

## **From Missioned to Missioning: The emergence of the New churches in the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

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(2000 “From Missioned to Missioning: The emergence of the New churches in the 20<sup>th</sup> century” *Grace and Truth* 17,1:38-49)

### **Mission in the early period**

#### *Introduction: Situating the period*

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close the Church could be well satisfied with its progress on the mission front. The mission to evangelise all nations was well under way and the Catholic church had spread out from its European base to the four corners of the earth. France was a major contributor to this missionary thrust both in terms of human power and finance. But the missionary spirit also affected the Church in Germany, Italy, Spain and other European countries with sizeable Catholic populations. The French revolution and the dispossession of the French church by the revolutionary governments led to a large scale change in French society and one of the consequences for this was a rebirth in Christian enthusiasm as well as a growing availability of large numbers of clergy and religious looking for new forms and expressions of ministry ready to respond to the crisis. A greater missionary consciousness appeared in the Christian community as a result of its setbacks. This was focussed on re-evangelisation within the country in the early period but also on participation in the mission of the Church abroad. The aim was to secure a Christian presence in the large numbers of colonised territories being set up as a result of the movement of great numbers of Europeans to North and South America, Africa, Australia and Asia. Many missionary congregations of both men and women were established during this period. The spirit of the great century was expressed by Latourette (1941:3) as follows: Christianity was effecting a mass permeation of culture and was shaping ideals, customs and institutions as in no other previous period.

#### *The mission to the settlers*

Initially the principal concern of missionaries to the colonial areas was to provide services for Catholics living in those areas. In South Africa the instructions given by Rome to the first Vicar apostolic were to attend first to the wants of the children of the household of the faith...[and

then] turn your attention to the native population@ (Brown 1960:8). So churches had to be constructed and the settlers as well as the colonial governments were usually prepared to finance the building of churches in their areas.<sup>1</sup> At the same time as church buildings were constructed attention also had to be paid to the provision of education for the children of Catholic families. It should be remembered that it was a requirement of Church law at the time that Catholic children be educated in Catholic schools and so both the parents of the children and the Vicars Apostolic were keen to ensure the provision of such structures. Many religious congregations, especially of women but also of men came to the mission territories to provide this service. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century most of these were working with settler groups in those areas with many European settlers like North America, Southern Africa, Australasia and a few parts of Asia. In other areas they worked more with the indigenous people.

In a similar way the church tried to respond to the need for health care and care for orphans and the elderly. These frontier settlements had very few services other than those required for the economic and political enterprises they had been set up for and the early missionaries often provided these services. They were also a source of income for the missionaries since they responded to a need that those with financial means were prepared to pay for. Very often the practice arose of a pay school for the elite run together with a free school for the poor with the finance from the elite school covering both the poor school and the needs of the missionaries.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Mission to the indigenous in sub-Saharan Africa.*

Although the Catholic Church had established a presence in many countries, the number of converts was still quite small (see footnote 5). The mission to the indigenous people was relatively small at this time. As the work was only beginning the period was one of experimentation to find effective methods. Four principal approaches can be discerned in the Southern African context which were repeated elsewhere. They can be referred to as an Assimilation method, a Colonial method, an Accommodation method and a Christian civilization method.

The Assimilation approach can be seen in the Eastern Vicariate between 1850 and 1930

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<sup>1</sup>See Bate 2000 forthcoming for more on this

<sup>2</sup>A typical example is the first foundation of the first women religious to come to South Africa, Assumptionist sisters in Grahamstown who opened a free school, St Josephs and a day and boarding school, St Catherine=s one month after arriving. (Young 1989:27-28).

This approach to mission is based on the Latin American Missionary Method. There Europeans establish their rule and some of their culture. Those natives who were prepared to become Christian were assimilated into the emerging Christian culture. Conversion thus implied leaving your own ways behind and natives who converted were assimilated into this culture and became a part of it leaving their old ways behind.

The Colonial method is illustrated in the first OMI attempts with the Zulu (1854-1856). Here the approach was to go to where the local people had been settled by the colonial power and missionaries are sent in order to preach to them "in situ". As the colonial power controlled the territory in which the natives were settled, this approach implied working through the Colonial structure and its religious policy in order to obtain land and permission for missionary purposes. Here there was little respect or recognition of the culture and society of the people especially regarding their laws and authority. The people were considered to be lost souls who had given themselves to paganism and barbarianism and who had to be saved or perish. Colonial models of control such as indentured apprenticeship were also used in this approach (See Brain 1975:52).

The Accommodation approach is illustrated in the mission of the OMI with the Basotho between 1860 and 1920. This model applies to the situation where missionaries go to an area which is under the control and authority of the people they have come to evangelise. Such was the case when the OMI=s went to the kingdom of Moshoeshoe. All had to be done through the authority of the local leaders. An offer of help was made by the missionaries in exchange for the right to preach amongst them. The help included bringing out people to make European style clothes (Brown 1960:210). They were slow in their approach and gave time in order to be observed and understood. The approach was to witness to the people before beginning their work of preaching. There was no rush. In the beginning the preoccupation was to become proficient in the language and then they began the preparation of a catechism in the language. The evangelisation method was a one to one evangelization which Fr Gerard referred to as Aline fishing@. The catechumenate was very long: often many years.

Finally, the Christian Civilization approach is illustrated in the work of the Trappists at Mariannhill. This approach owed a lot to the notion of the monasteries as centres of Christian civilisation during the Adark ages@ of the mediaeval period. When the Trappists arrived in Natal, they preoccupied themselves with the setting up of their monastery. Initially, they had very little contact with the local people. They began in 1882 and by 1884 they had 188 acres turned into

arable land; three and a half miles of road had been constructed together with 1300 square yards of buildings (Brown 1960:232). They formed a village with a square, built dormitories a church, workshops and a schoolroom. The local people were fascinated by all this effort and were attracted by what they saw as the success of the monks. Their crops were better, their livestock was healthier. They are attracted by what they saw and wanted to participate. The monks replied that they must learn first and this meant sending their children to school. The schools were very practical with work on the farms and in the workshops during the day and some lesson in the early morning and evening. The aim of the monks was to build a Christian community of Zulus on the estates of the monastery. The method is through the witness of their life style. They let the people come to them. What happened at Mariannhill was repeated on a smaller scale elsewhere as the monks expanded to other areas often at the invitation of the local chiefs. The whole process was repeated in other areas of Natal starting with Riechnau in 1888 so that by 1909 there were 28 separate settlements

The four missionary models can be understood in terms of two paradigms for mission: An attraction paradigm and an insertion paradigm. The assimilation model and the Christian civilization model are expressions of the *attraction* paradigm where the main approach is to attract potential converts to the values and benefits of Christian civilization, culture and society and thereby to integrate them into it. The colonial model and the accommodation model are expressions of an *insertion* paradigm where the strategy is rather that the missionaries insert themselves into the areas where the people are and begin to work within that situation for conversion. Any converts are expected to continue to live amongst their "pagan" confreres.

### **Mission in the middle period: growth from 1920-1950**

#### *Growth in missionary presence*

Baur (1994:261) calls the period between 1919 and 1959 *The Church under Missionary Tutelage*. During this period large numbers of missionaries poured into Africa from Europe. Many new congregations and orders began mission work in this and the other mission continents. By 1920 eleven vicariates had been set up in the Southern Africa region.<sup>3</sup> Two of these were

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<sup>3</sup>The Vicariates in the Union were the Cape (including Central Prefecture); Eastern Cape, Natal, Orange River, Kimberley, Transvaal and the Pietersburg Prefecture. Those outside the Union were Great Namaqualand and Lower Cimbebasia (South West Africa), Basutoland and Salisbury Prefecture (Rhodesia) (mission to 1905 then prefecture). See Brown

entrusted to a Vicar responsible to find his own clergy (Cape and Eastern Cape). The other nine were entrusted to Religious Congregations: the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (5), the Oblates of St Francis de Sales (2), the Benedictines (1) and the Jesuits (1). By 1935 a further nine ecclesiastical jurisdictions had been created in South Africa alone and eight further religious congregations or orders had entered the mission field.<sup>4</sup> Much of the stimulation for this change came from the visitation of Fr Gijlswijk OP in 1921. Although appointed by *Propaganda Fide* to visit the communities of Dominican sisters, his report was also highly critical of the South African Bishops. This was a confirmation of Rome=s view of the situation in Southern Africa AThe feeling in Rome was that these bishops with the possible exception of Cenez, lacked missionary zeal. They concentrated too much on white settlers@ (Denis 1998:150).

### *Resources*

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(1960:43) for all dates. Note that the names given by Denis (1998:150) are incorrect.

<sup>4</sup>Mariannahill confided to CMM in 1921, Zululand confided to OSB in 1921, Central Prefecture confided to SAC in 1922, Gariiep (Aliwal) confided to SCJ in 1923, Swaziland confided to OSM in 1923, Lydenburg confided to MFSC in 1923, Kroonstad confided to Cssp in 1924, Queenstown confided to SAC in 1929, Umtata confided to CMM in 1930, Mount Currie confided to OFM in 1935. Note that the Dominicans also entered although only received a vicariate after 1948. The Mariannahill congregation arrived as the Trappists in 1880 and the Central Prefecture was established in 1874 and confided to French Society of African missions. It returned to the control of the Cape Vicariate when the society left in 1882.

As a result new prefectures were carved out of the existing ones and confided to German congregations since the German missionaries had the reputation of being more inclined to indigenous work. (Denis 1998:150-151). These missionaries were indeed very successful and the new territories began a period of rapid growth. Between 1901 and 1951 the Catholic population of South Africa grew from 32512 to 488492.<sup>5</sup> This was part of a worldwide trend but was especially visible in Africa where the Catholic church grew from 4 to 24 million members between 1930-1959 a growth of 600% (Baur 1994:264).

These numbers are a major sign of the effectiveness of the Catholic Church's mission during this golden period. However they should be compared with the effort put in to achieve it. Many thousands of new missionaries poured into the mission territories in this period. So whilst in 1920 there were 6800 missionaries in Africa this had increased to 28000 by 1960, a growth of more than 400% (Baur 1994:266). During this time the Catholic growth in Africa was considerably greater than the Protestant growth. Braun suggests that this was due to two factors: the greater number of Catholic missionaries (:262) and the less stringent requirements for membership in the Catholic church which was less concerned with a saved elite who were prohibited from drinking smoking and dancing and more concerned with developing a Catholic society where both Saint and sinner were accepted (:265). Perhaps there were more reasons than that. Catholics often had more resources at their disposal and built more institutions and mission stations than the Protestants during this period. Even in South Africa where the Protestant mission was the most successful, the Catholic Church controlled 15% of all Black schools. By far the most visible Catholic outreach into South African society (Bate 1999:19). Also the Catholic worldview with its place for Saints and its emphasis on ritual in worship was perhaps closer to the traditional African rituals and easier for people to identify with.

### *Methods*

But in the final analysis it was the effectiveness of the missionary methods for that time and the zeal and conviction of the missionaries about what they were doing which were the most important factors. Those missionary approaches and methods which were successful had been

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<sup>5</sup>These figures are based on ecclesiastical sources and not government statistics. The figures for 1900 come from Dwight et al 1904. Those for 1951 come from The Catholic Directory of Southern Africa of 1952.

clarified in the earlier period and were based on the institutions fulfilling real human needs. The four approaches discussed above continued to inform the methods of the missionaries. Often they were combined. As the colonial government often controlled all of society, their permission had to be sought for enterprises. At the same time it was usually necessary to live and work amongst the people under the patronage of the local chief. Often a mission station was set up providing the health and education services which people were attracted to whilst at the same time the missionaries went out to outstations to work and even live amongst the people.

An important dimension of the growth in this period was the role of the local Catechist. In many ways he was the one who nourished and maintained the church structures initiated by the ministries. They were the leaders of the local Christian communities set up, especially those away from the main mission. They also accompanied missionaries on their journeys supplying language and cultural skills into which missionaries often only had rudimentary entry. The African Synod refers to catechists as a determinative force in the implantation and expansion of the Church in Africa.<sup>6</sup> Baur (1994:263) suggests that in the early period about 90% of all conversions may be the fruit of their instructions.

Usually however the focus was on the institutions especially the Catholic school and also the Catholic hospital or clinic. Thousands of Catholic schools were set up in the mission territories. Many people were anxious to have their children go there for a number of reasons. They provided access into the new society which was emerging and the ethos within which the Catholic missionary approach operated seemed to promise some kind of assimilation into Christian society as we have shown above. People were attracted by the western lifestyle with its promise of wealth and its city life style. Many people moved into urban areas and became part of the new society but even in the rural areas the mission stations with their hospitals, schools and farms seemed to stand out as beacons of wealth in the subsistence of traditional society. Christianity was often attractive to those on the margins of traditional society: defeated and displaced tribes, as well as those with no claim to the inheritance of the family in terms of traditional laws. At the same time those at the top of the traditional society were actively courted by the missionaries on the premise of *eius regio cuius religio* which informed much of Christianity in the post reformation period. The missionaries looked for ways to win over the chiefs often with

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<sup>6</sup>*Propositio 13*. See also EA 91.

promises of a better life for their people in the setting up of mission stations. So many chiefs also became Christians and with them their followers. It is this two pronged missionary strategy at both the head and the base of the traditional African society which allowed for the success of this period. Besides this we must also advert to the forces unleashed by the changing nature of society between the two world wars where many parts of the colonies entered into the market economy and set up businesses, mines, farms and so on to exploit the wealth, especially the reserves of these countries. This modernisation of society also created a need or want amongst the local people for a share in the wealth and benefits of the new world. The mission system provide a means of entry into it.

Consequently two forces met. The zeal and enthusiasm of the missionary movement with its desire to spread the gospel to all corners of the earth combined with a growing desire on the part of Africans Asians and Americans to participate in the new world of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All that was required was a means of entry and those structures which provided the door to entry were thus highly successful. In this way we see the rapid expansion of mission to indigenous peoples in this period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout the world there were many conversions. Many schools and hospitals were built and this combined with the rooting of colonisation and the economic growth which came from the industries of minerals, agriculture and other raw materials led to the golden age of settler society throughout the world.

The bright dazzle of the golden age carried with it a romantic spirit. In the secular culture this was to lead to the many romantic ideologies of the time: fascism, communism, Stalinism, Nazism and the myth of European superiority and the civilisation of the native: Rudyard Kipling=*White man's burden*. The Church too participated in the romantic spirit of the age with books and articles showing the heroic courage of the missionaries as they battled *Amid snow and ice* in the north and through *Ajungle and fever* in the tropics to bring *Asalvation and civilisation* to the indigenous *Asavages* of non-European lands.

### *The power of the Gospel*

However such a secular interpretation of events should not lead us to lose sight of the power of the Gospel and the faith of those who were sent on mission and those who became believers in Jesus. Social forces certainly help us to understand a lot of what was happening at the time and so to deconstruct some of the illusions of the past. But they do not explain the power of

the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit in these contexts. During this period there is no doubt that the level of commitment and faith on the part of the missionaries was outstanding and immediately visible. This was often a source of surprise for local people who were unable to see what the missionaries were getting out of the exercise.<sup>7</sup> This witness of faith and the effect of the Christian God on his followers was clearly a powerful instrument in the conversion of many thousands of people throughout the world. Similarly as in all times the level of conversion varied amongst those who became Christian with some making only superficial changes to their lives and others making a total commitment. However whilst the western culture was becoming less religious as a result of the influences of modernity and secularisation, the conversions amongst indigenous peoples were from peoples with inherently religious cultures. Consequently here was fertile ground for the missionary endeavour and this too explains the relative ease with which missionary work met with success during this period.

### **Mission in the late phase: Inculturation.**

Two world wars between European powers and the untold suffering they produced extinguished the will to resolve global problems by active warfare. The second half of the twentieth century has seen the triumph of pragmatic capitalism and the development agenda together with the emergence of a new form of war: cold war. Cold war was as serious and sometimes as costly as conventional war but it had one big advantage: it did not really involve ordinary people too much. It was a game of strategy between those who were committed to geopolitical power play. The ordinary people were sick of war. They got nothing out of it. The two hot skirmishes the Americans got themselves into as a result of the cold war: the Korean and Vietnam wars served only to confirm the hypothesis. Westerners did not want to get involved in war and would fight against it.

Instead they gave themselves to the building up of their societies through business, trade, production and wealth creation. They were very successful at it and twenty years after world war

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<sup>7</sup>Consider for example the impact of the Oblates on the Zulus during their first missionary attempt with the indigenous people. One of them, Fr Barret, writes (Brain 1975:65): 'The fathers sent there presented a sight of abject misery. They were poorly clothed, their linen consisted of two shirts...During the whole time they spent there, the fathers were employed in ceaseless building, cultivation, looking after pigs, raising rabbits...'. Such an approach was unlikely to be in any way appealing.

two, Europe, the Soviet Union and the US were buoyant and successful societies whose peoples were relatively happy with their lot in life.

In the Third world too the vision had changed. Local peoples clamoured for independence and the notion of colonies and colonial powers was seen as outmoded and also unproductive. Beginning with India and then in 1957 with Ghana in Africa, the colonial governments surrendered power to local leadership so that within 25 years very few areas of the world were considered colonies.

This affirmation of the local community and country also found expression in the local churches. From 1950 onwards the mission churches under Vicars Apostolic were changed into local Churches as formal hierarchies were established: In British West Africa 1950, South Africa 1951, British East Africa 1953, French Africa and Southern Rhodesia 1955, Congo Malawi and Zambia 1959" (Baur 1994:266). During this period then the predominant spirit in the church was one of localisation. Local vocations which had been very few up to this time began to increase and seminaries were set up throughout the third world.<sup>8</sup> Similarly an increasing number of indigenous bishops were ordained. On the eve of independence their number had grown to 25 (Baur 1994:268).

Localisation also found expression in theology and in ministry as tentative steps were taken to try to adapt or indigenise Catholic Christianity. Before Vatican II these attempts were often experimental and watched closely but at the same time it should be remembered that such adaptation and indigenisation was the focus of many of the papal missionary encyclicals and addresses from 1944 onwards (cf ND 1122,1129). This movement was given a major fillip by Vatican II in which criteria for a local church were suggested (AG19) and the restrictions regarding conformity in worship were changed especially regarding the use of the vernacular in the liturgy.

Since the 1970's the term inculturation has become popular and this is probably the current major focus of Catholic churches in Africa and Asia. The African Synod devoted a considerable amount of time to this issue which was subsequently referred to as an urgent priority in the life of the particular churches, for a firm rooting of the Gospel in Africa (EN45). *Catholic*

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<sup>8</sup>Between 1920 and 1960 the number of African Priests rose from 50 to 2000 (Baur 1994:267). The first African Bishops coming from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century mission were ordained in 1939.

*International* (July 1998:291) reports that surprisingly, central to the [Asian] synod's discussion was the theme of inculturation. Attempts at inculturation have occurred in the area of the liturgy and worship, catechetics and education, small Christian communities, healing and other forms of ministry like lay ministries, marriage, funerals and the pastoral care of the bereaved. In Southern Africa the Bishop's conference has allowed a period of experimentation under the guidance of local bishops. Several diocesan or regional councils have been set up to study and guide various initiatives.

During this period we have continued to see the rapid growth of Christianity especially in Africa but also in parts of Asia like Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia. The period has also seen the emergence of many Charismatic and Pentecostal churches as well as the influence of Pentecostalism on more traditional churches including the Catholic church (See Bate 1995 for more on this). During this period, the evangelical and Pentecostal churches are the ones who have wrested the missionary initiative within the Church. They are also now the most successful in gaining converts worldwide (Barret & Johnson 1999:25).

In many ways, this is the golden age of Third World Christianity. Whilst Europe is still the continent with the largest number of Christians in the year 2000 this will soon change. By 2025, Latin America will be the continent with the most Christians and before that year the number of African Christians will overtake the number of European Christians. Soon after that Europe will fall to fourth place after Asia (Barret & Johnson 1999:25). We can find four principal reasons for the growth of third world Christianity. In the first place, the Church continues to be a portal into the Western industrial world through its services in education and in health. In many developing countries the church is the most effective social organisation with the best schools, hospitals and infrastructure and in some parts of Africa, the Mission procure is the only way to get first world goods into the country. Secondly, the process of localisation has provided a place for leadership expression amongst local people. In a society with very few resources except the traditional, the Church provides a way for people to exercise social leadership and power. It is thus attractive to effective and ambitious people who have little opportunity within the traditional and political structures of their society. Clearly this mirrors the influence and role of the church in mediaeval society. Thirdly, the Christianity of the third world is a lived faith which itself creates life. The church responds to people's real wants. It provides community and identity. It helps people to deal with sickness and death and it provides vibrant and life filled worship. The mission

station is often the principal centre of life in an area and people go there to satisfy their needs (or better, wants). People who come from religious based cultures find an expression for their religiosity in the prayer and worship of the Church. And finally the Church=s social and political role provides people with often the only outlet and response to corrupt, ruthless and arbitrary governments which often afflict them. Here, then are signs of a special time of the Spirit operating in these churches to give them this life and favour as God nourishes his people and prepares them for their future as apostles in a new society.

At the same time this period has also been one of de-Christianisation in the first world especially in Europe. Returning missionaries from the vibrant churches of the third world are sometimes depressed by what they find Aback home@ and many missionaries prefer to remain in the churches of the third world where they have worked rather than return to a Ahome@ which seems to have changed so much for the worse since they left<sup>9</sup>. Increasingly the youth is being lost to the churches of Europe and North America and priesthood and the Religious Life is no longer seen as a valuable choice of life style. Vocations in Europe and North America have declined from a peak before Vatican 2 to a mere trickle now. Not enough priests are being ordained to supply the local needs and in the recent European synod it was pointed out that Ain certain areas of Western Europe, 80% of the population are (sic) not baptised@ (OMI Information 384[1999]:4).

Nevertheless Europe does continue to send some, though many fewer, missionaries to the third world. Sometimes this may be inspired by the same zeal as the past but one might wonder whether it is just not easier to mission in the developing countries where the strategies of the past are still reasonably effective whereas the Church has yet to find effective ones in Europe.

### **Mission at the end of the Millennium: from missioned to missionaries**

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<sup>9</sup>See OMI Documentation 384 (1999):5 for an example of this common phenomenon.

As we begin a new millennium there are several challenges which confront the Church. Perhaps the first priority is to discover effective missionary strategies and methods to respond to the growing dechristianisation and secularisation in the first world. Surprisingly perhaps, this too is an issue of inculturation. It is precisely because the Church is losing contact with the culture of the first world that it is increasingly relegated to the margins and dismissed as unimportant. Part of the effectiveness of the Church lies in its ability to provide culturally mediated pastoral responses to culturally mediated human needs.<sup>10</sup> Whilst many different attempts have been made to make a missionary response to modernity, it must be said that a solution to this problem remains to be found. During this century attempts have been made through Catholic Action, Liturgical renewal, Popular movements such as Young Christian Workers, Focolari, Neo Catechumenate, Taize and Communion and Liberation and increasingly the use of religious rallies. There has been some success but none of these has had the effect of defeating the demon of secularism. And as the societies of the former Eastern Europe become increasingly westernised so there too the traditional expressions of Christianity are declining. Probably, as with all global issues a simplistic approach based on one or two major strategies will not work. The pluralistic nature of the culture demands a pluralistic approach to mission. But answers will only emerge when the cultural dimension of Christianity is taken more seriously in the first world for the issues there too are basically ones of inculturation. The media for example is a major component of this culture and those churches which make use of it for example in televangelism are successful. Serious reflection by local churches is required in this area.

In the third world, the focus will remain on issues of inculturation and localisation. Vocations continue to increase in many of these churches and the balance of the location of the Church's personnel is already at the mid point of a dramatic change from first to third world. This will certainly continue in its momentum during the first half of the next century. Consequently, new forms of ministry, new types of institutions and even new forms of religious life may emerge in the third world. This is already occurring in the areas of liturgy, prayer, worship, small Christian communities and caring ministries.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps some of these forms will be transplanted

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<sup>10</sup>For a treatment of the notion of mission and ministry as a culturally mediated response to culturally mediated needs within a particular context see Bate 1995: 243-250.

<sup>11</sup> See Bate 1996 for examples of this resulting from the Pastoral plan of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa.

successfully into the first world as the enthusiastic third world offers new ways of missioning to a tired first world beginning to move out of the grip of materialism, sport and pleasure. Already there is a movement of clergy and religious from the third world to the first world reversing the trend of the early part of the century. Priests from Africa and Asia are being accepted in the dioceses of Europe and North America usually to fill the gaps left by the attrition in the local clergy from these areas. At the European Synod in 1999, the OMI superior general suggested a more direct programme of evangelisation of the first world by missionaries coming from the third church (OMI Information 384:5). It is clear that this reversal of missionary roles may be a trend which will increase during the next century. Once more, however, the priority will be to find effective missionary strategies rather than just providing human resources.

The increasing globalisation of human society has led us to an awareness of our human unity but has also empowered movements stressing cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. This emergence of these two complementary values is sure to continue and even increase during the new century. Organisations such as the World Council of Churches founded in 1948, the World Evangelical Fellowship (1951) and Vatican II with its emphasis on openness and new forms of Catholic expression are all signs of this new uniting process. Many of the divisions of the past are likely to be re-interpreted as in the Catholic-Orthodox rapprochement in 1965 and the Joint Declaration on Justification between Catholics and Lutherans in 1999.<sup>12</sup> On the interreligious level we have had events such as the world day of prayer for peace in Assisi in 1986 and the World Parliament of Religions in Cape Town in 1999. This truly ecumenical approach is one of the guiding spirits of the second half of the twentieth century and is sure to continue in the new century. These are divisions of people which result from European conflicts in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Already they are bemoaned by African and Asian scholars as of little relevance in their context. Many Protestant churches in these areas are trying to work together and some are even merging. This is likely to continue.

At the same time the coming together of Christians and people of faith will not be something which dilutes the faith expression of each in a watered down expression of a common

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<sup>12</sup>In 1965 Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople lifted the mutual excommunications of 1054. In November 1999 the Catholic Church and Lutheran church signed a joint declaration on the doctrine of Justification which had been one of the major theological divisions at the time of the Reformation.

humanity. This discredited liberal approach of modernity does not correspond to the fact that it is precisely those expressions of faith which affirm identity and stress the experience of the presence of God in the life of people within a specific set of circumstances that will prosper. Christianity, as all religion, is contextual and cultural for it is about people. However the mystery of the incarnation elevates the contextual and the cultural to the centre of the Christian faith and the truth of this statement is also an affirmation of the incarnation as a coherent, necessary and central part of God's intervention into human history. This is precisely why Christianity can never be merely a religion of the book as some would suggest but that it is a religion about a person who lived amongst us as one of us. Those religions which stress this will be the ones which prosper in the new millennium. Catholicism and Pentecostalism are probably the main Christian expressions of this approach. Any missionary approach which wishes to be global in a general and theoretical way without dealing with the daily events in the life of the people will not survive. This is why mission will have to be global and local at one and the same time. Mother Teresa is probably the principal icon of this approach so far. Her life was a mixture of caring for the poor people in her neighbourhood on a one to one basis together with jetting around the world speaking at huge international gatherings. Mission will have to work like this if it is to succeed.

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