

MISSION AS PROPHECY,

IN DIALOGUE WITH THE WORLD MISSION CONFERENCES, EDINBURGH 1910 -

SAN ANTONIO 1989

by

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SUMMARY

This thesis is an attempt at developing some contours of the missiological notion of Mission as Prophecy. To achieve this aim, the author uses the paradigm concept or more specifically, the concept of a paradigm shift, which is borrowed from Kuhn and made fruitful for missiology by Bosch, to construct prophetic paradigms. Furthermore, the aim is achieved by entering into dialogue with the World Mission Conferences, from Edinburgh 1910 to San Antonio 1989. The dialogue entails a thorough testing of the conferences in terms of contextuality, hermeneutics and spirituality.

The crisis for prophetic theology both in South Africa and in the world is indicated rather briefly. An argument for the persistent need of prophecy/prophetic theology is raised in terms of two theological dimensions. Firstly, drawing from Old and New Testament scholars the conclusion is reached that prophecy is contextbound, i.e. that it is informed by what the poor and the oppressed, the downtrodden and the lowly experience in a particular setting. Secondly, it is argued that the notion of Mission as prophecy, is unthinkable without the notion of reading or discerning the signs of the times. This study goes a long way in showing that the idea of reading the signs of the times, is more than a slogan. Indeed, with Bosch it speaks of a theology of the signs of the times.

In the final section of the study an attempt is made at

formulating what Mission as prophecy would mean today. This is done in terms of three theses indicating that Mission as prophecy is unthinkable without the dimensions of context analysis, of finding a language which is appropriate for a particular context especially with a view to naming the idols and reaffirming the option for the poor, and of finding the kind of holistic spirituality that would sustain the Church for its prophetic mission.

KEY TERMS

Mission; Prophecy; Prophetic paradigms; World Mission Conferences; Contextuality; Hermeneutics; Spirituality; Signs of the times; Preferential option for the poor; Movement of contradictions

PREFACE

In completing this project which started in the late nineteen eighties in Holland, I owe a special debt of gratitude to a number of people. These are people who, in one way or another, have been instrumental in shaping my life as a person, a Christian and a missiologist.

I still owe the State University of Utrecht in the Netherlands a debt of gratitude for having invited me to study there in 1986. Prof. Dr. J.A.B. Jongeneel had been instrumental in this. He also guided me patiently and understandingly through my doctoral programme. The decision to take as my field of study the World Mission Conferences emanated from the discussions we have had. It was also him that made my attendance of the San Antonio Conference possible. To him I say: "Bedankt"!

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Finally, now that Christmas is nearing and a momentous year in the history of South Africa is drawing to a close, I have to say thank you to my family. Words cannot express my gratitude for the patience with which you bore the burden of a father and husband involved in the mythical exercise of writing a thesis. Thank you Dawn, for undertaking those "mystery drives" late at night from home to UNISA to fetch me. At night, you must agree, UNISA is quite a romantic place. Thank you for your encouragement, especially during those trying times when I doubted the sense of it all. To you and to the "prophets of the home", Nico Christopher, Lionel Daniel and Nadia Ilonca, I dedicate this

thesis. May we this Christmas remember Leon, the prophet who died too young, killed by the apartheid regime in 1985 in the Lesotho massacre. Let us also not forget his daughter, Phoenix who lived to see the dawn of a democratic South Africa. May her name be a

reminder to us what prophecy is made of: The very firm, sometimes rather naive conviction that out of the ashes a radically new reality shall arise. Let us hold on to the vision!

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CHAPTER 1

Problem, method, structure and sources

1.1 PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to develop the contours of a Prophetic Theology of mission. In chapter 2 the attempt at constructing a working hypothesis for this study, is aimed at tentatively indicating such contours. In chapter 3 the World Mission Conferences, Edinburgh 1910 to San Antonio 1989, shall be studied analytically in terms of the question: To what extent was a prophetic theology of mission emerging? The question could also be posed in terms of the specific theme of this study, i.e. whether something which might be called *Mission as Prophecy* is present in the Conferences. In the latter part of the study, i.e. chapter 4, the theory of a prophetic theology of mission shall be developed in terms of the question: What precisely are the requirements of a prophetic theology of mission? These questions may not reappear in the same form, but in terms of the crisis with which prophetic theology is confronted.

Having now very briefly stated the problem I propose to study, I can proceed to offer my definitions for the concepts prophetic and mission. There is also a need to clarify the use of the metaphorical term, Mission as...

1.1.1 Prophetic

An attempt will be made here to offer no more than a tentative definition of what may be termed prophetic. This study refrains from any attempt to offer an omnibus type of definition. Rather, seven convictions shall be offered here which can broadly be divided as follows: Convictions a to d point to the sources from

which I draw for my understanding of prophetic and convictions e to g point to the objectives of the prophetic. These convictions will serve as a working hypothesis for the whole of this study. They serve as key for analysing the World Mission Conferences and they form the basis for developing the theory of a prophetic theology of mission.

The seven convictions will first of all be summarised here in their totality, and then worked out separately in more detail.

It is my conviction that the social context or the organisation of society constitutes an important source of prophetic theology. This is well illustrated by the Kairos Document (1985) and the Road to Damascus (1989). For that reason the two documents are seen as indispensable for our understanding of contemporary prophetism. The social context and the abovementioned examples of prophetic literature form only one pole of the hermeneutical circle. The other pole is constituted by the theology of the Old Testament prophets and Christology, specifically a specific kind of Christology. Finally this study also takes seriously as a source of prophetic theology, the history of prophetic thinking in Church and Mission. The development of a prophetic theology of mission is aimed at conversion, the creation of a servant community and a new spirituality.

a) The context as text

My basic thesis here is that modes of prophetic theology, be they the theology of the Old Testament prophets, Christ the Prophet, the World Mission Conferences, the Kairos Document or the Road to Damascus, can only be properly understood in terms of their social contexts and the social roles played by their proponents. This constitutes the first major dimension of the methodology of a prophetic theology, i.e. social-analytical mediation. In chapter 4 of this study the notion of social-analytical mediation shall be worked out in more detail. Suffice it to say here that

this exercise refers to what is known in prophetic language as "reading the signs of the times" or "discerning the kairos". For now it is also necessary to indicate very clearly that the notion of *mediations in theology* is borrowed from C. Boff (1987) who has broken new epistemological ground with his magisterial work Theology and Praxis. In his work Boff shows painstakingly that there is now such thing as *immediate theology*. Theology needs to be mediated in terms of social analysis, hermeneutical reflection and praxis. For Boff theology presupposes knowledge of the social sciences. In order to do theology one needs a positive, contextual and concrete knowledge of society according to Boff (xxi). In the area of hermeneutical reflection (xxi), which refers to the relationship between theology and scripture, Boff has the following to say:

...the theology of liberation pleads for a reading of scripture in continual mindfulness of and orientation to concrete challenges and problems.

How does Boff see the mediation through praxis? For him praxis is the fundamental locus of theology. It is the place where theology occurs. This is where liberation theology finds its point of departure, its milieu and its finality.

b) The Kairos Document (1985)

The document, limited as it may be, will be used quite liberally in this study for a number of obvious reasons, one of which is that it has introduced the notions of a "prophetic theology" and a "prophetic mission". The document reflects a strong and profound missionary élan.

c) The theology of the Old Testament prophets and of Christ, the Prophet:

(i) The theology of the Old Testament prophets: Although it may

be more appropriate to speak of prophetic theologies instead of presenting the theology of the Old Testament prophets as monolithic, a number of central themes do emerge. For the purposes of this study the following are mentioned specifically: the reign of God and its challenge to conversion from idolatry; the creation of a servant community in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed; and doxology.

(ii) Christology: Christ the Prophet: My basic thesis here is that a prophetic theology of mission as *missio Christi* necessitates a specific kind of Christology. It necessitates the kind of Christology which takes the act of incarnation as the starting point of Christ's prophetic ministry (Ellacuria 1976:23). The incarnation is God's supreme mode of speaking to us. This specific kind of Christology helps us to identify prophetic theology as a people's theology in a very special sense. Following Ellacuria I want to contend that through the socio-public dimension of Jesus' prophecy, people who lived with Him, situated Him in the prophetic line. Of great importance also is the transformative nature of Jesus's prophetic style which manifested itself in His rejection of a spiritualised religion and His attack against the oppression exercised by the religious

authorities in the name of God. This brings us to the *conditio sine qua non* of our special kind of Christology: a *theologia crucis* that is being acted out. Jesus did not only live the life of a prophet, but also died the death of a prophet. He showed to what extent a prophetic theology is by definition a theology of the cross and how in the end the prophets have nothing to offer, but their own lives. This has brought Frank Chikane to the very striking title of his autobiography, No life of my own. Finally, a specific kind of Christology takes seriously the notion developed about Christ as the eschatological prophet par excellence. The role of the eschatological prophet consists not only in preaching repentance, but also in suffering.

d) History of prophetic thinking in Church and Mission

This study limits itself to the World Mission Conferences of the I.M.C. and the C.W.M.E. of the W.C.C. The question which concerns me is to what extent this very rich tradition of ecumenism can help us in constructing a prophetic theology of mission. Can we speak of an emergent prophetic theology of mission? My basic thesis here is that although it has not been the scope of the World Mission Conferences to develop a coherent, systematic prophetic theology of mission, something of that nature has indeed been emerging ever since Edinburgh (1910). My thesis is confirmed by the results of research done, revealing the following, for example: the use of prophetic language like "kairos" and "signs of the times" ever since Edinburgh (1910); at the Jerusalem Conference (1928) racism and especially secularisation were identified as "signs of the times"; at Tambaram (1938) the Christological notion of Christ the Prophet was introduced polemically against the background of the rising national-socialism; the ecclesiocentric thinking which emerged so strongly at Tambaram (1938), was confronted prophetically by J.C.Hoekendijk round Willingen (1952); of importance also as far as Willingen (1952) is concerned, is the tension between Hoekendijk's frontal attack against ecclesiocentrism, and a strong eschatological expectation; at Ghana (1958) W.Freytag, in an exercise of prophetic self-criticism, elaborated on the problems encountered by Western missions and missionaries; at Mexico City (1963) the rise of secularism featured very strongly, with specific reference to the technological advance of humankind; Bangkok (1973) grappled with a number of issues which are relevant to the present study: contextualisation, conversion, culture and change, culture and identity, and issues of social justice. Central to the Bangkok agenda was also the call for a moratorium by John Gatu, that can be seen as prophetic criticism against the paternalistic attitude of Western missions; Melbourne (1980) presents us with two central prophetic themes, namely the Kingdom or reign of God, and God's preferential option for the poor; apart from the fact that the notion of a "prophetic mission" occurred expressis verbis at San Antonio (1989), the very topics of the four sections are profoundly prophetic.

e) Conversion

It is beyond the scope of this study to indulge in a discussion on different modes of conversion or to enter into a polemic with any reductionist understanding of conversion. Rather, the study simply takes conversion to be a central missiological dimension and focusses upon a specific kind of conversion, that from idolatry to the living God. An attempt shall be undertaken to identify the idols clearly and to show the way back to the living God.

f) Creating a servant community

This aspect relates to the prophetic theme of the reign of God. My concern here is the challenge which the reign of God presents to His people to constitute a servant community. The identity of this community does not so much lie with the formulations of the traditional academic theology but with the ecclesial praxis of involvement in the struggle for social justice and liberation of the poor and the stranger within the gates. It is an exodus community, constantly under way. It is a resurrection community, constantly being reinvented. The servant community of this study is grounded in the Spirit as missionary movement. I contend that the Spirit is the Energiser of mission, energising people for the task of a liberatory mission.

g) A new spirituality

My basic thesis here is that a prophetic spirituality is by definition a spirituality of struggle for liberation. It is a spirituality with at least two dimensions: a theological dimension and an anthropological dimension. The theological dimension refers to God as "the One who is intimately involved in their lives, and committed to their struggle for freedom and justice" (Kritzinger 1988:169). This calls for doxology, i.e. the praise of the Living God. The anthropological dimension refers to the faith, hope and love of people as they continue their

struggle against the idols of death. This new spirituality shall be defined more clearly in chapter 4.

1.1.2 Mission

Having tentatively defined my understanding of prophetic, it seems necessary also to define my understanding of mission. The task of defining one's understanding of mission is complicated by at least two factors. First, the terminus technicus for mission in post World War II mission theology is "Missio Dei". This term has already undergone quite a number of shifts in meaning. Three examples must suffice.

In the first place, the term was introduced by the Willingen Conference (1952), very simply stated, in order to ground mission in the Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Subsequently, at the Uppsala Assembly (1968) of the World Council of Churches the meaning shifted to the notion of humanisation. Then the Melbourne Conference (1980) thought of the "Missio Dei" as mission to and of the poor.

A second factor which complicates the definition of mission today is the fact that the term is not self explanatory. Theology does not have a monopoly on the term "mission". In a discussion of the meaning of the technical term "missiology" as distinct theological discipline, J.A.B. Jongeneel (1986:44-49) points to the secular meaning of terms like "mission" and "missiology". So, for example, one can speak of a "diplomatic mission", of "parliamentary missions" and "goodwill missions. Jongeneel argues that the use of terms like "mission" and "missiology" links Church and theology with their secular environment. He concludes:

Gelijkerwijs de handel haar handelsmissies kent, kent de Kerk haar door Jezus Christus geinaugureerde "missies", waarover in "de missiologie" gereflecteerd wordt (1986:48).

Precisely this constitutes a problem for our definition of

mission. The question which arises is the following: What is the relationship between Christian mission and secular missions? There is no way that this question could be ignored in a contemporary definition of mission. In the South African context, cognisance will have to be taken of at least the following "missions": the mission of the liberation movements to free South Africa from racism, sexism and economic exploitation; the mission of the working class to end all exploitation and to establish a socialist society; the mission of secular institutions to build a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. This is well expressed in the mission statement of the University of the Western Cape:

Today our mission is deeply informed by a sense of responsibility to a new South Africa, whether it be through preparation of a corps of intellectuals, professionals and skilled technicians, through leading in the field of providing educational opportunities for the socio-economically disadvantaged or through developing a university community that truly reflects the diversity of the broader non-racial character of our country (Focus Bulletin, 1990:7).

There are still other missions. Within the South African context there is the mission to the consumer as reflected by the motto of one of the supermarket chains, "Checkers' mission". Also, the vision of a "new South Africa" is being propagated with missionary zeal and the free market system is being presented as gospel truth.

This study takes as its point of departure the reality that the relationship between Christian mission and some of the abovementioned missions is dialectical. In some cases it is a relationship of continuity as well as discontinuity, and in other cases it may be a relationship of total discontinuity between Christian mission and other missions. Christian mission never simply coincides with other missions.

This now brings me to my attempt to define mission. My first conviction here is that there is no need to abandon the technical term "Missio Dei", although L.A. Hoedemaker (1988:171) may be right in typifying the term as an artifice:

Met is zonneklaar dat de formule missio Dei in tal van moeilijke discussies over missio en ecclesia ruimte heeft gemaakt voor bevrijding van niet meer bruikbare denkmodellen en voor verdieping van de reflectie op de wereldbetrokkenheid van de kerk. Dat neemt niet weg dat het een kunstgreep is: een algemeen gangbaar geworden begrip (zending/missie) wordt achteraf verbonden met een dogmatische term (missio) die in de triniteitstheologie thuishoort en daar voornamelijk passief gebruikt wordt voor de zending van de Zoon en de Geest.

The point is rather to define "Missio Dei" in an inclusive, contextual way, in such a way that the poor can identify with our definition of the term. From this perspective and on the basis of what has been developed as prophetic above, I offer the following as my definition of mission.

Mission is the praxis of people, struggling to realise God's reign in their own lives and that of others, especially by struggling for justice for and the liberation of the poor and the oppressed. This missionary praxis is grounded in the missio Dei, i.e. God sending Jesus Christ and the Spirit to evangelise, to heal and to liberate (cf. Luke 4:18). Mission is therefore also the praxis of calling people away from the idols of race, sex, class, capital, land and labour to the Living God, who in Jesus of Nazareth struggles with the poor and the oppressed and suffers at the hands of the rich and the powerful. This is "Mission in Christ's Way" (San Antonio 1989). This is also mission in the way of the Holy Spirit who energises people for a liberatory mission.

Three observations need to be made about the above definition. First, the definition affirms the understanding of missiology as

not so much a set of ready made ideas, but as the critical reflection upon missionary praxis. It opts for the kind of epistemology which contradicts the epistemology of Greek philosophy with its idealistic trend. Albert Nolan (1990:97) explains:

Idealism not only treats revelation as a set of ideas or propositions, it also seeks to acquire more knowledge by analysing and clarifying ideas by studying the history of ideas.

Nolan (ibid.) declares this kind of epistemology defective and opts for a materialist or contextual epistemology, stating:

...all knowledge is subjective,...the acquiring of knowledge is not a purely disinterested or objective pursuit, that it serves particular interests and concerns (good or bad) and that ideas are not neutral, absolute and eternal but conditioned by the material circumstances, the context, that gave rise to them.

In the first place this shift from idealist thinking to contextual thinking constitutes a paradigm shift. (The latter concept will be explored in some detail in chapter 2.) In the second place, the definition is both contextual and inclusive. Context does not merely refer to a certain locality, but functions as the technical term for a social analytic category. Contextuality in missiology therefore refers to the fact that there is no missiology "an sich", but only a missiology of mediations. (In chapter 4 I shall focus more specifically on the specific mediations.) By inclusive I mean that the definition contains three important dimensions of mission, i.e. evangelisation, healing and liberation.

Before concluding this section of the study, something has to be said about the connection between contextuality and "Missio Dei". In his definition of contextuality, Shoki Coe (in Witvliet

1985:29) makes the following connection:

...the critical assessment of what makes the context really significant in the light of the *Missio Dei*...is the missiological discernment of the signs of the times, seeing where God is at work and calling on us to participate in that work.

Witvliet (*ibid.*) is right when he argues that this prophetic task of discerning the signs of the times is only possible through involvement in specific historical movements and situations.

1.1.3 Mission as Prophecy

A brief note needs to be made about the distinct formulation of Mission as Prophecy. Why the formulation Mission as...? In his magnum opus Bosch (1991) uses this kind of concept for developing his emerging ecumenical paradigm of mission. Bosch's emerging ecumenical paradigm consists of a number of modes of mission and missiology, which are consistently described as "mission as...". Nowhere in the book does Bosch justify his use of this formulation. It is, however, clear that it is a way of breaking with the Enlightenment pretence that mission and missiology could be defined in watertight terms. Perhaps Bosch's usage of the formulation "mission as..." should be read in conjunction with what he says at the beginning of his book (1991:9) about the ultimate "undefinability" of mission.

A rather enlightening example of formulating the understanding of mission in metaphorical terms, is that of Van 't Hof (1972: 10). He does not develop concepts for formulating the answers which the World Mission Conferences gave to some pertinent questions. To the contrary, he uses images to describe the particular understanding of Christian Mission that emerged at a specific conference. He explicitly uses the term "zending als ...", i.e. "Mission as..." In his own understanding:

Een begrip geeft iets definitiefs, iets onherroepelijks. Het pretendeert het geheim te hebben opgelost, zodat het zoeken kan worden gestaakt. Het bepaalt wat iets is. Minder pretentieus is de notie van het beeld. Het definieert niet zoals een begrip, want het tekent de manier waarop iets functioneert. Het wijst aan hoe iets is. Daarom spelen ook de context en "setting", de tijdgebondenheid en dagelijkse leefwereld een rol. Het beeld impliceert de confrontatie met de situatie, het verspringt ook telkens, zodat wij een scala van beelden voor ogen krijgen, terwijl het begrip de zending als een tijdloos geldend en buiten de empirische geschiedenis staand verschijnsel wil fixeren.

Formulating the title of this study as *Mission as Prophecy*, is a way of confirming Bosch's usage of the term "mission as..." It is also a confirmation of Van't Hof's understanding of mission in post-modern terms, as something which could not be defined in definite terms, but which could only be expressed in images, in metaphors.

Ultimately, to speak of *Mission as Prophecy*, is an attempt to rediscover mission as primarily prophecy. This is, however not to suggest that there are not other modes of mission. I believe that fundamentally the locus for mission is the local congregation. Mission should consequently be understood in terms of the charismatic structure of the congregation. I understand the charismatic structure of the Church to be constituted by the different gifts bestowed upon the Church by the Spirit. Prophecy is but one of the gifts. It stands to reason therefore that the understanding of mission is in no way exhausted by *Mission as Prophecy*. It also needs to be made clear that other dimensions of mission interact and even overlap with prophecy. In fact, this reality is revealed by this very study. Three examples must suffice. First, in as much as *Mission as Prophecy* deals with the *good news to the poor*, it overlaps with *Mission as Evangelisation*. Second, in as much as *Mission as Prophecy* deals

with an holistic liberation, it overlaps with the notion of *Mission as Liberation*. Third, in as much as *Mission as Prophecy* is a theological construct, it overlaps with *Mission as Theology*.

Under the heading *Modalities of Mission*, Senior and Stuhlmuehler (1983:332-339) shows how *prophecy* or in their own terms, *Prophetic Challenge in Word and Sign*, is but one modality of mission. They contend that the prophetic style of communication was not limited to certain individuals, but was the responsibility of the prophetic community. They write:

Prophetic ministry as classically expressed in Israel involved dramatic challenges, delivered in word or symbolic gesture, to attitudes or structures considered incompatible with the message of salvation. This dimension of the prophetic vocation is also found in the New Testament and has important mission consequences.

According to Senior and Stuhlmuehler, the dimension of the prophetic vocation is superbly exemplified by Jesus. They see Jesus as

the Spirit-filled prophet who challenges the exclusive attitude of his contemporaries and suffers the rejection that the prophets of Israel had endured before him. Not only does Jesus blister false attitudes and false values by his preaching and storytelling, but he also chooses the apt prophetic sign: table fellowship with outcasts, healings on the Sabbath, cleansing of the temple, and so forth.

1.2 Method

My understanding of prophetic and of mission is materialist or contextual. This simply means that I do not keep concrete historical and social relationships abstractly at a distance, but take them to be an indispensable source of theology. In fact, I understand missiology to be the critical reflection on what is

taking place on the stage of historical and social relationships. This is an inductive way of theologising, contradicting the deductive way of theologising whereby we first have to postulate universally valid truths about God, Christ and the Holy Spirit and then apply them to concrete situations.

The hermeneutical key to contextual thinking is liberation. It includes both the critique and transformation of present realities. It is within this framework that I shall analyse the World Mission Conferences. My basic concern is whether a prophetic theology of mission can be said to be emerging from the Conferences. It is also in terms of contextuality that I shall systematically develop a prophetic theology of mission which constitutes a paradigm shift which "...includes among other things a shift beyond modernity and post-modernity to a new understanding of how God acts in and through human activity, in and through the material world" (Nolan 1990:99).

1.3 Structure

The study is divided into two parts. Part 1 includes three chapters and part 2 includes two chapters. In chapter 1 I attempt to define my working hypothesis by spelling out my understanding of prophetic and mission. As has been pointed out already my understanding of both is materialist and contextual. In chapter 2 the working hypothesis that has been stated tentatively, is worked out concretely in terms of four paradigms of prophecy. In chapter 3 an attempt is undertaken to analyse the World Mission Conferences in terms of the working hypothesis put forward in chapters 1 and 2. My conclusion is that these Conferences do contain profound prophetic dimensions, but no attempt was made at the time to develop a prophetic theology of mission with a contextual methodology. I shall therefore be offering a prophetic theology of mission as a new dimension in the theology of mission. In chapter 4 I attempt to develop the contours of a prophetic theology of mission by dialectically contrasting the continuity between the tradition of prophetic theology and a

prophetic theology which goes beyond modernity and post-modernity, and the discontinuity between tradition and this new way of discourse about mission. I take this to be hermeneutically sound, taking serious the Biblical tradition, the tradition of twenty centuries of Christianity and one's own context as sources of theology. Added to the contour which deals with the specific kind of methodology of a prophetic theology of mission, is an attempt to make clear the fruitfulness of prophetic terminologies like "kairos" and "signs of the times" for Christian mission. I also go into the opposition of prophetic theology to idolatry and inhumanity. My specific purpose here is to name the idols and to point to the missionary thrust of prophetic theology. This thrust refers to calling people away from the idols to the Living God. Chapter 5 contains a very brief reflection on what Mission as prophecy could mean today. This will be done in terms of three theses.

1.4 Sources

1.4.1 Primary sources

The sources used in this study are primarily the official documents and reports of the World Mission Conferences. These sources are fully reflected in the bibliography. An important note needs to be made about the way in which the material of the conferences are indicated in the bibliography. All relevant documents and reports shall be brought under WORLD MISSION CONFERENCES. In cases where a conference has more than one official document or report, the different volumes are indicated by numbering them from 1 to whatever number.

1.4.2 Secondary sources

Secondary sources refer to studies done on the World Mission Conferences specifically. I am thinking here of the work of Anderson (1960;1961), the extraordinary dissertation of I.P.C. Van't Hoft (1972), the standard work of A. Wind (1984) and works

by J.C. Verkuyl (1973) and Emilio Castro (1985), to name just a few. I do not hesitate to quote profusely from these works.

1.4.3 Other sources

In the attempt to construct a prophetic theology of mission, I cite a number of sources other than the primary or secondary sources mentioned above. I do not limit myself to a single theologian or a single mode of theology, but I take the liberty to draw from any source which is helpful in constructing a prophetic theology of mission. After all, it is rather difficult to put prophetic theology into a neat little box. Despite all our efforts to do so, it remains fragmentary and non-schematic. One point needs to be clarified, however, i.e. that I do not pretend to be ideologically unbiased and do tend to draw more from what could be generally seen as modes of liberation theology. I do this because I am convinced that the theology of the prophets can only be understood in terms of the organisation of society and their performance of certain social roles in it. A prophetic theology therefore is a theology mediated by social analysis. The Kairos Document and the Road to Damascus are twentieth century examples of prophetic theology which make clear that this mode of theology is unthinkable without social analysis.

According to Brueggemann (Sunderland 1985:51-52) an analysis of the organisation of society shows at least three things. In the first place, society consists in an organisation of social power. Social power is defined in terms of land, money, industrial hardware and technology. In the second place, society also consists in social symbols which are defined in terms of management, control and articulation. In the third place, the two, social power and social symbols, together constitute the social system. A fundamental question for Prophetic Theology would therefore be the following: What is the prophetic mission vis a vis the social system if it (social system) is offered as the ultimate solution? Brueggemann responds:

The prophetic task in such a social world is to maintain a destabilizing presence, so that the system is not equated with reality, so that alternatives are thinkable, so that the absolute claims of the system can be critiqued. (Sunderland 1985:51-52).

CHAPTER 2

PROPHETIC PARADIGMS

In chapter 1 of this study an attempt was made to define what I understand by prophetic. This attempt is now taken a step further with the introduction of the prophetic triad of contextuality, hermeneutics and spirituality. The use of the term prophetic triade is by no means suggesting that the three are not highly contested realities. However, in this study they are taken to be constitutive of a prophetic missiology. An attempt shall therefore be undertaken to justify the use of the three criteria by illustrating them in terms of four prophetic paradigms. Before coming to the illustrations, my understanding of contextuality, hermeneutics and spirituality shall first be spelt out in a few very broad strokes.

2.1 USE OF TERMS

2.1.1 Contextuality

Contextuality refers to the theological method where realities in the socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural realms are taken seriously, not simply as areas where the Bible should be applied, but as sources of theology in themselves. For this reason, social analysis is an important dimension of this theological method.

Below it shall be illustrated how different prophetic models take social analysis to be indispensable. Perhaps the social analysis is more implicit in the models of the Old Testament prophets and Jesus as prophet and very explicit in the models of the Kairos Document and the Prophetic Profile.

2.1.2 Hermeneutics

In essence the hermeneutical exercise is part and parcel of the

theological method defined as contextuality. The distinction between contextuality and hermeneutics in this study is for purposes of clarity, not to suggest a separation between them. Hermeneutics as the exercise of interpretation is in terms of this study the attempt at bringing into dialogue with one another, the understanding of the Bible and the understanding of a given context. Put differently, hermeneutics is the meeting point between social analysis and theological reflection.

It will be shown below how in the different prophetic models already mentioned, both the Word of God and the context of people are taken to be sources of theology. The language of interpretation that is being used, is informed by the social context.

2.1.3 Spirituality

In this study the notion of spirituality is used as a metaphorical way of overcoming the dichotomies between faith and politics, Church and society, individual and collective, personal and communal, people and creation. Spirituality refers to a state of being that is geared towards liberation and grounded in hope.

Below it shall be illustrated how the spirituality permeating all four prophetic models, is by definition a spirituality of liberation.

Having stated my understanding of the notions of contextuality, hermeneutics and spirituality in very broad strokes, I now want to turn to four prophetic paradigms as illustrations of the prophetic triad being used in this study. The four paradigms are the following: The Prophets of the Old Testament, Jesus as Prophet, the Kairos Document and the Prophetic Profile of Bartholome de las Casas. The term illustrations is used purposefully to indicate that what is to follow, is not an extensive discussion on the four paradigms, but rather sketches of how the dimensions of contextuality, hermeneutics and

spirituality are contained in these paradigms.

Before moving on to the four paradigms themselves a brief note needs to be made about the concept *paradigm*. I believe that in terms of all four paradigms to be used here as illustrations, there is an identifiable *prophetic community* where certain techniques are applied and certain values and beliefs are adhered to. The term paradigm is therefore used here in the sense of Thomas Kuhn (1970:175) when he writes:

the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community.

I think the way in which Kuhn describes the emergence of new paradigms is quite relevant here. He argues, with reference to the natural sciences, that phases of "normal" science are interrupted by a crisis or crises. During this crisis new paradigms emerge or, as Kuhn puts it, a scientific revolution takes place. I want to argue that the four prophetic paradigms mentioned here, emerged precisely in situations of deep crisis where the prevailing paradigms could not provide answers to teasing questions of a socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural nature. Prophetic communities came to the fore to provide answers in terms of the beliefs and values as well as the techniques they shared.

The application of the paradigm concept to theology dates back to 1983 when Hans Kung presented two papers at an international congress (Spangenberg 1994:144). In attempting to show how Kuhn's insights about paradigms and paradigm shifts in the field of the natural sciences, could also be applied to theology, Kung advances the following similarities. First, normally there is a phase in which "normal science" is being done. this is the phase of the classical texts, textbooks and prominent scientists, subscribing to a particular paradigm, propagating such paradigm through their scientific work. Second, gradually crises emerge

which cannot be solved by the existing paradigm. Third, the uncertainty and even powerlessness accompanying the crises, very often leads to the emergence of a new paradigm, presenting itself as a solution to the problem. Fourth, the new paradigm is never accepted without a struggle.

Once again, I want to argue that the four prophetic paradigms emerged when peoples were in deep crises, the existing paradigms not being able to provide solutions. In the Old Testament the paradigm of the prophets with its strong emphasis on social justice, the poor and the oppressed, the orphan and the widow, the stranger, proposed solutions for Israel's political oppression, economic exploitation and cultural decay. No wonder this paradigm was resisted to the extent of the prophets paying the supreme prize in their attempt to uphold the paradigm.

In the New Testament, Jesus the Prophet offers a solution to the identity crisis experienced by the Jewish community. In the Kairos Document a distinct prophetic community emerges, proposing a prophetic model that would address the crisis of and for apartheid quite decisively. In sixteenth century Latin America, The Spanish missionary, Bartholome de las Casas presented a paradigm that would contradict the racism, dominance and greed of the colonisers.

In South Africa the paradigm concept was introduced by Bosch (1991) in the field of Missiology. After having shown extensively how different mission paradigms emerged ever since the appearance of the New Testament as a missionary document, Bosch concludes his magnum opus with what he defines as the Emerging Ecumenical Paradigm. Deist (1989:1) has applied the idea of a paradigm shift to Old Testament scholarship on the prophets with specific reference to South Africa. The paradigm shift Deist speaks about relates to the fact that certain very pertinent questions could not be answered by what Deist calls the dominant model of rationality. According to Deist a different model is needed to answer questions like: what was a prophet? Did the prophets

occupy any office in society? How are the prophetic words regarding social, economic and political issues to be evaluated?

Deist (1989:1) defines a paradigm shift as follows:

A paradigm switch can thus be defined as the process of acknowledging the inadequacy, and therefore, the failure of a given academic approach to ask relevant questions and/or suggest valid solutions to problems in an academic field and that leads to the replacement of the old paradigm of thought by a more relevant/valid and/or promising approach. Since such a replacement does not imply the application of new techniques, but a complete change in outlook, it is also called a conversion - which may be an ironically relevant term when speaking about the prophets.

The failure of the dominant model to interpret the prophets in terms of social realities leads according to Deist, to a romantic-historicist view of the prophets. In the fourth chapter of this study Old Testament scholars like Gottwald, Brueggemann, Mosala and Wilson shall be introduced in an attempt to interpret the prophets contextually. A contextual interpretation of the prophets is one that takes seriously questions like: what did the Israelite society of the 8th, 7th and 6th century BCE look like? What were the material conditions under which people had to live? What exactly prompted prophets to speak out?

2.2 THE PROPHETIC PARADIGM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

2.2.1 Contextuality

The theology of the Old Testament prophets is by definition a contextual theology. Within the context of social, political and economic oppression, the prophets' mission was the pursuit of justice for the poor and the oppressed. In this sense prophetic

theology is a timebound theology and I would like to dwell briefly on this important characteristic of prophetic theology. According to Deist (1989:12) there are certain historical questions that cannot be answered effectively unless one has a clear idea of the societies in which the prophets lived and in which the prophetic texts had been produced. He suggests a materialist, contextual, sociological approach to them. In chapter 4 examples of this approach will be offered.

For now two renowned Old Testament scholars are called in to testify to the contextual, timebound nature of prophetic theology. One of the major results of extensive research done by Von Rad (1968) into the message of the prophets, is the timeboundness of prophecy. He draws the following conclusion:

It is all important not to read this message as if it consisted of timeless ideas, but to understand it as the particular word relevant to a particular hour in history, which therefore cannot be replaced by any other word. The prophetic word never tries to climb into the realm of general religious truth, but instead uses even the most suspect means to tie the listening partner down to his particular time and place in order to make him understand his own situation before God (Von Rad 1968:100).

The very same understanding of prophecy is echoed by Westermann (1981). He contradicts the idea of prophecy merely being the foretelling of the future, saying:

The charge of the prophets applies to their own time

Addressing himself to the prophetic language or the language of the prophets, Westermann shows how it is a particular language of an individual who has grown up at a specific time in a specific place, rooted in specific traditions with a specific vision on reality and a specific, uninterchangeable frame of reference. In brief, he concurs with Von Rad's understanding of

the timebound nature of prophecy.

In South Africa, it has especially been Nolan (1986:131; 1988:14) who has argued persuasively that prophetic theology is a timebound, contextual theology. He writes:

...there is a fundamental characteristic of this mode in theology that underlies everything else and that distinguishes it from every other theology or mode of theology. And this is the characteristic of being timebound. All prophecy and prophetic theology speaks of, and speaks to, a particular time in a particular place about a particular situation.

This understanding of prophetic theology is clearly illustrated by the different projects facilitated by Nolan's Institute for Contextual Theology like the Black Theology Project, Speaking for ourselves of the African Independent Churches, Feminist Theology and the Kairos Document.

Reid (1980:60) puts the contextual nature of prophetic theology in graphic terms by referring to the "earth boundness" of the prophets and their "ability to look reality straight in the eye" as well as their "concern with the pots and pans of life".

In terms of my understanding of the concept paradigm in its application to the prophets, I want to contend that the prophets of the Old Testament knew techniques of implied social and theological analysis. Logically, this is the only way of explaining their exposure of the causes of social, political and economic oppression. Their deep sense of theological analysis enabled them to identify the idols. These analyses led to the denunciation of persons, practices and structures.

2.2.2 Hermeneutics

I alluded already to Westermann (1981) who argues that because

of the contextual nature of prophetic theology, the prophets spoke a particular language. This is what hermeneutics is about: using a particular language to interpret God's Word in a particular setting to a particular people. Also, it is the exercise of interpreting a particular context to particular people.

Following Elsa Tamez (1982) I want to contend that one of the basic hermeneutic structures of the prophets was the *oppression liberation* structure. In her very powerful book, Tamez clearly shows the circular movement between context and text. She analyses the different levels of oppression, i.e. international and national as well as the agents and objects of oppression. Her investigation shows quite clearly who the objects of oppression are: the poor. In Part II of her book she deals with the other pole of the hermeneutical circle, namely liberation. In terms of the Good News of Liberation, *Yahweh is identified as the Liberator God and the Good News is taken to be essentially Good News to the Poor.*

2.2.3 Spirituality

The spirituality of the prophets was by definition a spirituality of liberation.

2.3 THE PROPHETIC PARADIGM OF JESUS

2.3.1 Contextuality

A very profound analysis of the context in which Jesus lived and worked, is offered by Tamez (1982:66). She writes:

In the first century A.D. the ordinary people of Palestine found themselves in extremely difficult circumstances. Like all Jews they had to pay heavy taxes to the Roman Empire; in addition, they suffered greatly from the inflation that was prevalent from Egypt to Syria. In the cities there was

growing unemployment, and slavery was on the increase. For these reasons, slaves and farm workers abandoned their places and formed robber bands to prey on the caravans of traders and pilgrims. Meanwhile, there was another social class that did not suffer from this situation but, on the contrary, possessed economic and political power in Palestine and profited from inflation. These were the people who formed the council of elders (generally, men from the noble and powerful families), the chief priests, the great landowners, the rich merchants, and others who exercised some political and ideological control (the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees). This class collaborated with the Roman Empire and acted in ways hostile to the masses of the people. Its members were the open enemies of the Zealots, a guerilla group that wanted to take power and drive out the Romans.

In chapter four the voices of Bosch and Segundo will be added to that of Tamez. Suffice it to state here that the very extensive citation from the latter goes a long way in setting the scene into which Jesus, the Prophet was to carry the *Good News of the Reign of God*. The point now is to illustrate how Jesus responded concretely to his historical context.

2.3.2 Hermeneutics

That Jesus took his context seriously, is clearly indicated by the metaphors he uses to impress upon people that the situation cannot continue as it is. He therefore interprets this very positive affirmation in terms of words like *reign of God, Good News, hope, resurrection, life and change* (Tamez 1982:67). For purposes of illustration Jesus' notion of *Good News* is singled out here for a very brief discussion.

In terms of Jesus' historical situation as sketched by Tamez, *Good News* meant one thing to some and another thing to others. To the poor and the oppressed the *Good News* meant:

The message of...the liberation of human beings from everything and everyone that keeps them enslaved (Tamez 1982:68).

To the rich, powerful and corrupt the *Good News* was quite evidently not so good. As Tamez (1982:69) writes:

The *Good News* that speaks of the liberation of the oppressed cannot be pleasing to the oppressors, who want to go on exploiting the poor.

2.3.3 Spirituality

The metaphors Jesus used to say that the status quo cannot continue as it is, clearly points to a spirituality of liberation. Jesus wanted a specific category of people, the poor and the oppressed, to be free. For this reason his spirituality was a spirituality of hope:

At the very heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ and at the very centre of all true prophecy is a message of hope (Kairos Document)

The Kairos Document goes on to say that Jesus taught us to speak of this hope as the coming of God's reign.

2.4 THE PROPHETIC PARADIGM OF THE KAIROS DOCUMENT

2.4.1 Contextuality

The contextual nature of the Kairos Document is well captured by the following statement from the document:

We need a bold and incisive response that is prophetic because it speaks to the *particular circumstances* of this crisis, a response that does not give the impression of

sitting on the fence but is clearly and unambiguously taking a stand.

Commentators on the document have paid special attention to its contextuality. Brockway (1985:44) shows great respect for the contextuality of the Kairos Document by relativising his own position in the following manner:

For an American who lives in Switzerland to comment on a statement such as "Challenge to the Church" is presumptuous at least and arrogant at most.

In his commentary on the document Witvliet (1988:25-26) shows very sharply how its contextuality is determined by the *story* being told at the beginning of the document.

There we sit in the same Church while outside Christian policemen and soldiers are beating up and killing Christian children or torturing Christian prisoners to death while yet other Christians stand by and weakly plead for peace (Kairos Document).

Witvliet comments as follows on the *story*

Het verhaal past zich niet aan aan de al van tevoren vastliggende logica van het theologisch vertoog, maar het dwingt tot een nieuwe logica, tot een nieuwe spreken over God. De context van het Kairos-document wordt door dit verhaal bepaald, en men zal het dus ook tot zich moeten laten doordringen. Vanuit dit verhaal kan dan ook duidelijk worden, waarom het Kairos-document de tegenstelling tussen onderdrukker en onderdrukte als het dominerend probleem schetst.

In terms of this comment Witvliet goes on to conclude that contextual theology which is a product of the Third World, is not

a theology referring to just any context. It is not simply a theology mentioning the own context or taking the own context into account. It is a theology that takes as its starting point the experiences of suffering and oppression, in search of a

method to understand such experiences in the light of the Messianic history.

Hoedemaker (1985:51) introduces a very interesting point by raising the contextuality-universality issue. On the one hand he affirms the document in its contextuality by saying:

It is a reflection on a situation in which an explicit confession for Jesus Christ over against the powers has become inescapable; its aim is to account for this inescapability.

On the other hand he suggests that the analysis the document offers is helpful in making clear that we are not dealing with an exclusively South African problem.

In his response to the Kairos Document Pobee (1985:37) makes clear that his hesitancy to comment stems from the contextual nature of the document. He writes:

First, theology is by definition contextual. Theology's formative factors include experience, revelation, scripture, tradition, culture and reason. Each of these reflect to a lesser or greater degree contextual insights.

The few examples referred to are helpful in at least three respects. First, they show to what extent the notion of contextuality has become acceptable in ecumenical circles and at universities. Second, they show that contextuality is not simply a way of bringing the own context into a theological discussion, but it refers to a distinct theological method. Third, they show

that to be contextual in terms of the understanding of the Kairos Document, is to be concerned about the way in which churches across the world relate to each other.

2.4.2 Hermeneutics

The prophetic language used in the Kairos Document is quite explicit. The political context in South Africa is theologically interpreted in terms of *kairos*, *signs of the times*, *oppression and liberation*.

For illustrative purposes a brief discussion shall now be conducted on how some commentators responded to the use of especially the *kairos concept*.

Most commentators have grappled with the question of the meaning of the concept. With reference to *kairos* the Argentinian pastor and theologian, Bonino (1985:55), writes:

The term is used in Tillich's sense as a moment in time on which eternity impinges as promise and judgment. It may be grasped in faith or rejected through lack of discernment (hardening?) It can be theologically interpreted in different ways, and this is precisely what happens in South Africa. But the important point here is the relation between the awareness of the time of "crisis" which demands commitment and the theological interpretation (including the socio-analytical and/or ideological mediation) which shapes the nature of that commitment.

Bonino seems to be suggesting, in typical Liberation Theological style, that a *kairos* is something to be explained and he himself is doing so in terms of Tillich, but it is more than that. It calls first and foremost for a faith commitment.

In his reflection on the *kairos* concept, Witvliet (1988:8-11) offers some razor sharp analyses which are helpful in

understanding *kairos* as a hermeneutical key. For Witvliet the wonder of the Kairos Document is constituted by a number of paradoxes which he describes as follows:

Het is geschreven door mensen die met hun rug tegen de muur staan, maar het is nergens defensief, angstig of verkrampd. Het is geschreven vanuit een duidelijk voelbare woede, pijn en frustratie, maar daarnaast met een groot analytisch vermogen en een opvallende helderheid. Apocalyptische beelden, duivel en antichrist gaan gepaard met oecumenische openheid en theologische bescheidenheid. Gebondenheid aan plaats en tijd gaat samen met een universele dimensie, gedocumenteerd door de wereldwijde respons.

Witvliet indicates how these paradoxes relate to the character of the *kairos*. He sees the *kairos* as prophetic judgment where two dimensions converge. First, there is the experience of a deep social and religious crisis by the victims of apartheid. Second, the crisis is viewed in the light of God's judgment and grace. A *kairos* is therefore:

...een kwalitatief begrip: het kwalificeert een historisch-maatschappelijke crisis als een geloofscrisis, waarin de goden worden ontmaskerd in naam van de ware God.

Others have shown that a *kairos* is not a only subject of definition or faith commitment. It is not only fraught with contradiction and consequently subject of dialectical analysis. It is above all something to be celebrated. In his contribution to the very useful book *We shall overcome, Spirituality for Liberation*, de Gruchy (1991:5-31) writes about "Singing the Kairos".

2.4.3 Spirituality

The Kairos Document reflects a profoundly siritual dimension.

The term spiritual is used here not in the other-worldly sense which is so mercilessly criticised by the Kairos Document. In exposing the kind of spirituality that is quite often dominating Church life, the document states:

Social and political matters were seen as worldly affairs that have nothing to do with the spiritual concerns of the Church. Moreover, spirituality has also been understood to be purely private and individualistic. Public affairs and social problems were thought to be beyond the sphere of spirituality.

In contradistinction to this kind of spirituality, the Kairos Document proposes a spirituality which is truly biblical, penetrating into every aspect of human existence, excluding nothing from God's redemptive will.

In the document this penetrating, holistic kind of spirituality is worked out in terms of hope, love, fearlessness and participation in the struggle for liberation. It is even proposed that all Church activities should be geared towards nourishing a prophetic faith, related to God's kairos.

The deeply spiritual nature of the Kairos Document is perhaps best captured by the urgent question Bonino (1985:55) poses at the beginning of his reaction to the document:

Do we or do we not discern here the voice of the Spirit?

For him this is in the final analysis the only decisive issue.

The spirituality of the Kairos Document has been extensively reflected upon by the authors of *We shall overcome, Spirituality for Liberation* (1991). In chapter 4 we shall return to this book. Suffice it to say here that the understanding of spirituality of the authors of the book is well reflected by one of them when he

writes:

Spirituality is verified by participation in the struggle for justice alongside the marginalised of society. A spiritual moment, however, does not always precede participation in the social struggle, because this participation is in itself a spiritual source. The struggle for life, the depths of human anguish, and the experience of desolation and oppression, are all moments of intense spirituality where God is sought and discovered (Grassow 1991:54)

Witvliet (1988:27-28) shows, however, that the spirituality of the Kairos Document should never be seen as *triumphalistic*. He draws attention to the tremendous tension throughout the document between the hope of the prophetic theology and the real situation in the townships, contradicting the notion of *God with us*. According to him the spirituality of the document is much more characterised by *hope against hope* than anything else.

2.5 THE PARADIGM OF A PROPHETIC PROFILE: Bartholome de las Casas

2.5.1 Contextuality

The story of de las Casas is the story of how the context he found himself in as a missionary, contributed dramatically to his conversion to the Indian people.

In his mammoth work, *Scourged Christs of the Indies*, Gutierrez (1993:45-66) tells the story of the radical change in the life of de las Casas. The context the latter found himself in was the typical setting of the intermingling between Christian mission and colonial conquest. This intermingling was according to Leon (in Dussel 1992:43) a violent cultural clash between the European world and the societies and civilizations of the "New World". As elsewhere in the world, here too the military superiority of the Europeans could not be resisted by the indigenous people.

The launch of the European invasion was described by de las Casas as "by wolves and tigers and lions that have been hungry for many days".

The invasion had devastating effects on the social, political and economic life of the Indians. The fabric of Indian society disintegrated, confronting missionaries with the serious problem of not knowing how to evangelise a scattered people. Estrago (in Dussel:1992:351) puts it as follows:

The fact that the natives lived in scattered groups made it impossible for them to be "reduced" to political and human life, the first requirement if they were to be converted to Christian faith and life.

The problem of the scattered Indians was solved by gathering them in the infamous "reductions" which were created in terms of a legal ordinance of the Spanish crown. These settlements were nothing but concentration camps and it was here that de las Casas was schocked to reality, seeing with his own eyes the brutalities being perpetrated against the Indian people.

Gutierrez (1993:45) offers a moving account of the conversion experience that de las Casas went through:

The profound change that now takes place in Bartholome's life is stamped with his experience of the untimely, unjust deaths of the Indians, which he has known in Hispanolia and which he has seen with his own eyes, most traumatically in the course of the first steps of his activities of evangelization in Cuba. The Caonao massacre, which he has personally witnessed, has marked him with an indelible scar. He mentions it repeatedly in his writings. He also perceives that in some way he belongs to an enterprise and social order that have brought these deeds about. This experience has led him to the heart of his spirituality and theology: recognition of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, in

the tortured, scourged natives of the Indies.

2.5.2 Hermeneutics

The context in which de las Casas worked, compelled him to acquire new language. Concepts like prophecy, idolatry, justice and liberation became part of his vocabulary.

Acting prophetically, de las Casas left Cuba in 1514 to return to Spain to present a memorandum defending the Indians. Although he had initial success in that royal consent was obtained in 1519 for the establishment of "settlements of free Indians", pressure from landlords turned it into an abortive exercise. De las Casas was to discover that at the root of the injustices were:

Greed and death - the first being the cause of the second...(Gutierrez 1993:45).

The actual prophetic ministry of de las Casas was his exposure of the idolatrous nature of greed. Gold was identified as having become the the lord of the greedy Spanish colonizers, prompting de las Casas to observe:

...they become captives and slaves of money and must do what their lord commands, walking ever with care and diligence and on the alert to please it and keep it satisfied, since it is from it that they await all their desires, and all their beatitude (in Gutierrez 1993:439).

Gutierrez places the ideas of de las Casas in proper perspective by alluding to the teaching of the prophets of the Old Testament. The prophets of the Old Testament denounced those who perverted the worship of Yahweh by putting their trust in something or someone that is not God. The Spaniards have given over their lives to false god, the god of gold, whom they served.

2.5.3 Spirituality

In essence the spirituality reflected by the life of de las Casas could be described as simultaneously a spirituality of compassion and fearlessness or courage. He showed great compassion in the way that he identified with the plight of the Indians. He showed great courage in denouncing the greed and idolatry of his kith and kin.

2.6 Conclusion

I would now like to draw the following conclusions from the four sketches of prophetic paradigms presented here.

2.6.1 Contextuality

The sketches illustrate that prophetic theology does not deal with universal ideas which are supposed to be valid for all situations. On the contrary, they illustrate that prophetic theology is a *timebound, contextual theology*. It is a theology addressing itself to real socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural matters. These matters are, however, not dealt with in a general way, but in terms of two hermeneutical keys. First, prophetic theology chooses as its interlocutor the poor and the oppressed. Second, prophetic theology makes clear that their situation cannot continue, but should be ended through liberation. It is this understanding of prophetic theology that will be used in analysing the World Mission Conferences.

2.6.2 Hermeneutics

In the light of prophetic theology not working with universal ideas valid for every situation, new concepts and new metaphors are being developed in every new situation. The sketches illustrate that prophetic theology has a distinct way of speaking. It denounces and announces. Within the oppression-

liberation framework concepts like poor, oppressed, kairos, signs of the times, good news and reign of God are being used. I am interested in testing the World Mission Conferences in terms of such concepts.

2.6.3 Spirituality

The sketches illustrate that the spirituality of prophetic theology is at its depth a spirituality of liberation. Here I want to concur with Saayman (1991:120-121) when he contends that the struggle for liberation is deeply spiritual, especially when the faith of the poor is taken as model. I also want to concur with his understanding of liberation which, although not exhausted by them, include the social, political and economic dimensions. I am interested in whether the World Mission Conferences reflect anything of this kind of spirituality.

2.7 Not exhaustive at all

In conclusion the important point needs to be made that the triad of contextuality, hermeneutics and spirituality by no means exhausts the dimensions of prophetic theology. These three are selected as a working hypothesis for the rest of this study. The illustrations have shown that they are, however, not arbitrary selections, but that I am justified to use them in terms of the self-understanding of prophetic theology.

CHAPTER 3

THE WORLD MISSION CONFERENCES IN PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVE: A DIALOGUE

Before analysing the World Missionary Conferences in terms of contextuality, hermeneutics and spirituality, the following needs to be stated.

- a) This study assumes knowledge of the dates and venues of the Conferences from Edinburgh (1910) to San Antonio (1989) and would therefore not waste space on such.
- b) The reasons for selecting the World Mission Conferences as field of study are twofold.

- i) Biographical

The author of this study attended the San Antonio (1989) Conference and was so overwhelmed by the prophetic spirituality that prevailed there, that he decided to do research on prophetic dimensions in the World Mission Conferences. The initial results of the research is contained in a doctoral script (Botha 1989).

- ii) Methodological

The second reason pertains to the specific theological method that is being attempted in this study. The method could be defined as an attempt to grapple seriously with the own context in dialogue with other contexts. Put differently, it is an attempt to hold particularity and universality, in creative tension.

1. Edinburgh (1910)

1.1 Contextuality

Without fear of contradiction it could be stated that Edinburgh suffered severely from the lack of contextuality. An anachronistic spirit prevailed at Edinburgh with most participants still gripped by the "abounding optimism" of the nineteenth century. They were optimistic about the future (Wind, 1984:29). This spirituality of optimism rendered Edinburgh illiterate: they were unable to read the signs of the times. The emerging danger was not seen.

The problem could be partly related to the way in which Edinburgh conceptualised the "world". Bosch (1980:160) sharply points to this when he writes:

world was not primarily a theological concept, but a geographical-historical one: 'world' was divided into two components, a 'Christian' and a 'non-Christian'. The relationship between the two was basically that of apostolic imperialism: the 'Christian' world had to subdue the 'non-Christian'.

The Weltanschauung of Edinburgh made it virtually impossible to analyse critically the following developments in the world of 1910. Or more accurate perhaps, the Western world of 1910.

a) "The age of Western imperialism" (Potter 1980 :9-10)

The Edinburgh Conference took place in a context where social Darwinism was rife. In its simplest form social Darwinism is the theory whereby it is believed that some races are superior to

others. To formulate it more precisely: there was a belief that white people and their culture were superior. This was very strongly reflected in the deliberations at Edinburgh. Two examples must suffice. Edinburgh distinguished between the 'more backward races of mankind' and the 'more advanced' (Edinburgh 7:115). The strength, enlightenment and the dominion over other races of the 'Christian nations of Europe and America' was ascribed to the 'Providence of God' (Ibid.:115). Mission against this background was understood to be the bringing of civilization from advanced peoples to backward peoples. And so the intermingling of colonial expansion and Christian mission was confirmed (Cf. Muller 1985: 31).

b) The age of war

Edinburgh almost coincided with the First World War. Still, the kairos could not be discerned. The vision was so blurred by optimism that the signs of war which appeared on the horizon could not be detected. The fierce power struggle between Western powers about the division of the world for investment, export markets and the import of raw materials which gave rise to the arms race, was not addressed by Edinburgh (Cf. Wind 1984:29).

c) The age of apartheid

The year 1910 was not only four years before the outbreak of the war, but it was also the year that the Act of Union was signed in South Africa. In terms of this Act, political power was transferred from Britain to the white minority of South Africa and blacks were effectively excluded. Surprisingly this major development was not on the Edinburgh agenda. South Africa's 'thorny and intricate problem of the native races' (Edinburgh 7:169), did, however, feature in the form of an intriguing confrontation between F.B.Bridgman of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in South Africa and

B.P.J. Marchand of the Dutch Reformed Church. Marchand claimed that the Cape Colony had 'a most enlightened native policy' and that 'Missionaries have had a free hand in their work' (Ibid.: 169). He could come to such a conclusion only on the basis of a dichotomization between mission and politics.

I know of no such problem from a purely missionary point of view. When you come to politics there is indeed such a problem, but I hold that missions as such, so long as they can carry on their work unfettered have nothing to do with that problem. In my humble view: the less missionaries have to do with politics in any shape or form, the better for the exalted object they have in view and the less chance there will be of losing sympathy of the Government and the financial support for educational work we enjoy (Edinburgh 7:169-170).

Marchand was strongly contradicted by Bridgman who pointed to the existing restrictions on the preaching of the gospel in South Africa. Though colluding with the social Darwinism of Edinburgh, Bridgman (Edinburgh 7:171) criticised the colonial authorities with special reference to the land issue, which he described as a 'bed-rock issue'.

In the past it can hardly be said that the South African colonists in general have done to the natives as they would be done by. I feel in some respect that there has been a sad lack of responsibility on the part of the ruling race for the welfare of the weaker race.

Only three years after Edinburgh the infamous Native's Land Act

was passed in South Africa. Through this 'law of dispossession', more than ninety percent of the country was reserved for white ownership and control. With this South Africa became a classical example of the type of schizophrenia whereby a dichotomy is being created between mission and the socio-political and economic reality on the one hand and the intermingling between mission and colonial conquest takes place on the other hand.

From the very brief discussion on contextuality it should be clear to what extent Edinburgh suffered from a lack of it. Put differently, there was no genuine attempt at Edinburgh to grapple with mission theology in terms of the prevailing social, political, economic and cultural realities of 1910. On the other hand, however, Edinburgh could be accused of the worst form of contextualisation : imposing the Western context on the rest of the world. No wonder that none else than Philip Potter (1980:10), draws attention to the lack of prophetic self-criticism amongst Western missionaries

It is touching to read the record of that conference which gave such concentrated and dedicated attention to what was happening in Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific. But they did not apply their prophetic assessment and judgment to the situation of their own countries and churches, except to lament the lukewarmness of Christians as regards the world mission. And yet, the situation in Europe was at that time perilously moving into a cataclysmic conflict.

It is precisely the lack of prophetic self-criticism which Potter refers to, that has prevented a proper interpretation of prophetic concepts by Edinburgh. In the end those concepts were void of any theological content and became mere slogans.

1.2 Hermeneutics

The Edinburgh Conference interpreted the time around 1910 as a kairos. This is clearly indicated by numerous expressions of which a few examples must suffice. The time of Edinburgh was typified as 'the day of God's power' (Edinburgh I:49). The urgency of matters was captured by expressions like 'the present is the time of all times' (Ibid.:362) and 'Time presses' (op.cit.:49).

The application of these kairotic expressions by Edinburgh, have brought a number of missiologists to a description of the Conference in prophetic language. Bosch (1980: 160), argues that the delegates at Edinburgh " could clearly deduce God's all-sufficiency from the " signs of the times". The period in which they lived was exceptionally important. Words and expressions that were repeatedly employed, included "opportunities", "a decisive hour", "this generation", "a critical time". That Edinburgh had a daunting responsibility hic et nunc and that times were very favourable for mission, in terms of Edinburgh's self-understanding, are well expressed by two Dutch missiologists, I.P.C.Van't Hof and A.Wind.

Van't Hof (1972:33) "...the kairos signifies responsibility now..." and Wind (1984:32) " The signs of the times were seen to be very favourable for mission ".

A question which needs to be addressed, however, is what was connoted by the kairos of Edinburgh and what were the challenges posed to the Church. Edinburgh spoke about the " synchronizing of crises in all parts of the world " (Edinburgh I: 362) and concluded as follows about the challenge to the Church

For the Church not to rise to the present situation and meet the present opportunity, will result in hardening the minds and hearts of its members and making them unresponsive to God

(Edinburgh I:45).

The real kairos of Edinburgh therefore was the " speedy completion of the evangelization of the entire world " (Edinburgh 9:109).

This study contends that Edinburgh was guilty of a reductionist use of prophetic language, if not a false application thereof. One of the theses of this study is that concepts like "kairos" and "signs of the times", could only be properly used in relation to the material situation, i.e. the existing social, political, economic and cultural realities. The discussion on contextuality has shown that Edinburgh was not vaguely aware of the kairoi constituted by the prevailing social Darwinism and the imminent World War. This situation could have been avoided if the hermeneutic exercise were to follow the exercise of social analysis.

1.3 Spirituality

The spirituality prevailing at Edinburgh, could be described as a spirituality of optimism. The spirit that gripped Edinburgh is well captured by Scherer (1987:15) when he writes

It was a conference to design the strategy for a final campaign by the concerted forces of the kingdom of God as they assayed what was needed to complete the 'unfinished task'.

Also Bosch (1980:160) attempts to reflect Edinburgh's spirituality of "missionary enthusiasm" and "Western missionary consciousness". He concludes: " Mission stood under the banner of world conquest'.

The concepts used by Scherer and Bosch in their analysis of Edinburgh, clearly point to the spirituality of conquest that dominated the conference. The important point to be observed here is that the line of demarcation between missionary-evangelistic conquest and colonial conquest, was a very thin one. In fact, many a time, the lines intermingled.

The spirituality which prevailed at Edinburgh, could be described as simultaneously other-worldly and this-worldly. This may seem to be a contradiction, but it is merely a way of expressing Edinburgh's withdrawal from colonial people and their historical processes on the one hand and its collusion with colonial conquest on the other hand. Once again, it was a spirituality of conquest, diametrically opposed to a spirituality of liberation which people in the colonies were yearning for. Perhaps the greatest deficit of Edinburgh, is the fact that the structural political and socio-economic need of the colonies was not really on the agenda. Some-times only in a very reactionary fashion:

When it comes to political aspirations that are at all legitimate and reasonable, the missionary should impress upon the native the gravity of responsibility accompanying such priveleges; he should counsel patience, enforcing the lesson from English history, showing how many centuries it has required for Britons to secure their present priveleges; once more he should reiterate that only through absolute and abiding loyalty to present authority can the native ever hope to secure the priveleges he covets (Edinburgh 7:84).

The quotation makes clear why the issue of race relations was not officially on the Edinburgh agenda. It took courageous people

like Azariah and Yi to speak to the issue.

1.4 Excursus on race relationships

The issue of race relationships is introduced here and elsewhere in the study by way of an excursus not to suggest that it is less important than other issues. On the contrary, it is treated in this way precisely to highlight its importance for the South African situation. It is one of the most important elements in any social analysis of the South African context. It is furthermore dealt with separately to overcome the inconsistency of not dealing with the issue in the analyses of all conferences.

Edinburgh was, save for a few exceptions, an exclusively Western occasion. More importantly though, is the prevailing air of superiority amongst white delegates to Edinburgh and the tendency to regard the Western Church as the model for all else.

Two Asians, V.S. Azariah and Cheng Ching Yi reacted very strongly to this. They "challenged the conference in ways that caused deep consternation" (Potter 1980:19). Azariah addressed himself to the question of race relations in the Indian Church, drawing attention to the close relationship between Christian mission and social problems. This could be seen as an exercise in contextualisation :

Race relations is one of the most serious problems confronting the Church today. the bridging of the gulf between East and West, and the attainment of a greater unity and common ground in Christ as the great Unifier of mankind, is one of the deepest needs of our time In India, the relationship too often is not what it ought to be, and things must change, and speedily, if there is to

be a large measure of hearty co-operation between the foreign missionary and the Indian worker The official relationship generally prevalent at present between the missionary and the Indian worker is that between a master and servant There can never be real progress unless the aspirations of the native Christians to self-government and independence are accepted, encouraged, and acted upon (Edinburgh 9:306,311-312).

Testifying to the unity of the Church, Cheng Ching Yi (Potter in Melbourne:19) was equally candid in his challenge, contending

The Church of Christ is universal, not only irrespective of denominationalism, but also irrespective of nationalities.

Unfortunately the issue raised by Azariah and Yi was not discussed further in an official way, but the voices raised, proved to be prophetic for later developments (Bassham 1979: 18). All indications are that the Continuation Committee under John R.Mott did take up the challenge, especially the one of Azariah (Potter in Melbourne:19) for missionaries to give up their racist and paternalistic attitudes and instead practice love and friendship

You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for love. Give us friends.

Having reflected somewhat negatively on Edinburgh thus far, it is paramount to point to the limited scope of this study. The very negative conclusions about Edinburgh, is an indication of how subjective a study of this nature could be. In a sense it reveals more about the ideological persuasions of the author, than of Edinburgh.

An exclusively negative reflection on Edinburgh would, however be a gross misrepresentation. There were signs of self-criticism in the acknowledgement of " corrupt influences of our Western nations" and of " growing racial pride and antagonism " (Edinburgh I: 22-24, 97, 124, 132, 226, 243-244, 266, 317). The quest for unity which culminated in the establishment of the Continuation Committee, could be interpreted prophetically as a form of critique against the division not only in the Church, but also in humankind.

2. JERUSALEM (1928)

2.1 Contextuality

The fact that Jerusalem was much more aware of the context in which the Conference took place, is made clear by the optimism which made way for pessimism. Jerusalem happened between the devastation of the First World War, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the crisis period of the nineteen thirties, which were to be a time of uncertainty and great cultural and social changes. Bassham (1979:20) shows how Jerusalem's "Message" recognized that " throughout the world there is a sense of insecurity and instability ".

Most commentators point to at least three major developments during the time of Jerusalem: the declining prestige of the West, rising nationalism in Asia and Africa and the revival of the World Religions. The latter took place at a time when there was an upsurge in secularism and atheism in the Western world. Secularism was interpreted by Jerusalem as a sign of the times.

That Jerusalem was much more conscious of the specific context in which the Conference happened, is aptly illustrated by the question formulated by Freytag (1961:47)

Was hat Mission zu dem allem zu sagen, was ist die Botschaft des Christentums zu den Problemen der Welt?

The theological grappling with this kind of question, brought Jerusalem to the introduction of a comprehensive approach. Discussions centred around consideration of goals toward which the missionary enterprise should be directed (Anderson 1961:6).

Apart from the attempt at Jerusalem to come to some understanding of the external world context, Bassham (1979:21) points out how the indigenization of churches was a priority concern

the indigenous church will become the center from which the whole missionary enterprise of the area will be directed.

2.2 Hermeneutics

Jerusalem experienced the process of secularization as a great danger to Christianity and identified it as a "sign of the times"

Our enemy is not civilization, but secularism; not science, but materialism (Jerusalem 2:199).

The attention which Jerusalem paid to secularization, had two very profound consequences. First, under the strong influence of W.E.Hocking, the idea of an alliance of all religions against secularization was propagated. It needs to be stated here, as Wind (1984:74) does, that Jerusalem did not as yet distinguish sharply between secularism as a closed system and secularization as a more dynamic reality which needs to be interpreted dialectically. At the Mexico City Conference in 1963 the

distinction was clearly made. Second, the focus upon secularization, helped Jerusalem to rid itself of the

'Corpus Christianum'-denken, de superieure westerse christelijke beschaving, het triumfalisme van voor de Eerste Wereldoorlog (Wind 1984:74).

Jerusalem makes clear that an authentic reading of the signs of the times, has a sobering effect and leads to the kind of prophetic self-criticism which was so blatantly absent from Edinburgh. In the conclusion to his presentation at Jerusalem, M.R.Jones (Jerusalem I:338) reflects how taking secularization seriously, could lead to a healthy introspection

Go to Jerusalem, then, not as members of a Christian nation to convert other nations which are not Christian, but as Christians in a nation far too largely non-Christian, who face within their own borders the competition of a rival movement as powerful, as dangerous, as insidious as any of the great historic religions. We meet our fellow Christians in these other countries on terms of equality, as fellow workers engaged in a common task. More than this, we go as those, who find in the other religions which secularism attacks, as it attacks Christianity, witnesses of man's need of God and allies in our quest for perfection. Gladly recognizing the good they contain we bring to them the best that our religion has brought to us, that they may test it themselves. We ask them to judge us not by what we have as yet made of our Christianity, but by that better and more perfect religion to which in the providence of God we believe our Master is leading us.

Apart from the question of secularization which was prophetically discerned as a sign of the times by Jerusalem, the application

of prophetic language was either fragmentary or totally absent. Though very isolated, the two examples quoted here are fundamental to what shall be developed in Part II of the study. First, a prophetic call to conversion is contained in a quotation from the Lausanne Conference (1927) on Faith and Order

The Gospel is the prophetic call to sinful man to return to God, the joyful tidings of justification and of sanctification to those who believe in Christ. It is the comfort of those who suffer; to those who are bound it is the assurance of the glorious liberty of the sons of God (Jerusalem, 1:482).

The sexist language contained in the quotation, is obviously rejected by this study. Second, the need to be prophetically concrete when it comes to economic matters, is illustrated by F.C. Mc Connell (Jerusalem 5:171) when he attacks the profit system

The prophets did not talk in the abstract but always in the concrete. In the prophetic utterances principles always confront us in concrete form. Amos did not speak in the abstract.

2.3 Spirituality

The exercise in social analysis which was executed at Jerusalem, laid the basis for a spirituality which differed remarkably from that of Edinburgh. The interesting point, as indicated by Bosch (1980:163), is that both Conferences put great emphasis upon the Cross. The difference was that the earlier conference accentuated the royal office of Christ, " in close connection with the "royal

stature" which the Western Church had conferred upon herself", whereas Jerusalem accentuated the priestly office of Christ. For Edinburgh the Cross was in typical Crusade fashion, the symbol of conquest. For Jerusalem it was the symbol of service, responsibility and sacrifice. It would be fair therefore, to conclude that a kenotic spirituality, a spirituality of self-emptying prevailed at Jerusalem.

This kind of spirituality helped substantially in the attempt to reach an holistic understanding of mission and evangelisation. It is clearly reflected in Jerusalem's concern with the social dimension of the Gospel and finds expression in the notion of a comprehensive approach. Wind (1984:75) traces the focus of Jerusalem on the racial question, industrialization and rural problems, back to the influence of the Movement for Practical Christianity and the Lausanne Conference (1927) of Faith and Order. At the Lausanne Conference it was declared that the Gospel is the source of power for social regeneration and the only way to overcome class and racial hatred. According to Wind, this had a profound influence on Jerusalem.

The holistic spirituality of Jerusalem was also very helpful in bidding farewell to the dichotomy between individual regeneration and social regeneration (Jerusalem 5:181). The Gospel was taken to be liberative for individual men and women and for society at large.

Unfortunately, Jerusalem's attempt to develop an holistic spirituality, did not prevent it from still being narrow in its reflection upon societal structures. Jerusalem was still very naive and idealistic in its thinking about structures.

Bosch (1980:164) alludes to this when he writes

" In no sense, however, did Jerusalem criticise the overall structures of society; it expected social renewal to be achieved

by the improvement of micro-structures "

Wind (1984:77) makes the point that Jerusalem did not reflect radically enough on the evil vested in the structures of society.

2.4 Excursus on race conflict and rural problems

The extensive way in which Jerusalem dealt with race conflict, industrial problems and rural problems, resulted in three major reports: "The Christian Mission in the Light of Race Conflict" (Jerusalem 5), "The Christian Mission in Relation to Industrial problems" (Jerusalem 5) and "The Christian Mission in Relation to Rural Problems" (Jerusalem 6). These reports form the basis of the discussion here, with special reference to the statements of Conference contained in them.

2.4.1 Race conflict

The urgency with which Jerusalem approached the problem of race conflict, is well reflected in the words of John R.Mott (Jerusalem 8:26) when he said that the Jerusalem meeting

has a greater opportunity than any world meeting ever held to lead into the very heart of the solution of that most alarming problem - one of world-wide concern - the problem of race relationships.

Whether Jerusalem really offered a solution to the problem of race conflict, is doubtful in the light of the devastation of Nazism in Germany, Apartheid in South Africa and racial oppression in the United States of America. Jerusalem did, however, develop profound ideas on race relations. Some of the ideas shall be indicated and analysed here.

For didactic purposes, it shall be argued here that Jerusalem's thinking on race conflict, contains the following elements: an attempt at social analysis, an anthropological element, a theological element and a program of action.

2.4.1.1 Attempt at social analysis

That Jerusalem attempted to analyse the problem of race conflict, is clearly shown by some individual presentations and the Statement adopted by the IMC. In his presentation Max Yergan (Jerusalem 4:218-219) tried to indicate the relationship between race conflict and politics, economics and social changes. He attributed race conflict to European imperialism in Africa and the "economic penetration" into Africa, because of its gold, diamonds, oil, rubber and cotton. He also pointed to the social changes that took place quoting the example of African chiefs being substituted by white magistrates.

If one were to interpret Yergan's analysis: It quite clearly shows the material base of racism. Put differently, the analysis shows to what extent racism has to do with power and to what extent it finds a basis in the existing political, economic and social structures. Of course, Yergan himself did not draw these consequences and in fact did not even use the term racism.

In his very brief contribution Bocobo (Jerusalem 4:228), perhaps unintentionally, developed the "idea" of racial capitalism, without having known or used the term. The lust of American capitalists for land to plant rubber, led to the oppression of the Filipinos.

American capitalists are demanding land for the planting of rubber on a large scale. They want the abolition of the law limiting the holding of public land to 2000 acres. The

Washington Government is backing the plan of the capitalists. Since we have protested against these proposals, our autonomy, granted in 1916, has been largely withdrawn.

The contribution of Jabavu (Ibid.:228-229) was equally brief, but with his reference to "land segregation" and "social segregation" and "all sorts of laws enacted against black men, just because of their colour", he clearly indicated the economic, social and political basis of racism.

1.2 Anthropological element

Several attempts were made at anthropological formulations vis-a-vis the problem of race conflict. Mott (Jerusalem 8:26) spelled out some principles for race relations, one of which referred to "the infinite worth of every race". This anthropological notion has, according to Mott, a Christological basis in the "unerring guiding principles of Jesus Christ". Max Yergan (Jerusalem 8:41-45) equally grounded the anthropological notion of "the inviolability of human personality" in the Christological notion of the teachings of Jesus. The Jerusalem Statement (Jerusalem 4:237-245) went even further with its formulation by speaking of the "sacredness of human personality" as a basis for rejecting racism.

A single observation needs to be made here. In a world flooded with "non-persons", to speak with Gutierrez, the formulations of Jerusalem could only be described as idealistic. For it is one thing to assume the sacredness of human personality and yet another when human beings are scourged beyond recognition.

2.4.1.3 Theological element

The attempt of Jerusalem to grapple theologically with the problem of racism is clearly shown by the following examples. It is theological notions like the Fatherhood of God, the fruit of the Spirit, the teachings of Christ and the Church as Body of Christ that has helped Jerusalem to come to a rejection of racism.

2.4.1.4 Program of action

The Jerusalem program of action was geared towards conscientization. Public opinion was to be informed on equality, economic justice in terms of land and natural resources and on brotherhood. Perhaps the latter term is an indication that Jerusalem did not as yet understand the parallel between racism and sexism. Jerusalem did, however, start to grasp something of the political, economic and social rootedness of racism. The basic criticisms of the Jerusalem Statement still remain. Adonis (1982:162), in quoting Gort, refers to the "air of Western superiority" stamping the statement and the very superficial way in which racial conflict was related to the differences between races. The attempt to expose the structural or material base of racism did not go far enough. Added to this is the fact that terms like "racial conflict", like "race relations" and "racial problem" conceal more than they reveal.

3. TAMBARAM (1938)

3.1 Contextuality

Tambaram was much more contextual than Jerusalem. Those who gathered for the IMC meeting at Tambaram, Madras in 1938, were conscious of the "unprecedented international tension in Europe and Asia" (Bassham 1979:23). Wind (1984:131) observes that the Tambaram Conference was stamped heavily by the threat of the Second World War. Others like Bosch (1980:167) and Van't Hof

(1972:125) go into more specifics by pointing to the prevailing ideologies of National Socialism, Fascism, Marxism and State Shintoism in Japan. Added to this were the ongoing war between Japan and China and the strained relations between the nationalist movement of Ghandi and the British Government.

A number of indicators at Tambaram pointed to the awareness of the historical context in which the conference was taking place. Perhaps the most important theological indicator, for the purposes of this study, is the emphasis upon the prophetic office of Christ. Also the central theme of Tambaram which was witness, was in line with the prophetic office. For the first time the notion of " Mission as Prophecy " seemed to emerge.

The opening presentation of Mott (Tambaram 7:1) clearly testifies to an awareness of the context

We have assembled at one of the most fateful moments in the life of mankind. Not in our lifetime, if at any time, have Christians come together when so many peoples were bearing such impossible burdens, or undergoing such persecutions and suffering.

In the report of Section I (Tambaram I:186) on " The Faith by which the Church lives ", the consciousness of the historical context is reflected in the following formulation

The Christian Church today is called to live and to give life, in a world shaken to its foundations. When the IMC met at Jerusalem ten years ago, the faith was strong that a new and better world had been born amidst the destructions of the Great War, and that the Church might lead in building it up. Today that faith is shattered, everywhere there is war or rumour of war. The beast in man has broken forth in unbelievable brutality and tyranny.

3.2 Hermeneutics

What happened at Tambaram, is a very fine example of the interaction or movement between social analysis and hermeneutics. The theological emphases at Tambaram were largely informed by the historical context. According to Van't Hof (1972:101,125), there is a close link between the time of the dictatorships with their ideological messages and the image of Mission as Prophecy which emerged so strongly at Tambaram.

Zij was kritisch, niet conformistisch. Tegenover de oorlogsdreiging van de dictaturen stelde zij.....de broederschap der Christenen, tegenover het uniform, het boetekleed en tegenover de uitdaging van het ideologisch getuigenis plaatste zij het bijbels getuigenis.

It is therefore not at all surprising that Tambaram dwelt extensively on the prophetic ministry of Christ, focussing on the Incarnation, the Cross and the Second Coming. For Tambaram the prophetic ministry of Christ starts with the incarnation. Consequently it was stated

The Christian is saved by an Incarnate Lord (Tambaram, Findings and Recommendations: 64).

The incarnation was therefore interpreted as an act of liberation and restoration of the whole world.

The Cross was identified as a culminating point of the Prophetic ministry of Christ. Indeed, "The Christian is saved by a Crucified Lord" (Tambaram, Findings and Recommendations:64). With this rather straightforward formulation, Tambaram gave expression to the staurocentric witness as central content of Mission as Prophecy. The younger Churches at Tambaram were especially moved by this motive. So for example did the Japanese, Toyohiko Kagawa,

not hesitate to describe the Christian religion as "the religion of the Cross". For Kagawa this was a contextual theological statement as so aptly illustrated by van Leeuwen (1988:150)

In his personal life this man was pulled across the deathline time and again. Brought up in a Buddhist milieu, he converted to Christianity and as a consequence he was disinherited by his uncle. From the days of his studies at the Presbyterian college of Kobe, he took the side of Japanese workers and went to live and work in one of the worst ghettos. In 1921 he ended up in prison for pleading the cause of striking dock-labourers' and their right to a trade union. Surviving on one lung, because of tuberculosis, he reflected in his own person the spiritual strength of the revival movement. During the Second World War, his conscientious pacifism led to his imprisonment for a second time, this time as peaceful opponent of the deified emperor. His life has become a constant testimony of the life " across the deathline ": personal, political, indeed, across the deathline of the Second World War (My translation).

Van 't Hof (1972:101) offers a polemical interpretation of the preference for the prophetic

The preference for the prophetic aspect was probably related to the constellation around 1938. Dictators, masquerading as prophets, witnessed to their own ideologies. Probably Tambaram wanted to state the true prophecy over and against false ones (My translation).

In line with its accentuation of the prophetic, Tambaram entertained as central theme, the idea of witness. Bosch

(1980:168) argues that this theme shows the influence of Barth's theology.

Apart from the theocentric-christocentric emphasis of Tambaram on Jesus as Prophet, there were other instances of prophetic language. In his famous book, "The Christian Message in a non-Christian World", Kraemer (1938) applies prophetic language quite liberally. A few examples must suffice. He sows the seeds of a prophetic ecclesiology when with reference to self-criticism in the Church, he contends that it demonstrates that "the prophetic spirit and capacity for dreaming dreams and seeing visions", has not left the Church. Also, a prophetic Church is a dynamic, pilgrim Church. It is not "a body to conserve and maintain a once-attained position", on the contrary, it is an "arising missionary movement with its prophetic and apostolic recapturing of the witnessing, militant and therefore suffering and triumphing Church".

Though rather fragmentary, there are other examples of prophetic language having been used at Tambaram. The examples selected, are in line with the general understanding of this study of Mission as Prophecy. They refer to nationalism and the denunciating role played by the Old Testament prophets.

On nationalism, or rather a specific brand of nationalism

The Church has seldom been awake to the dangers of hypocritical pharisaism and secret self-assertion that lurk in this self-satisfied nationalism, and has often too easily identified itself with this entirely worldly attitude, forgetting its prophetic task of exposing it to the light of the Gospel (Tambaram, Findings and

Recommendations:21).

On the denunciation of nations and rulers

The prophets of the Old Testament denounced nations and rulers for cruelty and inhumanity, for robbery and lies, and their message is applicable today (Ibid.:136-137).

Finally, there is resounding evidence that a spirit of kairos prevailed at Tambaram. With reference to world peace and world evangelization, there was talk of " the urgency of the hour " (Ibid.:136) and consequently "no hour for marking time or waiting for a better day" (Ibid.:136).

This section cannot be concluded without reflection upon the very central prophetic theme of the reign of God. As a classical missiological theme, it stood central at Tambaram. In an attempt to define the relationship between the reign of God and the Church, history and the systems people create and humankind, a dialectical position was arrived at.

3.2.1 The reign of God and the Church

Tambaram stated clearly that the reign of God and the Church are not identical. The latter " itself must stand ever under the ideal of the Kingdom of God which alone can guard it against becoming an end in itself and hold it true to God's purpose for it " (Tambaram, Findings and Recommendations: 19). Although the Church could not be identified with the reign of God, it is, however, a sign thereof and should act as "ambassador of Christ, proclaiming His Kingdom" (Ibid.: 32).

3.2.2 The reign of God and history, our systems and humankind

With the typical "within" and "beyond" formulations, Tambaram tried to come to grips with the relationship between the reign of God and History. The reign of God, it was stated, is both within and beyond this world (Ibid.:17). The dialectic of within history and beyond history consequently renders impossible any identification between the reign of God and systems created by people. All systems are constantly under the judgment of the reign of God. There is, however, some continuity between the reign of God and " all the labours, struggles and sufferings of men, and we are pledged to work for justice, goodwill and world brotherhood " (Ibid.:122).

3.3 Spirituality

The spirituality of Tambaram, is perhaps best captured by Hocking (19: when he refers to the "attitude of penitential hope", which prevailed. Tambaram's spirituality was grounded in prayer and the eucharist, which was celebrated twice during the course of proceedings. Despite a very full agenda, the Conference started with a "Quiet Day" of meditation and prayer. Kagawa took the lead in bringing together a small group of participants for prayer every morning at 6H15. His involvement points to the fact that prayer was not "spiritualized" in the sense of divorcing it from worldly affairs. On the contrary, the life story of Kagawa makes clear that his was a spirituality of struggle and of suffering.

The prophetic spirituality of Tambaram, did not only consist of elements of penitence and humility (Tambaram, Findings and Recommendations:16), but also of courage and fearlessness and of unflinching witness.

In this time when brute force stalks the earth, the Church

is summoned to bear courageous and unflinching witness to the nations that the base purposes of men, whether of individuals or of groups, cannot prevail against the will of the Holy and Compassionate God. It is commissioned to warn mankind of the judgment which shall assuredly overtake a civilisation which will not. It is under obligation to speak fearlessly against aggression, brutality, persecution and all wanton destruction of human life and torturing of human souls (Ibid.:18).

At Tambaram there were also glimpses of a spirituality of struggle and of liberation. It were to be simultaneously prophetic and pastoral. It were to find expression in attacking and striving, succouring and consoling.

Recognising that Christ came to open to all the way to life abundant but that the way for millions is blocked by poverty, war, racial hatred, exploitation and cruel injustice, the Church is called to attack social evils at their roots. It must seek to open the eyes of its members to their implication in unchristian practices. Those who suffer from bitter wrong, it is constrained to succour and console, while it strives courageously and persistently for the creation of a more just society (Ibid.:19).

3.4 Excursus on race relations and racial discrimination

Like its predecessor, Tambaram dealt equally extensive with a number of social, political and economic issues. A significant portion of Findings and Recommendations is spent on these. As indicated in Chapter I, the discussion here shall be limited to what Tambaram calls "Race Relations and Racial Discrimination".

From the outset, the point should be made that Tambaram, like Jerusalem, avoided the concept "racism". The deduction may be made from this that both Conferences failed to penetrate into the political and economic rootedness of racism. Terms like "race relations" and "racial discrimination" sometimes conceal more than they reveal. For social-analytical purposes it is perhaps more apt to use the term "racism".

In any case, the South African situation has made abundantly clear that racism did not disappear with some racist and discriminatory laws. The racist political and economic structures are still intact and still provides the material base for the system of racism.

It is within this framework that all Tambaram's formulations on Race Relations were still very idealistic. It is not always clear whether formulations on the unity of humankind and the creation of all peoples of one blood, really serve a critical purpose or whether they do not rather serve to legitimise the status quo.

There are, however, three areas where Tambaram has made a very useful contribution to the debate on racism, i.e. exposing the racism within the Church itself, putting racism in theological perspective and endorsing cooperation with liberation movements.

3.4.1 Exposing the Church as racist

In many countries, denominational differences and the existence of deep racial divisions within the Churches themselves, obscure the Church's witness to the Gospel and paralyse its efforts to win men for Christ (Tambaram, Findings and Recommendations:

3.4.2 Racism in theological perspective

The theological perspective which Tambaram developed, consists of a sharp theological analysis whereby racism is identified as a "national idol" and a "household god". On the basis of the Gospel as the Word of God for all humankind and the ecclesiological notion of the Church as a fellowship for all races, racism is to be renounced and opposed. In drawing a very interesting and illuminating parallel between racism, cultural chauvinism and sexism, Tambaram concludes that the central prophetic theme of the reign of God, excludes all three (Ibid.:130).

3.4.3 Cooperation with liberation movements

It would perhaps be fair to say that the foundation for the creation of the PCR of the WCC was laid at Tambaram, where the Church was called upon to cooperate with "movements working for the full and equal sharing by all races in the common life of" humankind (Ibid.:130).

3.4.4 Mina Soga : " a note of perfect beauty " (Hogg 1952:292)

Amongst the South African delegates to Tambaram was Mina Soga, the first African woman representing Africa in a World Conference (Cf. Utuk 1991:202). She made a "notable contribution" on the parallel between sexism and racism. Utuk (1991:205) :

Visionary and determined, Soga was, interestingly, articulating, though in the language of her period, some of the things contemporary feminism are emphasizing: equal opportunity to all in all areas of life, irrespective of sex, race or nationality.

4. WHITBY (1947)

4.1 Contextuality

is quite helpful in attempting to answer this question. He suggests that Whitby wanted to take a new course by interpreting the notion "world" in political terms. They have done so by introducing the category of revolution. Although no in-depth analysis was made of the notion "revolution" (Cf. Wind:1984:167), Van't Hof (1972:139) contends that they came very near to Rosenstock-Huessey's understanding of revolution as "eine Totalumwälzung". This understanding of revolution refers to the total transformation of structures.

...the break-up of the underlying structures of contemporary culture.

According to Wind (Ibid.:167) the question for Whitby was no longer whether there were points of contact or elements of truth in other religions, but what was happening in the revolutionary post World War II situation. Mission was to be defined in terms of this new trend at Whitby.

It is therefore not at all surprising that both in the individual presentations and the statement of the Conference, a kind of language was used to correspond with the analysis of the world as revolutionary. Stephen Neill (in Whitby:64) perceives of the Church as revolutionary, saying

From the beginning, in its essential nature the Church has been revolutionary. Christ sent it out as an explosive, corrosive, destructive force.

This is the only way that the Church can avoid becoming too closely integrated with the status quo. It prevents the Church from forgetting

It has been appointed by God as prophet, critic and judge. It is the instrument in His hand of the permanent revolution (in Whitby:71).

To indicate that he understood the notion of revolution in social terms, Neill (Ibid.) goes on to say about the social order

Changes in the social order are always necessary, since no human order is perfect, and wherever there is injustice or oppression of the weak it is the will of God that the ordering of society should be reformed

The mission of the Church in a revolutionary situation would therefore be to

recover its leadership in the revolution.

The idea of the Church's leadership in the revolution is then very significantly linked to the mission of caring for the sorrows of the poor and the oppressed, as if Neill wants to say that the authentic revolution is only then constituted when the least amongst us are being cared for.

The category of revolution was introduced by Van Dusen (in Whitby:185-197) in his analysis of the world of 1947 as a "revolutionary age". Like Neill, he also grappled with the question about what that would mean for the Church. He concluded that the Church's mission is bi-focal: Revival and Reform.

Not only Neill and Van Dusen described the context in which Whitby took place as revolutionary, but also John Mackay (in Whitby:200) did. Introducing a concept that was to become famous in missiological circles, i.e. "frontier", he described the world situation as follows

...the frontier which the Christian missionary movement faces today is a flaming, revolutionary frontier.

It is within this framework that Whitby formulated its ideas on mission and evangelization and which is contained in the declaration on "Christian Witness in a Revolutionary World". The striking characteristic of the declaration is the way in which evangelization and social involvement are being kept together dialectically and not treated as mutually exclusive.

As Christians, we are pledged to the service of all those who are hungry or destitute or in need; we are pledged to the support of every movement for the removal of injustice and oppression. But we do not conceive these things, good in themselves, to be the whole of evangelism, since we are convinced that the source of the world's sorrow is spiritual, and that its healing must be spiritual, through the entry of the risen Christ into every part of the life of the world (Whitby:215).

Emerging at Whitby was therefore a "nieuw missionair elan en vernieuwingsdrang" (Wind 1984:163), the image of a revolutionary Church on the march. With its title "Renewal and Advance", the official report of Whitby expresses precisely this.

Next to this very coherent line of thinking at Whitby, there were also fragments of prophetic language being used. One striking example is the usage of the "kairos" concept by Baillie (in Whitby:87). He makes clear that the concept is closely related to Christology. Jesus Christ began his prophetic ministry with the announcement of an approaching event, i.e. the reign of God. The crucial point is that the kairos demands a decision. In Part II this line of thinking shall be pursued further.

4.3 Spirituality

Commentators on Whitby agree that a strong sense of oneness prevailed at the Conference. Scherer (1987:94-95) puts his very brief reflection on Whitby within the framework of the fellowship in the gospel which had survived the "testing of war" and "the years of separation".

They marveled at the spiritual unity that bound together the body of Christ.

Bassham (1979:27) also speaks about the unity at Whitby when he states that

One of the most striking realities evident at Whitby was the sense of oneness and unity which the delegates experienced.

The major Whitby report takes as its starting point the oneness of those gathered at the Conference. Though separated from one another through six years of war, Christians have known by faith and in experience the reality of the universal Church...Under the stress of trial, Christians have been driven to realize as never before the oneness that underlies their divisions (Whitby:206-207).

All of this evoked expressions like "another Pentecost" and "realized Christian love" (Cf. Wind 184:163). It would be fair to conclude that a spirituality of oneness dominated the Whitby Conference.

Concurrently with the dimension of oneness which characterized Whitby's spirituality, was that of expectancy. Bosch (1980:176) indicates how the spirituality of expectancy was grounded in the eschatological vision of Whitby and how the term "expectant

evangelism" came to be coined. What Bosch says about the future as being filled with the reign of God and about the dialectic of the "already" and the "not yet" and therefore about history and eschatology as being intertwined, makes clear to what extent Whitby's spirituality of expectancy was also a spirituality of hope.

4.4 Excursus: Whitby and the emergence of the Theology of the Apostolate with reference to Hoekendijk : An exercise in Mission as prophecy

The prophetic nature of Hoekendijk's missiological thinking finds expression in his protest against the "churchification" of mission. His ideas were clearly stimulated by the eschatological dimension of Whitby and resulted in a Dutch brand of theology, the theology of the apostolate.

Before attempting to summarize Hoekendijk's main ideas, one important historical note needs to be made, i.e. that ecclesiocentric missionary thinking gained currency especially at Tambaram (1938). The polemic of Hoekendijk is directed against this.

The central element of the theology of the apostolate is that the Church is an illegitimate centre for mission.

Not the Church but the world, the oikoumene, stood in the centre of God's concern... A church-centric mission could not but miscarry for it had a false centre. The Church was, at most, an interlude, but she had designed history for herself- Church history, salvation history-into which she could withdraw as into a "reserve", or which she could use as a base from which to attack the world or exploit the world as training-ground, in an effort ultimately to fill the entire horizon (Bosch 1980:176-177)

But if the Church is not the centre of mission, in what way is the relationship between Church and mission defined? Hoekendijk answers the question by an inversion of van Ruler's thesis that mission was a function of the Church: the Church was a function of mission. As a function of mission the Church should give expression to God's concern for the oikoumene. The Church should do so, because it is apostolic. "In this way", Bosch (1980:177) concludes, "Hoekendijk's theology of the apostolate became a theology of the world".

Hoekendijk introduces the concept "sjalom" to indicate the form that the Church's involvement in the world should take. He interprets peace holistically and calls it a "social happening". It is more of an ethical concept than a soteriological concept, according to Bosch (1980:178).

If one were to ask the question about Hoekendijk's relevance for South Africa, the following points emerge as being important.

1) The Church scene in South Africa is still very much dominated by the "three-selves" formula of Venn and Anderson and by the German idea of the "Volkskirche". Hoekendijk considers an ecclesiocentric view of mission to prevail in these (Cf. Bassham 1979:33). Rereading Hoekendijk may facilitate the liberation from a church-centric understanding of mission.

b) Hoekendijk understands "sjalom" as something, a "social happening" that needs to be proclaimed, lived and demonstrated. These are very helpful ideas in a situation where violence is tearing the country apart and where peace is very narrowly understood as the absence of armed conflict.

c) However, Hoekendijk's interpretation of peace in almost exclusively ethical terms, is too reductionist for the South African context. Soteriology is still very much needed, i.e. materially speaking, the liberation from oppressive social, political and economic structures.

4.5 Excursus on the problem of racism

The problem of racism was looked at from two perspectives at Whitby. First, the serious problem of the patriarchal and paternalistic attitude of European and American missionary societies and missionaries was confronted. Whitby attempted to solve the problem by introducing the concept of "Partners in Obedience". The relationship between older and younger churches were to be that of a partnership. In fact, even the concept "older and younger churches", was viewed to be outdated. What was needed, was total equality between all churches (Cf. Hogg 1952:340). What was also needed, was a common obedience to the Gospel.

Second, Whitby pointed to the interrelatedness between war, nationalism and racism. In a very sharp theological analysis, it is shown how war is the logical consequence of deifying nation, state and race (Whitby:219). In trying to answer to this, Whitby held dialectically together the non-denial of the cultural and social inheritance and the primary loyalty to Christ and the service of the ecumenical Church. Also, on the one hand the solidarity with the world and on the other hand the sense of being strangers and sojourners in the world and in the nation (Whitby :220).

Once again, the basic deficit of Whitby's reflection on racism, is the failure to see the rootedness of the patriarchal and paternalistic attitude of Westerners in the existing social, political and economic realities. The arrogance and paternalism

of Westerners were grounded in their political and economic power. Despite the well meaning formulations about equality , the partnership visualised by Whitby, never really materialised. Not even the attempts to put the slogan "Partnership in Obedience" to practice in terms of the personnel policy, finances and administration.

5. Willingen (1952)

5.1 Contextuality

The fact that Willingen was much more aware than its predecessors of the context in which the Conference took place, is shown by the following quotation from the report of Section 5 on "Reshaping the Pattern of Missionary Activity":

We live in a world of radical change. We hear the cry of the masses of mankind for a better life expressed in demands for land reform, higher standards of living, national independence and racial equality. We see the achievement of political independence and the end of colonialism over wide areas. There is a stirring of national and cultural loyalties, reacting against further encroachments upon them. Totalitarian states rule a large section of the world's peoples and seek to shape popular beliefs. Secularism continues to spread. In some areas there is a sharpening of racial issues. Growth in world population outstrips Christian expansion (Willingen:215).

This is the way Willingen pictured the historical situation of 1952. It was a time of "darkness and confusion", but also a time for the discernment of God's summons to go forward (Willingen:192).

Perhaps there is a need also to move beyond the general picture

as reflected in the quotation and to pinpoint certain specific developments around 1952. Deddens and Drost (1980:35) refer to the worsening relationships between East and West. Others like Bosch (1980:178), Scherer (1987:96) and Wind (1984:216) point to the success of the Maoist liberation struggle in China which subsequently led to the end of Western mission in that part of the world.

Another major development around the time of Willingen was the decolonization which was in full swing in Asia and was just beginning in Africa. The process of decolonization triggered off the revival of the major world religions like Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Willingen had to take cognisance of the fact that these religions were not merely re-emerging, but they proliferated themselves as missionary world religions.

Van't Hof (1972:157) adds to the list of major developments by mentioning the population explosion in the Third World, the racial issue with specific reference to apartheid in South Africa and the Cold War which has already been mentioned. Added to this is of course the crisis of faith in the West, secularism and the concomitant challenge of the legitimacy of western mission (Wind 1984:216).

5.2 Hermeneutics

The important point here is to establish whether Willingen succeeded in interpreting these events or at least some of them theologically. To what extent, if at all, was the hermeneutics of Willingen informed by the broad social analysis done at the Conference?

At least three aspects indicate the profound attempt to grapple hermeneutically with what was happening in the world of 1952. First, the attempt to hold together dialectically evangelization

and social action. Second, the emphasis upon "mission as solidarity with the incarnate and crucified Christ" (Bosch 1991:390). Third, emphasis upon the eschatological nature of mission. By and large the prophetic dimension of Willingen is determined by these elements.

5.2.1 Evangelization and social action

Bassham (1979:35) clearly relates Willingen's dialectic of evangelization and social action to its recognition of the radical political, economic and social changes which were taking place throughout the world in 1952. In fact, in a whole report entitled "Reshaping the Pattern of Missionary Activity", the Church's mission is related to the context of 1952. This resulted in a comprehensive notion of mission whereby evangelization and social action are kept together in creative tension.

Faced with the task of Christian witness in such a world, we are called to hear anew and accept once more our Lord's commission, 'Go ye therefore'; to realize the Church as the instrument in God's hand; to face the problems of Communism and secularism; to raise a prophetic voice against social, economic and racial injustice (Willingen:216).

5.2.2 Mission as solidarity with the incarnate and crucified Christ

Commentators on the World missionary Conferences highlight the fact that the Willingen meeting was convened under the title "The Missionary obligation of the Church", but that the presentations at the meeting were published under another title, "Missions Under the Cross" (Goodall 1953). The staurocentric character of Willingen should clearly be interpreted as a response to the context in which the meeting took place. Wind

(1984:221) suggests

In het licht van het Kruis kon men de duistere betekenis der tijden onderscheiden en de zendingstaak interpreteren als zelf-verloochende, lijdende solidariteit met een wereld van radicale sociaal-politieke veranderingen.

Mission was therefore not only understood as solidarity with the incarnate and crucified Christ, but precisely because of that, also as solidarity with the world. The notion of solidarity was strongly accentuated and elaborated upon by Warren in his address "The Mission and the Cross". Warren took a dialectical position on the church's solidarity with the world. On the one hand it were to be a solidarity whereby the Church "accept involvement in the world and so in the Spirit of the Christ incarnate and crucified" (Willingen:32). On the other hand it were to be "another kind of solidarity, the tragic, frustrating solidarity of a common need" (Ibid.:33).

From the context of his Russian imprisonment, the experience of the Second World War and especially the Germany of 1952, von Thadden grappled with the crucial question about the meaning of the proclamation of the Cross of Jesus Christ. In his presentation under the title "The Church under the Cross", he developed some profound ideas on what could be called a staurocentric ecclesiology. First, he saw a Church under the Cross as a "Servant Church", where the concern for the poor, the miserable and the sick finds concrete expression. It is a Church which is "the mouth of the dumb and a help for the tormented and oppressed" (Willingen:53).

Second, if von Thadden were to be excused for his sexist language, it is a Church of brotherhood. He understood a Church of brotherhood to be an obedient and suffering Church. And in Germany, with reference to the National Socialist Regime this

would mean

...it cannot count on those who are prepared to bear their sufferings. He originates the gap in the system, the breach in the wall of enmity, the free space where the suffering Church develops a most lively activity. This room is so spacious that many people can find a place and take refuge in it who have stood outside the sphere of the Church (von Thadden in Willingen:60).

In conclusion and for the sake of a proper perspective, it needs to be observed that the Christological contraction of Willingen emanated from Willingen's explicitly trinitarian basis for mission. Indeed, with formulations like the following, Willingen could rightfully be seen as the auctor intellectualis of the "Missio Dei" concept.

The missionary movement of which we are a part has its source in the Triune God Himself. Out of the depths of His love for us the Father has sent forth His own beloved Son to reconcile allthings to Himself, that we and all men might, through the Spirit be made one in Him with the Father, in that perfect love which is the very nature of God (Willingen:189).

5.2.3 The eschatological nature of mission

Wind (1984:224-225) is right when he contends that a discussion on the participation in God's mission in the world and the erection of signs of the reign of Christ, naturally leads to a discussion of eschatology. At Willingen this would not have been different. The discussion at Willingen centred around the relationship between Church and Kingdom (Reign of God) from the perspective of eschatology. The contributions of Hoekendijk and Newbigin are paramount in this regard, as well as the interim

report of Section I and the official statement on the "missionary calling of the Church".

Let us begin with a very brief quotation from the interim report:

...this eschatological hope is an essential part of the Church's missionary message.

Wind argues that this kind of formulation was a protest against the thinking of people like Hoekendijk. In terms of his theology of the apostolate, the Church has no other status than that of its mission. This line of thinking is a polemic against an ecclesiocentric view of mission. Identifying the Church as an illegitimate centre of mission, Hoekendijk argued that not the Church, but the world was the object of God's liberative mission. The Kingdom of God and the world belong together.

The eschatological aspect comes to the fore on the basis of the question about the precise relationship between the Church and its mission. For Hoekendijk the Church was merely a function of mission and therefore his famous slogan "Let the Church be the Mission" (Hoekendijk 1952:334-335). He was of the opinion that the Church only happens, accentuating the word "happens" in so far as it proclaims the Kingdom to the world. It has no other existence than in "actu Christi". Once again, not the Church, but the world is the object of the "missio Dei". The order of sequence is therefore not : God - Church - world, but rather God - world - Church.

Obviously there would have been fierce objection to Hoekendijk's thinking, not only because it caused a kind of stalemate at Willingen on the question of eschatology, but also because of its reductionist nature. In listing some of the objections, Wind (1984:225) mentions specifically that of Hartenstein who accuses Hoekendijk of reducing the Church to its mission and not allowing

it space to be more than a function of the apostolate.

Whatever the criticism against Hoekendijk might have been, his ideas and those expressed by Warren, as well as those contained in the Dutch report (Bassham 1979:35) on the eschatological nature of mission, stamped several of the Willingen statements. The crux of all that was said about eschatology, was that the Church in mission should prepare the whole earth for Coming of Christ (Willingen:192).

5.2.4 Newbigin and the Christian Hope

Grounding the Christian hope in Christology and pneumatology, Newbigin reflected quite sharply on eschatology. With some very to the point formulations like " The resurrection as certain promise of God ", " Christian hope only makes sense in Christ " and " the life of hope is a life in the Spirit ", he laid the Christological and pneumatological basis for further reflection.

In Part II of this study some of the ideas raised by Newbigin, shall be elaborated upon. Suffice it to state some of them very briefly here.

a) The collective nature of hope

In rejecting the idea of an individualistic hope, he contended

Our hope is corporate; it is nothing else than that in Christ all things in heaven and earth should be reconciled, summed up. It is therefore unthinkable that any individual should share in that salvation except in its totality which includes all who are Christ's (Newbigin in Willingen:111).

b) The Christian hope can therefore not be a "selfish quest of private salvation" nor a "hope merely for a perfected human

social order" (Ibid.).

c) The dialectic of hope

Newbigin pointed to the two sides of hope. On the one hand it is a "certain promise of God" and an "unshakable assurance" (Ibid.:107,108). On the other hand the victory we hope for is a hidden victory.

d) The vision of new heavens and a new earth

The resurrection of Christ is the sign and the first fruit of a totally new creation that would dawn upon us. The Biblical metaphor for this new reality is that of the new heavens and the new earth.

e) Eschatology not an alibi for maintaining the status quo

Newbigin was very clear on the issue of eschatology not serving as an alibi for inactivity. We could not "bat down the eschatological rabbit hole and wait for the day of doom" (Ibid.:114), on the contrary, we should be "preparing, waiting for His coming, hurrying to bring the message to the farthest corners of the earth" (Ibid.:113,114).

Let us now conclude this portion on Hoekendijk and Newbigin by saying that they have clearly helped Willingen to start developing some ideas on "the eschatological function of mission" (Bassham 1979:36).

Apart from these coherent attempts to reflect hermeneutically on the world of 1952, there were also fragments of prophecy at Willingen. These fragments refer to the use of concepts like "prophet" and "prophetic", "kairos" and "signs of the times."

In his presentation on "The Calling of God, A personal Testimony", Alfonso Rodriguez, expressed some very helpful ideas on the prophetic calling. With reference to Calvin, Knox, Zinzendorf and Wesley, he pointed out how they were under a prophetic obligation which compelled them to respond

The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy? (in Willingen : 118).

In going back to the authentic source of prophetic calling, he cited the calling of Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Samuel. He indicated that the distinction that is made between a spectacular and a not so dramatic call, is not always helpful. In a comparison between the calling of Moses and Jeremiah, he said

God spoke through the burning bush to Moses. But he talked to Jeremiah in a whisper (Ibid.:120).

The prophetic expression "discerning the signs of the times", featured in the statement on "The Missionary Calling of the Church" (Willingen:192). Discerning the signs of the times led Willingen to the dialectical position of seeing on the one hand "a time of darkness and confusion "and on the other hand "eyes opened by the Crucified "to" discern in it sure signs of God's sovereign rule" (Ibid.). The social and political nature of the signs of the times is observed in the "vast enlargements of human knowledge and power" and in the "mighty political and social movements" (Ibid.). The identification of the signs of the times with specific social, political, economic and cultural developments, be they negative or positive, shall be developed in Part II of this study. Suffice it to state here that even these prophetic fragments point to an attempt by Willingen to take the context of 1952 seriously.

5.3 Spirituality

The spirituality of Willingen contained two elements. First, a spirituality of the Cross, or in the words of Gort (1980:4)

Willingen wilde heel dicht onder het Kruis staan. Daar is het hart van de bevrijding.

But this spirituality of the Cross was not only an objective reality, but also a subjective reality, finding expression in a self-emptying, suffering solidarity with a world undergoing fundamental socio-political changes.

The spirituality of the Cross is also seen in the penitent mood which prevailed at Willingen. There was a willingness to confess with penitence their share or responsibility for the terrible events of the time.

Second, Van't Hof (1972:169) correctly points to the dominant eschatological spirituality. Our discussion on the eschatological nature of mission, has shown conclusively, that despite the stalemate that occurred at Willingen, eschatology was not understood in an otherworldly fashion. On the contrary, the hope and vision of a new reality, is firmly grounded in the erection of signs *hic et nunc*. Put differently, an eschatological spirituality is never divorced from the material world of social, political and economic relationships.

6. Ghana (1957/1958)

6.1 Contextuality

Neither in the Introduction to the official report of the Ghana Assembly, nor in the Statement towards the end of the report, is there any attempt at context analysis. However, this does not mean that the discussion on Christian mission took place entirely out of context. The keynote address of Mackay (Ghana :

100-124) makes abundantly clear that Ghana wanted to determine the nature of Christian mission at that specific " Hour ". In using a profoundly prophetic term, i.e. "discernment", Mackay argued that this would necessitate inter alia, an historical perspective. He gave that historical perspective by pointing to the following : the fact that the Ghana Conference was the first of the IMC in an African country and that Ghana was at the time , with Malaya, one of the two youngest nations in the world, having won its independence on 6 May 1957; the absence of the Chinese from the Conference and the fact that

A world so closely united by technology that space and time have been transcended is, at this hour, so divided by suspicion and hate that universal discord is regnant (Mackay in Ghana:101).

Also in other individual presentations, were there attempts at social analysis, albeit in very broad terms. Thomas (in Ghana : 23-27), reflected on the social revolution that was taking place in Asia, the main features of which were the emergence of national selfhood and the urge for social development. He suggested that Christian mission in that context would be the witness to Christ as the Redeemer of nation and society.

Danho (in Ghana:41-46), mentioned the process of decolonization that was occurring in Africa and the concomitant revival of primal religions.

Reference was also made to the resurgence of Asia and its resistance to " cultural aggression " and the revival of Buddhism (Ghana:47-55). It was also indicated how the spirit of nationalism gave rise to the aspiration towards indigenization, i.e. a culture more suited to national characteristics.

The National Council of Churches in Indonesia pointed to the

revolution sweeping through Indonesia and the formation of Christian political parties, both Catholic and Protestant (Ghana:56-69).

Commentators on the Ghana Conference have also attempted to say something about the context in which it took place. Van't Hof (1972:180), for example, quite sharply draws attention to the very ironic development around 1957/1958 of African countries gaining political independence on the one hand and the formation of economic power blocs on the other hand. This marked the introduction of neo-colonialism with the world divided into the rich North and the poor South. Van't Hof argues that political independence did not bring economic welfare to Africa.

A very noteworthy analysis of the world in which the Ghana Conference took place is undertaken by van Randwijck and Blauw in their booklet on Ghana, Naar Nieuwe Wegen van Gehoorzaamheid (1958). In Chapter 2 on the "wereld in 1957/'58" they indicate two intermingling developments as background to the Ghana Conference. First, there was the enormous technological and scientific advancement of the Western world, that enabled it to dominate the largest part of the world politically and economically. Second, simultaneously there was a tremendous upsurge of mission towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. This was the period when precisely the imperialism of the West, was seen to be very favourable to mission. It was a time when there was virtually no realization of the fact that

...het Westen... niet alleen bewondering, maar ook weerzin wekte (11).

The situation would change rapidly after the Second World War. No longer was the world scene dominated only by the colonial powers, but also by the emerging anti-colonial powers. Apart from

highlighting the Asian revolution, van Randwijck and Blauw (12-13) also pay special attention to Communism, which seemingly gave an answer to the longing for economic independence and political influence in Asia, but which was also to determine the position of Church and mission decisively. In China this was already felt in the elimination of the missionary influence from outside. In Africa the very same historical forces were already working as in Asia and some African states have by then already won their independence and served as an example for others.

A very important aspect comes to the fore when van Randwijck and Blauw argue that with the change in personnel in states having won their independence, a change in perception about the task of the state has taken place. Church and mission were to take cognisance of this. Health and Education were clearly seen as tasks of the state. That explains, according to them why not in the preparation material, nor at the Conference itself, were the issues of medical mission and mission education mentioned.

6.2 Hermeneutics

The crucial question, once again, would be whether Ghana responded interpretatively to the kind of analysis that was given at the Conference and afterwards. To what extent was Ghana influenced by "uiterlijke omstandigheden" (van Randwijck and Blauw 1958:11) and to what extent not.

In an attempt to answer this question, Mackay, Freytag, van Randwijck and Thomas shall be called in as witnesses. How did they respond to the kairos of Ghana? How did they respond to the "implicit question and focal point" (Anderson 1960:327): What is the distinctive task of the Christian world mission at this hour?

Some would argue that Ghana came nowhere near in answering this question and made no significant contribution towards a

reformulation of the theology of mission. Vicedom (quoted in Anderson 160:328) is one of those who reported on the Ghana Conference, saying that delegates left Ghana disappointed for not having heard clearly what the missionary message should be at that hour and not having received an answer to the "schicksalhaften Problemen der Mission".

This study agrees with Anderson when he contends that the perception of Vicedom is not doing justice to what transpired at Ghana.

To thinkthat the Ghana Assembly had no significance for developments leading towards a re-formulation of the theology of missions in the twentieth century or that it ignored the subject would be to misinterpret the facts of the event (Ibid.:329).

Although there was no attempt at Ghana to systematize the ideas expressed in the individual presentations, it is important to note that these addresses contained some very profound and for the liking of this study, prophetic statements on Christian mission.

6.2.1 John A. Mackay : The Christian mission at this hour

Perhaps the best example of what is meant by profound prophetic statements on Christian mission is the keynote address of the Chairperson of the IMC, Mackay. He dealt with the crucial question, also indicated by Anderson (1960:329) of the time being ripe to probe deeply into the theology of mission

This basic question confronts us: What does mission-mission of any kind -- mean ? What does it signify to have a sense of mission (Mackay in Ghana:104).

A selection of ideas expressed by Mackay, would of necessity include , for the purposes of this study, his triad on a Prophetic, Redemptive, Unitive Mission. Clearly this was an attempt to missiologize contextually. i.e. rendering a theological interpretation to the world of 1957/'58.

a) Mission as prophecy

It is interesting to note how Mackay perceived of the Church as a pilgrim Church engaged in a new Abrahamic adventure. This is the essence of a Prophetic Ecclesiology, indicating that the Church as a movement under way cannot be pinned down by the dogmatic formulations of academic theology. According to Mackay, the Prophetic Church has a Prophetic Mission.

He understood a Prophetic Mission to include the radiation of the light of God upon the world, the proclamation of the reign of Christ over the world, a comprehensive approach including every phase of human life and welfare, a "prophetic ministry" pointing to the servant nature of a Prophetic Mission. He went on to argue that a Prophetic Mission needs to be contextual in taking seriously "contemporary society" and the "thought problems of the hour" (Mackay in Ghana:122).

b) Mission as Redemption

Here Mackay indicated a Redemptive Mission to be grounded in the "Missio Dei". It is the Mission which God Himself initiated and it involves the mediation of the love of God through the Son of God who took the form of a servant. It is furthermore an ongoing Mission in which God the Holy Spirit is still engaged in the world.

It is a Mission that has overcome the dualism between word and deed. It involves divine love as well as human need, proclamation

as well as the welfare of people. It is a Mission where the "word must continue to become flesh" (Mackay in Ghana:123).

c) Mission as Unity

The paradigm or model for the Church's unity is the Oneness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who are together dedicated to a missionary task. Mackay (Ibid.:124) stressed the point of the Unitive Mission as being a Mission under the Cross

For the Church will never be so truly the Church of Christ, and never so relevant to the needs of this generation, as when it takes the 'form of a servant', even of a "suffering servant.

One may level the criticism against Mackay of not having spelt out the issues concretely enough, but one has to concede that his concern was with the nature of Christian mission at "this hour", "contemporary society", "the thought problems of the hour" and the "needs of this generation".

6.2.2 W.Freytag : Problems of Western Mission and the Western missionary

The input of Freytag is another good example of an attempt to relate the problems encountered by Christian Mission to the prevailing social and political developments of the time. To be sure, it is precisely the quest for selfhood and independence amongst the nations of Africa and Asia that has confronted Western Mission with an identity crisis. And this is what Freytag wanted to highlight in his presentation on "Changes in the Patterns of Western Missions".

In a brilliant piece of missiological material which also contains the famous statement of Freytag, "Then missions had problems, but

they were not a problem themselves", he explained how three "new realities" have contributed to the frustration and limitation of Western missions (Cf. Scherer 1987:101). First, there was the rising nations creating new political and cultural situations. Second, the reality of younger Churches and third, in the language of Bosch (1991), there was the emergence of an ecumenical paradigm, which obviously did not start with Ghana.

In a very "penetrating" (Scherer 1987:101) or for the purposes of this study, very prophetic way, Freytag analysed the impact of the new realities on Western Mission, concluding that it led to a loss of directness and an endangered image.

There were, according to Freytag, basically three possible responses available to Western Mission. One very straightforward response: to do nothing. A second possible response was to escape to the beginning. i.e. to look for places where people have not as yet been evangelized. That, to Freytag, would be an act of disobedience, demonstrating an unwillingness to cooperate with younger Churches. Quite prophetically he opted for a third response: to go forward in faithful obedience. He argued forcefully for obedience to be grounded in a *theologia crucis*

Does God not make us free for the more difficult but essential task, to concentrate on the message of Christ Himself, which means on the message of the Cross? (Freytag in Ghana:145).

Freytag went on to formulate what Christian Mission would mean at that hour, saying

Mission means taking part in the action of God, in fulfilling His plan for the coming of His Kingdom by bringing about obedience of the faith in Jesus Christ our Lord among the nations. In that context missions as

empirical organizations or institutions (there is no obedience possible without becoming concrete in such human form) are one indispensable member in varieties of services of the churches (Ibid.:146).

Two observations need to be made before concluding the piece on Freytag. First, with his strong emphasis upon obedience, Freytag was implicitly saying that Whitby's obedience was much more a challenge to Western Mission than to the younger churches, contradicting the very synical remark of an Indonesian who with reference to the "Partnership in Obedience" concept of Whitby, said : "The partnership for you, the obedience for us" (Quoted in Wind 1984:169 , my translation)

Second, still the analysis of Freytag was not penetrating enough. It is one thing to list the emergence of younger churches and the quest for nationhood and political independence in Africa and Asia as contributing factors to the identity crisis of Western Mission. It is yet another to reflect critically upon the existing power relations and indeed the worsening power relations which were triggered off by the formation of economic power blocs. There was a material basis to the "Patterns of Western Missions".

6.2.3 S.C. Graaf van Randwijck : The foreign missionary forces challenged

In a very similar paper to that of Freytag, van Randwijck in his " Some Reflections of a Mission Board Secretary ", presented an analysis of the challenges facing foreign missions. He saw at least six challenges to foreign missions : The traditionally "spiritual relation" (in Ghana:86) between mission leaders in the home-base and "newly-won" Christians as well as decision making power vested in the mission boards, were challenged radically by the following developments : a) Interchurch Aid which obviously

necessitated a broader definition of mission to include relief to the needy; the internationalization of missionary activity, i.e. the formation of "international, inter-racial and interdenominational teams" (Willingen Minutes:68); a call, even before Gatu, for a moratorium on personnel, but not on money; a moratorium call on mission subsidies for evangelization; a call for non-professional missionaries, i.e. those not only giving Christian witness, but also serving the Church in secular professions and finally there was the challenge to "the missionary as an evangelist", the challenge being that in some cases the older churches were not asked for personnel to embark upon evangelization, but rather to perform tasks like literature production, teaching and health services.

Responding prophetically to these challenges, van Randwijck even foresaw a time that foreign missions as they were known until Ghana, might cease to exist. The context has changed and foreign missions were to respond to the new context even if it meant following "the law of the grain", i.e.

...unless it 'falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies it bears much fruit' (in Ghana:98).

It is interesting to note how, like Freytag, also van Randwijck saw a *theologia crucis* as the only proper response to the challenges before Western Mission. He also raised the issue of obedience and in the end he opted for a balance between conservatism and radicalism, without clearly defining these concepts.

Having said all this about how individuals at Ghana attempted to respond to the challenge of the hour, the main criticism against Ghana, at least as far as this study is concerned, is that it did not concretely answer to the very concrete challenges of the world of 1957/'58. It is therefore difficult, taking seriously

the point Van't Hof (1972:191) is making, to determine the character of Ghana in terms of its own response to the situation then.

6.3 Spirituality

Whether or not Ghana responded adequately to the "hour", it would be fair to say that the Conference was gripped by a spirituality of kairos, the kairos being constituted by historical developments around 1957/'58 and the challenges posed to Western Mission.

This spirituality of kairos was not only introduced by Mackay (Ghana:101-102) , but also enhanced by his analysis of "this hour" as an "apocalyptic hour"

It is an hour weighted with destiny, an hour when the element forces of human nature and history are laid bare, and when a titanic struggle is in process to determine the type of human individual who shall populate the world of tomorrow. We are living in what the Bible calls 'a day of the Lord', a day of darkness rather than light. Yet our time is one of God's springtimes, albeit, one of His terrible springtimes.

The kairos of Ghana was not so much translated into decisions of a social, political or economic nature, but rather, it was seen as a moment of truth for foreign missions. This led to a very realistic approach at Ghana, evoking the description of Ghana as sober by some. Van't Hof (1972:190) very aptly speaks of a "spirituality of soberness" (my translation).

The soberness of Ghana should, according to Van't Hof, not be seen as an exercise in relativism, a balanced ability to adapt or as a sort of disciplined emotionalism, but rather as a

realistic weighing of the facts with which Western Mission was confronted.

This explains why the spirituality of Ghana was more than just a spirituality of kairois and of soberness, but also of obedience. It is a spirituality of obedience quite firmly grounded in the Cross (Cf. Freytag and van Randwijck). It would therefore not be an overstatement to say that a kenotic spirituality prevailed at Ghana.

6.4 Excursus on racism

Being "aware of the political significance of this gathering for the first time in African soil" (Utuk 1991:235), there was no way that the Ghana Assembly could avoid the issue of racism.

The influence of Evanston (1954) on Ghana is shown by Ghana's reaffirmation of the Evanston statement on race relations which contained formulations like the following

...all churches and Christians are involved, whether they recognize it or not, in the racial and ethnic tensions of the world.

Wind (1984:292-295) points to the controversial nature of the discussion on racial relations at Evanston due to the presence of delegates from the white churches in South Africa. The controversy was mounting when two churches from South Africa, one white and one black, became members of the WCC, highlighting the practice of racial segregation in South Africa.

It is, however not the idea to elaborate on that any further, but to move on to Evanston's statement on "Inter-Group Relations", contained in the report of Section 4. It is rather striking to note how Evanston has avoided the term "racism" and has opted for

the euphemistic term "segregation" or "discrimination". This study finds it to be problematic from a social-analytical perspective. Once again, more often than not terms like segregation conceal more than they reveal. The PCR of the WCC has therefore done well to use the term "racism" in their special publication on World Council of Churches' Statements and Actions on Racism 1948-1979 (1980). The usage of the term " racism " is very helpful in social-analytically identifying a world wide system of apartheid, rooted in the prevailing social, political and economic power relationships.

Despite this critique of the Evanston statement on racism, it contains some very profound formulations on the issue, which might have had substantial influence on Ghana four years later.

The basic principle on racism was stated : "any form of segregation based on race, color, or ethnic origin is contrary to the gospel ". In the field of social justice, one of the major problems was identified as

that of securing for all the oppurtunities for the free exercise of responsible citizenship and for effective participation by way of franchise in both local and central government activity ". A very concrete decision was taken by Evanston to create a structural organization " to assist constituent churches in their efforts to bring the gospel to bear more effectively upon relations between racial and ethnic groups .

Having reflected on Evanston a little bit, perhaps it is necessary to say something about the first meeting of the All-Africa Church Conference which took place at the beginning of 1958, almost simultaneously with the Ghana Conference. Reaffirming past statements on racism, according to Utuk (1991 :244), Ibadan went on to relate the question of racism to

economic issues, i.e. the land question.

... the land question in various countries of Africa is one of the greatest barriers to the achievement of racial peace.

A significant contribution was made by a South African woman, Edith Thoko Hlatshwayo who was a Welfare Officer in Johannesburg at the time. Speaking on the theme "Laywomen in Church and Society", she called on the ecumenical movement to look anew at the Bible and to discover how much attention Jesus paid to women. Addressing herself to the issue of "the fullest kind of partnership" (Utuk 1991:246), she pleaded for equal opportunities for all in building partnership. She used the term "rightful place" with reference to the role everybody, including women should play in the Church. Utuk (246) comments critically to the use of the term "rightful place", "given that such a phrase has been used several times in the history of the church to defend the status quo as a divine right of which women themselves have borne the brunt of the conservatism and abuse". If however, Hlatshwayo used the term in trying to argue for some form of affirmative action vis-a-vis certain groups in the Church, the criticism of Utuk would be unfair. The point should be made that, perhaps unintentionally, the parallel between racism and sexism had been discovered. In this sense, Hlatshwayo has played the same kind of prophetic role as Soga at Tambaram in 1938.

7. Mexico City (1963)

7.1 Contextuality

The meeting of the CWME in Mexico City, being the first of the Commission after New Delhi (1961) where the integration of the IMC and the WCC took place, clearly constituted a break with past conferences. Whether the break could really be defined as an

epistemological break or not, the fact remains that Mexico City, unlike its predecessors, attempted to develop a contextual way of missiologizing. The title of the official Mexico City report testifies to this : "Witness in Six Continents". This has been a clearcut attempt to break with the idea of a universal missiology which is good for all people everywhere and which should be carried from the West to the rest.

How did Mexico City understand the world of 1963? The world of 1963 was analysed in terms of key words such as "revolutionary change , "science and technology" and above all "secularization." In the "Message" from the CWME these words feature either *expressis verbis* or interpretatively:

Our world is changing faster than it has ever done before. New patterns of life are taking form for the whole of mankind. In this revolutionary change, science and technology play a decisive part. This means two things: it makes possible for masses of people greater freedom, greater security, more leisure and a more truly human life; but it poses a great question- is technology to be the servant of man or his master? It is a question of life and death for the world (Mexico City:173).

A key word in the attempt at analysis by the Youth Delegation at Mexico City, was "struggles" (Ibid.:176).

The youth felt themselves challenged to "enter into the struggles of our time and work against misery, hunger, social justice, racial hatred and political tyranny". The involvement in these struggles could mean participation in the work of labour unions, student movements and political parties. The youth also took cognisance of their contemporaries believing in secular ideologies and living by practical atheism.

The tone for analysis was set by M.M. Thomas (Ibid.:11-19) in his keynote opening address on "The World in which we Preach Christ". Speaking about the communication of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole world, he argued strongly in favour of a socio-cultural analysis, saying

If this communication is to be effective as communication it is important that we seek in each generation to know the world in which men live and to understand their basic thoughts, hopes, aspirations, and the urges within which they become aware of self and God.

This is clearly calling for a contextualization of the Gospel, which is different from an application of the Gospel "senkrecht von oben". In his own attempt to come to grips with the world in which the Gospel was to be communicated, Thomas began with the scientific and technological revolution that was taking place. He went on to indicate the revolutionary ferment that was being created in Asia, Africa and Latin America by nationalist revolts against foreign domination and the revolutionary programme of nation building. Turning to the religions of humankind, Thomas referred to the changes taking place there due to the process of secularization. In his analysis he showed how the basic characteristic of secularization was the breaking down of the integration between religion, society and state.

Visser't Hooft (Mexico City 1963:24) equally showed some sensitivity for contextuality, when he challenged Mexico City to give a clear answer to the question whether the Word of God was bound or not

A Church may have great missionary fervour and yet fail to be truly apostolic, because its missionary work consists in the exporting of its own culturally conditioned brand of Christianity and in imposing of that brand on another

people. If so, it has not grasped that the Word of God cannot and must not be imprisoned in any human form of expression but claims the sovereign right to make its own impact upon every people and to create its own forms of expression.

Visser't Hooft did not elaborate on what this would mean for the development of a specific missiological method, but he did go on to analyse the world of 1963, using terms like "modern world", "totalitarianism" and "Zeitgeist".

Of the analyses rendered by commentators on the Mexico City Conference, that of Van't Hof (1972:197) is quite noteworthy. He points to the political notion of coexistence that was prevailing at the beginning of the sixties and the expansion of Marxism to Cuba, for example. He also mentions the dominance of neopositivism and the second Enlightenment. Simultaneously there was the spirit of uncertainty and the spirit of resistance, a crisis of culture and the revolutionary thinking that was kept alive.

And Latin America? Obviously there would have been some analysis given of the continent on which the Conference was taking place. In their input, Castillo-Cardenas (Mexico City:29-36) and Sapsezian (Ibid.:37-47) indulged in the kind of social analysis for which the Latin American theologians would become famous. It is important to note that this has happened before exponents of Liberation Theology opted consciously and methodologically for the Marxist analysis of society. The analysis of Castillo-Cardenas and Sapsezian therefore shows that even in the absence of scientific tools of analysis, there exists a kind of common sense analysis which helps people to understand their situation in terms of the opposing forces operating there.

The Latin American situation was seen as one where tremendous

revolutionary changes were taking place, demythologising the concept of a religious continent. Dechristianization and secularization were the order of the day. Tremendous pressures of a social and political nature were felt. There was an "awakening of the collective conscience to the fact that we live in a society unjustly organized, which does not justify the sacrifice of the millions of human beings which is being required for its preservation. Thus the masses are determined to sacrifice their lives - not in order to preserve an unjust social order - but rather to change it radically" (32). There was also the emergence of a new nationalism which Castillo Cardenas assessed very positively as "the struggle of people to find themselves".

With reference to the Brazilian situation, Sapseizian pointed to the "dynamic search for its own national integration and identity" (37). He also referred to the ongoing struggle for a more fruitful and just social order. There was also the process of dechristianization, resulting from the secularization of life. Marxist philosophy and Afro-Brazilian religions were seemingly offering more comprehensive and more immediate answers to the anxieties of many than the Christian Church.

If one were now to pinpoint some key words that emerge from the different attempts at analysis, at least three seem to be paramount, i.e. Revolutionary change, scientific and technological advancement and secularization. In the next section the focus of our discussion shall be upon whether and how Mexico City responded hermeneutically to these, especially to the problem of secularization.

7.2 Hermeneutics

How did Mexico City respond to the emergent secularization? Commentators of a wide spectrum evaluate Mexico City's response to secularization very positively. Daddens and Drost (1980:37)

speak about a "nieuw orientatie op het zendingswerk". Reflecting on the missiological significance of Mexico City, Scherer (1987 :109) highlights the "sustained inquiry into Christian witness in the secular world".

Bassham (1979:65) mentions the "new theological understanding of mission" that Mexico City began to wrestle with. Also Van 't Hof (1972:198) points to the special attention paid to secularization by Mexico City. In his impression on the Mexico City Meeting, Fenn contends that it "represented a fresh start in the international missionary planning of the churches". Quoting Oldham, he goes on to identify the task of "understanding and interpretation" as the greatest confronting Christian Mission. With reference to Mexico City the acid test would be the understanding and interpretation of the secular world.

Unless the signs of the times are wholly misleading, the latter half of this century will see immense strides taken towards the first world civilisation mankind has ever known, a civilisation based on scientific knowledge and techniques, applied over an ever-widening area of human life, and resulting in a way of life which is not obviously related to any religious values (Fenn in IRM:275).

Today, thirty years after the Mexico City Meeting we may conclude that the signs of the times were not at all misleading.

Mexico City responded to the signs of the times " in seeking to welcome secularism as a liberating force in the world- or, if not secularism, then at least secularization- the process rather than the ideology" (Fenn). This was contrary to the attitude adopted at Jerusalem where secularization was identified as an enemy which needs to be combatted.

The final report of the Section dealing with secularization makes

clear, however, that Mexico City did not opt for total continuity between secularization and Christian Mission, but for a dialectical position expressed in the following way

We are neither optimistic nor pessimistic about this process of secularisation. It should not be judged simply by the criterion of what it does to the Church... We believe that our own churches in many situations have been secularised in a bad sense - that is to say, that they have become a compartment of life...the time has come for them as institutions to go and join their laity where they are, inside the secular world...as our Lord took on our flesh, so he calls his Church to take on the secular world. That is easy to say and sacrificial to do (Mexico City).

Scherer (1987:109) uses the term "ambiguity" in describing secularization as a process which opens up possibilities for both human freedom and human enslavement. Like other commentators, he points to the inability of the Mexico Conference to discern a clear vision of the missionary task in a secular world. There was, however, an attempt to set the direction for mission by way of the following statement

Christian witness participates in the common agony and hope which men experience in the process of secularization. It should articulate questions and answers from within the modern world and take up the points of decision which God himself provided through secularization. Thus we can come to deeper understanding of the presence of Jesus Christ in the world and communicate the Gospel. . . . The Christian message to man in the secular world is not only the proclamation of a transcendent God who reigns as the Lord of nature, but also the proclamation of God as the Lord of world history who became a man in Christ. His divinity has become visible in his true humanity, as he emptied himself

to be one of us so that men might fulfill the tasks to which they were ordained in creation (Mexico City:153-154).

In trying to understand what this would mean in terms of ecclesial praxis, Mexico City burdened the Third Section with the task of spelling out the "Witness of the Christian Congregation in its Neighbourhood". Some very profound prophetic moments resulted. In special relation to the Latin American context, it was said that the witness of the Church must be borne "in the midst of the incredible awakening of the masses to the task of demolition of an evil social order - an awakening which constitutes a marvellous conversion from fatalism to hope, from indolence to revolutionary action, and from resignation to rebellion". Mexico City understood that this would necessitate new forms of congregational life. The isolation of churches from one another was identified as a major obstacle and the appeal to all involved in the missionary enterprise to become international, inter-racial and inter-denominational was an attempt to overcome division.

7.3 Spirituality

In his preface to the publication Key Words of the Gospel, which contains the Bible Studies presented to the Mexico City Meeting, Newbigin (in Berkhof and Potter 1964:8) makes the observation

This Bible study was not just to be a 'devotional exercise', to be left behind when the serious business of the conference began. On the contrary, it was to be the foundation of the whole conference.

If one were therefore to reflect on the spirituality that prevailed at Mexico City, its groundedness in the Bible should be mentioned first and foremost. For the purposes of this study it is quite important to note the number of times that the

prophets of the Old Testament featured in the Bible studies, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and especially Isaiah. The point to be noted is that no attempt was undertaken to debate the question whether these texts were missionary or not. If it would not be a gross misinterpretation of what was intended with the exposition of the texts, it could be argued that the intention was to inculcate a prophetic missionary spirituality. Perhaps the best example is the sermon of Castro (in Berkhof and Potter 1964:116-126) on Isaiah 55 where a prophetic dialectic between the concerns, anxieties and perplexities of those gathered in Mexico and their visions, courage to go forward, their joy and peace emerged strongly.

Not only the text of the Bible, but also the context of the Mexico city Meeting, informed its spirituality. The strong focus on secularization and its challenge to Christian Mission, gave rise to an ecumenical spirituality which found expression in the notion of "Joint Action for Mission" (Mexico City:165). The quest at Mexico City was a quest for wholeness, "wholeness of fellowship... and wholeness of witness" (Ibid.). The desire to do mission ecumenically was also expressed by the Youth

It has become clear to us that this work must be done ecumenically. We recognize an unwillingness of many Christian youth to be associated with divided and splintered missionary enterprises. We feel deeply the hopelessness of a divided witness.

Another important aspect of Mexico's spirituality was what could be called a spirituality of the road, if one were to speak with Hastings (1971) and Bosch (1979). A spirituality of the road refers here to the missiological notion of crossing frontiers (Mexico City:161-162). At Mexico City the conviction was that "the missionary frontier runs around the world" (Mexico City:161) and that there were "formidable barriers which must be crossed"

(Ibid.).

Finally, the quest at Mexico City was for an holistic spirituality. This found first and foremost expression in the concept of "Witness in six continents" which was a polemic against the fragmentation of Christian Mission as a movement from the West to the rest. This meant a major change in mentality and was well articulated in point 4 of the Message of the CWME

It must be the common witness of the whole Church, bringing the whole Gospel to the whole world (Mexico City:175).

For Mexico City such an holistic spirituality was grounded in eschatology, i.e. God's purpose to sum up all things in Christ.

8. Bangkok (1973)

8.1 Contextuality

In his report to Bangkok, Potter (Bangkok:51-63) very significantly uses the concepts "Context of Mission" and "Mission in Context". The extent to which he took the issue of contextuality seriously, is clearly illustrated by the global analysis he offered. The framework of his analysis, is the "one world"- "divided world" dialectic. On the one hand the world of 1973 was a world where people were drawn together through science, technology, rapid means of communication and the mass media. On the other hand it was a divided world, politically, economically and racially. It was a world at war.

The genius of Potter's analysis lies in the manner in which he overcame the dichotomy between the political, the economic and the racial. He singled out white racism as "one particularly virulent form of the political and economic conflicts of our time" (53), relating how the Mexico City Meeting hardly paid

attention to the march on Washington to demand civil rights for black people and the emergence of liberation movements in Southern Africa. For Potter all of this has got a direct relationship to mission and evangelization

For it is a notorious fact that the period of the Western mission to the continents of coloured people was that of European and North American political and economic imperialism. There were features of the missionary movement which contributed to or re-inforced the disease of racism and particularly white racism (Bangkok 1973:53,54).

There were still other aspects to Potter's analysis. He referred to the consciousness of systemic violence and the counterviolence of those who seek liberation. He also mentioned the paradox of "man's greatly increased power over creation through automation, the computer and the vast resources of science and technology, and at the same time the increasing powerlessness of man to change effectively the structures and values of society for greater justice and community" (Bangkok:55). Finally there was the paradox of on the one hand the attempts at cultural revolutions and on the other hand at counter-cultures.

The analysis attempted by Verkuyl (1973:14-25), differs from that of Potter in that it addresses itself to the local context, i.e. to Bangkok as the capitol of Thailand and to the South East Asian situation.

On the situation in Thailand, Verkuyl's analysis contains three elements. First, the Buddhist community in Thailand. With the Bangkok Conference about 94 percent of the population were from the Thera-vada Buddhism. The Thera-vada Buddhism is one of the currents in Buddhism which emphasises the original teachings of Gautama Buddha and the elders. Verkuyl highlights the identity crisis experienced by Buddhism in Thailand in terms of the global

process of modernization. The crucial question also for Buddhists was how to participate in modern civilization without losing one's identity. Second, the political situation in Thailand. Thailand has never before known colonial domination, either by the West or Asia. The name "Thailand" quite symbolically means "land of the free". But how free was the land? Verkuyl points to its factual dominance by the USA, especially during the "thirty years war" in Indo-China when thousands of American soldiers and five air bases were deployed in Thailand. B 52 bombers took off from Thai airports. Although the Bangkok Conference took place in a period of relative calm when the bombardments on North Vietnam were suspended, there was always the danger of starting it all over again. Foreign investment, particularly from the USA and Japan and largely responsible for the economic boom in Thailand in the early seventies, was another factor which rendered the "land of the free" unfree. In November 1972, just before the Bangkok Conference, Thai students were protesting against the growing influence of foreign capital.

Third, the Churches in Thailand. Suffice it to say that the Christian Church in Thailand is numerically very small. In 1973 only about one hundred and fifty thousand Roman Catholics and about thirty five thousand Protestants.

The question which would concern this study in the next section on Hermeneutics, is to what extent the Bangkok Conference interacted with the Buddhist community, the Christian community and the heavy military presence of the USA in Thailand. Were the deliberations at all informed by the immediate context?

Before we deal with that, let us now turn to the points of analysis offered by Verkuyl on the context of South-East Asia. First, the detente between the People's Republic of China and the USA. This new atmosphere of relaxed relationships was effected by the Nixon visit to China. It opened up possibilities for the

repair of communication between China and the rest of Asia. Verkuyl relates how this has had a profound influence on the deliberations of the Bangkok Conference and especially on the informal discussions in the corridor. Second, the regrouping of countries in South East Asia. There was a concerted attempt by countries like the Philippines, Singapore, Malasia, Indonesia and Thailand to forge an alliance. The challenge by China for these regimes to break down the walls of partition between the elite and the masses in their countries, was taken more seriously than before. They started realising that their politics benefited the "happy few" whilst disadvantaging the poor masses of people. On the other hand these countries could not allow a hegemony of China in South East Asia.

Once again the question would be whether the hermeneutical reflection at Bangkok was informed by the context of South East Asia.

8.2 Hermeneutics

8.2.1 Epistemological discontinuity

With the discussion on Mexico City there was some hesitance to speak too confidently and categorically about an epistemological break. With Bangkok one can do so without fear of contradiction. The epistemological break is constituted by the fact that Bangkok pursued an altogether different theological method than its predecessors. By and large the World missionary Conferences since Edinburgh used a deductive theological method whereby rational theological formulations were applied to concrete situations. This kind of epistemology could be defined as follows: We rationalise therefore we know. Bangkok broke radically with this epistemological tradition. The break was triggered off by participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America who introduced the "action-reflection" model or an "experience-centered

approach" (Bassham 1979:93). They came to Bangkok with their narratives about racism, social injustice, economic exploitation, with the hopes and struggles of Third World people. The new epistemology that emerged could be defined as follows: We experience, we suffer, we struggle therefore we know.

This new way of knowing had a profound influence on the theological-hermeneutical exercise at Bangkok which focussed upon the theme "Salvation Today". In terms of the "action-reflection" model, the attempt to understand what salvation would mean for people in the contemporary world, was strongly informed by the general, global analysis of Potter and the more particular context analysis of Verkuyl. The action reports on concrete situations (Bangkok:3) and the discussion of specific topics in sections and sub-sections, indicate the extent to which social analysis became an indispensable dimension of the theological process at Bangkok. To be more concrete: The reality of having a major World Missionary Conference within the context of a Buddhist community, impacted upon the understanding of salvation.

Also, the stories about racism and cultural domination, the struggles for social justice determined the way in which salvation would be defined.

Bangkok systematised its thinking on this new way of doing theology with specific reference to the emergent Black Theology and Feminist Theology.

8.2.2 On Black Theology

Proper theology includes reflection on the experience of the Christian community in a particular place, at a particular time. Thus, it will necessarily be a contextual theology; it will be a relevant and living theology which refuses to be easily universalised because it speaks to and

out of a particular situation. Black theology tries to make sense of the particular black experience of suffering and oppression from rampant white racism, in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. It is a theology of liberation and as such, is really a theology of the oppressed, so that it may legitimately be appropriated by those who are dehumanized by oppression whatever the colour of their skin. It affirms the personhood of the oppressed and asserts that God offers them Salvation in Jesus Christ as the persons for whom Christ died, proclaiming that they do not need to apologize for their existence. They are God's children as blacks or whatever. Christ is their brother who shares their whole life because He places himself unequivocally on the side of the oppressed and the powerless (Bangkok 1973:74).

8.2.3 On Feminist Theology

God's "feminine voice" will only be heard as women are enabled to make their own particular contribution to theological thinking and in the whole life of the Church.

In practical terms, this means that a deliberate attempt has to be made to bring women into positions of responsibility and decision-making. The structures, the style of working and the form of conferences and meetings all need radical change to ensure that women make their full contribution, and that all may be liberated from the evil of power, domination and manipulation (Ibid.:75).

If one were therefore to pose the question about the specific contribution of Bangkok to missiology, Potter (Bangkok:62) seems to be answering

Mission and evangelism cannot be carried out by purveying

some ready made confessional or theological corpus of Christian truth. Through the process of dialogue, of giving and receiving, we are enabled better to understand our faith and to communicate it. An indispensable method is that of action and reflection.

Attempting to define the new ground that was broken by Bangkok, Castro (1985:26) concludes

They wanted to keep in mind the interplay, even the unity, between religious and secular history, between salvation history and human history.

With this kind of formulation Castro is contradicting the sharp distinction drawn by Glasser between a "cultural mandate " and an "evangelistic mandate". "Bangkok attempted", explains Castro (1985:27), "to see the evangelistic dimension within the cultural mandate; and within the evangelistic dimension, the need to call for recognition of the lordship of Christ over all cultures and kingdoms".

With the reference to Glasser the criticisms against Bangkok from the Evangelicals, is already hinted. Evangelical Missiologists like Bassham and Scherer who have commented extensively on the World Mission Conferences tend to show some understanding for what transpired at Bangkok, but at the same time they are quite critical. Bassham (1979:93) sees as a consequence of Bangkok's experience-centered approach "that serious theological reflection was difficult to achieve" and "the method reduced the amount of probing theological analysis". Scherer (1987:121) seems to be agreeing with Bassham when he writes

The theological effort made at Bangkok to give contemporary expression to " salvation " proved inconclusive...

If the new theological method that emerged at Bangkok, takes seriously both the context of people and the text of the Bible as sources of theology, there is no way that the criticisms of Bassham and Scherer could be ignored.

The actual reaction of Evangelicals to Bangkok is contained in a publication The Evangelical response to Bangkok (1973) and consists of contributions by the likes of Ralph Winter, Donald McGavran, A.R. Tippett, Arthur F. Glasser and Peter Beyerhaus. It is beyond the scope of this study to entertain their criticisms at length, but an attempt shall be made to indicate the main thrust of their objection to Bangkok.

Clearly the "two billion" syndrome was the dominating factor in the Evangelical response to Bangkok. Beyerhaus (in Winter 1973 :109), accuses the CWME of losing sight of the "preeminent goal of Christ's great commission, the eternal redemption of the unsaved "two billion" who by their sin, superstition and ignorance are separated from God, the fountain of life".

Glasser (in Winter 1973:148) also refers to the "two billion "who were yet to hear the "salvation today". The overriding feeling amongst Evangelicals was that Bangkok was guilty of operating with a reductionist theology of salvation. By attempting to broaden the scope of salvation or in the words of the preconference literature" opening the debate on Salvation Today as widely as possible", according to Beyerhaus (Ibid.:120), the concept of salvation "has been deprived of its Christian distinctiveness".

And what is this distinctiveness? Beyerhaus asserts:

"Christ's universal salvation for all sinners who believe in him".

Seemingly Evangelicals were missing the point Bangkok wanted to

make about the soteriological hermeneutic having been applied to the "lostness of all men apart from Jesus Christ" (Glasser in Ibid.:148) as a matter of tradition, but which was in need of being applied to other forms of bondage, be it racial discrimination, economic exploitation or cultural domination.

That some Evangelicals were clearly insensitive to what participants from the Third World were seeking to communicate to them, is for example indicated by a quotation from Beyerhaus (in Winter 1973:113), relating how a leading American Evangelical remarked "This is the most boring meeting I have ever attended". Precisely this kind of response constitutes the crisis of Christian Mission. If one is so blatantly insensitive to the experiences of suffering and struggle of those coming from the Third World, how does one ever hope to carry a credible Gospel to the "unsaved two billion" ?

It is precisely this kind of reaction that has provoked people like John Gatu to call for a moratorium on Western Mission to Africa, Asia and Latin America.

8.2.4 Excursus : The moratorium call as prophecy

For purposes of this study, the moratorium call shall now be put into prophetic perspective with specific reference to Gatu and Carr.

8.2.4.1 John Gatu

The Kenyan, John Gatu made missiological history by being the first to apply the concept of moratorium to Christian Mission. This happened in February 1971 in a presentation in New York where Gatu proposed the complete withdrawal of missionaries from Africa for a period of five years after which they were to return. This complies with the original meaning of moratorium of

"temporary suspension". Only a few months later, in Milwaukee, at the mission festival of the Reformed Church in America, Gatu radicalised his call with the slogan : "Missionaries go home. Full stop".

The moratorium issue emerged again very strongly at the Bangkok Conference. In fact, quite a portion of the work of Committee C which dealt with Partnership, was devoted to the moratorium call. It was a South African , Gabriel Setiloane (Cf. Bangkok:24-25) who moved in the Committee for the material on a "Call for a Moratorium" which was before Sub-section A of Section III to be included in the report of Committee C.

If one were to pinpoint the elements constituting the prophetic nature of the moratorium call, at least five seem to have emerged at Bangkok. First, It was first and foremost a challenge to the churches requesting a moratorium to work for their own selfhood and identity. Second, churches no longer in a position to send money and personnel, were challenged to utilize their resources for education for mission back home. Third, these churches were also challenged to give financial support to those involved in struggles against unjust and dehumanizing systems. Fourth, churches on both sides of the spectrum were challenged to develop new styles of relationship. It is in this context that Bangkok's famous concept of "mature partnership" emerged. Fifth, the moratorium call was applied very concretely to situations where a minority was dominating a majority. The question was whether a foreign mission agency should withdraw from such an unjust situation. Already there was the case of the White Fathers who withdrew from Mozambique.

A little more than a year after Bangkok the All Africa Conference of Churches took place in Lusaka, Zambia. Gatu was elected chairperson and obviously the moratorium issue would feature once again. Two issues determined the framework of the discussion,

i.e. the quest for African selfhood and the continued presence of missionaries in Africa. The latter was seen as distracting from the goal of Africanisation. The Lusaka meeting therefore decided

The contribution of the African Church...cannot be adequately made in our world if the Church is not liberated and becomes truly national. To achieve this liberation the Church will have to bring a halt to the financial and manpower resources... from its foreign relationships... We recommend this option to the Churches of Africa as the only potent means of coming to grips with being ourselves and remaining a respected part of the one Catholic Church...Surely election of this option may cause many existing structures of our Churches to crumble. If they do, thanks to God, they should not have been established in the first place... (Cf. Le Coutre 1974:329-334).

8.2.4.2 Burgess Carr

Carr (in Reader) was the first to interpret the moratorium call prophetically and in his article THE MORATORIUM : The Search for Self Reliance and Authenticity, he devotes a chapter to moratorium as prophecy. Quite sharply Carr shows how the moratorium issue cannot be separated from the global political and economic setting

We realize that one of the moral issues of our time has to do with the relationship existing between the dominating and dominated parts of our world. We speak of rich and affluent Churches just as we speak of rich or affluent nations. Similarly we speak of "poor" Churches and "poor" nations. The terminology passes over into our discussion on development, where we speak of developed and underdeveloped (AACC Bulletin, 7.3 1974:36-44).

Carr goes on to say that this type of language presupposes a vertical understanding of history, with the rich on top and the poor at the bottom. Development would mean helping the poor to climb up towards the top. This approach, according to Carr, camouflages the "essential inner-relation that binds both the dominated and the dominating in a vicious cycle of alienation" and "obscures the need of both to be liberated". On the basis of the Lusaka statement, he pleads for the restructuring of relationships and the renewal of the patterns of cooperation, concluding

Only when this happens shall we be able to define our identity clearly in relation to Him who is our common Liberator, Jesus Christ.

His warning to the Churches in Africa to be wary of replacing the expatriate dominator with the indigenous one, once again shows the prophetic challenge of the moratorium call, first and foremost to Africa.

8.3 Spirituality

The spirituality which prevailed at Bangkok was in terms of Bangkok's selfunderstanding, an ecumenical spirituality.

This conference, perhaps more than any previous ones, has given most of us a deeper understanding of the word "ecumenical" (Bangkok:1).

On the basis of what transpired at Bangkok, it seems as if their understanding of "ecumenical", functioned on two levels. First, there was the one Church consciousness, meeting "around the living person of Jesus Christ", recognizing "together the power of salvation by his cross as it is manifest in his resurrection" (Ibid.). Second, there was the one world consciousness which

enabled participants to voice their concerns, sufferings and hopes and which formed the basis of some frank dialogue between the poor and the rich.

The Bangkok spirituality, however, was not merely on the level of consciousness. It was translated into a spirituality of struggle as is clearly exemplified by the Letter to the Churches from the Bangkok Assembly (Ibid. : 2)

...we commit ourselves more fully in the struggle against everything that oppresses men and women today, not only the sin that is in them but also that is in societies. The scandals of racism, of social injustice, of economic and political oppression, the tragic shame of the Indochina war or the bloody suppression of liberation movements, the dehumanization of technological civilization and the threat that it poses for the future of humanity, all these challenge Christians urgently to express in action the salvation of Jesus Christ.

An ecumenical spirituality is therefore one which keeps together action and reflection in a dialectical relationship. It also keeps together the struggle against personal sin and social sin and therefore personal conversion and social action.

Perhaps the definition of spirituality offered to the Bangkok Conference by M.M.Thomas (Bangkok:113) expresses very aptly, in systematic terms, what the dialectic of spirituality entails:

Human spirituality, one might say, is the way in which man, in the freedom of his self-transcendence, seeks a structure of ultimate meaning and sacredness within which he can fulfil or realise himself in and through his involvement in the bodily, the material, and the social realities and relations of his life on earth. This means of course that

if the structure of meaning and sacredness which men choose is false, a false spirituality results and instead of self-fulfilment, there is self-disintegration.....

Similarly, the primary concern of the Christian mission is also with the salvation of human spirituality, with man's right choices in the realm of self-transcendence and with structures of ultimate meaning and sacredness- not in any pietistic or individualistic isolation, but in relation to and expressed within the material, social and cultural revolutions of our time.

Quite clearly for Thomas, a true spirituality holds together our structure of ultimate meaning and our involvement in social realities. It holds together " our total surrender to Jesus Christ " and " a commitment to his mission on earth ".

9. Melbourne (1980)

9.1 Contextuality

The attempts at context analysis at Melbourne were on two levels. First, there was the more general and global analysis and second, there was the more particular analysis.

The more global analysis is contained in the Message to the Churches (Melbourne:235-236) and refers to the following alarming developments in the world of 1980. It was a world

under the clouds of nuclear threat and annihilation...deeply wounded by the oppressions inflicted by the powerful upon the powerless...oppressions are found in our economic, political, racial, sexual and religious life. The world of 1980 was one where people were suffering from hunger, poverty and injustice.

The more particular analysis refers to attempts by individual contributors to Melbourne like Banana, Fung and Beato either to analyse a particular trend or a particular context. It also refers to the analyses surfacing in statements and declarations on El Salvador, Latin America, South Africa and from the women and the South Pacific. Instead of discussing these one by one, an attempt shall be made to identify some of the specific issues they addressed themselves to.

The poor stood central in the analyses at Melbourne. In social-analytical terms the poor were not poor by mistake, but by design. Poverty was not a "necessity but a consequence of present structural arrangements" Banana (in Melbourne:107). In the statement on South Africa: Uprooting the poor, it is illustrated how structural arrangements like the Group Areas Act, the Pass Laws and the Homeland Citizenship Act create poverty and massive unemployment, especially in the Bantustans, where millions of people were deported to. In hermeneutical-theological terms the poor were identified as the "sinned-against" (Fung). In praxiological terms the need for a missionary movement of the poor was expressed (Fung). The Declaration on the situation of El Salvador and Latin America, made clear the ghastly consequences for those who dare participate in the missionary movement of the poor, referring to the treacherous murder of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero.

He defended the people who have organised themselves to fight against an unjust order that perpetuates misery and hunger, and who suffers the utmost consequences of a violent repression by a military dictatorship that pretends to silence the cry for liberation in the name of the order of a "Christian society" (in Melbourne:247).

There was also some focus upon feminism. Women participating in the Melbourne Conference, presented a statement on the Vision of

the Kingdom according to women. The analysis contained in the statement described the situation of women as "still struggling to find our voice and to be heard" (Melbourne:252). Theirs was an "unrecognized and invisible ministry". The need for women to establish their God-given identity was also expressed. Women were, however, not to be paralysed by the situation of oppression in a male-dominated world. On the contrary, women at Melbourne saw themselves "as accountable to God and responsible for society" ; "aware of the importance of our participation in the church " (Melbourne:252,253). The following statement dispels any suggestion that women merely wanted to become like men, internalising their attitudes and their power mongering.

Women look for new spirituality and the new lifestyles of the kingdom out of their own context and experience, finding their own definitions and ways in the coming of the kingdom (Ibid.:352).

Participants from the South Pacific tried to create awareness and a deeper understanding of their problems and struggles by presenting a statement on nuclear testing in that area. From the perspective of social justice, they stated their strong opposition to the violation and exploitation of the rights of the Pacific community. The French, US, Japanese and Chinese governments were identified as the culprits involved in the testing and proliferation of nuclear weapons or the dumping of nuclear waste.

If one were to summarise both the global and particular analyses of Melbourne, the division of the world into the powerful and the powerless, into oppressors and oppressed and the need of both for liberation, strikes one as important. At Melbourne the poor of the world were identified as the powerless and the oppressed. For the purposes of this study these are important hermeneutical keys and in the next section a hermeneutical-theological analysis

shall be conducted to establish their impact upon the central prophetic theme of the Kingdom.

9.2 Hermeneutics

Several commentators on the Melbourne Conference have pointed to the poor becoming the "dominant hermeneutical category" (Bosch 1991:435). Castro (1985:151), for example, calls the poor the "missiological principle par excellence" and the "missionary yardstick". According to Scherer (1987:142), the poor forced a redefinition of mission upon the Melbourne Conference. What did this mean for the hermeneutical-theological exercise at Melbourne? What missiology or theology of mission resulted from the circular movement at Melbourne from the context of the poor as locus for mission to the Biblical metaphor of the Kingdom of God and vice versa? All evidence points to the fact that Melbourne perpetuated the distinct theological method which emerged at Bangkok. Theological reflection was informed by social analysis. Banana's (in Melbourne:105-106) definition of the poor, contained also in the Section I report, was the hermeneutical key for unlocking the metaphor of the Kingdom. The stories of the poor (Ibid.:174-175) which were told at Melbourne, evoked the notion of a narrative theology (Cf. Gort 1980:15). The notion of a narrative theology confirms the inductive theological method which was used at Melbourne over and against the deductive method.

Put differently, Melbourne did not attempt first to formulate theological statements on the Kingdom of God and then to apply them to the situation of the poor. On the contrary, the Section 1 report contains a number of very striking inductive theological statements like

In the perspective of the Kingdom, God has a preference for the poor. God has shown his preference for the poor

throughout the history of Israel. God has identified with the poor and oppressed by sending his Son Jesus to live and serve as a Galilean speaking directly to the common people... (Melbourne 1980:171).

What was to be the kind of ecclesiology to emerge from this kind of theology? Without necessarily entertaining the notion of an ecclesiocentric mission, Melbourne had some very distinct ideas on the involvement of the Church in the struggles of the poor. It was recommended that the churches should

Become churches in solidarity with the struggles of the poor. The poor are already in mission to change their own situation. What is required from the churches is a missionary movement that supports what they have already begun, and that focuses on building evangelizing and witnessing communities of the poor that will discover and live out expressions of faith among the masses of the poor and oppressed (Ibid.:177).

If the notion of "the poor already in mission", is not too romantic (Cf. Scherer 1987:144), the challenge posed to the Church, points to a new epistemology, or rather it points to the same kind of epistemology that emerged at Bangkok. It is an epistemology whereby missiology would not be dealing with ready made ideas on Christian mission, but would rather be a critical reflection on the missionary praxis. In terms of the Melbourne perspective, missiology would be the critical reflection upon the ongoing struggles of the poor and the Church's involvement in those struggles.

9.3 Spirituality

Perhaps the greatest contribution that Melbourne has made to missiological theory and praxis was the " search for a missionary

life-style patterned after Christ's own ministry among the poor and the marginal (Scherer 1987:143). The spirituality which prevailed at Melbourne was firmly grounded in the kenosis of Christ, i.e. his self-emptying through the incarnation, his identification with the poor and the marginalised, culminating in his death on the cross. In his foreword to the official Melbourne report, Jacques Matthey(xv-xvi), the conference secretary, has this to say about Christ's kenotic spirituality

It is the significance of Christ's kenosis as the necessary way of accomplishing his mission. Christ refused to impose God's kingdom by taking power and ruling humankind and all creation as the just ruler (Cf. temptation story). He manifested God's way of reigning by giving up his being equal to God, becoming a Jew, a Galilean, living among the poor and disenfranchised, dying on the cross in our place. The symbols of God's kingdom are not the sword and the crown, but bread and wine-the broken body of our Lord. The call to the disciple is nothing less than to follow that way-in absolute opposition to any reasonable search for accomplishment and success.

Scherer (1987:143) defines this new missionary life-style as one that "overcomes limits, breaks down walls and barriers, and crosses frontiers to live with people where they are. It makes the witnesses vulnerable and pushes them toward new experiments in living, risk-taking, and pilgrim ways".

It is the kind of definition Scherer offers, which makes abundantly clear that the spirituality of kenosis which was searched for at Melbourne, could never be a paralysis of spirituality. On the contrary, it is meant to enable the church to be present in the midst of human struggles and to witness to the hope that is in Christ (Ibid.). A kenotic spirituality is

therefore simultaneously a spirituality of suffering and of struggle and of hope.

10. San Antonio (1989)

10.1 Contextuality

The analysis of San Antonio resembles that of Melbourne in that it also consists of a universal context analysis and a particular context analysis. The universal context analysis is especially contained in the Message of the Conference (San Antonio :20-24). The term "universal" is being used here not only to indicate the global context, but also the very general nature of the analysis, which could hardly be different. An interesting feature of the analysis, however, is the emphasis upon the "voices of anguish and pain". Not the clinical type of analysis, but one which takes seriously the experiences of people. The more global kind of analysis is also contained in the Section reports. In the Section I report on Turning to the Living God, "the present moment in history" is being analysed as follows

In some parts of the world people face a total system of death, of monstrous false gods, of exploitative economic systems, of violence, of the disintegration of the fundamental bonds of society, of the destruction of human life, of helplessness of persons in the face of impersonal forces (Ibid.:26).

An issue which has been on the agenda of the World Mission Conferences ever since Jerusalem (1928) and which forms an important part of the analysis at San Antonio, is that of secularisation. The definition of secularisation was strikingly positive at San Antonio.

Many would see "secularisation" partly as a fruit of the gospel,

releasing humankind from ancient powers and emancipating people to make mature choices and take responsibility for their destiny (Ibid. 29).

San Antonio was distinguishing very clearly between "secularisation" and "secularism", the latter being defined as "a closed system, a context in which people live and act without reference to God" (Ibid.:30).

In terms of a broad and general analysis references were made to economic injustice in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific; Racism in South Africa; Exploitation by affluent countries of poor countries through transnational corporations. Reference was made here to the Bhopal gas leak disaster in 1984 as an example of such exploitative ventures. The resistance of the Namibian and Palestinian people against colonisation and the regional conflicts in Lebanon caused by international interests were also mentioned (San Antonio:42-43).

The very broad and general analyses are also reflected in the Section IV report on "Renewed Communities in Mission" (Ibid.: 68). The need for renewed communities in mission is expressed within the framework of social analysis, as indicated by the quotation below.

The call for renewed communities in mission comes to us at a time when the forces of destruction dividing the human community seem to have become more active than ever. Throughout the world, humanity is threatened by division because of restrictive affirmations of group identities and allegiances to race, class, nationality or religion: the economic gap between north and south is growing constantly wider. And we see the disintegration of the sense of community expressed in anonymity and alienation as a result of progress in technology and communication. In view of the

worldwide resurgence of individualism we feel the need to reinstate the Christian idea of community, but also to reformulate it in the light of a renewed understanding of the Holy Trinity.

The quotation clearly underwrites the theological method that is attempted in this study. Once again, it is a method where theological or hermeneutical reflection does not go without social-analytical mediation. To put it more clearly in terms of the quotation itself : The reflection upon the Christian idea of community and the Holy Trinity can only be meaningful if it is done in terms of the global context analysis.

A slightly different mode of analysis was introduced by the Section 3 report, dealing with the theme "The Earth is the Lord's". The analysis here is different not because it is detached from political and socio-economic realities, but because it attempts to show how the political and economic behaviour of humans has devastating ecological consequences. Reports from around the world indicated "the prevalence of the abuse of creation". The report on the Netherlands indicated the pollution of rivers, seas, air and land as a result of industrial behaviour. The report speaks of the violation of God's creation by the way people use land, sea and space and by the way modern agriculture and technology impact upon creation. The situation was ambivalent, however, with a proper use of the earth's resources on the one hand and an abuse of God's creation on the other hand. Some reasons were advanced for the abuse

...are rooted in a turning away from the living God, the free reign of human greed, the misuse of power, the presence of fear and ignorance, and deception that hides the truth of creation's suffering (San Antonio:54).

The land issue stood central in the report. A number of regions

and countries were named as having grave land-related problems: Brazil, South Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan. Others were faced with the struggles of indigenous people for self-determination: Australia, New Zealand, North America, Latin America, the Pacific islands, Palestine, the Middle East, South Africa and Southern Africa.

The more particular context analysis refers to the site of the San Antonio Conference. In his Introduction to the San Antonio report, Frederick R. Wilson (Ibid.:14), describes the city of San Antonio as representing "all that is commonly perceived to be powerful". He also makes reference to the economic policies of the United States which often negatively influence many parts of the world. On the other hand the open ecumenical climate and the multicultural nature of the city where Hispanics, Anglo-Saxons, Blacks and indigenous people clash and intermingle, rendered San Antonio quite suitable for a World Missionary Conference.

10.2 Hermeneutics

Despite all limitations, the attempts at analysis over a broad spectrum in terms of the different section reports as well as the universality- particularity dialectic, point to the very basic question San Antonio wanted to ask. How does the world of 1989 look like and how is the will of God to be done in that locus? What are the features of a Christian mission that is modelled after Christ's mission?

The question could also be phrased differently in terms of the hermeneutical exercise which is to take place here: Is there a way in which the social analysis done at San Antonio informs the interpretation of the theological notions of the Will of God and Mission in Christ's Way? What is the interplay between the kind of ecological analysis done by section III and the fundamental theological notion that the earth is the Lord's?

In attempting to determine the kind of language used at San Antonio, this study suggests four metaphors which refer respectively to the four section reports : turning, acting, sharing-sustaining and meeting. The former two metaphors will be discussed now and the latter under the spirituality rubric.

10.2.1 Turning

The turning metaphor refers to the section I report and is contained in the title of the report "Turning to the Living God". Before elaborating on the metaphor a bit, it needs to be noted that section I attracted more participants than any of the other sections. Especially participants from the West were particularly interested in the work of section I, so much so that some had to be turned away. Why this interest in the theme of conversion ? Did it emanate from a genuine urge to turn from the idols of the West to the Living God or did some participants find the theme of conversion "safer" than for example the theme of section II on "Participating in Suffering and Struggle"? On a more serious level: Was the flocking of Westerners to section I not perhaps a practical demonstration of the dichotomic thinking of the West as if some wanted to argue that a reflection on the Living God could be insulated from a discussion on suffering and struggle.

In terms of what actually happened in section I, these questions remain fairly hypothetical. By leaning heavily on the document "Mission and Evangelism - An Ecumenical Affirmation", section I managed to overcome a number of dichotomies, especially the one between turning to the Living God and turning to one another in solidarity and in dialogue.

A number of commentators on the San Antonio Conference commented on the turning metaphor by using its equivalent "conversion". Neely and Scherer (in *Missiology* 1990, 18(2):146) point to the fact that San Antonio issued the call to repentance and

conversion within the context of a reiteration of a trinitarian understanding of mission as God's own activity.

In a preconference exploration of the subtheme - "Turning to the Living God", Van Elderen (1989:12), writes

The concept of "turning" reminds us of the need for conversion to Christ in our involvement in mission. Turning to the Living God is a call to turn from the false gods we are always tempted to serve.

Reflecting on San Antonio from the perspective of the JPIC of the WCC, Linn (1989 :518), argues that the radical change which is needed in people's attitude towards nature, amounts to a conversion experience. In fact, he defines mission as the invitation to all human beings to conversion, as turning to the living God and turning away from the idols. Consequently he defines the particular mission concern related to stewardship of creation as follows:

...to discern the idols of our time, to unmask them and to show how one can be liberated from the captivity of worshipping them. Thus we have to unmask the idol of economic growth, the idol of success which often depends on violence, the idol of speed, etc.

The act of conversion is, however, not limited to our attitude towards creation, but is paramount in the relationship between Christianity and other faiths. Stockwell (in San Antonio:126) speaks about "our checkered Christian history of arrogance and intolerance", indicating the prevailing attitude towards other faiths. The point he makes is pursued by Held (in Mid-Stream:20) who relates the arrogance and intolerance of Christianity to the claim of the absoluteness of Christianity. Held draws attention to section I,6 of San Antonio where the call to repentance in

this area, is stated in no uncertain terms:

We have to repent of our arrogance and insensitivity, but also of our failure of nerve and inertia.

San Antonio has also implicitly taken seriously Gutierrez' (1973:204) notion of conversion to the neighbor. Gutierrez understands the neighbor to be the oppressed person, the exploited class, the despised race or the dominated country. Turning to the living God, in San Antonio's understanding, would entail precisely this. Therefore

We are called to exercise our mission in this context of human struggle...to promote human dignity, since the living God ... is protector of the widow, the orphan, the poor and the stranger (San Antonio:26).

This very brief exploration of the turning metaphor of San Antonio, goes some distance in showing how the Conference attempted to avoid a reductionist understanding of conversion in favour of a cosmic understanding. As a dialectical process conversion could simultaneously mean turning to God, to creation, to other faiths and to the neighbor. It is a multi-directional process.

10.2.2 Acting

The acting metaphor refers to section II report which deals with the participation in suffering and struggle. Neely and Scherer (1990:141) capture the San Antonio emphasis upon action well when they write:

In San Antonio the emphasis was on 'doing' of evangelism by participating in the world's suffering and struggle, taking seriously the truth that the earth is the Lord's, affirming

the need to defend the oppressed, denouncing those forces of division and destruction, i.e., race, class, nationality, and religion, and by engaging in mission in Christ's way.

To make clear that Conference did not have just any form of activism in mind, the novo concept of *acts in faithfulness* was introduced. In terms of section II these acts were to be performed in a very particular area, i.e. the area of justice. Acting out justice requires "acting in solidarity with those who suffer and struggle for justice and human dignity". Indeed

The acts of the people become God's mission for justice through creative power (San Antonio:40).

Of special interest for San Antonio in the area of acting, is the application of power. Although San Antonio did not develop Melbourne's notion of a theological option for the poor further, as Thomas (1990:152) rightfully indicates, it did, however break with a negative connotation of power. San Antonio gave a more positive connotation to power, calling it creative power. Using the metaphors of creation and incarnation, Conference located power squarely in the context of suffering and struggle. Despite the lack of an in-depth Biblical exegesis on the notion of creative power, Thomas (Ibid.:153) still concludes:

Nevertheless, I believe the basic insight of San Antonio concerning *creative power* is biblically sound. It is that our Lord in praying 'Your kingdom come' invited his followers in *mission in Christ's way* 'to participate with the people who are crushed in their struggle for the transformation of society'.

A rather powerful and illuminating exposition of creative power, is offered by Brown (1989:37-44) in his search for a theological

grounding of power. He writes inter alia:

God's power is creative, redeeming and liberating. It is never coercive, dominating or destructive. Those made in the image of God are not free to use their power to dominate or destroy. Because people are made in the image of God their dignity, freedom and power is to be respected and honoured.

Brown goes on to show how prophecy is concerned with the abuse of power and how the Israelite prophets sounded a fundamental critique of the misuse of power. Power, creative power, according to Brown, should be used for the liberation of the poor and the restoration of those who are broken. It is therefore small wonder that he speaks about the *power of brokenness*. For Brown the power of brokenness is exemplified by the suffering servant of the Old Testament who releases, liberates and transforms towards a more human, compassionate and just society. In the New Testament the power of brokenness is exemplified by none else but Jesus by way of confronting the evil powers, by being executed and by being vindicated in the resurrection.

10.3 Spirituality

The grounding of the spirituality which prevailed at San Antonio is perhaps best expressed in the very simple statement of the *Message of the Conference*: "we rejoice in the Spirit" (San Antonio:21). This rejoicing in the Spirit took on different forms.

One such form was the worship services. Another was the Bible study sessions which were held. The San Antonio spirituality also found expression and profoundly so, in "walking the way of the cross" (San Antonio:10). Furthermore it found expression in what could only be described as a spirituality of liberation or more specifically a spirituality of suffering and struggle. Not to

forget the two metaphors that are mentioned above, i.e. sharing-sustaining and meeting or an eco-spirituality and a spirituality of community.

10.3.1 Participatory worship

The San Antonio worship services were organised such that "the worship was fully participatory with ample opportunity to speak and to listen" (San Antonio:9). It was this participatory worship that enhanced the ecumenical quality of San Antonio. Wilson (San Antonio:9) reflects beautifully how the worship services helped in instilling an ecumenical spirituality, when he writes about their content:

Many languages were used in the readings, the prayers and the singing. In the finest tradition of ecumenical worship as it is evolving in World Council of Churches events, these worship experiences were such that every participant was at times an alien. No tradition, no rite, no style was allowed to dominate and thus permit its advocate to feel totally at home.

In his reflection on San Antonio from an Orthodox perspective, Lemopoulos (1990:21) quotes Fr Cyrill Agentis as the latter describes the San Antonio Conference in poetic and prophetic language. With reference to the spirituality of worship that ran through the meeting, Lemopoulos quotes Agentis as having said:

...there was a sort of charismatic breath that ran through the meeting. These people who were crying for God's help were praying. There was a real atmosphere of prayer in the meeting, a prayer that was spontaneous, that was enthusiastic. Yes, there were times it was indeed charismatic.

The centrality of prayer at San Antonio is clearly reflected in the ten-day prayer calendar which was prepared for use in churches before and during the conference. It is furthermore reflected in a prayer vigil organised during the conference and in the prayerful offering of the worship plans and preparations by the worship team.

Just how important its worship life was for San Antonio is indicated by a chapter by Stromberg (San Antonio:80-90), being included in the San Antonio report. Stromberg underwrites Wilson's idea of participatory worship which was planned to include everybody in the group of participants in ecumenical worship across confessional, cultural and linguistic lines.

10.3.2 Nurturing the faith

Special content was given to the worship life of San Antonio by the Bible study sessions that were held. A true nurturing of the faith occurred in the confrontation between diverse contexts around the text of the Bible. The portions from Scripture reveals something of the way in which San Antonio understood Mission in Christ's Way. Clearly the grappling with Luke 1:39-55, 6:17-26, 14:12-24, 22:39-46 and 24:13-35 indicates a focal point: the poor and the humble. Even at San Antonio some of the Western participants tended to spiritualise the texts, but were time and again challenged by their brothers and sisters from the Third World to attempt a reading of the texts from the perspective of poor and the marginalised.

10.3.3 Walking the Way of the cross

At six in the morning and quite symbolically on the Thursday of the conference, small clusters of persons participated in what became known as walking the way of the cross. What was the aim behind all of this? Stromberg (San Antonio:85) answers from the

perspective of solidarity:

The worship team wished to give special consideration to these events in relation to our discipleship and to our faithfulness in solidarity with those who carry crosses today.

The notion of walking the way of the cross, is also a rather creative way of practically bringing together the two parts of the conference.

Walking the way of the cross brought the two parts of the conference theme together in a powerful way: nowhere does the prayer Your will be done ring more powerful than in Christ's prayer in Gethsemane; nowhere does the call to mission in Christ's way express itself more eloquently than in the taking up of one's cross to follow Christ (Stromberg in San Antonio:85).

In practical terms the exercise of walking the way of the cross, entailed a moving pilgrimage of about 800 people who trodded silently and solemnly through nine meditation places or stations. The walk started with a meditation on the life of Christ and went through Gethsemane, the scourging and mocking, the judgment hall, the nailing, the forsakenness, the cross, the resurrection and culminated in a reflection on shared bread.

The culmination of the walk in a breakfast of water and tortillas which was meant to be an act of solidarity "with those for whom a single piece of bread must suffice for today as well as a reminder of the millions who cannot be confident of getting any food" (Stromberg in San Antonio:87), is fundamental to the understanding of spirituality. A true spirituality is by definition one where reflection on the passion of Jesus, is simultaneously an expression of solidarity with the breadless.

There is no dichotomy.

10.3.4 Spirituality of liberation

A description of the San Antonio spirituality as a spirituality of liberation, is completely justified by the emphasis laid upon suffering and struggle in the section II report. Two quotations from the report must suffice to show how those who participated in the deliberations of section II, were gripped by a spirituality of liberation. Right at the beginning of the report, the involvement in the struggle for liberation is grounded in the missio Dei and the incarnation.

Participating in suffering and struggle is at the heart of God's mission and God's will for the world. It is central for our understanding of the incarnation, the most glorious example of participation in suffering and struggle. The church is sent in the way of Christ bearing the marks of the cross in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 20:19-23) (San Antonio:37).

And again in the concluding invitation of the report, it is argued that the participation in struggles for liberation prefigures the redemption of all peoples through Jesus Christ.

Prefiguring the coming redemption of all peoples through Jesus Christ, God called the marginalised people in Canaan to resist the political and religious injustices of their day. As they were empowered by the announcement that God had declared them, the most defenceless, to be in the right, and were invited to use their creative power to build a just society in accordance with the will of God, so the churches are invited to reread the scriptures and to recognize that God is actively taking sides in history in order that suffering and struggling people in all places

may have fullness of life.

To make clear that a spirituality of liberation is indeed to be translated into acts of liberation, the report includes examples like Palestine, Namibia, Lebanon and Armenia as areas where people were urgently in need of liberation.

10.3.5 Sharing-sustaining: Towards an eco-spirituality

The notion of eco-spirituality is equally justified in describing the elements of the San Antonio spirituality. The affirmation with which the preamble starts, calls for a consciousness which acknowledges God's authority over the earth:

We affirm that the whole creation belongs to the Triune God - every inhabited part of the earth (territory) and every piece of earth (land) is, remains, God's. God has given the earth to the whole human family "to till and keep it" (Gen.2:15) (San Antonio:52).

The drafters of the section III report, were seemingly hoping that this type of consciousness would lead to the type of stewardship that would result in at least the following. First, a confirmation of the confession that according to Ps.24:1 Yahweh, the liberator God holds ultimate authority over the earth. Second, that a just sharing of land would ensue from this theological understanding of the ownership of the land.

10.3.6 Meeting: Towards a spirituality of community

Commentators on the San Antonio conference have experienced some difficulty in establishing the unique contribution of San Antonio. Some, like Neely and Scherer (1990:145) are clear that San Antonio "broke no new ground missiologically". However, others like Bosch (1989:137), who have undertaken some close

reading of the section reports, are prepared to grant San Antonio a unique contribution. Despite all reservations, Bosch singles out the notion of community as may be the contribution of San Antonio:

Still, reading carefully through the four section reports, I was struck by the fact that there was one recurrent theme which had never been so explicit during any previous CWME meeting: the idea of community.

Whereas Bosch alludes to San Antonio's idea of community in very broad terms, Thomas (1990:153) attempts to work it out in some detail. In reflecting upon the specific ecclesiological focus of San Antonio, Thomas points out how conference understood community holistically to include Christians and the whole of humankind. He highlights the way in which the section IV begins, recognising the global thirst for community. The thirst for community manifests itself in the church as a rediscovery of the dimension of community in faith. In society it manifests itself in the quest for new forms of community life by those struggling for political and social freedom.

CHAPTER 4

Mission as prophecy: towards the year 2000

The structure that has been used in analysing the World Mission Conferences, will also be employed in chapter 4. However, before coming to the three issues of the structure, namely contextuality, hermeneutics and spirituality, there is a need to state the theological question that chapter 4 intends to deal with, very briefly.

The problem this chapter addresses could be stated as the problem of "to be or not to be" of prophetic theology. This is to suggest that prophetic theology/prophecy is faced with a serious identity crisis. For the purposes of this study it will be indicated how developments in South Africa and on the international scene have contributed to the identity crisis of prophetic theology/prophecy. The developments referred to will be worked out in some detail under the rubric of contextuality.

In very broad terms the developments in South Africa refer to the transition from apartheid to a non-racist, non-sexist democracy, the transition being triggered off by the emergence of a new political paradigm of negotiation, compromise and settlement. In equally broad terms the developments on the international scene refer to the termination of the cold war, the collapse of

communism and the identification of the very powerful movement of liberal democracy, claiming to represent the "end of history". In what way do these developments constitute a crisis for prophecy?

As far as the South African context is concerned, the crisis for prophetic theology is well captured by Lamola (1994) when he writes:

Since the beginning of 1990, that section of the church which had taken a prophetic stance against apartheid and devoted itself to a ministry of social justice has been going through a very traumatic and difficult time. It has had to deal with what in the beginning were rapid and dramatic changes that had an impact on its theological self-definition, while at the same time trying to remain a critical voice within this very ferment.

The crisis for prophetic theology relates to what Lamola calls "a prophetic stance against apartheid". By and large prophecy in South Africa has been reduced in years past to opposition to apartheid or the apartheid regime. It is therefore extremely difficult for the prophetic section of the church to respond prophetically to the new situation. The lack of prophetic response to the new situation is concretely exemplified by the fact that nothing has come of the need to get a permanent

Ecumenical Prophetic Movement going (Cf. Challenge, August 1991).

Instead of attempting to be creative in terms of constructing new prophecies, theology is almost entirely being informed by what politicians say. If the politicians talk reconstruction, a theology of reconstruction is produced; If the politicians talk nation building, a theology of nation building is produced*; If the politicians say "Let bygones be bygones", theologies of mediation and reconciliation are produced *. This is not to question the legitimacy and validity of such theologies, but it is to say that something more is needed. Chapter 4 is a modest attempt at saying that prophecy is what is also needed.

On the global scene the crisis for prophetic theology* relates to its alignment with Socialism to a greater or lesser extent. The logic now is very simple: The collapse of Socialism worldwide equals the collapse of basis of prophetic theology. Chapter 4 concerns itself with the question whether there is any sign of a re-emergence of prophetic theology worldwide.

4.1. Contextuality

Where is the link between the context analysis of this chapter and that of the World Mission Conferences? First, the link is discontinuous in the sense that the World Mission Conferences never intended to do this type of specific social analysis. In

the second place, however, the link is continuous in as far as context analysis was either implicitly or explicitly present at and indeed influenced the conferences in some important respects. Thirdly, we have learned from the Edinburgh Conference how disastrous the lack of context analysis could be for Christian Mission. Instead of carefully reading the signs of the times, Edinburgh totally misread them by declaring a false kairos, i.e. the evangelisation of the world in that generation. This abounding optimism would be destroyed by the outbreak of the First World War only a few years later. In the fourth place, the post-1960 Conferences have explicitly shown the importance of context analysis for Christian mission. The fact that Third World people were suddenly taken very seriously by Christian mission, could for a great part be explained in terms of the attempts at social analysis of Mexico City, Bangkok, Melbourne and San Antonio. Finally, by and large the socio-economic realities as analysed by the post-1960 Conferences are still prevailing in the world. In a number of Third World countries, struggling peoples have won political liberation, but not yet economic liberation. The poor are poorer and the landless are as landless as ever. Self-conscious context analysis is therefore an abiding task of a truly liberatory Christian mission, and to that task I now turn my attention. A further lesson for Christian mission is that context analysis or in theological methodological terms, social-analytical mediation by itself, is not enough. If analysis does not lead to action, it can become rather paralysing. Indeed, the

idea is not so much to interpret the world, but to change it. But in order to interpret and change the world, proper context analysis is essential.

The way in which the problem of and the crisis for prophetic theology is posed, suggests an analysis in terms of the particularity-universality dialectic. This section will therefore contain two sections. First, an attempt is made at analysing the particular South African context. Secondly, a rather broad analysis of the global context is attempted. No specific analytical tool in the sense of those developed by Marx or Gramsci or whoever will be applied. This does not mean that the analyses will be value free, ideology free and "objective". On the contrary, the hermeneutical tool for analysing both the particular and the universal context, is the poor. To say that the poor are the hermeneutical tool, is not another way of objectifying them. It is rather a way of asking serious questions about the New South Africa and The New World Order from the perspective of the poor. The recurring question in chapter 4 is: Where are the poor in the changing South Africa and in the New World Order (NWO)?

A note needs to be made about the way in which the analyses will be organised. The political and the economical are the organising principles for analysing the particular as well as the universal contexts. A brief note needs to be made also about the

particularity-universality dialectic. As a dialectic it indicates the discursive relationship between the local and the global context. The crucial question in the interaction between the local and the global context is whether South Africa will be allowed any leeway to create its own kind of society or whether eventually it will succumb to the hegemony of the so-called New World Order.

4.1.1 Particularity

4.1.1.1 The political and the economic

The analysis focusses on the most current political and economic situation in South Africa, i.e. the situation after the April elections and the establishment of the government of national unity. It is paramount to note that the current situation is still part of the transition that was set in motion in 1990. Indeed, if the 'transition' which 'began' on 2 February 1990 really began a long while before then, it will not end for a long while after the negotiation process has seemingly ended. An attempt will be made now to describe the process of transition as precisely as possible, indicating the contradictions that are still prevalent.

Liberal and radical analysts are agreed that the transition in South Africa is grounded in a broad, progressive consensus on the

absolute necessity for democratic elections within the context of an interim constitution. Commenting on this broad consensus, Cronin (1994:32) writes: "This consensus has been achieved on the brink of an alternative. That alternative was, and remains, a descent into barbarism." Cronin (ibid.) goes on to argue, however, that the consensus within and about South Africa against a descent into barbarism "does not abolish major strategic, which is to say, class differences." The rest of the discussion is an exploration of some of the strategic or class differences that are existing in the changing South Africa or the South Africa in transition. The exploration might make clear the impossibility of separating the political and the economical.

4.1.1.2 Violence

The violence which erupted after the elections and the inauguration of the new State President and the democratically elected National Assembly and the Regional Legislatures, has made clear that it would not be far fetched to speak of a class of people especially subject to political violence. The re-eruption of violence on the East Rand and in Natal-Kwazulu as well as the violent response of big business and the police to the Pick'n Pay strikers, clearly show that the season of violence is not yet over. The important point to note is that the victims of the violence are almost exclusively black. As Maluleke (1994:32) points out, it is still true that "many [blacks] meet their

deaths at crucial points of their struggle for life and livelihood". The contradiction is that in post-election South Africa some (mainly white) are enjoying relative peace, whilst others are dying from political violence for no other reason than that they are black.

Some rather pertinent questions which are not easy to answer come to the fore: Who is behind the violence in the townships? Will the "Third Force" forever be haunting South Africans? Are the agents of Low Intensity Conflict still hell-bound on turning South Africa into a Beirut or a Bosnia or an Angola or a Northern Ireland? How long will it take to overcome political intolerance and taxi feuds? Is violence going to be a permanent feature of South African society? These are difficult questions to answer. Maluleke (1994:32) captures something of the almost impossibility of answering these questions, when he writes:

"The entire phenomenon - its logic, impact and the suffering it has caused - has been difficult to fathom".

He concludes:

Perhaps it is something more to be stopped than to be understood.

Violence constitutes a major contradiction in the sense that South Africa is definitely into a new dispensation and yet violence which was the essence of the old apartheid dispensation, is continuing.

4.1.1.3 A luta continua on the labour front

Many South Africans were taken by surprise (if not schocked) by the wave of strikes on the labor front immediately after the elections. South Africa saw the workers of Pick'n Pay, mine workers, municipal workers and media workers involved in forms of dispute with the bosses. South Africa saw the bosses and the police resorting to the same old highhanded and violent tactics of apartheid. South Africa also witnessed a new approach from the side of the government with the intervention of the State President, Nelson Mandela, and the Minister of Labour, Tito Mboweni. The latter two confirmed the right of workers to strike and called for mediation between the bosses and the workers. This study would want to suggest that at least the following elements seem to be emerging from the current wave of labor resistance. First, those workers who have voted the ANC into power in terms of their involvement in the tripartite alliance between the ANC, COSATU and the SACP, are saying: It is pay time. Seemingly no manner of repression or call for realism will deter them from saying so. Second, the workers are justified in arguing that the

new South Africa should also mean a new quality of life and a new standard of living for them. Third, capital is shocked by the present uprisings, because their expectation that the new government would create stability for investments to stream in and for exploitation to continue unhindered, has been devastated. Fourth, the signal sent to international capital is not that investors are not welcome in South Africa, but rather that they are most welcome, but not entirely on their own conditions. Perhaps the workers are affirming Suttner (1994:32) when he asserts: "...the new situation throws up the need to neutralise forces in the new international order which might aim to subvert South African independence, reconstruction and internal liberty".

4.1.1.4 New wine, old skins

Perhaps the most glaring contradiction in the political sphere is the continued fragmentation in all government departments in the face of a Government of National Unity and Regional Governments of Unity. The Education Departments and the Health Departments, for example, are still functioning as racially divided, separate entities. This has got rather serious political consequences. First, the promise that unity might be achieved by the beginning of 1995 is not very consoling to disgruntled and confused citizens on the ground. Second, some bureaucrats in the ethnically divided departments are likely to misuse the current state of affairs by either retarding movement towards unity or

by destabilising the processes. Third, the serious consequence for democratically elected and appointed ministers is that they may have political authority without financial and executive authority.

4.1.1.5 Neo-Liberalism versus transformation

Another major contradiction operating on the South African scene presently is between the tendency which is perhaps characteristic of liberal democracy, neo-liberalism and the consensus amongst progressive forces that the new South Africa needs to be transformed fundamentally. In the South African context a neo-liberal approach would be one which is premised on a number of simplistic assumptions like: the doors are open now, so why try to force them open; what is needed is a radical switch in paradigm from resistance to cooperation; under apartheid it might have been necessary to say "no", now is the time to say "yes"; what is needed now is stability; now is the time for reconciliation and nation building. The contradiction inherent in the neo-liberal approach is that on the one hand it cannot be accused of being anti-change. On the other hand, however, it fails to take seriously the existing power relationships. The latter is not at all surprising if it is taken into account that normally those in positions of power are likely to pursue a neo-

liberal stance.

Transformation, in contradistinction to neoliberalism, is about fundamental structural change. It is not about shifting the furniture around in the very same old building, but it is about reconstructing the building itself. Whereas neoliberalism is accommodative of Low Intensity Democracy (LID), transformation is about participatory democracy. According to an article *From Low Intensity Conflict to Low Intensity Democracy* (in TEP Update 7:1, March 1994:12-14), LID is a creation of the USA. It does encompass regular elections to a multi-party parliament, but it does not institute real change. It is a mechanism for keeping the existing power structures intact. From the perspective of the USA the LID contains mechanisms inhibiting fundamental social reform, ensuring the economic and cultural dominance of global capitalism. In essence then the LID is a form of procedural democracy in which elections are seen as an end in themselves. In opposition to LID is what the article calls substantial democracy. Substantial democracy sees elections as a means to consolidate the goals of the struggle for national liberation, like in South Africa. Substantial democracy is also called Participatory democracy. In South Africa a Participatory democracy would be one where forums like the National Education and Training Forum, the National Economic Forum and the National Housing Forum facilitate broad consultation and cooperation to realise, for example, the aims of the RDP. An extension of

Participatory democracy is "Direct democracy ": "This means self-empowerment and self-initiated action by organised forces on a variety of fronts, sometimes in support of the RDP and sometimes advancing local demands. Ordinary citizens must be able to exercise their rights, as individuals, who may or may not choose to belong to organisations, street committees or any other structures " (1994:29).

Mkhatshwa (in Venter 1993 :3) offers a very simple, but profound definition for a Participatory and Direct democracy when he contends:

Real democracy for me has its base in education, organisation, localised leadership and equally important, proper access to resources. The basic truth is that correct political consciousness is not enough - people also need money. Democracy is empty if people have no control over their daily lives. How can you have sovereignty if you have no resources? You need legal and constitutional reforms that can deal with the economic and social counterparts of the political principles of democracy in a way that ensure sovereignty resides in the people.

4.1.1.6 Racial capitalism versus non-racial capitalism versus Reconstruction and Development

Racial capitalism was the term coined by progressive theoreticians to define South Africa's Capitalism of a Special Type. Still one of the most profound attempts at explaining the term is that of Sebidi (in Mosala 1986: 1-35). Opting for what he calls the "Neglected Dialectic", Sebidi argues persuasively that the race and class analyses of the social formation in South Africa were not mutually exclusive, but mutually reinforcing. Basically racial capitalism would be a mixed and intertwined social formation between a racial oligarchy and capitalism. Generally anti-apartheid forces were agreed on this type of analysis of apartheid being a heinous system of racist oppression and capitalist exploitation, of black people being oppressed as a race and exploited as a class. However, there had always been difference of opinion when it came to strategy to transform the situation. Sebidi (in Mosala 1986:32) writes:

... there are those of us who believe that racial capitalism can be effectively combatted only on the basis of black solidarity, whereas others take the stand that it can be successfully fought only on the basis of forging trans-racial links and alliances with other people sympathetic to our cause.

Writing during the period between the De Klerk speech of 2 February 1990 and the April 1994 elections, Kunnie (in Balia 1993 :83) seems to be persisting with the type of analysis Sebidi is

offering, describing South Africa as "an historical paradise for racist capitalists". Kunnie entrenches the notion of racial capitalism when he uses expressions like South Africa being "a haven for capitalist exploitation of black people" and "capitalism's unholy alliance with the cancer of racism".

Sebidi, Kunnie and others can hardly be contradicted if they argue that capitalism in terms of its mode of production and the concomitant exploitation, still has a very strong race determinant. However, the notion of racial capitalism is reductionist in overlooking the following three objective realities. First, exploitation knows no colour. This is a way of saying that, irrespective of whatever contradictions there may be, the existence of a white working class cannot be denied. Second, seemingly some amongst the emerging black elite are quite comfortable with capitalism. More and more there is talk of exploitation of a special type. Third, there is a sense in which we also need to speak of sexist capitalism, indicating that black women are worse off than their male counterparts in the labor market.

It is interesting to note that essentially the analysis offered by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), confirms the notion of racial capitalism. In attempting to answer the question *Why do we need an RDP?*, the document states:

The economy was built on systematically enforced racial division in every sphere of our society. Rural areas have been divided into underdeveloped bantustans and well-developed, white-owned commercial farming areas. Towns and cities have been divided into townships without basic infrastructure for blacks and well resourced suburbs for whites. ([ANC] 1994:2)

Two more examples from the document must suffice. In the area of income distribution the existing inequalities evoke the following analysis from the document.

Our income distribution is racially distorted and ranks as one of the most unequal in the world - lavish wealth and abject poverty characterise our society ([ANC] 1993:2).

In the area of commerce and industry:

very large conglomerates dominated by whites control large parts of the economy. Cheap labour policies and employment segregation concentrated skills in white hands. Our workers are poorly equipped for the rapid changes taking place in the world economy ([ANC] 1993:2).

The analyses offered by Sebidi and Kunnie as well as the

quotations from the ANC RDP Document, whether reductionist or not, make clear the complexity of South African society. It makes clear above all "that there are a host of interests, on both sides of the racial divide" (in Friedman 1993 : 192).

4.1.1.7 Conclusion

Limited as the particular analysis may be, it shows some of the major contradictions which will now be summarised. First, violence constitutes a major contradiction in that those who are supposed to be liberated now, still suffer from selective violence. Second, events on the labour front are exposing the conflict of interests between the bosses and the workers. Three, a contradiction of major proportions is the one between the Government of National Unity and the continued existence of racially divided State Departments. Fourth, the neo-liberal expectation that all should return to normal now that the "open door utopia" has been achieved, versus the resolve of progressive forces to transform South African society fundamentally. Five, on the economic terrain there seems to be conflict between those who are hell-bound on maintaining racial capitalism, those who want to liberalise capitalism by roping in the black elite, a type of non-racial capitalism and finally those who want to restructure and democratise the economy in terms of the RDP.

If the contradictions are at all taken seriously, then maybe what

Pityana (1994:7) says about the urgent need for moral reconstruction, is quite applicable here:

Times have changed. We now live in a post-apartheid South Africa, but that is not the same as a new South Africa. Our society is different, but it is not yet a new society. What we need is a society with new values, a new moral community.

4.1.2. Universality

The attempt at analysis of the universal context will even be more limited than the particular one. It can only be done in terms of some very broad trends. The guiding principle here is what has become known as the "New World Order" (NWO). What is the NWO? The witnesses called in to help answer this question are by no means unbiased. They are what Gramsci (1980:84-86) would call "organic intellectuals". To elaborate a bit on Gramsci's understanding of organic intellectuals. Gramsci distinguishes between two categories of intellectuals. First, the category of intellectuals who are organically linked to what he calls a fundamental social class or group. Second, the category of intellectuals called traditional intellectuals by Gramsci. Gramsci argues that the intellectuals are not an autonomous, social group, but every social group in society forms its own intellectuals to provide leadership and unity to the ruling

class. These are the organic intellectuals who are closely linked to the ruling class and its productive function. The traditional intellectuals are those who have been formed in the preceding society by those who ruled then. The distinct role of the organic intellectuals is to assist in extending the *hegemony* or political influence of the ruling class by taking up leadership positions and by promoting the development of society. In the process they establish alliances with the traditional intellectuals, starting a process for the assimilation of the traditional intellectuals. In this way a new unity of intellectuals emerges, linked to the ruling class, with the political party as central and fundamental agent of unity.

Quite illuminating is the way in which West (1988:3-12) typifies Martin Luther King as organic intellectual. He asserts:

Martin Luther King, Jr., was the most significant and successful *organic intellectual* in American history. Never before in our past has a figure outside of elected public office linked the life of the mind to social change with such moral persuasiveness and political effectiveness.

Organic intellectuals are those who analyse the NWO from the perspective of the poor and the working class. Cronin (1993:43) traces the origin of the concept NWO back to a speech made in 1989 by President Bush. On the South African scene Minister of

Foreign Affairs under the apartheid regime, Pik Botha, was about the first South African politician to use the concept NWO quite liberally and quite positively. He never spelled out clearly what he meant by NWO.

Leftist thinkers and analysts like the already mentioned Cronin, Suttner and Turok have done some thinking on "Trends in the new world order" (Suttner 1994:25-32). The importance of their reflection lies in the attempt to indicate some implications for South Africa. Apart from them, Jose Maria Vigil (1994:1-7), a Jesuit priest from Nicaragua shall also be called in as witness, interpreting the dawn of the NWO for the Central and Latin American setting. His discussion of the NWO takes place within the context of the very pertinent question: "What remains of the option for the poor?" The discussion on trends in the NWO draws for its structure fairly liberally on Suttner's article already referred to. Before drawing the contours of the emerging NWO, Suttner discusses the general characteristics of the collapse of the "Old World Order" (OWO). He identifies the collapse of socialism in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union as the most significant feature, the collapse meaning that the cold war had been "won" by the West. The ideological consequence of this is the kind of capitalist triumphalism, proclaiming the "end of history". It is this kind of triumphalism that has evoked the following response from Cronin (1993:43): "On the left...we have been suffering from an enormous inferiority complex these past

years. The rhetoric of the 'new world order' seemed irresistible".

The ideas expressed by Suttner on the collapse of the OWO are confirmed by Vigil (1994). In a statement of the "facts" and quite significantly under the heading "Starting with Reality", Vigil tabulates five indicators of the collapse of the OWO. First, the ending of the era of the cold war means that we have reached a unipolar world. (Below it will be shown how Cronin differs from Vigil on the unipolarity of the world.) Second, the cycle of anti-imperial revolutions has ended. Suttner (1994:27) speaks of the crises of progressive third world states and concludes that the governments of Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Congo, Malagasy Republic, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Grenada, Peru and Bolivia who were hailed as revolutionary, are either in crisis or no more. Third, socialism has crumbled; outside of capitalism there is no salvation. Fourth, we have reached the end point of history. Fifth, "That which was experienced in the past decades was an ideological dream, a revolutionary romanticism devoid of foundation which at this juncture has been shown to be simply unfeasible".

In typical dialectical fashion the collapse of the OWO marks the dawn of the NWO. The measure of scepticism about the NWO, however, surfaces, for example, in the sub-title of Cronin's (1993:43) article *The empire's new clothes*. The sub-title poses

the urgent question: "Why has it taken so long to figure out that the 'new world order' is exactly the same as the old one?" It is not my idea to elaborate on this question any further here, except to say that the NWO is nothing but a logical consequence of the OWO.

Hopefully this has set the scene now for a look at the contours Suttner offers for the NWO. He indicates three. First, increasing militarism. The point made by Suttner is that the removal of the Soviet Union as a counterweight to American aggressive designs, saw an increase in the deployment of military force. He cites the examples of Iraq, Panama and Somalia and one could add Haiti where there have been imperialist military interventions. Suttner points out how these took place under the guise of the United Nations (UN). Second, the United States capture of UN and other international institutions. The point here is, now that the balance of power between the US and the Soviet Union in the UN has fallen away, the UN has virtually been captured by the US. The latter is more and more using the UN as a cover for its own military escapades. Concludes Cronin (1993:44): "The political and military dominance of the US has certainly made our world more unipolar than it has been since Queen Victoria." Third, economic policies are being dictated to the South and the former socialist Eastern Europe. Specific reference is made to the imposition of a universal conception of economic development and growth by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Turok (in Venter

1993) puts the hegemony of institutions like the IMF and World Bank into perspective when he writes:

In the 1970's, commercial banks, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank induced southern governments to borrow freely, leading to rapid build-up of debt. Soon the massive scale of this misfortune became evident as interest was added to capital, bringing severe payment problems. The scale of the debt came to pose a near-fatal threat to the survival of US banks and the international banking system. The IMF and World Bank stepped in and took control of the whole debt crisis, to the point where they are now in charge of over half the Third World's official debt.

It is this kind of stranglehold which enables the IMF to impose economic policies. It is through institutions like the IMF that the US seeks to dominate the world economically.

Cronin (1993:44) argues, however, that the global economic scene is more complex than a straightforward US domination. This is where he differs from Vigil who categorically declares the world unipolar. Cronin asserts that the US economy has not emerged from the Cold War unscathed. Suttner (1994:29) agrees when he contends: "...despite its cold war victory, the US itself has serious internal structural problems of both a social and

economic kind. It has not, therefore, been able to take full advantage of its new ascendancy". A compounding factor for the US is the economic challenge from Germany and Japan, both of whom have been unfettered by major arms spending. It is in this sense that economically, the world is multi-polar.

An important aspect of the analyses offered by Cronin and Suttner, is the indications of opposition to the NWO. Cronin makes the following, somewhat general statement about such opposition, when he writes: "Around the globe, people are challenging the hypocrisy and moral standing of the 'new world order'". In concretising the opposition to the NWO, Cronin refers to the collapse of several Latin American governments due to popular struggles against the imposition of neoliberal economics. He also cites the example of Uruguay where a referendum was held on whether to proceed with privatisation and where seventy percent of voters said no. Suttner (1994:30) cites the examples of the recent eviction of the Brazilian and Peruvian presidents over corruption which was linked to their privatisation policies. He also mentions, inter alia, the very significant formation of the *Sao Paulo Forum of left groupings* of Latin America and the Caribbean. In Eastern Europe there is growing mass rejection of the reimposition of capitalism. According to Suttner the political consequence of this was "a resurgence of support for reconstituted left/communist forces in countries like Lithuania, Poland, Russia and in the eastern parts of Germany".

Quite clearly the opposition to the NWO is not confined to Latin America, Eastern Europe and to a lesser extent Africa, but is emerging from within the major imperialist countries. So, for example have recent municipal elections in Germany and Italy, seen some impressive performances by left-wing parties.

4.1.3. Conclusion

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, broad and general as it may be and drawing as it does from only three analysts, it would still be fair to conclude as follows: The global context is, amongst others, characterised by the contradiction between the seemingly irresistible rhetoric of the NWO and its rather hegemonic effect on the one hand and the recovery of the left from its inferiority complex (Cronin), manifested in an ever growing resistance against the NWO globally on the other hand. In a sense the contradiction between the NWO and the vehement resistance against it, equals the contradiction between two philosophical paradigms: the Enlightenment paradigm and the Post-modern paradigm. The NWO could be seen as the most logical consequence of the Enlightenment and its reductionism. The "Enlightenment's elevation of reason as the only faculty by means of which humans can arrive at knowledge and insight" (Bosch 1991:352), has seemingly made place in the NWO for another form of reductionism: a unipolar world where capitalism is triumphant and the US reigns supreme. The NWO must therefore be seen as an

attempt by some to hang on to the Enlightenment paradigm, in spite of signs from all quarters that it is breaking up (1991:349). Does the breaking up of the Enlightenment paradigm leave the world in a philosophical vacuum? According to Bosch (:349) "one more paradigm would follow, which, ...I am calling the 'postmodern' paradigm".

4.1.4 One more paradigm

Nowhere does Bosch attempt an omnibus type of definition of postmodernism. What he offers is a description of the new paradigm in terms of the challenges it poses to the famous characteristics of the Enlightenment. This is not the place to offer an in-depth discussion of the seven major characteristics Bosch deals with. For the purposes of this study reference shall be made to the epistemological structure of the Enlightenment and to the subject-object scheme.

The epistemological structure of the Enlightenment refers to the tenet whereby knowledge can only be arrived at through reason. This is challenged by the postmodern insistence upon the expansion of rationality. Bosch (1991:353) suggests two distinct ways of expanding rationality. First, the recognition that language cannot be absolutely accurate. This simply means that nothing, neither scientific laws, nor theological truths can be defined in the way that the Enlightenment understood

"definition". Second, the rehabilitation of metaphor, symbol, ritual, sign and myth. Bosch attributes the upsurge of interest in narrative theology as well as other forms of nonconceptual theologising to the aforementioned rehabilitation.

The subject-object scheme of the Enlightenment refers to "the dominance over and objectification of nature and the subjecting of the physical world to the human mind and will" (Bosch 1991:355). Bosch points out how this scheme had disastrous consequences for humans and ecology. For humans it had the consequence of first being replaced by machines and then becoming the slaves of the machines. For ecology it meant death. The reorientation introduced by the postmodern paradigm to challenge the subject-object scheme, is well formulated by Bosch (1991:355) when he writes:

One should, again, see oneself as a child of Mother Earth and as sister and brother to other human beings. One should think holistically, rather than analytically, emphasize togetherness rather than distance, break through the dualism of mind and body, subject and object...

Despite some very profound tenets of the postmodern paradigm, as indicated above, there is some suspicion in the Third World, about yet another "intellectual import from the North" (Vigil 1994:2). Elaborating on the reasons why Third World people react

negatively to postmodernism, which is in any case not known by that name in the South, Vigil asserts that it is "threatening to enslave us". He goes on to describe the general spirit of despondency as follows:

Here also, as has happened in the intellectual world of modern times, a process of disenchantment and disillusionment has taken place. Here also people have ceased believing in progress, not classical modern "progress", but rather progress as the capacity of humanity to take control of history, or more concretely, the capacity to overcome age-old injustice and poverty. The most dizzying euphoria has been replaced by the worst disenchantment: there is no way out.

4.1.5 Conclusion

On the basis of this all-too-brief reflection on the postmodern paradigm the following conclusion may be reached: There are indications that the fanaticism about the NWO relates to the hanging onto the Enlightenment paradigm for as long as possible. There is, however, not only resistance against the NWO, but also the Enlightenment paradigm is forcefully challenged by the postmodern one in terms of its very characteristics. Already there is talk of "the dialectic of postmodernism" in the sense that some are embracing it for its "neo-liberating" effect and

others are very suspicious of it for its enslaving effect.

4.2 Hermeneutics

In the dialogue with the World Mission Conferences, an attempt was undertaken to show to what extent their theological reflection or interpretation had been informed by context analysis. This research has shown with a reasonable amount of clarity that the majority of conferences were either implicitly or explicitly informed by global trends or by the immediate context of each conference. It has been established also that there is an epistemological line of demarcation between the pre- and the post-1960 conferences. The pre-1960 conferences were still gripped by the Enlightenment understanding of knowledge as exclusively deriving from the faculty of reason. That explains why even reflections on social, political, economic and cultural matters, were rational constructs rather than reflections on the experiences of people. The situation is significantly different with the post-1960 conferences. The idea of an epistemological break has already been hinted at. The fact remains that the post-1960 conferences were quite explicitly informed by context analysis as far as their theological understanding was concerned. If one were to put it differently, the conferences from Mexico City (1963) to San Antonio (1989), understood, despite all deficiencies there may be, hermeneutics to be the theological or missiological interpretation of the text of the context as well

who have extraordinary and supernatural experiences of a highly emotional type.

None of the two approaches is to be followed here. An attempt shall instead be made to take seriously the paradigm switch that has taken place in Old Testament scholarship whereby studies on the prophets are of a sociological nature. Deist (in Fritz 1989) alludes to this switch in paradigm with specific reference to South Africa. In terms of the new paradigm the prophets or prophecy is understood more in terms of social realities. Since some detailed reference has already been made to Deist in Chapter 2 of this study, one very fundamental question which he poses, must suffice here, albeit in a slightly amended fashion: What are the material conditions under which people have to live and what prompts the prophetic community to speak out?

The expertise of Old Testament scholars like Brueggemann, Gottwald, Mosala and Wilson will be called in to assist in the attempt at answering the aforementioned question. For the New Testament the experts are limited to Bosch and Segundo.

4.2.1.1 Walter Brueggemann

In contradicting the rather reductionist view about the prophet Jeremiah as being preoccupied with internal spiritual life or individual religion, Brueggemann (in Mays and Achtemeier

1987:121) writes:

To the contrary, it is clear that Jeremiah is destined (or predestined? cf. Jer.1:5) to be a public man, preoccupied with public events, responsive to them, and convinced that those public events are the ways in which Yahweh is having his say with his creation and with Israel.

Paramount for this study is the way in which Brueggemann works out the social involvement of Jeremiah. What picture is emerging? Are we at all justified to see Jeremiah as an ordinary human being who had been very sensitive and responsive to his social context? Brueggemann (in Mays and Achtemeier 1987:122-125) offers five observations about Jeremiah's public discernment of his prophetic role. First, citing two very powerful examples, i.e. chapters 36 and 37:16-21, Brueggemann shows how what he calls the "word of disclosure given by Jeremiah", was aimed at public figures and public issues. The importance for Brueggemann of the word directed at the royal leadership in chapters 36 and 37, is that it "delegitimizes royal claims to reality and presents an alternative reality that is unwelcome to the rulers of this age". Second, citing chapter 7, Brueggemann shows how Jeremiah understands public history as an arena of God's free activity. In chapter 7 the temple, rather than being a vehicle for God's presence in the world, is exposed as a fraudulent form of escape for the special interests which practice social oppression.

Brueggemann concludes: "Jeremiah's strictures against the temple provide one of the most radical and penetrating criticisms of religion as a form of social control". Third, in what Brueggemann calls "the most striking aspect of Jeremiah's public life", he shows how the prophet takes sides in unambiguous terms in the Babylonian question. Jeremiah did not side with either the pro-Egyptian group who wanted to seek help from Egypt against the Babylonian threat, or those who sought refuge in a quiet faith and sure confidence. In stunning fashion Jeremiah saw Babylon as the wave of the future who would surely triumph. For him the perceived threat was the real hope. Fourth, citing Jeremiah's speech about Nebuchadrezzar in chapters 25:9 and 27:6, Brueggemann indicates the linkage between Yahweh's resolute will and the public realities of Judah. Jeremiah concretely affirms Nebuchadrezzar as Yahweh's servant. Fifth, citing chapter 44:11-30, Brueggemann shows the very conflictual nature of Jeremiah's public life. The prophet was frequently in conflict with the pro-Egyptian group.

On the issue of conflict in the life of Jeremiah, Brueggemann argues very convincingly that the conflict is not accidental or incidental because of wrong strategy or insensitivity or about marginal matters. On the contrary, "conflict is definitional of Jeremiah's call. The promise linked to his call is that he will be 'against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land. They will fight against you'" (1:18). There

is a sense in which the conflict between Jeremiah and others could be seen as an ideological conflict if ideology in its simplest form is understood to be the way in which people perceive of reality, the images of reality they handle. This is confirmed by Brueggemann when he writes:

The conflict occurs because Jeremiah has been given a vision of reality and a word about reality that is deeply at odds with the vision of reality held by his contemporaries, and these two visions can in no way be accommodated to each other.

4.2.1.2 N.K.Gottwald

With his concept of political prophecy applied to international relations, Gottwald (1964:349-387) convincingly showed how the prophets and their message, their relationship to God and to their community, could not be understood outside of their social context. In his conclusion (:388-392) to an in-depth discussion on political prophecy, prophetic political consciousness and prophetic models for international relationships, he offers four points, indicating the social-political location of prophecy. Not all four theses will be discussed here, but only the one referring to the knowledge the prophets had about what Gottwald (:388) calls power realities. All indications are that the prophets must have had a very good sense of analysis and that

they had been familiar with current events. Gottwald consequently contends:

... the prophetic understanding of the power realities of the ancient world was impressive. When they advised against alliances they were well informed about the political and military prospects. When they foretold the defeat of this or that nation their threats were normally fulfilled. Many oracles previously thought to be inserted by later editors can now be explained within the life-times of the original prophets.

The example of Jeremiah's oracle against Kedar in 49:28-33 and Elam in 49:34-39, respectively belonging to 599 BCE and 596 BCE, is cited by Gottwald.

4.2.1.3 I.J.Mosala

As one of the foremost exponents of Black Theology, not only in South Africa, but also worldwide, Mosala has made a fine contribution to Old Testament scholarship with his materialist reading of the prophets. Mosala (1989:103) explains why he resorts to a materialist method:

I used a materialist method to delineate the struggles inherent in black history and culture; I will use a similar

method to connect us with the struggles behind and in the text of the Bible.

Obviously Mosala is not original in using this kind of method. He has been influenced by the likes of Gottwald, Brueggemann and Clevenot who all take as their starting point for reading the Biblical text, in one form or another, a cultic-ideological approach. What is however, original and creative is the way in which Mosala appropriates the method to Black Theology.

A materialist approach to the Bible or to Black Theology would, according to Mosala, entail the following three aspects. First, an inquiry into the mode of production. Second, an inquiry into the constellation of classes necessitated by the mode of production. Third, an inquiry into the ideological manifestations arising out of that mode of production. Obviously the three points are not mentioned with a view to any sort of in-depth discussion of Mosala. Also, this is not the place for seriously dealing with some fundamental criticisms raised against Mosala's approach by Bosch (1991b:87-88), for example.

For purposes of this study a very brief look at how Mosala reads Micah and the black struggle must suffice. His materialist reading of Micah brings Mosala to the contention that the Israelite monarchical system was based on a tributary mode of production, meaning that tributes had to be paid in order to

extract surplusses. The basic means of production was the land which was communally owned. However, the generation of surplusses as alluded to above, set in motion the formation of classes and states. Mosala elaborates on how in the Judah of the eighth century BCE, there was considerable growth, development and prosperity. In terms of his materialist reading of the period mentioned, Mosala states the dialectical converse side of the coin, namely the underdevelopment of the majority of the populations of Israel and Judah. A major aspect of Mosala's reconstruction of the socio-political and economic setting of Judah in the eighth century BCE, is the way in which he works out the changes in the social relations of production during the monarchy. It is not the idea to go into the factors that precipitated the changes, except to say that the changes led to a tributary social formation. Mosala explains in some detail:

The class structure of this formation was characterized by a social division of labor resulting in antagonistic social relations of production, exchange, and distribution. At the top of the class structure of the monarchy was the royal aristocracy made up of the king and nobility, which consisted of the king's sons and their wives. Next to the royal aristocracy, but within the ruling class, were the *sarim* (chiefs or governors); the *horim* (nonroyal nobility); the *nedibim* (members of the houses of assembly by virtue of their wealth and power, which derived from their land

In his reflection on the social location of prophets, Wilson (1964:74-76), distinguishes between central prophets and peripheral prophets, to identify the social standing of prophets. Central prophets were those who carried out their activities close to the centers of power and peripheral prophets were those far removed from the centers of power. The former were performing important religious functions and by virtue of that they enjoyed social prestige and political power. The latter on the other hand had almost no authority and very little status or political power.

The basic thrust of Wilson's argument is that the social location of a prophet would necessarily inform prophecy. Indeed, "Prophecy can have a variety of different social functions, but in general a given prophet's functions are determined by his social location" (:75). Very concisely and yet very convincingly, Wilson shows how what central prophets and peripheral prophets set out to achieve, is strongly informed by their social location. He contends that central prophecy is more concerned about the orderly functioning of the existing social system. To the contrary, peripheral prophecy is interested in rapid social change. It has a concern for the radical transformation of social institutions and the concomitant termination of social repression.

4.2.1.5 Old Testament conclusion

What conclusion can one come to regarding the theme of my study on the basis of this all-too-brief survey of the thinking of scholars of the prophets such as Brueggemann, Gottwald, Mosala and Wilson? Perhaps the survey sheds light on one important aspect of prophecy, namely that it is not ethereal and timeless, but rather bound to a particular social context. Prophecy emanates from the fact that prophets are students of their social environment in terms of public figures and public issues (Brueggemann), international relations (Gottwald), class struggles (Mosala), and their own social location (Wilson). Prophecy also emanates from the fact that prophets are commissioned to speak a word, God's word to their context. Hence, prophecy is borne out of the interaction between a particular social context and the Word of God. Smith (1989:150) puts it differently when he writes:

Each prophet lived at a particular historical time, understood the socio-cultural institutions of that day in a particular way and functioned within that society as a messenger of God. Their knowledge of reality was firmly embedded in both the institutional patterns of their time and the word of the Lord that they received.

The focus now shifts to the New Testament where a discussion of Bosch and Segundo must suffice. This may be seen as an arbitrary choice, but in terms of what is meant to be achieved, even

limiting the survey to Bosch and Segundo may prove to be more than ample. Is there any evidence in the New Testament confirming the Old Testament understanding of prophecy as grounded in a particular social context?

4.2.1.6 D.J.Bosch

In his exploration of what he calls the "Lukan missionary paradigm", Bosch (1991:84-122) develops some helpful ideas for an understanding of prophecy as embedded in a specific social context. Of special importance here is what Bosch does with the centrality of the poor in Luke's gospel. First, on the basis of sound Biblical exegesis, he shows how a spiritualisation of the poor or poverty in Luke would be totally unwarranted. Both are social categories, giving rise to profound prophecies in Luke. "It is common knowledge", says Bosch (:98) "that Luke has a particular interest in the poor and other marginalized groups". On the basis of examples, which are unique to Luke, Bosch goes on to indicate Luke's consistent bias towards the poor. Bosch's examples are the following: the beatitude of the poor and the woe-saying on the rich in 6:20,24, the parable of the rich fool in 12:16-21, the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus in 16:19-31 and the narrative of Zacchaeus in 19:1-10. Added to this is the occurrence of the term *ptochos* ("poor") ten times in Luke. It is within this framework that the prophecy in 4:18f. should be understood. It is a prophecy in the form of a "programmatic

statement concerning his (Jesus's) mission to reverse the destiny of the poor"(100). The relevant prophecy is quoted here in full from the NIV translation of the Bible.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

As a quotation from Isaiah 61:1f, this manifesto of Jesus is grounded firmly in the prophetic tradition. According to Bosch the prophecy of Isaiah 61 goes back to shortly after the Babylonian exile and was addressed to disappointed Jews to encourage them by assuring them that the Jubilee would dawn upon them. In Luke 4, the prophecy is presented as good news to prisoners, the blind and the oppressed, all subsumed under "the poor", according to Bosch. Paramount for this study is the insertion of a phrase from Isaiah 58:6 by Luke. Bosch (:100) draws attention to this by indicating how Luke inserted the phrase "to let the oppressed go free" between Isaiah 61:1 and 61:2. He goes on to comment:

The phrase "to let the oppressed go free" has a distinctly *social* profile in Isaiah 58. It stands in the context of prophetic criticism of social discrepancies in Judah, of

the exploitation of the poor by the rich.

The prophecy about freedom for the oppressed and the breaking through of the Jubilee, was informed by this very distinct social context. According to Bosch (:101) it is the same type of context which is reflected in Nehemiah 5. There

we are told of poor Jews who, in order to pay the taxes levied by the Persian king, had to mortgage their vineyards and homes and even sell their children into slavery to rich fellow-Jews who grasped the opportunity to capitalize on the predicament of the poor.

Luke's prophecy situates Jesus squarely in the prophetic tradition. Though it is not easy to reconstruct what the specific prophecy meant to Jesus, this study is in total agreement with Bosch when he contends that there can be no denial of the fact that Jesus announced and exerted himself for fundamental changes.

4.2.1.7 Segundo

For his exploration of the "Central Proclamation of Jesus", Segundo (1985:86-103) also takes the Gospel of Luke as his starting point. He indicates how in the proclamation of Jesus in Luke 7:22-23, the following notions are closely associated: kingdom, poor, and good news. This he calls the prophetic content

of Jesus' proclamation. The relevance for this study of what Segundo calls a "meaning circle", i.e. the intrinsic relationship between the kingdom, the poor, and the good news, is the political nature of the terms. Quite interestingly Segundo does not use the term political in opposition to religious. To the contrary, " they are all the more crucially political precisely insofar as their underlying motivations are religious" (:88). Segundo goes on to explain the dialectic of the political and the religious in very simple terms, saying:

Jesus' listeners understood one thing perfectly : while the force behind the kingdom (or those poor) was the force of God, the reality of the kingdom was something to be achieved on earth, so that society as a whole would reflect the will of God: " Thy *kingdom* come. Thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven".

Segundo advances some convincing arguments to show that Jesus must have been aware of the double meaning of the term kingdom. This is, however, not the place to go into such arguments, except to say that Segundo advances them not to indicate the precedence of the political over the religious, but rather to argue that they are not contradictory.

Having established this, prophecy for Segundo is about how the political content of the coming kingdom concretely threatened the

structural situation of the authorities of Jesus's context. It is in examining the relationship between the kingdom and the poor, that Segundo actually exposes the authentically political nature of the kingdom, in the following sense. The good news of the kingdom is not meant for just everybody. There are certain designated groups for whom it is meant. The dividing line of the kingdom is of a socio-political nature, it runs between the poor and the rich. Once again, this is not the place to go into all manner of argument about what Segundo is offering to prove his point. Suffice it to say that clearly the kingdom-poor-good news prophecy of the gospel can only be understood in terms of its concrete political and social context.

4.2.1.8 New Testament conclusion

This very brief survey of Bosch and Segundo confirms the Old Testament understanding of prophecy as embedded in a particular social context. In the Gospel of Luke, the particular context refers especially to that of the poor for whom the kingdom was destined. Once more, prophecy is created on the cutting edge between the situation of the poor and the Word of God. In fact, prophecy is language about a vision or visions, metaphors like Jubilee and good news, speaking to a specific context, contradicting that context.

4.2.2 Towards a theology of the signs of the times

The contention of this study is that the notion of Mission as Prophecy would be incomplete without the notion of reading the signs of the times. The question arises, however, whether the idea of reading the signs of the times is merely a slogan or whether it can be developed into a full-blown theology. The discussion will therefore be conducted along the following lines. First, it will be shown that the concept *signs of the times* is more than a slogan. Taking its cue from Bosch (1992:247-266), this study will indicate, albeit rather briefly, some contours for a *theology of the signs of the times*. Second, an attempt will then be made to identify signs in terms of both the particular context and the universal context. This will be done with the help of exponents of Liberation Theology. Third, this section will be concluded by a thesis spelling out what the reading of the signs of the times could mean in Mission as Prophecy.

4.2.2 Towards a theology of the signs of the times

Perhaps the most extensive treatise on this topic recently, is the article by Bosch (1992) with the very significant title of *A theology of "the signs of the times"*. In it Bosch develops five points under the heading The historical nature of the faith, which could be seen as contours of a theology of the signs of the times.

Before exploring these points as stated by Bosch, it is

necessary to say that Bosch himself borrows the idea of a theology of the signs of the times from Catholic theology. There the term signs of the times, has gained currency especially since the nineteen sixties when Pope John XXIII and different Catholic documents began to use the term rather positively. It is in his attempt to establish the basic thrust of the Catholic way of theologising in terms of the hermeneutic of the *signs of the times*, that Bosch develops the following contours.

First, Bosch seems to be suggesting that the signs of the times theology constitutes a shift in the Catholic assessment of the world and of history. Previously it had been almost entirely negative. The signs of the times notion represents a new approach which is well captured by what Pope John XXIII (quoted by Bosch 1992:253) said at Vatican II:

In the daily exercise of Our pastoral office, it sometimes happens that We hear opinions which disturb Us - opinions expressed by people who, though fired with a commendable zeal for religion, are lacking in sufficient prudence and judgment in their evaluation of events. They can see nothing but calamity and disaster in the present state of the world. They say over and over that this modern age of ours ... is definitely deteriorating ... We feel that We must disagree with these prophets of doom, who are always forecasting worse disasters, as though the end of the world

were at hand.

The consequences of the new approach for the Roman Catholic Church was a switch from dealing only with the internal structure of the Church to an outward-looking attitude.

Second, the new approach led to an understanding of history as one. This meant overcoming the dichotomy between salvation history and secular history. It meant an interpretation of salvation history not as a different history from secular history, but as a theological perspective on history. Hence, discerning the signs of the times would mean discerning God at work in the one history.

Third, the new approach to history led to a new anthropology of also looking for what is good in humanity.

Fourth, the activity of discerning the signs of the times is not an exercise of turning secular history into salvation history. Put differently, a reading of the signs of the times is not a pious interpretation of world events, but rather an attempt to see political, social and economic events for what they are, i.e. human events.

Fifth, it therefore follows that hermeneutically the human context becomes an indispensable source of theology. Nolan

(1988:20,22) makes some illuminating statements about this when he writes:

The process we call reading the signs of the times is the process of discovering the religious significance of public events, which means discerning, differentiating and interpreting them in relation to God.

If I understand Bosch correctly, it would be fair to reach the following conclusion. The notion of the signs of the times is more than a slogan. It is a creative attempt to overcome the dichotomy between secular history and salvation history. It is a theological method which takes seriously the context of people as a source of theology.

4.2.2.1 Identifying the signs of the times: The particular context

The theological notion of the *signs of the times* gained currency in South Africa through the Institute of Contextual Theology, specifically through the Kairos Document of 1985. In developing a prophetic theology, the KD (4.1) sees as the first task for such a theology "an attempt at social analysis or what Jesus would call 'reading the signs of the times' (Mt 16:3) or 'interpreting this KAIROS' (Lk. 12:53)".

The major sign with which the KD concerns itself, is the crisis of and the crisis for apartheid. The KD interprets the signs of the times therefore in terms of a system created by human beings and in terms of human activity either in favour of or against apartheid. As a creative attempt to save the Christian faith in South Africa, the document makes clear the indivisibility of history. As a new way of doing theology in South Africa, it opens up exciting possibilities for taking seriously the struggle of the oppressed as an important source of theology.

The very fresh understanding of the *signs of the times* in terms of human events is also reflected in documents of the ICT that would follow after the KD. The release of Mandela after twenty seven years of imprisonment, is identified as a major sign of the times in South Africa ([ICT]1990). In its document *Violence: the new kairos*, the ICT suggests violence to be a sign of the times by posing the urgent question: "Is this what we have come to in South Africa ? Are these the signs of our time?" (11).

If one were to look for signs of the times after the April 1994 elections in South Africa, the following could be suggested. Violence still constitutes a kairos in South Africa, irrespective of the causes and nature of such violence. The ascendancy of Mandela to the Presidency of South Africa and the emergence of a democratically elected government of National Unity, are in themselves major signs of the times. However, these events have

led to the constitution of new kairoi: the huge gap between rich and poor, the tussle between the working class and capital, a crisis for non-racialism, the contradiction between the Government of National Unity and racially divided State Departments. As positive as the Presidency of Mandela and the existence of the Government of National Unity, is the new hope that the RDP has brought to the poor. As an imaginative program for social and economic reconstruction the RDP should rate as one of the profoundest signs of the times. Nolan (1994:4-5) rightfully offers an extremely positive prophetic theological assessment of the RDP. He does not only regard the RDP as the most comprehensive plan to overcome poverty, but he appraises its concern for the poor very positively. "The RDP", he says "is good news for the poor, or at least it has the potential of becoming good news for the poor". About the challenge that the RDP poses to the church, Nolan writes, "The churches participated in the struggle against apartheid; the challenge now is to participate in the struggle against poverty".

The challenge as spelled out by Nolan, says something about the theological role of the church in post-apartheid South Africa. In the struggle against apartheid, theology was understood to be critical reflection on the praxis of liberation. In a sense a new praxis, i.e. the praxis of reconstruction, has come. Theology, prophetic theology more specifically, should now be critical reflection on the praxis of reconstruction. To conclude with

Nolan, this new theological role calls upon the church to provide the following incentives: the very powerful motivation of faith and love of neighbour, compassion and justice for the poor, a spirit of self-sacrifice and a conscience about theft, corruption and greed.

With the emerging of a black elite in South Africa and the concomitant absorption of more and more black people into the capitalist system, the famous Melbourne adagium of a preferential option for the poor, may take on new meaning in the South African context.

4.2.2.2 .Identifying the signs of the times: The universal context

One of the major signs of the 1990s on the international scene, is the contradiction between the unipolarity of the world and the process of democratisation. Once again, the unipolarity of the world refers to the emergence of the US as the only superpower and capitalism as the only global economic system. This, in a nutshell, constitutes the NWO. What also constitutes the NWO, and this is where the contradiction comes in, is the global march to democracy, albeit a limited form of democracy. A hopeful sign is in any case the growing resistance against the NWO which is a euphemism for the US policing the world under the guise of the UN.

In identifying the above as signs of our times, there is obviously a need to take seriously what Bosch (1992) calls "the ambiguity of the 'signs of the times' terminology". In quoting a number of examples Bosch shows how an event or development on the global scene could at one stage be regarded as a sign of the times, only to be discarded as a counter-sign at a later stage. The example which is most relevant to this study, is a reference to the 1928 Jerusalem Conference, where secularism was viewed as a threat to Christianity and the world. The idea of an alliance of all religions against secularism emerged. This very negative assessment of secularism changed dramatically when theologians started to embrace it as a positive sign. One can add to this the dialectical way in which The Mexico City Conference (1963) attempted to interpret, notably, not secularism, but secularisation.

The Edinburgh Conference (1910) illustrates how easily a situation could be misread. The kairos for Edinburgh was not the immanent danger of a World War, but the prospect of evangelising the world. The accentuation of the prophetic ministry of Jesus at Tambaram (1938), is perhaps an indication of the ability of the Conference to read the signs of the times. Tambaram (Findings and Recommendations:20) clearly identified the "new paganism" and the new "national gods". These were Nazism, national-socialism and the dictatorships of Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany. These were national gods of race and class (:185). By

emphasising the prophetic ministry of Christ, Tambaram was actually entering into a polemic with the false prophets of the time.

At Whitby (1947) the kairos metaphor was used by Baillie (:87) in his reflection on the preaching of Christ. The kairos of Jesus's times was an approaching event or situation which was so decisive that it demanded a decision. It was the approaching reign of God for which the prophets had taught people to wait. In the KD (17) the notion of a kairos is also traced back to Jesus where he told the Pharisees and Sadducees to read the signs of the times (Mt.16:3) or to interpret the kairos (Lk.12:56).

At Willingen (1952) the notion of reading or discerning the signs of the times appeared in a rather fine way in a paper on The Missionary Calling of the Church (Willingen:192). The statement makes clear that signs could be either negative or positive. They need to be interpreted dialectically and could consequently be signs of "darkness and confusion" or "sure signs of God's sovereign rule". The understanding of the signs as human events and developments like the "great events of the day" or "vast enlargements of human knowledge" or more concretely, "mighty political and social movements", is confirmed here.

At the Ghana Conference (1958) the idea of discerning the particular hour was introduced by McKay (1958:). According

to McKay, discernment of the particular hour was needed to grasp the tragic tensions of the present time. He offered two ways of discernment, namely discernment in terms of an historical perspective and discernment in terms of the apocalyptic significance of events.

At Mexico City the term *kairos* was used by Sapsejian (Mexico City 1963:44) in connection with the encounter between the Church and the world in the country of Brazil. He identified this encounter as a "true *kairos*". The outstanding feature of Mexico City in this context, however, remains the way in which secularisation was understood. Clearly it was seen as a major sign of the times even without stating it *expressis verbis*.

The type of social analysis done at Bangkok (1973) could be seen as a reading of the signs of the times. Indeed, in terms of the KD (17) the sociological notion of social analysis and the theological notion of reading the signs of the times are one and the same exercise.

At Melbourne (1980) two examples emerged of how the concept of discerning the signs of the times was used. First, in his presentation Nababan (Melbourne:1-5) identified the dreams and struggles of people as signs of the times, saying,

as we discern the signs of the times in our country we see

that the whole world is full of dreams and struggles for freedom and liberation. We notice the growing yearning of humanity in general for a common life based on justice and well-being. We witness the birth of freedom movements from foreign oppression, liberation from poverty, from economic and political oppressions.

In the Conclusions to the Section 2 report of Melbourne (:192), the task of discernment by the Church is stated as follows :

The Churches have a prophetic task to discern , in these struggles and in the ambiguities which they represent, where the forces of the Kingdom are at work and where countersigns of the Kingdom are being established.

Finally, at San Antonio (1989), the Church itself was identified as a sign. In the Section I report (:28), within the context of unity in mission, the calling of the Church is translated as follows: "The Church is called again and again to be a prophetic sign and foretaste of the unity and renewal of the human family as envisioned in God's promised reign".

If one were to conclude on how the reading of the signs of the times was understood at the World Missionary Conferences, the following points seem to be vital. First, the examples mentioned might create a rather fragmentary impression. They are

fragmentary for the simple reason that the notion under discussion here was not at all central to any of the conferences. Second, the examples quite clearly indicate, however, that indeed the signs are not of a metaphysical nature, but are historical events, either of a negative or positive nature.

4.2.2.3 The spirituality of reading the signs of the times

The art of reading the signs of the times can never be an art in the clinical analytical sense of the word. As a product of the Enlightenment, social analysis in itself does not always penetrate into the theological meaning of the signs of the times. Therefore, according to Bosch (1992:261), "the heuristic of reading the signs of the times is to be pneumatological in nature". Bosch quotes two Catholic sources in his attempt to offer a pneumatological grounding of discerning the signs of the times. He quotes paragraph 44 of *Gaudium et Spes*, which reads as follows: "With the help of the Holy Spirit, it is the task of the whole people of God... to listen to and distinguish the many voices of our times and interpret them in the light of the divine Word..."

The other source is the Puebla document of 1980, where it is stated: "The Spirit of the Lord prompts the People of God to discern the signs of the times and to discover, in the deepest yearnings and problems of human beings, God's plan regarding the

human vocation..." Both statements contain important elements for a spirituality of reading the signs of the times. First, the Spirit is the One who helps and prompts. The exercise of analysing any given situation is more than displaying sociological tools of analysis. It is a spiritual exercise in the sense of searching for the theological significance of political, social, economic and cultural events. Second, both statements make clear that the discernment of the signs is not limited to a chosen few, but it is an activity of the prophetic community, "the whole people of God" (Gaudium et Spes 44). Third, both statements reveal the true nature of discernment, it concerns itself with history, with material conditions. It concerns itself with "the many voices of our times" (Gaudium et Spes 44) and with the "problems of human beings" (Puebla (1979) 1980:177). Fourth, the exercise of reading the signs of the times is a confirmation of the circular movement between the historical context and the text of the Bible.

4.3 Spirituality

It is totally beyond the scope of this study to even begin to explore all possible material on spirituality that has appeared over the last decade or so. A very limited selection will be made from the vast material available in an attempt to develop a spirituality that would be congruent with the foregoing hermeneutical reflection.

The two issues featuring in the hermeneutical discussion, i.e. the nature of prophecy and the discernment of the signs of the times, call for a distinct type of spirituality. For purposes of this study, this will be called prophetic spirituality.

Now, before attempting to say what elements a prophetic spirituality would contain, a note needs to be made about the metaphor spirituality. The note consists of a few examples of how spirituality is creatively understood to overcome all manner of dichotomies. "Until recently", writes Haslam (1987:113), "it [spirituality] was relegated to a lower place by radical Christians because of its connotations of piety, individualism, much Bible study and private prayer, without any real relationship with practical action ". Over the last couple of years the situation has changed dramatically in that the prejudice against the notion has been overcome. It is, according to Haslam, especially in situations of struggle like in Nicaragua and Southern Africa that a breakthrough has occurred towards a more creative understanding of spirituality. It is an understanding that brings together the spiritual and the practical.

It consists fundamentally in breaking down the wall that separates faith and life, prayer and action. These forms of dualisms appear alien to biblical spirituality which is all-inclusive and permeates all the fabric of our private

and public life. (Nebekukwu 1990:108)

Saayman (1991:120) elaborates as follows on the overcoming of dichotomies, saying " ... *spiritual* must not be understood in terms of the old dualism between spirit and flesh, so that to be spiritual means withdrawal from the world, ascetic rejection of the created". For Saayman true spiritual life is only attainable by way of historical mediation. He identifies the poor and the oppressed as such historical mediators.

In explaining the scope of an excellent book on spirituality, the editors, Worsnip and Van der Water (1991:3), allude to the idea that *spirituality* is a fundamental way of overcoming dichotomies. They write:

The book is therefore a call to rediscover the radical nature of a spirituality of the incarnation, which has no place for false dichotomies between the sacred and secular; between the holy and the profane; between religion and politics; between the transcendent and the immanent.

A possible understanding of spirituality in otherworldly terms is also strongly contradicted by Verstraelen (1986:281). With reference to the Dictionary type of definition which sees *spirituality* as "geestelijkheid, geestelijk bestaan, onstoffelijkheid; als tweede betekenis: geestelijke

levenshouding, bepaaldelijk de opgang van de christenziel naar God", he contends

Wij zien spiritualiteit allereerst als een dimensie van de mens als mens. Het is een antropologische structuur welke ten diepste aangelegd is op de oorsprong en bron van alle zijn en op alles wat met die oorsprong verband houdt: de mede-mensen (persoonlijk en sociaal), de natuur en de kosmos.

Verstraelen goes on to make the important point that *spirituality* is not something typically Christian, but appears in all religions and ideologies.

Nowhere else has the type of otherworldly spirituality which is often characteristic of Church Theology been more severely criticised than in the KD (16).

As we all know spirituality has tended to be an otherworldly affair that has very little, if anything at all, to do with the affairs of this world. Social and political matters were seen as worldly affairs that have nothing to do with the spiritual concerns of the Church. Moreover, spirituality has also been understood to be purely private and individualistic. Public affairs and social problems were thought to be beyond the sphere of spirituality. And

finally the spirituality we inherit tends to rely upon God to intervene in God's own good time to put right what is wrong in the world.

The kind of prophetic spirituality propounded by the KD is diametrically opposed to the other-worldly spirituality of Church Theology. The KD suggests a spirituality that is truly Biblical in the sense of not separating human persons from the world in which they live. It is a spirituality which overcomes the dichotomy between individual and social and between private life and public life. It is therefore a spirituality which understands Rom. 8:18-24 to mean that God liberates the whole person as part of His whole creation.

The final example here refers to the new metaphors of cosmic spirituality and eco-feminism. Both metaphors emerged quite strongly at the *Consultation on African and Asian Spirituality*, held in Colombo, 18-25 June 1992. In a powerful statement that breaks new ground in the understanding of spirituality, a cosmic spirituality was defined as one which would take cognisance of the "web of relationships: intra-personal and inter-personal, communal and societal, global and planetary". The relationship, according to the statement, "is based on justice: no exploitation, manipulation or oppression; but mutuality, deep respect and delicate balance ". In conjunction with the notion of a *cosmic spirituality*, the idea of a spirituality of eco-

feminism appeared. In terms of the Colombo statement, eco-feminism refers to the merging of the ecological and the feminist world-views. When some elements of a prophetic spirituality are developed, we shall return to the notions of cosmic spirituality and eco-feminism.

The examples quoted here clearly show that *spirituality* is a way of saying: Let us view reality in a holistic fashion. It is a way of breaking down the walls of partition within persons as well as between persons. To be spiritual would then mean to overcome the dichotomies between the personal and the communal, the individual and the collective, the private and the public, Mother Earth and her sons and daughters, human beings and the planets. It would, however, not mean buying into the type of harmony model which denies the existing contradictions and injustices. A prophetic spirituality is one that understands the dialectic as expressed in the Colombo statement very well:

Insofar as all religions and cultures contain elements that are both enslaving and liberating, we need to elaborate and apply principles for critically and constructively evaluating each and all of them. What is genuinely life-giving and fulfilling for human beings and for nature is from God, the author of all good; and whatever human action is dehumanising and devastating nature, the source of life, is contrary to God's loving design for humankind and the

cosmos.

On the basis of this brief theoretical exploration of the metaphor *spirituality* and once again, in terms of the understanding of prophecy and the reading of the signs of the times, let us now turn to some elements of a prophetic spirituality.

4.3.1 A spirituality of vigilance

In the particular context of South Africa the term vigilance has had a negative connotation for a very specific reason. The reason relates to the reign of terror of the so called vigilantes in the black townships. As instruments of apartheid, these vigilantes ran havoc in the townships in their vigilance to protect apartheid. The struggle against apartheid has shown, however, that another form of vigilance would prove more powerful. This study contends that from the perspective of the poor, a distinct form of vigilance is still needed in the post-apartheid situation. In a proclamation to the Christians of Southern Africa, those attending the SACC-sponsored *VISION 94* Conference in Johannesburg, committed themselves "to continued vigilance, reasserting the prophetic role, to ensure justice by working for a strong and active church in civil society". Obviously it would be a vigilance taking seriously the ever changing dynamics on the political, social and economic scene in South Africa.

The changing dynamics on the political, social and economic scene in South Africa, have given rise to theologies of mediation and reconciliation. Once again, the legitimacy, validity and even relevance of such theologies are not called into question here. However, some close reading will have to be done by what is left of the prophetic church to analyse the content of such theologies. The point Nolan (in Venter 1993:75-76) makes about mediation is relevant here. He asserts that even participation in mediation should be to the advantage of the poor and the oppressed. Indeed, the church must never exercise its mediating role in such a way that it gives up its prophetic role.

Concerning the theology of reconciliation, the critical question is about its functioning in practice. Does the process of reconciliation lead to a situation of authentic confession by those who have promoted apartheid in whatever form, and authentic forgiveness on the part of the victims of apartheid? Does the notion of reconciliation not serve simply to affirm the rich and the powerful in their wealth and power and the poor and powerless in their poverty and powerlessness? Are restitution and compensatory justice part and parcel of the reconciliation package?

These questions call for a spirituality of alertness. They challenge the prophetic church to its watchdog role, to its discerning function. Naturally the positive signs of the times

in the political arena would modify the watchdog role of the church. In fact, these signs are in themselves a challenge to the church to be transformed. To be watchful would therefore be different from being judgmental and to be alert would be different from being paranoid. This study contends that a spirituality of vigilance should particularly be operative in the area of naming names. The term *naming names* is a way of indicating the prophetic activity of exposing the idols. A very high assessment of this naming and unmasking activity of prophecy, is reflected in what Dunlop (1993:516) writes in his article "Prophetic Ministry: Questioning the Ideologies":

One of the few ministries capable of unmasking the powers is that of the prophets. The prophet is concerned with the particular; with what is going on around about, and with the analysis of it. The prophet names names.

To identify the idols, however, has never been an easy task for at least one reason. In most cases there is a certain dialectic about entities being seen as idols. What I want to say with this formulation is that these entities are not idols in themselves, but can be turned into such. The working definition of the RD (16) for idolatry underscores the point. Idolatry, it states, is the sin of worshipping or being subservient to someone or something which is not God, treating some created thing as if it were a god. The golden calf of Exodus 20:4-5 was not an idol in

itself, but the worship of it made it into an idol. This is what Moses condemned. In the New Testament, according to the RD, the principal form of idolatry was the worship of mammon (Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13). The document goes on to identify some contemporary idols, namely money, power, privilege and pleasure. The list shows the truth of the argument that these entities are not evil in themselves. Idolatry is being constituted the moment they replace the worship of God. In essence, in the understanding of the document, "this form of idolatry has been organised into a system in which consumerist materialism has been enthroned as a god. Idolatry makes things, especially money and property, more important than people. It is anti-people" (RD 16).

A strong prophetic dimension in terms of grappling with the idols is reflected in the missiological thinking of two University of South Africa missiologists, Kritzinger and Saayman (1988, 1991).

4.3.2 A spirituality of liberation

The very powerful notion of a spirituality of liberation originated with Latin American Liberation Theology. This could be said without fear of contradiction. It was the auctor intellectualis of Liberation Theology, Gutierrez, who has given the notion its profoundest content. In his magnum opus, *A Theology of Liberation* (1973:203-208), Gutierrez develops the following ideas as contours of a *spirituality of liberation*.

First, he defines spirituality as a "vital attitude, all-embracing and synthesizing, informing the totality as well as every detail of our lives". But he does not stop there. For Gutierrez spirituality is the dominion of the Spirit. It is through the Spirit that people are able to live the gospel concretely. And therefore, a spirituality is a definite way of living before the Lord, in solidarity with all persons, with the Lord, and before humankind. This seems to be the theological grounding of a spirituality for Gutierrez. This theological grounding of a spirituality shall be elaborated upon below. Second, for Gutierrez, a spirituality of liberation is characterised by a conversion to the neighbor; not neighbor in the general sense of the word, but particularly the oppressed person, the exploited social class, the despised race and the dominated country. Third, it is also characterised by what Gutierrez calls "a living sense of gratuitousness". He uses the expression to say that the communion of people with God and with others is a gift. Fourth, Gutierrez shows how the Magnificat in Luke 1:46-53 expresses the spirituality of liberation that he is attempting to spell out. In it, thanks is being given to the Lord for his gifts and joy is being expressed for his love. His gifts and his love are concrete and relate to his action in liberating the oppressed and humbling the powerful, in satisfying the hungry and sending away the the rich empty handed.

This very brief overview suffices to pinpoint the elements in

Gutierrez' spirituality of liberation. For Gutierrez a spirituality of liberation refers to God, to the self and to the other, not in abstraction, but historically. It refers to God who liberates, to the self who participates in the praxis of liberation and to the other who is in need of liberation.

In the South African context the notion of a spirituality of liberation gained momentum with the publication of the KD in 1985 when apartheid repression was at its fiercest and the resolve of the prophetic church to struggle against apartheid at its clearest. Reference has already been made to the manner in which the KD took to task the otherworldly spirituality of Church Theology. In contradiction to the kind of spiritualising spirituality of Church Theology, the KD (18) stated the kind of spirituality which would be characteristic of a genuinely prophetic theology. Emanating from the context of the church's struggle against apartheid a prophetic spirituality would be one whose

words and actions will have to be infused with a spirit of fearlessness and courage, a spirit of love and understanding, a spirit of joy and hope, a spirit of strength and determination. A prophetic theology would have to have in it the mind of Christ, his willingness to suffer and to die, his humility and his power, his willingness to forgive and his anger about sin, his spirit of prayer and

of action.

The type of spirituality that the KD intended is brilliantly captured in the book *We shall overcome* (Worsnip and van der Water 1991). A striking feature of the sub-title of the book is that the authors have chosen to speak of a Spirituality *for* liberation rather than *of* liberation. Perhaps this choice of preposition was intentional, given the particular context in which the book emerged. In his foreword to the book, Mkhathshwa (:1) captures something of this particular context when he writes:

With the change in strategy and laying the foundation for social reconstruction, the issues are no longer so clear cut as before. To participate meaningfully in this new phase of the struggle for National Liberation requires a new spirituality to match the new struggle.

In the words of the editors of the book, the "new spirituality" for the "new struggle", is one "which both protests and celebrates with equal vigour". That explains why the hermeneutical key of struggle runs like a golden thread through the book on the one hand. On the other hand the *kairos* needs to be sung (de Gruchy 1991:5-31), it needs to be celebrated. This new spirituality is one where religious symbols like fasting, praying and meditating attain new meaning. Indeed,

Vasten wordt een uiting van doorleefde solidariteit met de strijd om vrijheid en gerechtigheid in de Derde Wereld. Bidden biedt perspectief en moed om door te gaan met geweldloze akties tegen mensen-vernietigend machtsmisbruik ondanks gevoelens van machteloosheid en woede. Meditatie leidt tot een scherper zicht op eigen positie met betrekking tot 'de toestand in de wereld' en laat alternatieve oplossingen oplichten wanneer alles geblokkeerd lijkt. (Verstraelen 1986:281).

Clearly therefore the kind of spirituality propounded in the book is not a fly by night spirituality. It is not the kind of spirituality that was to be terminated with the political liberation of South Africa. It is the kind of spirituality that would equip Christians for a protracted struggle for social and economic reconstruction.

Gutierrez, the KD and the book referred to, all confirm the metaphorical understanding of spirituality as holistic interpretation of reality. Yet, even the holistic spirituality as suggested by the three, is still reductionist in a very special sense. Saayman (1991:121) correctly contends that the meaning of liberation is not exhausted by its social, political and economic dimensions. Insofar as only these dimensions are taken into account in a spirituality of liberation, it has to be

branded reductionist.

Writing about the main trends in African Liberation Theology, i.e. religio-cultural liberation, political liberation and socio-economic liberation, Daneel (1991:99) exposes the reductionist nature of the understanding of liberation. He writes:

What all these trends in African theology have in common is a strongly personalised focus. Oppressed, suffering and impoverished human beings have to be liberated from the structures which keep them enslaved. Post-colonial development is seen as primarily aimed at human upliftment and progress. In all this one misses a holistic theological concern for the *liberation of creation*, for the church's task of earthkeeping.

From the perspective of African Traditional Religion and the African Initiated Churches, Daneel offers a theologically well-founded treatise on earthkeeping. According to him there is a growing spirituality or awareness as he calls it, of the urgency of responsible earthkeeping. His article shows the extent to which the speeches of spirit mediums, chiefs, councillors, district administrators as well as the activities of a tree planting movement in Zimbabwe, reflect the integral link between religion and ecology.

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In handling what Nürnberger (1990:205-219) would call a soteriological hermeneutic, Kroeger has the following to say about trinitarian mission:

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So then, to speak of a theological spirituality, is a way of saying that ultimately the consciousness we have of struggle and liberation, our cosmic consciousness, relates to the trinitarian God. That is to say, if consciousness is holistically understood it includes:

"a whole panorama of constitutive elements ...seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking, desiring, experiencing. Consciousness incorporates perceptions, emotions, observations, thoughts, aspirations, choices" (Kroeger 1990:259).

CHAPTER 5

TOWARDS MISSION AS PROPHECY

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Thesis 1

Mission as prophecy is a metaphorical way of saying that

missiology as critical reflection on the praxis of Christian mission, is unthinkable without social-analytical mediation.

In prophetic theological terms social-analytical mediation is the exercise of reading the signs of the times. This study insists that the task of discerning the signs of the times is not esoteric, i.e. it is not assigned to the initiated few, but it is the unalienable task of the prophetic church as a school of prophets.

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Mission as prophecy is a metaphorical way of saying that Christian mission is in need of a language that is appropriate to a particular context. It is the kind of language that would enable it to name names, i.e. exposing the idols and reaffirming the option for the poor. It is the kind of language that would hold in dialectical tension the tasks of forthtelling, mediation, diplomacy and reconciliation.

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Mission as prophecy is a metaphorical manner of saying that a prophetic spirituality is needed which overcomes all possible dichotomies. It is the holistic kind of spirituality in at least the following senses. First, in the sense of relationships with God, self, others and the entire cosmos. Second, it is holistic

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