2. The whole of life

Community life does not respect civil or ecclesiastical boundaries. The individual has various foci in his life (e.g. work, leisure, shopping, education) which may be geographically dispersed throughout a wide zone regardless of existing boundaries. Other aspects of his life are more local and based on a neighbourhood.

In the past the churches expressed their proper concern with the whole of life through parish and congregational structures. By these means the influence of the local churches spread out naturally in all directions. But in today's extremely complex society these traditional structures can only deal with a limited number of human activities. They can no longer express the original intention of concern with the whole of life. This function can now be fulfilled only if the churches base their action on zonal or regional levels.

3. Caution

In the process of re-structuring the churches there is a real danger of absolutising these concepts which prove most useful. It would be fatal to regard zonal structures per se having some absolute value. A further fallacy would be to think that the churches become a missionary church, responding to the needs of the world, merely by adapting its existing structures to fit a zonal basis. It cannot be overstressed that detailed plans for new church

structures can only evolve within a given concrete situation.

4. Does the argument apply to the smaller churches?

At first sight the case for zonal structures may appear to be relevant only in those areas where churches are in a traditionally majority situation. It is probably true that where the parish tradition has been strong it should not be difficult to appreciate the need for a broader framework in which missionary structures may develop. But it is not the majority position of a church that calls for larger territorial areas; it is the actual structure of society. It is likely, therefore, that minority churches in economically highly developed areas may also feel the need for regional planning, although the practical response may well be quite different from that of a majority church in similar areas. The principle of zonal structures providing workable levels of co-ordination is of equal importance in all church situations.

5. Definition of a zone

In the present discussion the term is used to describe a territorial area within which by and large the population lives out the complex network of movement and relationship which is its life. A zone thus comprehends and integrates most of the various contexts around which the population is concentrated for the basic activities of local life. The replacement of the parish by the zone is a clear result of three inter-dependent forces at work in Western Society - concentration, differentiation and mobility. The first is characterized by the growth of vast urban areas. In these areas there is a high degree of differentiation between the various parts of an individual's life, has different and distinct worlds. This leads to the mobility aspect and the constant movement of the individual between his different worlds.

The traditional parish is useless as a basis for comprehensive action in a society determined by such forces as these. Zonal structures, however, can get to grips with them. A typical zone would be a city with its surrounding fringe towns - an area produced by, and caught up in, the forces of concentration, differentiation and mobility. Summing up, the zone may be said to have replaced the parish as the geographical area which comes near to integrating the different contexts of everyday living.

6. Determination of a zone

Zones can be of different kinds and covering greatly different areas. The basis of the zone in a particular area must first be decided in the light of the definition of a zone suggested above. The geographical boundaries can then be defined by those who have professional knowledge, such as regional planners and sociologists. All the essential information about the social and economic life of the area has to be collected and evaluated

before the map can be drawn. In view of the constantly changing patterns of life today, it is essential that the boundaries of the zone are kept under constant review.

7. The missionary perspective

The missionary church is committed to a concern for the particular contexts or worlds in which people live, and also for the integration of those worlds into a meaningful pattern. A zonal structure provides the vantage point for the right perspective. On the one hand it is a constant reminder of the different worlds in which people live and which have to be engaged in appropriate missionary action. On the other hand a zonal structure is itself a symbolic expression of the wholeness of life.

The essential differences between zonal and parochial structures are rooted in this matter of perspective. As the churches become re-structured on the basis of a zone, they are able to engage in profitable and meaningful action at a level which brings into focus the rich diversity of modern life. If the churches were organized in smaller units than the zone, they would fail to face up to the vast diversifications of human life; if they were organized in larger basic units, then the immediate task of mission, arising from confrontation with the world, might well become unmanageable. In other words, a zonal structure covers the smallest geographical area compatible with the right perspective and with good management.

8. Levels of co-ordination

Zonal structures may be based on smaller or larger areas, according to the particular area and its characteristics. An example of a smaller zonal structure would be a particular district like East Harlem in the middle of the great metropolitan area of New York. Larger zonal structures would be needed for other purposes e.g. in regard to regional planning. An increasing number of functional spheres, such as broadcasting, higher education and large-scale industry, require national or international levels of co-ordination.

9. New direction for traditional structures

It is the responsibility of leadership in the area to discover how far the traditional structures of the parish or local congregation can become sufficiently relevant to share in the new zonal pattern of missionary action. Mere adaptation is far from being sufficient. What is needed is that these traditional structures shall be caught up in the new movement and given a new sense of direction which restores their original concern with the reality and the wholeness of life. If this is not possible, then such structures should be discarded with the least delay, providing that there is general understanding of the whole principle.

10. Differing responses

The great variety of spheres of interest and problems of the modern world calls for a variety of responses on the part of the churches. Each context and function of life requires an appropriate structure which ministers to its particular needs. Although the whole church has a ministry in the world, the variety of situations requires in practice that this ministry be exercised by a variety of particular ministries and groups. Some of these will be large, others small; some will be permanent, others temporary; some will be functional in the spheres of interest, others functional in residential areas; some will be service groups; others will be servicing groups. All of these should be considered equally as being parts of the whole church, though because of the interdependence of each on the others, it would be wrong for an individual group to be understood as 'the' church in isolation from the complex totality.

Group structures can be identified according to types, for example:

- groups associated with social, political and economic areas of concern, some of which may arise spontaneously to meet an immediate need;
- activities associated with the naturally given events of the family e.g. young married's groups, the pastoral care of the bereaved;
- 'permanent availability' structures which demand the minimum of involvement from people seeking help in coping with particular problems E.g. the telephone service, some aspects of industrial chaplaincy, the retreat house, counselling.

11. Authentic characteristics

The sensitivity of all these forms of ministry to the needs of the mission should be expressed by the following characteristics:

- lively self-criticism and regular evaluation;
- flexibility and absence of rigidity in thought and action;
- openness towards people and towards the problems of the world;
- a sense amongst the members of belonging to each other and of mutual acceptance;
- readiness to change and to disband at the right time;
- awareness of partnership with the whole church and with the whole world;
- continuing dialogue between practical involvement and theological thinking

12. Expressions of coherence

The complexity and diversity of the emerging church groupings in the zone underlines the need for signs and guarantees of unity which express and safeguard the organizational and structural coherence of the church in the zone. Three such signs and guarantees are:

- The Word and Sacraments which bring into focus the wholeness of the church;
- the ministry, whether ordained or not;
- the episcopate, in the form of a team, responsible for the oversight of the church in the zone. This team or panel will be thoroughly representative of the different parts of the zonal structure and will set the pattern of good communication between all the particular activities.

13. Levels of decision

Churches have traditionally made use of larger units for major policy decisions and for administration. Examples include presbyteries, dioceses, classes (Holland), Kirchenkreise, Dekanate. The logic of the zone as the basis for local missionary action suggests that eventually these larger units might be radically revised to emphasize their own participation in the missionary structure of the whole church. They might be reconstituted to become coterminous with one or more complete zonal structures. But as with other traditional structures, adaptation or re-drawing of boundaries is an adequate response to the need for appropriate levels of missionary decision.

14. Inter-denominational co-operation

In many regions denominations exist side by side. But the present discussion about (missionary) structures in the zone assumes that the whole community of Christians is prepared to participate, regardless of denominational divisions. Practical co-operation about implementing the zonal structure of the church could be an important growing point for unity.

15. Case Studies

Case studies can be useful as descriptive parables. It is not possible in this paper to publish examples, for such would either be too superficial to be helpful or too detailed to be included here. But urgent attention should be given by the Western European Working Group to establishing a means of publishing papers about the churches in zones. This would require a central agency, to act as a clearing house and as a means of expert evaluation.

16. Self-surveys

Community self-surveys can prove a very useful method of awakening a wider and deeper interest in the area. When a congregation carries out a self-survey (see CONCEPT VIII), certain problems may be revealed which cannot be solved at the parochial level. This realization can provoke a readier understanding of the wider social framework in which the community is set, and suggests the need for surveys or investigations on the level of the zone. Such wider surveys require the co-operation of the different congregations together with expert knowledge and professional evaluation.

17. Emergence of regional thinking

Two factors are encouraging the growth of regional consciousness in the churches. On one hand are developments in regional, social, and economic planning undertaken by government. On the other hand there are already various new forms of missionary work in the course of development which require an awareness of larger or different regions than those included in the existing church organization. As the traditional structures are confronted by these new (missionary) structures, there are considerable opportunities for this zonal thinking to be shared so that its scope is progressively enlarged to include the totality of church structure.

18. Cri de coeur

Finally, resistance to change can be expected, but the logic of the argument should support those who have to do battle.

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