

## ***Introductory Study: The Fact and Reality of Mission***

### **LECTURER'S PERSONAL NOTE:**

For many years I studied the works of Roland Allen. For ten years my wife and I (with children) were missionaries in Pakistan. I also had ministry in those and following years in other countries. My views of what we call 'missionary ministry', then and now, issued greatly from my reading of the Book of Acts, the Apostolic Epistles and the Book of Revelation—to say nothing of the background of the Old testament and the four Gospels—along with Roland Allen's writings, namely *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours (1912)* *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Christian Church*, and *The Ministry of the Spirit-Selected Writings of Roland Allen*. Donald MacGavran, a disciple of Allen wrote his famous book *The Bridges of God* which in some ways followed the principles taught by Allen. I was so gripped by these and, later, a book by H.R. Boer *Pentecost and Missions* that my thinking was developed and has remained gripped by such writings. In Pakistan I was Founder Principal of that country's first Bible Training Institute where we taught these principles and saw many of the fruits of them, and I believe some of those fruits remain even today. Whilst I have learned to come to terms with the institutional churches in this land and elsewhere I believe we always pay the price for churches being formed along lines other than what I see to be 'apostolic'<sup>1</sup>. I am appalled by many of our modern methods of church planting, substantiation and enlargement, eg. what are called 'mega-churches'.

The studies we will be sharing may be considered by some to be outdated, outmoded when made in the face of modern Missiology. 'Missiology'—The Study of Mission and Missions—is a word devised to cover all the aspects of missionary planning, strategy, and action. I have certainly gained many insights from the writings of missiologists, and if we are talking about the fire of God spreading the Gospel throughout the world, then I have no problems since Christ gave us this privilege and responsibility, with but I feel the very idea of missiology as a learned discipline is inadequate. Where men and women have been gripped by the Gospel there will be the action of proclamation whatever name we may apply to it. The name does not matter, but the action does. For some missiology relates to our use of the Bible as a text-book from which to abstract principles and then apply them, especially with other modern skills to assist in their outworking. Whilst I believe the Holy Spirit can use all things that is, he works in spite of our planning and 'how to' techniques I am sure we need to know our primary direction from the Holy Spirit himself We need to be fired by him.

None of this is said to denigrate the enormous activity that is going on in the name of the Gospel throughout the world, but to say that we must constantly learn afresh from the Apostolic church and move in the ways they knew.

---

<sup>1</sup> For example many European churches were established at the point of the sword. Likewise colonisation had more than light of elements of proselytising. The whole subject of regimentation of non-Christian people into the organised church is a subject that would require enormous research. Churches that sprang from the pure Gospel under the Holy Spirit may have been fewer than we think, historically, to be the case.

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

Roland Allen's books for some years were required study in many Bible Colleges, but that is not the case today even though in some cases they may be recommended reading.. He was a missionary in China from 1895-1903 and wrote mainly his works in the years that followed, especially in the first three decades. Although he used the word 'methods' in one tide he did not really advocate methods, as such. He was sure the development of churches depended upon trust in, and obedience to, the Holy Spirit and the power of the Gospel to cause churches to be born and to develop. Generally in this respect nothing has changed in the action of God, although we have imported many strategies, aids and helps to stimulate such work. Later in our Course we will have reason to look at Allen's writings, along with others who would now be called 'missiologists', but meanwhile we will study a book of mine *Proclaiming Christ's Gospel in Today's World* which is a distillation of my thinking and practice of what I think constitutes Apostolic ministry. I, myself, have always worked along these lines. They certainly do not parallel Allen's understandings, although they derive much from him. IF there is a weakness in Allen's writings it may be that he does not sufficiently show the church-and so the churches-are not so much from the coming and work of the Spirit as they are directly from the 'word of the Cross' through the power of the Spirit. I am sure Allen would never have debated this assertion, but perhaps his emphasis may been somewhat differently placed.

I have personally studied the Scriptures for well over 60 years and this does add to one's understanding of them, one's moving about them in increasing familiarisation of them, and in perceived the many mysteries contained within them. Regarding the work of the Cross which I have seen for myself, I have been enriched by men such as Peter Forsyth, James Denney and R.W. Dale. I have read widely regarding the Person and work of the Holy Spirit but no one book has particularly captured me. A developing understanding of the Fatherhood of God has been indispensable to my understanding of what we call 'mission'. Increasingly I am being gripped by the depths of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King, so that studies in the Triune Godhead have made me better able to see God's mission in history. This naturally demands an understanding of history as being 'salvation history'. It also requires the perspectives of what we call the eschaton and the telos-what we know as the last, climaxing things and the goal and fulfilment of God's ultimate intention for His creation.

There is an approach to missions based on an exhortation to go to every nation, to go into all the world and to preach the Gospel which is often couched in terms that unfortunately, in some, evoke a legalistic compulsion to go 'on mission'. Other factors also get folk to what has been called 'the mission field' but the power of the Cross and resurrection, the personal and universal Lordship of Christ and the empowerment by the Spirit along with his leading and guidance are often sadly missing. I think also that what is called 'guidance' is lacking or has been imposed by others upon certain Christians. From this paper I think it can be seen that we must first understand what is meant by what we call 'mission', and then realise that the vocation of every believer is in the hands of God and must not proceed from the exhortations of other persons. In this respect we must come to understand the nature of the community of Christ-the people of the Spirit and the family of the Father. In other words we must be couched in the wisdom of God, in the plans He has, and the sovereignty He exercises. We may now proceed with our Study Text-*Proclaiming Christ's Gospel in Today's World*.

# *Missionary Principles*

Rev. G.C. Bingham

Second Term, 1994

## **INTRODUCTION**

Our subject is expected to cover two areas (i) The Principles of Mission and (ii) Missionary principles. The first includes the Biblical imperatives and motives and purposes of mission, including a brief survey of the history of missions — not in detail, but simply to cover the areas in which the principles of mission have been evidenced, and also the obstacles to their outworking. The second includes all the observable patterns that are being used on the field today with reference to the practical outworking of building churches, working with churches, and field facts to assist those who will work on the field.

## **‘PRINCIPLES OF MISSION’**

It is clear that the modern missionary movement which roughly speaking began with William Carey when the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the heathen was commenced in 1792. Whilst today we accept the fact of missionary societies Carey and others had to fight grimly, not only against apathy, but actual opposition, especially in the realm of a hyper-Calvinism which insisted that God would evangelize in His way, if He wished to do so, and would not need any “activistic” aid

from man. In the 18th century there were other movements also on the Continent. Whilst we can examine some of these stream later it is fairly true to say that missionary activity, particularly of the 19th century, but beginning in the 18th century, with earlier emphasis by Pietist groups on the continent, was based on the Great Commission. We are bound, in these studies to examine the Great Commission, but we need at this point to see that the prime motive for ministry was obedience. For example, at the end of the 18th century Melville Horn in an address which led to the founding of the Church Missionary Society said “the habitual, open violation of Christ’s command... without shame, and almost without effort to the contrary—“It is true to say that such sentiments were the basis of what is known as the modern missionary movement, and indeed still are so.

Roland Allen, whose books first began to be known at the beginning of this century had what seems to be another theory which he termed “the spontaneous expansion of the Christian church.” He called for a new understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in causing the proclamation of the Gospel and the growth of churches, independent of foreign support — in other words evangelism, under the Holy Spirit was

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

to be more by the growth of churches, than, per se, the missionary probe, although it too was needed and most valuable. These two emphases were not necessarily opposed one to the other. Allen mainly opposed professionalism as such in missionary activity.

We must not reject any of these emphases, but must seek to see what in fact is the emphasis of Scripture, in other words to establish a biblical basis of mission. We will then be able to evaluate the principle and motivation known as: “obedience to the Great Commission,” and indeed any other rationale of missionary work today\*

### THE PRINCIPLE OF MISSION.

The word “mission” is not, primarily, a word in the Bible as such. For example, neither in the Old Testament nor the New Testament do you hear the word mission. It is derived from the word “mission” - “to send”. One who goes on a mission is one who is sent. This idea is found broadly both in the Old Testament and the New e.g. Abraham is sent to a land of which he will be told; Jesus is sent into the world. The Father sent the Son, the Son sends His disciples (Gen. 12:1, John 17:18, 20:21) into the world. However such a sending may be incidental, and not focal. We then have to see back into the Bible and discover whether “mission” as such is not only Biblical but central in Biblical teaching. This is what we mean “If God is going to a lost world, in order both to save it, and inform it of its salvation, and by informing draw in the elect, then that is mission at its best. If on the other hand God does not care, or only at a particular point in history begins to save man — as it were in a special dispensation, then can **mission truly to be said of the** essence of the Bible?”

### THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

One fact is clearly established in the New Testament, and it is this:- by the foolishness of the proclamation (*kerugma*) God saves man (1 Cor. 1:21).

What is this *kerugma*? Is it peculiar only to the New Testament, or is it implicit and indeed actual in the Old Testament? The *kerugma* itself is the announcement, roughly of the following order:

- (i) The prophecies have been fulfilled
- (ii) The Messiah has been borne
- (iii) and crucified
- (iv) and buried
- (v) God has raised Him from the dead (Therefore he is Lord of the dead and living)
- (vi) He is exalted to the right hand of God.
- (vii) The Spirit has been sent
- (viii) The Messiah will return in judgment
- (ix) In the light of this repent, receive baptism, be forgiven.
- (x) Receive the Spirit.

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

It is clear that there can be no N.T. “kerugma” without the Old Testament. The Apostles taught only from the Old Testament. The acts of Christ’s life, death etc. they interpret from the Old Testament. These are in accordance with the Old Testament. (cf. Luke 24:25f, Acts 17:1f, 1 Cor. 15:1f, etc. etc. see Acts 17:11). In other words the kerugma is basic Old Testament teaching, even if that has to be interpreted. In addition to this we have many strands of the Old Testament which may have been taught by Christ. They are there. Whilst on the wider scale the New Testament is the fulfilment of the old economy which whilst cultically active was also in its cult prophetic, there is also a further proof that the New Testament has no meaning without the Old. Even though the message Christ brought must have sounded new and novel even to His disciples, and even more so to others, yet it was not novel. It was an ancient message. If God has spoken by the prophets yet the message spoken by His Son was no new message\* It was the message fulfilled in act. Indeed one of the key notes of Christ’s action is “that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”

Our conclusion then is that whilst the New Testament is the fulfilment of the Old, of God’s promises, all of which are connected in some way or other with redemption (salvation-history), yet even more we can now go back to the Old Testament and see it anew in the light of the fulfilment enacted in the New Testament. In other words we can get new light on the meaning of the early events. The Holy Spirit has written the Old Testament with a purpose — not simply to record historical fact, but with — if we like — a thesis. We might even say at this time the thesis of “mission”. We conclude the kerugma is rooted in the Old Testament. Indeed we have indications that the kerugma is in the Old Testament. We might even go further and say that the flowering of the kerugma? even though it be in the New Testament economy, yet it is not only in embryo in the Old Testament but in actual fact.

## MISSION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

It is impossible to stress the importance of the Old Testament sufficiently. When we realise that the apostles and early Fathers used it exclusively for their preaching, and indeed that the Jews would have had no acceptance of the Gospel unless it were proven from the O.T., then we can understand that whilst revelation is to a certain degree progressive yet all the elements of the kerugma must be discoverable in the Old Testament.

On the other hand the material is so vast that in a course of study such as we are undergoing, it will be impossible for us to cover it all. The student will be advised to follow through the lines of study indicated.

One thing is clear—the Bible is the history of redemption. We must reject such dispensational ideas which dispense with the foreknowledge and election of God. By this we mean that God has planned **history with a view** to its climax. Nothing that is of the creational order can be viewed apart from the redemptive order. Whilst sometimes we may not see the relationship, we must not therefore deny that it is there. Genesis chs. 1 and 2 precede the third chapter. The creational is the background to the drama of the Fall, and the proto-evangel (Gen. 3:15). The concept of the conflict between God and Satan is envisaged from this beginning. If the interest seems to be taken up, all too soon,

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

by the interesting stories of the Patriarchs, it is because we do not get them into perspective.

The story of man's fall, then of Cain and Abel, and of the Flood followed by Babylon is history which teaches truth in relation to redemption. If we view them only as history, and do not see what they are intended to teach then we miss their value. We must understand them as far as possible in the light of God's purposes for man. We could, therefore highlight the early chapters of Genesis as follows\*

**Chapters One and Two.** The Creation. The Spirit in Creation. The creation is not understood apart from man. Man is created in the (moral) image of God. He is given authority - the Creation receives its *raison d'être* from him. Psalm 8 and Heb& 2:5-8 are here relevant.

**Chapter Three.** Moral issues arise. Man's use of moral choice is tested and he rejects his authority-in-submission for authority without submission. The processes of guilt, alienation, death and rejection from Paradise commence. The Gospel is announced.

**Chapter Four.** (This could be read in conjunction with Romans 8:18-24). The fruit of the Adamic rebellion is witnessed in murder, and the entail of sin is noted in lawlessness. The curse pronounced in ch. 3 has its outworking.

**Chapter Five and Six** lead on to judgment, the consequence of Adamic sin, following the uniting of the godly and ungodly seed.

**Chapters. 9 and 10** lead on to the new covenant. This is a general covenant with all men. Even in chapter ten the division of the nations begins, and whilst in chapter ten we have the division of the nations set out objectively (compare Acts 17:26-27 cf. Deut. 32:8-9), Gen. 28:11-15, John 1:51).

Chapter Eleven sees the overt rebellion of man in trying to assert his authority, and to live in such a way that he was independent of God. God, however is Lord of history as well as of creation, and He scatters them. This is still part of salvation history, for at the point of disbandment His eternal purposes are revealed in His dealings with Abraham - that is at the point of judgment His salvation-dealings with man "begin".

### **Abraham, Election, and Covenant.**

It is clear from Gal. 3:13-14 that Paul sees the fulfilment of the Old Testament in the act of the Cross, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. We would be tempted to say that the call of Abraham GENESIS 12:1-3 is the beginning not of a universal redemption and faith, but of a narrow particularistic national choice. In these verses Abraham is to be a nation, and only those who bless him will be blessed, those who curse him being cursed. Deut. 7:6-7 shows the election is not particularistic. Nevertheless in Romans 4:13 Abraham is called the heir of the world and Gal. 4 3:8 shows that Abraham is not to be the father only of some nations, but of all God's people - i.e. those who believe.

When we see Matt. 3:7-9 and John 8:37-40 we realise that God's purposes in, Abraham are those of evangelism. In other words — the whole sweep of history in the Old Testament is not concerned with a nation for its own sake but with a nation for

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

salvation's purposes. Exodus 19:5-6 shows that Israel is to be God's treasure among (RSV) Psalm 67 and 96 (which see) amongst others show a clear relationship between the nations, and the nation of Israel. We can thus draw this conclusion that the Abrahamic Covenant is with a view, and Israel as the servant of God, although it may unwittingly be the same. If it is the elect nation (thee only have I known of all the nations) it is elect for a purpose for service. The conclusion we reach, at this point is: The end is salvation, the means is Israel. The action is God's being amongst His people. This is the implicit (yet actual) message or kerugma in and of the Old Testament. One thing is on any level undeniable — that God is active in the world, He is especially active towards His people. He is active in His people to be gracious to the nations of the world.

### **Israel's Particularistic View.**

If we take the Bible as a unity then we must also recognise that we see it, and God's purposes through the eyes of the New Testament. The New Testament helps us to interpret many things of the Old Testament. We can recognise God's action in history. This does not mean, however that Israel regarded herself always in the role to which God appointed her. We see her national zeal and particularism. The question is — Is this in accordance with what God has designed her for? The answer is "No"! We can see two clear strands in the Old Testament.

- (i) All history leads to God's saving acts in Christ. Put into this perspective Israel's true purpose as a "priest-nation" is seen.
- (ii) Israel, although not seeing clearly God's purpose in using her as a servant, nevertheless at times has rich moments of understanding and demonstrating this.

### **A Further View to be Considered.**

If we say that there is an evolutionary process in the Old Testament — i.e. from primitive polytheism to monotheism, and then to a high universalistic view of God, on to a sense of mission then we would have to fit the Old Testament into this hypothesis.

However we find a high monotheism at the beginning. Again we must not confuse the word "primitive" with "ancient". All we can say is that God was always working, though Israel was not always responding clearly. However, over and above this we find ample material in the Old Testament to see there is a clear kerugma so much, that at times we are astounded with the breadth and depth of vision, i.e. in regard to a universal outreach in "mission" to the nations.

### **The Old Testament and Other "Mission" Passages.**

#### **1. God is King.**

The saying of Jesus in Matti 11:25 of, Acts 4:24 Acts 17:21 designates God as Lord of all. The New Testament Kerugma emphasises that Jesus is Lord. Those two are not contradictory. Gen. 1:26-28 cf. Psalm 8 show that man was made to be lord of the universe under his Father, and to subdue the earth. Christ's Lordship in the New Testament is believed on after belief in God. of. John 14:1 and in the Acts men who

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

believe in God now believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament “kerugma” certainly has the concept that God is Lord, King and Judge of all the earth, as well as Creator. cf. Genesis 18-26. This concept of Lordship is carried through not only in Creation, the Fall, and the division of the nations, but also in the history of Israel. Indeed all of His dealings in the Old Testament show Him to be Lord. The New Testament only completes the predicted plan, and shows the rounding off of the Old Testament kerugma.

### **2. The Implications of God’s Kingship.**

God’s kingship implies always the Kingdom of God. This implies God’s hand on all nations, indeed on all history. “Shall not the judge of all the earth do right” was Abraham’s understanding of God’s action. In this sense, the Gospel, which is orientated towards the nations of the earth and for the ultimate climax of the kingdom is inherent in all Old Testament history. So the Psalms quoted above (67 and 96).

### **3. Israel’s View of God’s Covenant and Universal Plan.**

There is a dichotomy in the Old Testament. That is we see God’s plan clearly stated, as above, and Israel’s position in it as the priestly nation. Israel however is so often rebellious, so often hard of hearing that she does not hear God’s word to her. On the other hand it is by no means clear that God about “winning the nations” in the Old Testament, so much as setting the stage for the act of redemption. It is assumed by many today that the “highest” concept of religion ought, ipso facto, be the universal religion or made so. In actual fact it cannot be said that because kerugma is inherent in the Old Testament that it is so explicit that it is Israel’s task to go out and tell the world. Israel is intended to be a witness. However time and again Israel is castigated because her witness is a cause of offence, and God is not sanctified in the eyes of the heathen.

The most we can do is see (i) Prophecies concerning a wider outreach of the Servant of Jehovah (Israel — the Messiah) such as in Isaiah 40-55 especially 42:1-7 and 49:1-7 (11) Israel is a witness, and this is an important part of God’s plan. Israel is not expected to gather proselytes to her kind of Jehovah religion.

### **4. The Place of Jonah in Missionary Activity**

The book of Jonah is seemingly a missionary book. It seems to show that Israel was narrow in its view. Jonah’s implicit faith in the power of the Word to produce repentance is clear. At the same time he does not wish Nineveh to know repentance and so escape God’s wrath. It is interesting that God does not ignore Nineveh, but pursues it in wrath. The book of Jonah is a clear challenge to Israel’s narrow outlook, and that it is included in the Jewish Canon is very much to the point. On the other hand Israel does not move out further than this one act. It is not intended to be a pattern for Israel. We need not conclude that Israel ought to have gone out like Jonah. It was one command to one prophet at one point in history.

### **5. The Meaning of the Messiah in the Old Testament.**

(i) This subject is vast, and cannot be dealt with, here, exhaustively. However the material dealt with above is inadequate unless the concept of the Messiah is understood & Whilst the passages we use are mainly from Isaiah 40-55, the idea of



## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

Messiah is not absent from other areas e.g. Daniel and certain Psalms as well as isolated passages in the Pentateuch and other prophetic and historical books. The following references are valuable to study: Gen. 3:15, 49:10, Num. 24:17, 11 Sam. 23:1-7, Isa. 2:2-5, Mic. 4:1-4, Amos 9:11, Hos. 3:5, Isa. 4:2p 9:1-6, Mic. 5:1-5, Jer. 23:5-8, 30:9-33:14-18, Ezek. 34:21-30, 37:24,28, Hagg. 2:7-9, Zech. 6:9-15, Psalm 2 Psalm 72.

Those references as such refer to Christ as a lordly figure, a ruler, one to do with the peoples, with ruling. He is linked with the defeat of the nations, and so his ruling of them and their obedience to them. He is appointed by God, and therefore it is God's kingship which is really the point. The relationship of the Messiah to God gives Him the character of a divine figure. He will bring these things to pass.

- (ii) The other concept of Messiah is that of the Servant in Isaiah 40-55. Here He is in God's service. He is human — very much so — and in ministry He suffers and dies (Isa. 50, 52, 53). He is, however, of a quality which is not only human, indeed more than this. He so glorifies God that God's light and salvation is shown to the world. This Servant sometimes seems to be the nation of Israel, sometimes the remnant (holy), and then, more clearly, a Person — the Messiah, but without the kingly glory ascribed in the set of references above.

The conclusion of both streams of prophecies is the same. The peoples of the world shall come under God's rule — because of Messiah (a) Through His victory (b) Through the suffering and proclamation of God's salvation. All of this is future, indeed its language is very often eschatological.

N.B. The reader is advised to study deeply the "Servant Songs" of Isa. 42:1-7, 49:1-7, 50:1-9, 53:1-12, and see the various elements connected with the ministry of the Servant-Messiah.

### **6. Conclusion Regarding the Old Testament**

- (i) The kerugma is implicit in the structure of the Old Testament in that all that is to climax in Christ commences in the Creation and the Fall, and is linked not only with the promise of the Redeemer, but Israel's whole history is to do with this coming event.
- (ii) Israel is placed as a witness to God. He is king of the earth, and of history and as such has to do with nations, and these are not outside His redemptive purposes.
- (iii) Whilst Israel is a priest nation, and a witness she is often unaware of this because of her rebellion, but even when aware sees no direct commandment as such to evangelise.
- (iv) The whole matter of redemption, and of King Messiah is in the future. We can, if we wish, speak of an eschatological climax which is to come, but which is linked with future action, and missionary activity of the people of God.
- (v) We would see none of these conclusions clearly but for the fact that the New Testament makes them clear.

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

(vi) Although this is so we can get tremendous depths of understanding from the Old Testament, and its material gives us a deeper understanding of what God is about in the New Testament, especially in relation to “mission”.

(vii) The teaching of “Messiah” is the most vital of “mission” concepts.

### MISSION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In the New Testament we seem to come into a different atmosphere immediately. To understand this — as regards mission — we must remember that the early church was a missionary church and that the New Testament was written by a missionary church. Even its synoptic gospels (especially Luke) are written with a view, not only to giving a rationale for evangelistic out-going, but to be the very tool of it. Whilst it is true that the Gospels — say of Matthew and Luke — lay stress on Christ’s Messianic being, yet the conclusion has long ago been drawn in this regard. The Gospels are written to show the *fait accompli* and their authority lies in this. All Gospels, for example head up into the Great Commission, whilst they have been written out of its very action and fulfilment.

### The Old and the New Testaments.

We are drawn to see again that the Kerugma of the New is rooted in the Old. Whilst apostleship is the authentic proclamation and interpretation of the old yet it has no authority to depart from the Old. Thus we expect to see some interesting material in the interpretations of the apostles, and in this we are not disappointed.

Naturally enough we commence our studies at the Gospels. Yet we can do this only against the background of the New Testament times with reference to the period between the Testaments.

#### (i) Inter-Testamental Period.

In this we find some changes in attitude. Whilst the history of Israel had been one of idolatry, there is now a shift to the worship of Jehovah. This has ethical and moral connotation. Successful wars (such as the Maccabean rebellion) had increased self-confidence of the Jews. Their doctrines were formulated by many rabbinical schools. The law came into esteem. Contemporary evil in society drove many to seek the moral values of Judaism. Proselytes were made, and it seemed that there was a missionary drive. This, however, can hardly be said to have had a “kerugma” such as we have discussed (of. Matt. 23:15). The Book of Acts shows how fine a moral witness many of the Jews had given, and how many “God-fearers” (the name given to interested Gentiles) were prepared for the Gospel. Another factor which was quite strong was Judaism’s part answer to the question of conscience. Another interesting factor was the Septuagint which opened the Scriptures to hellenistic population, especially as its Greek was the racy *koiné*.

Messianic expectation. This was one of the strongest elements. There had been “false” messiahs, and so some suspicion of these would-be liberators. Racial, national tension

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

was high. The breeding ground for insurrection, and the mingling of religious and political ideas (it had always been so to some degree in Israel) set the background for the coming of the true Christ.

### (ii) The Gospels.

The Gospels seem to bear two strands (a) Jesus goes only to Israel, and not beyond. His mission is a local and national one. See Matt. 15:24, Mark 12:1f, Matt. 10:6, Matt. 8:12, Luke- 12:32. The Gentiles too seem to be spoken about as though they were deficient. See Matt. 6:7,32, Luke 12:30 cf. Mar. 10:33, Luke 21:24, Acts 4:27.

However the Gospels have a really universal note. Whilst Christ fulfils the first part of His mission — to Israel, yet it is with a view to the whole nations. Thus we see (b) 'mat not only does He minister to non-Jews, but does not have a narrow Jewish attitude. Cf. John 4, Luke 9:51ff, 10:25-37, 17:11-19. Other passages which show that God deals with the nations are Matt. 25:31ff, Matt. 8:11, 12:41ff.

Under four names we see the cosmic nature of Christ's ministry.

- (a) **"Son of God"** or **"Messiah"**. Matt. 3:15-17, Luke 9:35 link with both Psalm 2:6-7, and Isa. 42:1. Isa. 61:1f (cf. Luke 4:18f) are universal. The Messiah-King is to rule over the nations. He is "begotten" for this purpose.
- (b) **"Son of David"** See Mark 12-35-37. This is linked with Psalm 110 where the king of the nations is indicated. Mark 11:1-10 is also in similar meaning of. Zech. 9:9f and Isa. 9:4-6. There is no doubt that Jesus is looked at as the universal king.
- (c) **"Son of Man"**. The "Son of Man" is an outstanding name for the one who will rule over the nations. An examination of Dan. 7:13-14 with Matt. 26:63-66 shows clearly that Jesus considered Himself to be this Son of Man. He used the name frequently, although often to hide the full meaning for the time. A reading of the Gospels shows how authoritative this one is considered to be.
- (d) **"The Servant of the Lord"** The Old Testament study of this person (see above) is enough to indicate how universal is His ministry. The Gospels (especially Mark's) show this Servant (Mark 10:45, 14:24, and Matt. 12:15-21). His life can well be shown to be that of the Suffering Servant, otherwise there is no meaning, no sufficient rationale of His death.

Another strong element is the teaching of our Lord, especially the parables. So often the "world" is referred to. The Great Commission, of course, which was post-Resurrection makes it quite clear that the Gospel was to be for all nations. The book of the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Book of the Revelation make it quite clear that the Gospel is for the world, and in particular for nations.

Conclusion. We see in the New Testament, the pre-Abrahamic history emphasised as God's purpose for man is fulfilled in the coming of Christ. Then we see the promise of the Covenant, to Abraham, which includes blessing for all nations, is also fulfilled in Christ. We see that God has gone out in Christ to fulfil His "mission" to it.

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

### (iii) “Mission in the Gospels”.

We are now able to look in detail into the Gospels to see that “mission” was going on during the life of our Lord, even if it seemed, at first, confined to Israel.

#### (a) **Jesus’s Mission.**

It is clear that Jesus is sent. John’s Gospel is filled with references to His being “sent”. See 3:17,34, 4:34, 5:23f, 5:36,38, 6:29, 57, (6:38f, 44) 7:16,18p28,29,33, 8:16,18,26,29,42, 9:4, 10:36, 11:42, 12:44f,49, 13:20.

#### (b) **His local mission to Israel.**

Jesus did not come as a Teacher, or a moralist. He came to bring the Kingdom to Israel. This He did by many means e.g. by teaching, healing, miracles, exorcisms. His basic initial announcement in Nazareth (Luke 4:17f) would be seen as particularly to Israel. He steers clear of the Gentiles, with only a few notable exceptions. However it is the Kingdom He constantly introduces, that is to say His ministry is dynamistic. He yearns for Israel. He sends His disciples in active ministry. It is mission without a doubt. See

Luke 9:1f, 10:1f, 11:20-3.

#### (c) **His mission to the world.**

Whilst it is directly to Israel He comes initially, this is not the extent of His ministry. If Israel is to be given the opportunity to be priest-nation, then it must first be able to hear and accept — or reject. However as we have seen above His use of the phrases Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, and the concept of Servant of the Lord are all universalistic. The Gospel must be preached to all the nations — then shall the end come (Matt. 24:14). John’s Gospel of course with its concept of the sea and the draught of fishes, of the others which are not of this flock, and the idea of one fold, together with John 11:54 speaking of the children of God scattered abroad being brought into one family. All of these speak of mission. Phrases like Luke 19:10-11 “the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost”. Of the three “lost” parables in Luke 15, and of John 4:23 which speaks of the Father seeking — all of these make it clear that God is out after His own. The great Johannine teaching of the Father, and of Christ being the way, as well as the Father drawing man to the Son and through the Son to Himself — all of these speak of mission.

The most convincing are the **saving acts of Christ**. The Incarnation is incredible in its implications. The actual seeking by the Son of Man, and liberation of the oppressed; then the large proportion of the Gospels given to the Cross and resurrection show the act of God in “mission”. This is the only faith in the world where God goes out to man in mission.

#### (d) **The Passages linked with the Great Commission.**

It is significant that these passages are all post-resurrection. The reason for this is that Christ’s Messianic ministry is partly hidden. It was for purposes of fulfilment at the right time, and partly because others did not see it. For this reason the universality of the Gospel is hidden until Israel makes her rejection of it. She is not to reject it just because of its universality, but because of its direct challenge to her disobedience. This completed the universality, always inherent is made explicit. Nor **could it be explicit**

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

**until the cross** and resurrection make it clear that Jesus is Lord and His rule is to be over death and sin and Satan, as well as the universe.

We are now in a position to study these passages.

### (1) JOHN 20:19-23

This has been called the profoundest, whilst the simplest of all the “commission” passages.

- (i) **Its background.** Jesus is clearly risen from the dead. His fresh and open wounds (cf. John 20:27) are the signs and attestation of victory over sin and over death. His disciples understand something of this for they are “glad” when they see Him (v. 20 of. Luke 24:41). His victory is borne in upon them. Only this makes clear the commission that follows — the background of “peace **with** God”. Only in such a back- ground is such a command understood.
- (ii) **Its Substance.** “Peace be unto you.” They are equipped in that sense. “As the Father hath sent me, so send I you”. The elements are (a) A continuum. i.e. A new idea is not being introduced. Long ago the Father had sent the Son. The command had been given in the eternal counsels. John’s Gospel shows the Son referring to the Father’s sending at least 40 times. Many of these are deeply significant. Sent to do the Father’s will, to do His works, to save mankind, to reveal the Father’s love. Only as the Father hath sent, does He (Jesus) send. The mission goes on. (b) A parallel. The Son, related to the Father is sent. The disciples related to the Son are sent. In fact they are related to the Father through Him. He expects the love and its obedience as the Father expected from the Son. The whole concept of “sonship” is involved of. Psalm 2:6-7. The Son reveals the Father and leads to the Father (1:18, 14:6) and so the Son exercises a unique ministry. It is this ministry which is to be extended through the “sons” i.e. those related to the Father through the Son. (c) “Send” John 17:18 shows “into the world.” It is a going to a lost world—“the Father ever seeketh” ..
- (iii) **Its Enabling** He breathed on them..’receive (take) the Holy Spirit.’” It was to be the Spirit’s power which would enable. Command is calling. The Spirit equips. (iv) Its message. Remission and retention of sins. No sooner (as it were) is Jesus risen from the dead than He is commissioning to release from sins. John Stott has remarked “not magisterial but ministerial authority”. The remission of sins (cf. John 1:29) is a significant doctrine in the Bible.

### (2) LUKE 24:44-49

The basis of this command is the actual thrust and drive of prophecy. cf. v. 44f. Not only is Christ’s suffering the burden of prophecy, but also that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached...”. The substance of the command is repentance and remission of sins. This is a tremendous message. The Lukan emphasis in Acts can be seen in Acts 2:38-9 3:19, 5:30-32, 10:43f, 11:15-18, 13:38f, 22:16 etc. It is to be “upon His name” i.e. based on Jesus as Saviour—none other. It is to be preached among all nations. Again this is a witness — i.e. to Christ and what He has done to obtain remission for man, as well as to evoke repentance for there is no remission without repentance (cf. Acts 26:18-20). They need the Holy Spirit (“power from on high”) to

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

accomplish this witness. This power of the Holy Spirit they had seen in Christ's ministry (cf. Acts 10:38) and without that they cannot communicate the truth of repentance and forgiveness, seeing the Holy Spirit is linked with both (cf. Acts 1:8, 5:30-32 10:43-44 11:15-18).

### (3) MATTHEW 28:16-20.

The background here is a mixture of belief and unbelief (v.17) and possibly the occasion on which 500 were present (1 Cor. 15:6).

- (i) The basis is "all authority is given unto me in heaven and earth". This is Lordship, the prerogative of Messiah. There is no authority not under Him. The "Go ye therefore" is on the basis of His authority.
- (ii) Go ye. The church must go. The "lo!" (I am with you always) is-not possible without the going. It is part of the nature of the church to go.
- (iii) Make disciples of all nations,. A disciple is "an undistracted learner" i.e. his loyalty is to his master, and he allows nothing to distract him (Luke 14:25-35). At the same time he is a novice — has to learn. He is humble enough to do this. "all nations" takes up the theme in so many places of Scripture that God is concerned with nations (cf. Romans 1:5, 15:18, 16:26, Rev. 21:24-22:2, Psalm 2:8-9 etc). Each nation is to become a disciple (although this will involve also making disciples within the nations).
- (iv) Baptising then into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the ordinance of disciple-making. With its significance later explained (Romans 6:1-6, Gal. 3:26 etc) it is into the 'Inane' (singular) of the Trinity. The name signifies authority, power, character etc. The 'Inane' is not static but the very action of God. See Acts 3:16, 4:17-19, 19:13-15).
- (v) Lo! I am with you. (cf. Mark 16:20) Christ is with His church in all its action. Indeed the action of the church is His of. also Acts 19:11-20, 22:17f etc.). The being with His people is dependent upon their going i.e. obedience to the task given. (vi) unto the end (consummation) of the age. We see that the consummation is not arbitrary, but planned. cf. Acts 1:7-8. This plan will be worked out by Christ through His church. The age will head up (in victory) so that nothing in ministry is lost.

### (4) MARK 16:15-20.

This section is not found in the oldest "witnesses". It must, however, have found general acceptance in the early church to have merited inclusion. Whilst we may not rest upon it too heavily, yet we cannot ignore its witness.

- (i) Repeated principle of "Go". Geographically it is into all the world.
- (ii) Preach the gospel to all the creation. "preach" here is "proclaim" cf. 1 Cor. 1:29 Rom. 10:14-15.
- (iii) Believing is obeying the gospel. Baptism is the natural outcome of believing (and mandatory), but it is unbelief (disobedience to the Gospel) which brings judgment.
- (iv) And these signs.. . (cf. Luke 10:19) are mainly those which have accompanied the preaching of the kingdom (cf. Acts 6:8, 8:6-7 etc).

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

- (v) “on the right hand of God”. An allusion to the authority of the Lord (Psalm 110:1f).
- (vi) “proclaimed everywhere” (v.20). Whilst not part of the commission is evidence of it.

### (5) ACTS 1:7-8.

The promise of the baptism of the Spirit (v.5) must be linked with the idea of the kingdom (v.3). They connect the two as the question of v.6 shows. Whilst not denying the “kingdom action” Jesus leaves the times and seasons under the Father’s authority. That they are — and are there, is certain. His commission then takes the form:-

- (i) You will receive power (*dunamis*, not *exousia*) to witness.
- (ii) This witness will cover two areas (a) Geographical (Jerusalem and Judea, Samaria, “the uttermost parts” (extremity) of the earth. (b) Racial. Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles. The witness will be to Christ — obviously in the proclamation of the Gospel (cf. Luke 24:47-48),.

### (6) (a) ACTS 5:20

A local command given by the angel of the Lord. Here the verb is *laleó*, “speak”. The message “this life.” i.e. the life of Christ, and the life He gives etc,

### (c) ACTS.10:42

Peter at the house of Cornelius. The word is “proclaim”. The “people” probably refers to Israel in particular. They are to “solemnly witness” to Christ’s being as Judge (Lord) of all (cf. v.36). (c) ACTS 26:16-23 The commission is particularly to Paul but contains a richness of points, all of which are contained in the above passages. The “*kerugma*” is quite clear in this section. Most interesting is v.16b, a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of the things in the which I will appear unto thee.” This indicates the continuing action of Christ.

### (7) AN ANALYSIS OF THE PASSAGES.

There is no denying the appearance of the imperatives (Acts 1:2 “had given commandments” — note plural). Yet both the Matthew and Mark portions use “going”, a participle which does not make the initial portion a command, but, as it were, a direction. Luke simply states subjunctively “should be preached” and the commission in John speaks of their remitting sins etc. Acts 1:8 simply says they will be witnesses (the Holy Ghost coming upon them).

We may comment that John 14:15—“if you love me you will keep my commandments” (cf. 1 John 5:3) is the key. The “peace” communicated in the Johannine commission is the basis of proclamation, which, after all, is to be a witness. These disciples know repentance and remission of sins. They know the fulness of the Holy Spirit. They understand “the wonderful works” of God. They have long ago submitted to the demands for discipleship (and so they may “disciple”) and the question of a severe command or commission simply does not exist. H. de Beer in his “Pentecost and Missions” points out that it is not simply the command, but the coming of the Holy Spirit which gives the needed impetus for evangelism. The command is not repeated in Acts or Epistles, and is nowhere a “lever” to preaching. It is good for us to recognise that the fellowship of the church is the general basis and impetus for Spirit-led ministry in evangelism.

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

### (iv) “MISSION” IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

It is almost humorous to speak of “missions in the Acts” as this is the whole content of the book. It is all “mission.” We therefore have to ask the question — “Is the Acts of the Apostles an account of an initial impact to set up and establish the church? Does this thrust of “mission” expend itself here, or does this book set up patterns for all times? Is the commission to the apostles only and has it been fulfilled, or is the church always under this commission?” We now have to work out the fact of missions and the pattern of the same in Acts, and see whether these obtain or should obtain today. As the pattern will concern a later section, let us first establish the fact of “mission” in Acts.

- (a) The Command is clear. Acts 1:3-4 connect the kingdom and the Spirit’s coming. 1:7-8 infers “times and seasons” but limits the apostles’ work to witnessing as such. This is to have racial and geographical connotation.
- (b) The Action is Clear. Acts 1-7 cover “mission” in Jerusalem and Judaea (Jews). Acts 8 covers Samaria. Acts 10-28 cover “the uttermost parts”, or is on the way to doing so. There is a constant outwards movement (a) Geographically (b) Racially. (c) Evangelistically. Acts 1-10 cover the ministry of Peter (including Stephen and Philip). Acts 13-28 cover basically the ministry of Paul. Movements are (a) Peter’s ministry. (b) Stephen and Philip’s ministry. (c) “Natural” ministry as seen at Antioch (11:19-30, 13:1-3f etc.). (d) The ministry of Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy — in various “teams”. The Acts does not concern itself with describing the evangelism of the newly founded churches as such. (e) Local evangelism. Acts 2:47 indicates that the Lord added to the church (daily) inferring that it was the witness of the church which was basic to this. So see 4:4, 4:32, 5:14, 6:7. (f) Peter states a principle in Acts 10:42 and 15:7 in regard to “mission” ministry, whilst Paul in Acts 26:16-23 enunciates a similar personal commission of “mission”.

One element which has to be noticed is that the action of Acts is constant and spontaneous. The commission as such does not appear after the first few verses. It might be observed at this point that “mission” stems from Pentecost.

### (v) “MISSION” IN THE EPISTLES.

Accounts of this appear almost incidentally. Romans 15:18-22 speaks of Paul’s ministry, and shows the mind of Paul for future action. Passages like 1 Cor. 9:16-27 show the general urgency of preaching (cf. Acts 20:24-31) and 2 Cor. 4:8-13 (cf. 1 Cor. 15:30-32) show that Paul is ever about the task. 1 Thess. 1:6-10 speaks of a local church in the action of evangelism, and such mention is inferred in Phil. 1:13-18, and 4:2,3 of. 1:27-30. The pastoral epistles are written to a more fixed situation, but passages such as 1 Tim. 4:1-5 and 2:2f. show that evangelism did not stop with the apostles. Whilst 2 Cor. 12:12 speaks of the signs of an apostle yet Acts 6:8 makes these also of a “layman.” The Epistle to the Hebrews (see 2:3-4, 10:32-34) shows the same activity and emphasis upon the Gospel continued.

### (vi) MISSION IN THE REVELATION OF JOHN.

This book persists in the “mission” of God, as it declares in various ways the “kerugma” of. 1:5p 11:15, 17:14, 19:15f but the language is different — apocalyptic. The phrase



## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

“for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy” is in the principle of Acts 1:8. The smiting of the nations (19:15) and kindred phrases describe the ongoing activity of the kingdom, but the Book is designed to comfort those who are seeking to “endure unto the end” for His sake. The 2nd and 3rd chapters show the church being admonished to action, and if true churches this would include “mission.” Even at the end of the book there is an “evangelistic” invitation — “and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely”.

## MISSION IN HISTORY.

Having seen mission in the Old and New Testaments, as a principle we are now able to see how this has worked out in history. The “History of Missions” is a vast subject, and one which we cannot cover. On Page One of these notes we have seen in brief that the modern missionary movement began in 1792. What then happened between the apostolic age and that time? Did perhaps the church reach a stage when its mission was completed? In the light of the principle of “mission” can we say that the task has been completed or, as Bishop Neill says, “is it an ‘unfinished task’”?

Thiessen (“*A Survey of World Missions*”) gives 20 pages for the missionary action of the church before Carey and 456 for the action stemming from the time of Carey. Whilst this attention must be to some degree arbitrary, yet it is significant. From the death of Christ until 303 A.D. the Christian faith flourished under intense persecution. Persecution *Der se* does not cause the church to flourish as it has been destroyed by Islamic and other persecutions when its doctrine has been deficient. Bliss (*The Missionary Enterprise* 1908) says “by the opening of the fourth century Christians had covered the then-known world to such an extent that when Constantine came to the throne he found them a force that could not be ignored — at least intellectually and morally, if not numerically.” Pliny the Younger, ruling Bithynia wrote to the Emperor Trajan (early 2nd Century) “The contagion of this superstition (Christianity) has spread not only in the cities but in villages and rural districts ... the temples have been almost deserted and the sacred rites neglected.” This might describe the situation in New Guinea or Borneo today.

The decline of the church’s outreach had a number of factors. The espousal of Christianity by Constantine made it a legal religion, and had two effects (i) It became an instrument of the State, even though it wore not necessarily the State religion (ii) It weakened the doctrinal and worship purity of the church by syncretism. Becoming a power unit exposed it to being an instrument of personal or group ambition, and many of the divisive doctrinal disputes may be traced to non-theological factors.

### (i) The Apostolic Age.

Peter preached in Jerusalem, Lydda, Joppa, later Antioch (in Syria), Babylon (?) and Asia Minor. Perhaps in Rome.

John — Jerusalem, Samaria. After A.D. 70 went to Ephesus, and led the churches of Asia. Exiled to Patmos in Mediterranean.

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

Thomas — said to have gone to India — Mar Thomas Church.

Paul — See Romans 15:19. See also Col. 1:5-6 “in all the world.” See also Romans 10:16f. Col. 1:23 “every creature under heaven.”

### (ii) Post-Apostolic to 4th Century.

Persecution fanned the flames of zeal and large numbers pressed into the kingdom (see above). In these three centuries ten periods of persecution took place. In this time believers had gone to Edessa (in Modern Turkey). The Gospel spread as far as Persia to the east and northward to Armenia which received Christ (at present in Russia). Rome, Athens, Corinth were great cities of the Christian faith. The Gospel spread to France, Germany, Spain, even to England. In Africa Alexandria became a great influential city of Christianity, and the Gospel spread to the Berbers, some reaching the edge of the Sahara Desert. It also went southward to Ethiopia where the Coptic church was established, which remains until today. Whilst persecution often drove Christians, literally, underground, yet the Gospel flourished even more.

### (iii) From Constantine to Carey.

#### (a) From 4th Century to 800 A.D.

Following Constantine's espousal of Christianity the Gospel became popular — its downfall. Nevertheless, although hordes of pagans swept into the Church and elements of syncretism dulled the clear outlines of the Gospel, yet the **Gospel continued its outreach**. At this point we have to study, **closely, church-history**. The advance or rule of the Roman empire came to mean the conversion, often, of people to Christianity by the sword. Vast areas came under the Gospel. Europe gradually became Christian, and the Gospel spread far into the east, reaching even Japan, China, India, and other middle-east countries. The big thing, at this time was the consolidation of the Gospel in Europe.

In the 7th century Islam arose, and immediately posed a great threat to Christianity, partly because it was composed of a mixture of pagan, Jewish and Christian elements, and yet being entirely different to the religions from which it had drawn. Mahomet died in 632, but within centuries Islam, at the point of the sword had overpowered Persia, Asia Minor, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa and Spain.

#### (b) 800 to 1500 A.D.

The vital consolidation of Europe took place in the Scandinavian countries, e.g. Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Greenland. Also in the Slavic countries — Bohemia, Bulgaria, Moravia, Hungary, Poland. The Germanic country of Prussia extended the previous Germanic missionary outreach. Russia invited the faith to come and then came under the Christian religion.

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

### (c) **The Period of the Reformation to Carey.**

(i) Europe was caught in the vortex of the Reformation in the 16th and 17th centuries. The great leaders of the Reformation—Luther, Calvin, Molanoton, Zwingli, Knox seemed to have no great thought of outward missionary movement. They were occupied in their conflicts with the Roman church and in consolidating, theologically and ecclesiastically the gains of the Reformation.

The Roman Church had its missionaries during this time. In just ten years of ministry Xavier baptised over one million persons. He ministered in India, Ceylon, Malacca, the Moluccas and other Islands. He also spent 2 years in Japan.

Immediately following the Reformation period colonisation began in the now areas of the world discovered. The Dutch, the English and the Danes followed the movements of colonisation to North America, South America, the West and East Indies, India and Ceylon. Some of these ministries were not effective, but without doubt the beginnings of missionary activity are within these actions. Often the companies of the countries undertook to evangelize the native peoples, but often with the sword. In Ceylon, for example the church was often made up of opportunists who varied in their faith from conqueror to conqueror — e.g. Roman Catholic with the Portuguese, then Protestant with the Dutch and then “Anglican” with the English.

### (iii) **An interesting development.**

Austrian noble. Baron Justinianus Von Welze. This man was an Austrian noble who made a strong appeal by two publications issued in 1664, arguing for evangelical Christianity to be extended to the heathen. He had three questions (i) Is it right that we evangelical Christians hold the Gospel for ourselves alone, and do not seek to spread it? (ii) Is it right that in all places we have so many students of theology and do not induce them to labour elsewhere in the spiritual vineyard of Jesus Christ? (iii) Is it right that we spend so much on all sorts of dress, delicacies in eating and drinking etc. but have not thought hitherto of means for the spread of the Gospel? His appeals brought no response, and finally he despaired of a response going off himself as a missionary to Dutch Guinea.

It was about this time that the Pietist movement had begun. Philip Spener, and August Francke taught that saving faith involves a complete transformation of the whole being through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. He sought to raise the spiritual life and level of the clergy as well as giving it theological substance. The concept of personal conversion was not absent from Reformation thinking but it had not been developed. The doctrine of the new birth, and the demand for an evidence of regeneration arose, as also a demand to live consistently with the new birth. The state churches were not seen as the centres of spiritual life, so much as the conventicles, which took over the prerogatives of the church as such. In these fellowship groups pietism flourished, and institutionalism was superseded. The missionary thrust was undoubtedly born through these groups, which accounts for the establishment of societies by groups of Christians, rather than by denominations.

The English puritan William Perkins, influenced the Dutch reform movement, which also gave emphasis to the idea of the “church within the church.” Such an emphasis constituted an attack upon nominalism in state churches, jolted formalism and complacency, and set a new fire burning. Francke’s influence in Halle became powerful

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

because he also accompanied his work with social and philanthropic work — schools for the poor, orphanages, a Bible School, a pharmacy and the Danish Halle mission to India. This kind of pietism was confirmed by good works, and its movement of directly exhorting repentance and holiness of life gave a power to ministry which had not been evident under the preaching of grace and justification. Receiving now life consciously others began to exhort to repentance and faith in Christ. The impetus for missionary activity became a solid fact. Francke's influence spread across Europe, into England and across to America. The Archbishop of Canterbury accepted two students from Halle who were to establish a Halle type school in London; several students went to study at Halle. Anton Bohme came to England, set up social programmes and translated letters from the Halle missionaries into English, and these were read by the mother of John Wesley—Susanna, and this kindled the first missionary interest in John Wesley.

### **Hornhut and Zinzendorf.**

The 17th Century passed, and the early 18th century saw an increase in pietism. Count Zinzendorf, a student of Francke gathered together Moravian brethren who had come out of the old Bohemian fellowship, and other refugees and founded the Herrnhut colony and in 1727 the Moravian brethren. Zinzendorf's idea was "walking together in company" or "fellowship is the foundation of religion." His people shared in preaching campaigns. Most of all this group emphasised the commission to preach the Gospel throughout the world. Missionaries began to go throughout the world. Two missionaries went to the Danish West Indies, working at their trades to support themselves. They moved into Greenland, Dutch Guinea, South America, then South Africa. They worked amongst the North American Indians and later in Labrador. They ministered in England, and later in South Africa, Australia, and on the borders of Tibet.

### **JONATHAN EDWARDS**

Edwards early in the 18th Century began preaching sermons on justification by faith. His grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, had been a minister in this New England (Northampton) church and had seen numerous revivals. In his "Strange Narrative of Conversions" he tells how the whole city became thoughtful and wherever people gathered it was on the basis of spiritual and eternal things. In six months some 300 real conversions took place and the movement spread. Later revivals also took place, but the significant thing was Edwards' writings on conversion. His "*A Treatise on the Religious Affections*" was published, and this seemed to break through the old Calvinistic view which did not give much emphasis to regeneration in the sense of direct preaching for direct results. Edwards was a great scholar, and today he is being more and more studied. He became President of Princeton College.

Someone has said "It was work amongst American Indians which drew forth from him a re-interpretation and a development of Calvin which brought out Calvinism's latent missionary impulse." What also was significant was that a young protegee of his—David Brainerd, worked for five glorious years amongst the Indians, and he too, saw wonderful revival. Edwards' biography of Brainerd—Brainerd died young of disease - greatly influenced Carey, Henry Martyn and others. Along with Edwards were men like Wesley and Whitefield. The latter preached in Edwards' church, and Edwards, and his wife were deeply impressed. Whitefield too, was a Calvinist.

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

**Whitefield** was one of the first to seek oneness in all denominations. In North America revival continued to grow. Hyper-Calvinism was being answered by the very clear and genuine results of evangelistic preaching.

In England also revivals were beginning to move forward under the ministry of men like Whitefield and Wesley. Moravian influence was strong, and indeed greatly assisted in Wesley's experience which changed him from a High-churchman to an itinerant evangelist. Whilst the Puritans had laid a good foundation in the previous century, and many of their works influenced those of the 18th Century, yet their teaching was to flower out in England, Wales, and Scotland through these new "methodists". Great men like William Grimshaw, William Romaine, Daniel Rowland, John Berridge, Henry Venn, William Fletcher and others. Other names like those of John Newton, Doddridge, Toplady, are associated with the great Evangelical Awakening. It was impossible that such evangelism, and revival should exist in Great Britain, and nothing happen from this.

### **WILLIAM CAREY,**

William Carey was deeply affected by Jonathan Edwards. He himself was a particular (Calvinistic) Baptist, and had to re-think his traditional theological position, and his writings can be best understood in the light of this- It was this that he questioned in the first and more theological part of his now famous "*Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen.*" He rightly saw it as one of the foremost obstacles to missionary outreach in his day, and in challenging it, he was to eventually change the whole attitude of the Protestant churches.

There is no doubt that the attitude of many had been changed by the Great Evangelical Awakening, and there was a better climate. A new philanthropy grew and concern for souls needed a clear outlet and opportunity and this Carey helped to provide as he worked to form in 1792 "The Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen." More than this, Carey had got across to the Protestant world that the Great Commission was still binding upon it, and that failure to engage in mission was nothing short of disobedience to the Lord Christ. At that time leader after leader was saying the same thing as Carey. Melville Horn, addressing ministers at this time said words which were to lead to the formation of the London Missionary Society — failure to engage in foreign missions he said was "the habitual open violation of Christ's command ... "without shame, and almost without effort to the contrary."

### **The Establishment of Missions.**

The formation of a Society scarcely raises a thought in our minds, certainly not an objection. We have to go back to Pietism, however to see the ecclesiology which allowed societies to do the work which, perhaps, churches ought to have done. In 1698 "The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge" had been formed. In 1701 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel," and these were to assist in the winning to the faith of Indians and Negro slaves in the British Colonies. America, in fact formed the first missionary society in 1649 — The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Now England. Carey's Society was formed in 1792 and he and Dr. John Thomas went to India in 1793. The L.M.S. was formed in 1795, and the Church Missionary Society in

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

1799. The British and Foreign Bible Society was formed in 1798, and the American Board of Missions in 1812.

### **The Great Century**

The work of the pietists — inspired by the puritans — found its fruits in the Great Evangelical Awakening, and thus in Carey's ministry. By the dawn of the new century the machinery was being well set up for a forward missionary drive. The principle of "mission" had been generally accepted.

Professor Latourette has called the 19th Century (1814-1914) the "Great Century." In this period Protestant missions flowered amazingly and virtually covered the whole earth. A number of elements combined to make such an expansion (i) The re-discovery of the Great Commission. This was of course coupled with the experience of regeneration and holiness of life which demanded obedience. (ii) The ecclesiology of the pietists often made them reject just the ministry of state-controlled churches, and they sought outlets in countries where their governments had not colonised. (iii) The colonisation movement around the world also brought with it missionary ministry which took the opportunities afforded them. (iv) Explorers like Livingstone opened up new areas for ministry, and pioneers like Hudson Taylor discovered the potential of a life of faith. (v) The acceptance by many denominations of the Westminster Confession's interpretation of the Bible as itself being the Word of God. (vi) Much of the German impetus came from the thought that Christ's coming would be brought in with the preaching of the Gospel to all nations. (vii) Further evangelistic ministry such as that of Moody with its emphasis upon outward response helped the tides to rise, and with it came the formation of the Student Christian Movement, and the Student Volunteer Movement with its watchword "The evangelisation of the world in this generation." This profoundly affected the last quarter of the Century.

At the beginning of the Student Volunteer Movement there was a meeting at Mount Hermon, Mass. at which 251 students from 87 colleges attended. Also present was Dr. William Ashmore of China, and in one of his addresses he said, "Show if you can why you should not obey the last command of Jesus Christ." No less than 100 students found that the only realistic response that they could give to such a challenge was to volunteer for missionary service. They became the first fruits of an unprecedented harvest of lives from the universities, and missionary societies found that their numbers of missionaries had doubled before the end of the century.

So by the year 1900 the Protestant denominations had accepted the principle of the Commission, of missionary responsibility, and the several hundreds of missionaries of 1815 had swelled to some 22,000 by 1914, and the Protestant churches were represented amongst almost every people. By 1910 the Bible had been translated into 500 languages, and this process has continued even more vigorously in the 20th century. Many countries coming under literacy found the Bible was the first thing they read, especially translated Gospel portions. The famous Edinburgh Conference brought delegates from many places of the world. It was the festival day of missionary thrust, and the fulfilment gloriously of William Carey's vision and hope. This "Great Century" closed on a note of triumph. The principle of missionary ministry had been accepted.

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

### THE PERIOD SINCE 1910.

It would be impossible to cover the vast expansion since 1910. This survey demands a vast coverage. There has been also a diversification of methods. Changing attitudes to the Bible with the advances of critical thinking; the growth of liberalism, the states of theological flux, and the vast movements towards syncretism in religion, the rejection of many of the principles of the Bible as enunciated by the former conservative Bible scholars, have all tended to produce a ferment in the missionary situation. At times the whole missionary movement has been called in question. The growth of humanism with its consequent effects upon the Church has even reached points where a synthesis of religions, that is to say their best features, has been called for, and the clearly defined goals of missions have been blurred with theological and liberal overtones. Evangelism as such has also been blurred. Definitive goals have given away to the pressures of a social gospel in which the function of the church has become one of serving rather than of saving.

The association of missions with western colonial expansion, the mistakes of missionaries in including culture changes and westernisation as part of their programmes has sometimes affected the image of the missionary movement. The resurgence of ancient and quiescent religions often made the tool of modern nationalisms, has thrown the whole missionary question into the melting pot. All these lines of development have made the study of missions/an exceeding complex one. Two world wars in which the image of the West has been depreciated, and by which the East has been virtually awakened have considerably altered the world picture. The progress of nationalism in Asia, Africa and the Pacific, in addition to revolutions in South America have all combined to make the position less static. Materialism that has encroached upon Islamic countries as oil has been discovered in the Middle East, and independence has been granted to many of the larger groups of Islamic people has changed the whole pattern of missionary participation.

There has been the growth of what are called “the younger churches.” These have grown as the result of church-planting and tending by missionary societies and denominations. Their origins are extremely complex — some of them coming out of mass movements, some of them having been greatly influenced by political, economic and social motivations. Many churches are forced to grow because of the removal of missionary or “older-church” aid. Nationalism has had its influence within the churches. Some churches are in countries where Communism and other nationalistic ideologies play a large part are unable to communicate with churches of other lands.

The ecumenical movement has been powerful in two areas. It has drawn leaders of all denominations to a common centre, and younger churches have participated in conferences and ecumenical gatherings. It has also been a means of assisting in many social causes. This has often helped the “image” of churches in the eyes of non-Christian groups. Alongside this movement have come moves for church-union, and in various parts of the world denominational mergers have taken place, and schemes for church-union have happened or being planned in countries which do not take denominational divisions too seriously.

This short survey is sufficient to show us how complicated is the present missionary situation. The image of the missionary as he was — sun-helmet, equipped with much

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

baggage and ninny servants, seeking to set up a mission station, and build up a work has rapidly faded in a progressive, education worshipping, technologically advancing world with the younger countries crying out for the larger share of modern progress and its amenities. The United Nations Organisation, and the relatively effective policing of modern international ambitions has withdrawn any form of “imperialistic” power or authority under which the missionary may have worked. He himself has to adapt to a modern age, fast-moving, which takes its own toll of him and he must be equipped to face the days as they are.

We are faced now, with the task of first sorting out a theology of missions so that we can formulate some kind of ecclesiology which can be adapted in changing patterns to constantly altering situations. Recognising a state of flux in the world we must, nevertheless be equipped with those principles by which we can work — however much we may have to adapt them.



## A THEOLOGY OF MISSIONS.

### 1. Introduction:

There are many reasons for Missions which we might adduce in an apologia for missionary action in history. Some which are readily put forward are the enlightenment of people in darkness, the social and moral uplift of nations, and aid in educational progress. Probably the history of missions — when worked out, will show that many of these results have been brought about through the missionary action of the church. Fine and valid as many of these purposes may be, they are not at the heart of the concept of mission. There are clear reasons why they cannot be — for example these very things are being done by non-Christian religions, however much they may have derived them from Christianity. Today governments are increasingly enlightened in their endeavours to help the underprivileged, and Communism has made social justice a “must” even if only to forestall the spread of that ideology. No, we must be at the heart of the matter and develop a theology of mission.

### 2. Mission is because God is on Mission:

#### (i) The Nature of God.

We have seen that God’s nature is shown in creation, and in the revelation of the Scriptures. This nature includes His divine sovereignty, that is He is Lord of the earth. History must climax in this sovereignty being effected completely. However His sovereignty is not apart from His attributes of love, holiness, goodness, righteousness, truth etc. His holiness demands holiness of man, as His righteousness demands unswerving obedience to His holy eternal law. His transcendence and His immanence naturally involve action on the part of evil which He cannot abhor but must destroy. For this reason He cannot be absentee landlord from His universe. Also His love is not distinct from His holiness. The Bible makes it clear that God has purposed in history to defeat and destroy sin, Satan, the world and the world powers and to redeem man from them. Whilst this is of the grace of God, His grace is not apart from His nature, and His nature demands wrath upon evil, and its destruction, and His love goes out to redeem the lost.

#### (ii) The “Lostness” of Man.

A Biblical anthropology of man is divided into three sections (a) Man in innocence. (b) Man fallen. (c) Man-in-Christ. Man fallen reveals his lostness because he cannot rise to help himself, nor does he have a will to so do. In his lostness he does not seek God, and it is needful that God seek him. God seeks man in His love, and His seeking is first to provide the way out of man’s sinful dilemma — salvation, but not able to accomplish it. It can be said, from the Biblical point of view that history is God’s careful plan of seeking lost man. It is not wrong to say that in this sense God has ever been on mission. Man, too has ever needed it in his lostness. The holiness and wrath of God make it impossible for man to justify himself, and only God can through the propitiation of the Cross — be “Just and the justifier of him who believes.”

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

### (iii) The Nature of the Gospel

- (a) **The Gospel is unique.** The Bible shows no other way of redemption (I Cor. 1:21, Rom. 10:14f, John 14:6p Acts 4:12). A negative way of stating the same thing is to say that non-Christian religions are inadequate. The Gospel of course includes the revelation rooted in the Bible. The Bible insists on man's lost and depraved condition, but points to the remedy in the death and victory of Christ. There is no other way but this.
- (b) **The Gospel is Rooted in Messiah.** Luke 4:17f shows that the Spirit came upon Christ for His Messianic acts. These involved His ministry, death, and resurrection. He was Messiah in order to liberate men and women from sin's bondage, and the dread penalty of sin — hell, and the wrath of God. None but Messiah (saviour) could do this. None but He can do this. This is what makes the Gospel, of itself, universal.
- (c) **The Gospel is God's Love.** "God so loved the world" makes the Gospel universal — i.e. for all the world. It is His love which the Holy Spirit floods into men's hearts, as He reveals the Cross. Love gives quietness to the "desperate conscience." This makes it imperative that it be preached.
- (d) **The Gospel redeems man.** By the Gospel (and in no other way) is man justified—acquitted of guilt. He is also forgiven, cleansed of sin's pollution, and renewed (regenerated) by new birth. The processes of sanctification commence in him, being completed at his glorification. The Gospel is eschatological in this sense that it looks to the end when man shall be redeemed from the presence of sin, and his spiritual (moral) transformation be complete. This, apart from the Gospel cannot be effected. If the Gospel is eschatological (see Kingdom, below) then it is vitally linked with history. Nothing of the present (in history) is irrelevant. In this sense the redeeming Gospel calls for universal proclamation.
- (e) **The Incarnation is Purposeful.** The Gospel does not just exist in a vacuum. The "Word became flesh" has altered the course and meaning of man's activity. We saw clearly that the Incarnation was with a view to the Crucifixion (redemption). It also involved, however the resurrection, and Christ is become the first-fruits of them that slept. Man will be raised bodily because Christ has come into flesh. It is the Son of man Who judges not just the Logos, or (un-incarnate) Son. His taking on flesh—whatever may be, and including, the aim—has given all incarnate life a new look. The Gospel gives dignity to men through restoration, and the Gospel is linked with man's bodily being in a way denied by many philosophic religions, and by Greek philosophy.
- (f) **The Gospel Gives New Life, and a New Way of Living to Man.** If man is changed by the Gospel—and this not just a devised psychological system operating on discovered techniques and behaviour mechanisms, then the Gospel is not only unique (see (ii) (a) above) but indispensable to redeem man, not only from ultimate destruction but the present powers that — by virtue of coming wrath work upon the spirit of man. In other words, if this Gospel renews man, then man must have this Gospel, or at least the opportunity to reject it. If it works (in regeneration) in the depths of him, then he must have it.

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

### **(iv) “No Other Name” — the Inadequacy of Non-Christian Religions.**

A corollary to the claim that the Gospel is unique is the inference that other religions are not unique. This does not mean that they are not fine systems of thought, nor even brilliant systems of religion, nor that certain elements of ethics are not commendable, or even enlightening. It simply means that they are not the way to God. That this fact must be included in a theology of missions is quite clear because the concept of the Gospel's unique nature has been attacked. The Madras Conference in 1938 was divided over this issue. The Bible claims that the truth is revelational. Other religions spring from what we might call “religious consciousness.” In an age when tolerance of all views is held, it seems strongly intolerant to claim that only Christianity is unique and saving. We must recognise that, in fact, tolerance is not really existent. A communist is intolerant of religion, a radical of a conservative. The centres of tolerance and intolerance have shifted. Man's innate desire to be right, and insist on his rights has not really changed. If the revelatory nature of the Christian faith is proved to be false then its contribution becomes only one of many. If its truth has been arrived at by evolutionary progress, then it can be superseded, probably by a matter of time. Until the revelational nature of the Bible, rooted in the acceptance and insistence by Christ Himself is shown to be wrong, the Gospel, of itself must clearly involve the missionary imperative — in fact the imperative of love. The nature of the Gospel, then — to sum up this section — is itself the basic theology of mission. Many elements which are involved in this we have had to leave through pressure of time, yet they are so instructed to the Gospel that the more the Gospel is studied the more it is apparent, that even without a Commission the Gospel must be preached to all peoples.

### **(v) The Nature of the Church.**

It is clear that the church, when vital, has instinctively gone out preaching. A study of the book of Acts, and the contemporary Epistles show us that the church denies its own nature and inherent function when it does not proclaim. We base this claim upon the following factors:

- (a) The church is empowered by the Spirit Whose ministry is to glorify Christ, and to pour the love of God into the hearts of (now) redeemed men and women.
- (b) The Holy Spirit structures the church in unity and engifts it so that its inner life may be strengthened to proclaim Christ — and to “hold forth the Word of life.” The fellowship, love and unity of the Church are part of the kerugma itself, as they are the “kerugma-in-effective-action.”
- (c) The Church being the Body of Christ, the Bride, the Temple, the Family has a natural function. It is action of Christ in the world. It is the social corporate being of redeemed humanity. It is the instrument to save men and women and to build them up in the faith. It is the Body by which Christ works out His plan for history. As history culminates in the marriage of the Bride and of the Lamb (the Spirit and the Bride say “Come”) then the action of the Church is with a view to this end.
- (d) The church is salt, light etc. all elements which purify, effect and preserve. Society is not damaged by the church—only society's evil. The church is not God's “social unit”, but it brings a powerful effect upon society. If the “servant-nature” of the church is pressed, the answer is that it serves to save. Man's eternal destiny, whilst not unrelated to the present world, is what matters

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

more than present life in this world. “The best citizen of time is the citizen of eternity” holds true.

- (e) The church is linked with the Kingdom of God. Whilst the two are not co-equal, or co-extensive, yet they are closely related. To preach the Kingdom of God is to preach the Gospel, and to bring men and women into the Gospel. The Kingdom has an “end” view, i.e. it is eschatological, and the church too has an “end-view.” When the Gospel is preached to every kingdom, then shall the “end” come.

### (vi) The Nature of the Holy Spirit.

As we have seen above, the Holy Spirit was the agent of Christ’s ministry. He is also the Messianic and Covenant gift, being poured from the throne of the Ascended, Reigning Lord. He has been poured out “upon all flesh.” His coming makes the Word of the Cross (see “Nature of Gospel” above) and makes it communicated in power to men. Wherever the Spirit is, there is proclamation. Since the Spirit structures and empowers the Church, and engifts it, then proclamation is by the Spirit. He indwells the church as it were a temple. He glorifies Christ, bringing conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment to the world. The early church came into being by His coming (at Pentecost). The church was empowered in all its ministry, and personally guided by the Spirit. Since God is on mission the Holy Spirit is on mission He Himself “hath been sent forth into our hearts”, but He communicates the mission of the Son. He brings repentance, faith, forgiveness, regeneration, justification, adoption and sanctification. This means that the Holy Spirit cannot be in the world, and mission not exist. It is by virtue of Him, for the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and so acts as they act, and their action is thus in and through Him. In one sense the Spirit may be said to flow from the Cross, and He is for the “healing of the nations.” It is the sword of the Spirit which proceeds from the mouth of the conquering Son which shall smite the nations. His power takes the church to the “uttermost part.” No matter how much the church may decay, apostasise, become dull and decadent **the spirit will** not abide the dullness, but will — in His way, and anyway — proceed with the work of glorifying Christ. We may easily read church history as the manifold action of the Spirit, building up churches but never marking time when they do. Old patterns established give way to the new and exciting acts of the Spirit. Whilst the Spirit is, there will always be mission. We do not have to make it so: because of the Spirit it is so.

### 3. The Attacks Upon the Theology of Mission.

Whilst there was a rediscovery of the theology of mission in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the high peak of that action of mission was witnessed in the 20th century, it has remained for the 20th century to produce the most devastating attacks upon the theology of mission. To recount these fully is outside the scope of this study. We have, however to hand the “*Wheaton Declaration*” (Made at Wheaton USA 9th — 16th April, 1966). This should be closely studied. Elements which attack the basic theology of mission are given as follows in the declaration:

- (i) **syncretism**. “..the attempt to unite or reconcile biblically revealed Christian truth with the diverse or opposing tenets and practices of nonChristian religions or other systems of thought that deny it. Alarming are the deviant and heretical views within Christendom advocating a depersonalised theism acceptable to religions of

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

East and West. Such syncretism denies the uniqueness and finality of Christian truth.”

- (ii) **Neo-Universalism.** “The teaching of universalism which we reject states that, because Christ died for all, He will sovereignly and out of love bring all men to salvation. It proclaims the final and essential unity of the human race, which will never be broken, now or in the future, by God or by man. All mankind is “reconciled”; those who have met Christ have an advantage over those who have not, but it is a difference in degree not in principle. If men do not believe the Gospel in this life — even if they reject it — their guilt and punishment will be ultimately removed. They are simply not conscious of the riches they possess.”
- (iii) **Contemporary Protestant Movements.** “that boldly contend for the nonexistence of the gospel revealed by God, that propagate a neo-universalism. denying eternal condemnation, that substitute inter-church reconciling service for aggressive evangelism, that blur the biblical distinction between “Church” and “Mission”, between Romanism and Protestantism, and that create ecclesiastical organisations moving in the direction of a worldwide monopoly, likewise demand a careful assessment and response.”
- (iv) **Pseudo-Christian cults** that feed on man’s innate desire for spiritual authority, in their intensive efforts to subvert the faith on untaught Christians, and in their deceitful parading of themselves as the true followers of Christ, likewise demand a careful assessment and response.
- (v) **Non Christian religious** systems such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism in their new missionary vigour, pose an oppressive threat to the growth of the church, and likewise demand careful assessment and response.

## THE EARLY CHURCH AND MISSIONARY METHODS

### 1.INTRODUCTION:

It is difficult for us to project ourselves back into the early church situation. It is also difficult for us to imagine that the churches did not worship in exactly the manner that we do. For example 1 Cor. 14 gives us a picture of charismatic life, worship and action. As we have seen the Holy Spirit gave gifts by which the church was internally strengthened that it might go out to evangelise. We find in the early chapters of Acts that multitudes were added to the church, and mainly, it seems, through the powerful and effective witness of the local church.

Whilst to us it seems legitimate to transfer our church patterns to other lands, yet in a very real way they may not be apostolic, and indeed because of traditions and cultural elements will be exotic to another land. Books such as Nida's "*Customs and Cultures*" and "*Message and Mission*" show us the errors we have made. In order then to approach the matter of missionary activity and expansion, and that of church-founding and church building we should have some principles by which to work. These principles we will expect to find in the New Testament, both in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles.

Churches and societies of many countries have learned by experience the failures they can make, and through failures have learned to adapt. However the adaptation is not always a good one, nor a correct one. In working out these principles we must remember

- (i) The Apostolic principles should be discovered and adhered to.
- (ii) The outworking of these in a modern age must require adaptation, as we see the background of the apostolic age, and the background of this age. Indeed adaptation may vary from area to area etc.
- (iii) We must understand that the Holy Spirit is working as ever He was. To find a pattern is one thing; it may not always be the time for such to be utilised, and the voice of the Spirit must be heard in every situation.

An historical fact is that in 1868 a person named Roland Allen was born. In 1892 he was accepted by the SPG (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) and for ten years laboured as a missionary in China. He returned to become a parish priest and for forty years afterwards was a voluntary clergyman or "part-time priest." He wrote two books which were designed to utterly change missionary thinking. His first book — published in 1912 was "*Missionary Methods, St. Paul's or Ours?*". His second book, published in 1927 was "*The Spontaneous Expansion of the Christian Church and the Causes which Hinder it.*" Roland Allen told his son that these books would be recognised about 1960. He himself died in 1949, but by that time they had become famous and their principles were being utilised by some societies. It is a mistake to think that Allen alone had discovered these ideas. Even back in the 18th Century such ideas were known, and the Church Missionary Society had committed itself to such principles. A man who greatly appreciated Allen was Donald McGavran, a missionary in India who was involved in some of the mass-movements in conversion. He has written in the same vein "*The*

## MISSIONARY PRINCIPLES

*Bridges of God—a Study in the Strategy of Missions,*” and also “*How Churches Grow—The New Frontiers of Mission.*”

What is the theme and theory behind these books? It is this:- God is concerned for a lost world. Having completed the work of redemption in Christ He does not leave His world to His servants who are expected to carry on as best they can, and who may, from time to time lapse in this work. These writers posit that God is ever at His work, through the Holy Spirit. He works, however in certain ways, many of which are definable. We however work according to certain patterns which are not truly scriptural, or with a mixture of scriptural and nonscriptural. It is for us to seek to work as we find the early beginnings of the church. At the same time we should recognise that the “wind bloweth where it willeth”, and so we should also try to discern patterns as they work out. God is Lord of history. He is building His church. We must trust Him, and His Holy Spirit. We must not simply seek to reproduce the kinds of patterns we have back here at home. Further selected writings of Allen have been published called “The Ministry of the Spirit” and these high-light to the action of the Spirit in the building up of the church, and in the work of evangelism.

One of our difficulties is that we do not recognise in accepted missionary patterns that there is much which is not truly scriptural, and that we are thereby hindering a more spontaneous action of the Spirit. Some of these things we will try to discover. Perhaps it should be added that an even more challenging and demanding book has been written by Dr. H.R. Boer called “*Pentecost and Missions*” his theme being that the great thrust of missionary activity always follows where the Holy Spirit is poured out, and where His loadings are sensed and followed.