

A missional understanding of the church, its ministry, especially with regards to its Christ centric liturgical reorientation

ABSTRACT

*This article shows the necessary shift in missional thinking from the functional approach in most congregational studies to create purpose and consumer driven congregations to a foundational approach based on the church being an agent of the *missio dei*. This switch in rethinking the essential, basic missional identity of the church necessitates a rethinking of*

- *the Trinitarian scope of all theology, whereby it is essentially based in the gospel of the salvific revelation of the triune God, what He has done and is doing in history;*
- *the fact that a missional ecclesiology should assist the move from an ecclesio centric view to a theo-centric and theo-dynamic view of the church, based on the *missio dei* as the foundational source of its identity;*
- *the total ministry of the church being rooted in its proclamation of the Word of God with the gospel of Jesus Christ as its hermeneutic focus; and*
- *a missional liturgy which provides the energy and spaces where the change to a missional practice can be experienced and celebrated.*

1. THE SWITCH FROM AN ECCLESIOCENTRIC UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION TO A PROFOUNDLY THEOCENTRIC RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF MISSION – OR FROM FUNCTIONALISM AND MISSIONALISM TO A FUNDAMENTAL MISSIONAL ENTERPRISE

A study and research project, inaugurated by the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America in the late 1980s sought fresh answers to the problems regarding the missional challenge of the churches in North America in the midst of crises confronted in the so-called post-modern 21st century (for a description of this programme, see van Gelder 1999: xivf; Guder 1998 and Nieder-Heitmann 2001: 11f). It asked the *basic, the foundational and radical (referring to its roots)* question: how a missional ecclesiology and ministry are shaped by the ongoing missional action of God as recorded in Scripture and witnessed to in Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit and in the worldwide witness of the churches in every culture and every time, moving toward the promised consummation of God's salvation in the *eschaton*. It stressed a *foundational* point of entry into the theology of the church and its ministry, thereby developing an ecclesiology based on the *missio dei*. As Guder states: "We have come to see that mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather, mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation" (1998:4). Bosch understands the classical doctrine of the *missio dei* to mean that mission must be "derived from the very nature of God...Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world" (1991:390). *This foundational point of entry represents deliberate shifts in all aspects of our understanding of the church and its ministry, a shift from an ecclesio centric to a theo centric theology. This article will try to demonstrate the full implications of this shift.*

In the *ecclesio centric approach* mission is regarded as an important, but *only* one of the many programmes of the church. The missionary task and missionary enterprises

is then regarded to be one of the many mandates of the church. In a broader sense, many forms of congregational studies on church growth and management are based upon a *functional or organisational* description of the church, i.e. defining the church in terms of its accomplishments, its structures, its decision-making processes, its organisational dynamics and management skills in order to be effective and relevant (Nieder-Heitmann 2001: 28f calls this an example of “doing” theology and ecclesiology. In general see Carrol, Dudley & McKinney 1986; Hybels & Hybels 1995; Warren, 1993. For a critique of this approach, see Guder 1998: 145f) It is strongly motivated by the goal of growth in membership and of developing attractional services. Mission is considered as a function of the church with an aim to extend the church or plant it in new places – and this became the determining and the guiding goal of all missionary enterprise. In short, it is a *purpose driven church*, reducing the church to a set of effective ministries – amongst others, mission becomes a function of the purpose driven church (van Gelder 2000:30; see 23f on the focus on organisational approach; on the “sickness” of purpose drivenness see Hall 2007:35 and MacDonald 2007:39f, calling it “the dangers of missionalism”). In all this, the church is defined in terms what the church has to do, how it must function and be organised in order to be effective.

In the *more theo centric approach* the church is defined in terms of its biblical nature, its identity, its essence. In short, in a more *foundational* way, the missional church is described as a people of God, created by the Spirit to live as a unique, distinct missional community, serving as an agent of and rooted in the *missio dei* in every time and place. Mission is not an important function of the church: *mission is inherent in the very nature of the church*. A missional church is not opposed to functional effectiveness, but gives *priority* to the fundamental theo centric approach: the church must *do* what it is *basically in essence*; and only then the church should organise what it does – and organise it well.

Nieder-Heitmann seeks a middle position: a critical dialogue between the two approaches should develop into “an ecclesiological congruence” between the two, between an ecclesiological emphasis on method and task (the functional) and the basic foundational emphasis on missional identity (his 2001: 1,10, 95, 110. For a critical discussion of the two approaches, see Guder 1994; 145f). *But as stated above, the critical dialogue can only take place when the priority of the foundational is honoured.*

The rethinking of the missional identity of the church which Arbuckle (1993) calls the “refounding of the Church” will require also a rethinking and reshaping of the theological, ecclesiological, ministerial and liturgical shifts required to transform a consumption driven church into a missional church. We will try to do this in the rest of the article.

2. THE REQUIRED THEOLOGICAL SHIFT

2.1. Basically a missional theology is a Trinitarian, theo-logical, theo-practical and theo-dynamic view of God’s *missio dei*. In the heart of a missional theology is the gospel of God’s love in Jesus Christ, of the mysterious movement of the Holy Spirit in realizing the inbreaking Kingdom of God (John 3: 1 – 16; actually the whole Gospel of John expresses this inherent relationship between the kingdom of God and the mission of the apostolate; see in general Ridderbos 1962). Missional theology is essentially based in the gospel of the salvific revelation of the triune God, of what he has done and is doing in history. “A missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God’s mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, to restore it to what God has always intended for the world. Missional churches see themselves not so much sending, as being sent. A missional congregation let God’s mission

permeate everything that the congregation does – from worship to witness” (Barret 2004: x). A missional theology therefore uses symbols and language as thick descriptions to fit these salvific actions and continuing presence of God (see Geertz 1973: 6 and Walzer 1994: xi on such “thick descriptions” of the sacred in history). This theological shift will be demonstrated in expressions how and where the real presence of this God is experienced, telling where and how He acts in the church and in the world; in which practices of the church and society this presence is realised, manifested – or disregarded, neglected, abused....

2.2. Missional theology manifests this distinct missional identity and vocation of the church through whom God wants to show his salvific presence in the world. “Being a missional church is all about a sense of identity, shared pervasively in a congregation that knows it is caught up into God’s intent for the world” (Barret 2004: 36). It issues in a missional call to humble service to God and his *missio dei*. Thereby it redefines success, vitality, relevance, etc in terms of faithfulness to God’s calling and his Trinitarian sending. No grand program and ambitious activism or a vision of the church to change the world or evangelise it lie at the heart of “doing” missional theology. Mission is not recruitment. No! - it is a call to service, to discipleship. Over against the stress the usual theology of missions placed on human initiatives, strategies, efforts, organisations in missionary work, missional theology underlines the *missio dei* as the source and dynamic of all missionary enterprise. Quite rightly Barth moved the theological basis of Christian mission away from the doctrine of the church or the doctrine of salvation to the doctrine of Trinity. Mission is therefore *primarily* not an activity of the church, but an attribute of God (see his 1958: 125 and especially par 69, 72). Guder (1998: 81) showed clearly that since the 1950s there was a clear “shift from an *ecclesio centric* view of mission to a *theo centric* one... [stressing] the *missio Dei* as the foundation for the mission of the church” (see also Hunsberger & van Gelder 1996, and Newbigin 1964.). Bosch was a clear avant-garde exponent of this switch: “God is a missionary God... Mission is a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission... To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love towards people” (Bosch 1991: 390; see 494 on the *missio dei*).

2.3. Nussbaum (2005: 96) says that when mission is thus recognised as God’s mission, with the triune God both as its source and owner, it has three implications: mission is larger than the church, God may work outside the established church; the church is derived from mission, therefore mission cannot be incidental to the life of the church; and, mission cannot be reduced to conversion aimed at enlarging church membership. God has larger and wider things in mind! This “doing” theology is a radical shift from what the church has to do to what God does and wants to do in the world, in and through his church. In this theological shift there is a direct relationship between the view of God, the view of the church and the view of the world and its culture, as will be argued later.

3. THE IMPLICATIONS OF A MISSIONAL THEOLOGY FOR ECCLESIOLOGY

The switch to a missional theology must of necessity give rise to a *missional ecclesiology*, dealing with the *missio dei* as the foundational source of the identity of the church as missional church. It is radically important for a missional theology to assist the move from an ecclesio centric view to a theo centric view of the church. There is an inherent tension between an ecclesio centric view of the church concentrating on being “our” church, a club governed by “our” rules of success – and a church governed by God and our obedience to the movement

of His Spirit, “wherever it pleases” Him to go (see John 3: 8). “Nicht das Handeln von Menschen, sondern das Handeln Christi schafft die Kirche; nicht die Präsenz von Menschen, sondern die Gegenwart Christi macht die jeweilige Zusammenkunft zur Kirche” (Huber 1979:6 1). This ecclesiology deals with the church as agent of the all-inclusive *missio dei*, it deals with the location and shape of the church, of its witness, vision and its practices and finally it deals with the type of community it nourishes (see also Guder 1998 :11f describing a missional ecclesiology as biblical, historical, eschatological and translatable in practice).

3.1 If the identity of the church is described by and located in the *missio dei*, then all ecclesiology is basically missional ecclesiology, referring to the church as the *missio dei* in practice. The missional church represents as an agent for this mission of God’s encounter with human history and culture. This encounter is manifested in the all encompassing history of salvation as witnessed to in Holy Scriptures and in the tradition of God’s people through all ages. This history of salvation became visible in the incarnated life and ministry of Christ, described as *eu-angelion*, the good news attested to by the Holy Spirit in the church . Therefore: mission cannot be only a (probably important!) compartment of the church. Church and mission are not two separable concepts (as expressed by the possibility of a missionless church and/or of a churchless mission): they are *inseparable* parts of the one gospel of the triune God calling the church to the “one hope, the one faith in obedience to the one Lord” (Ephesians 4:4,5). Any ecclesiological effort to label some churches as sending missionaries and other as receiving the missionaries as so-called “daughter churches” (so well-known in the South African church history!) is an ecclesiological heresy!.

3.2 The missional church is therefore an instrument, agent and sign of the in-breaking reign of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, a reign that lies at the heart of the gospel. The missional church centres on the proclamation and manifestation of this in-breaking reign: it proclaims the whole gospel to the whole world. The Kingdom as God’s “redemptive reign has profound implications for our understanding of the nature of the church... is also central to a proper understanding of a missiological ecclesiology” (van Gelder 2000: 75; see his whole chapter 4 on the church and the redemptive reign of God; and Ridderbos 1962:334 -396; Kung 1967: 41 – 104). The reign of God initiates the church as its representative, as its servant-community, as its messenger. Although the church can never be *separate* from this reign of God, it is not *identical* with it. It is only a sign, a pointer, a foretaste, a glimpse of the new creation in the midst of the old and of evil powers as will be argued in 3.3 (see on this: Guder, 1998: 97f; Ridderbos 1962: 354 and Hoekendijk 1966: 43). The being, doing and speaking of the missional church must always be signs of the coming reign, as being “already” present and “not yet”. The church is therefore still an incomplete expression of the Kingdom, still a flawed witness to it – and if the church wants to remain faithful to its missional calling, it has to look critically at its shortcomings and flaws in proclaiming and presenting this reign of God.

3.3 Being an agent of the reign of God, implies that the church is enveloped in a power struggle with the powers and principalities of the surrounding contexts (see Ephesians 6:12). The children of the Kingdom has to participate in this redemptive drama, has to form and constitute in this world a new redemptive community that lives by God’s power in and through the presence of the Holy Spirit. “The kingdom of God is not just about ideas or words; it is also about power and confrontation”(van Gelder 2000:83). The church is called to be this community, not controlled by idolatrous powers, not conformed to the common sense of the

surrounding culture, but shaping its life and ministry around the life and message of Jesus Christ. The reality of the kingdom implies a nonconforming engagement with the world, which in turn determines the nature of its total ministry (see Romans 12:2; Mark 8:34; on the *parokkia* of the Church, see Theron 1997: 256f; Placher 1994:161f; and in general Elliot 1982 and Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*, 1951). The *redemptive* reign of God *over all creation* (Colossians 1:15) must be implemented by the church as the first fruits of God's eschatological harvest (the meaning of Pentecost, see Acts 2) In this respect, however, we must stress that it is not the task of the church so much to build, extend, promote or establish the kingdom – but in the first place to *receive it, enter into it*. In the process of seeking the Kingdom, it must then actively work to *inherit it* (Matthew 6: 33, 25: 34; Luke 18: 17 – 30).

3.4 Being the sign of the universal and eschatological reign of God, the church is described in the New Testament as the *body of Christ, the local embodiment* of the eschatological household of God. The church in Ephesus is described as the body of Christ over which He reigns as head (1:22f); as “members of God's household.... built up as a holy temple in the Lord” (2:19f) – “built up as body of Christ ... reaching up to the unity of faith” (4:12f). This means that the church is God's property, in which Christ is the head: therefore all authority in the church comes from Christ (see Matthew 10:1 and 28:18). Thereby He forms and authorises the church as a missional community with a missional vocation. This missional assignment to his body is local, specific and geographic (see Acts 1.8f). “Its meeting place (‘the House of the Lord’) and its residency, family by family, lie within a specific, poor, and socially rugged neighbourhood, marked by boundaries of roads, ravines and political units. The move to that place ... was a conscious one” (Barret 2004: 39; see in general Schreiter 1985). The metaphor of the church as body of Christ stresses this concrete, tangible, visible presence of the church in the world as evidence of the gospel of Christ – at the same time remembering “that the process of missional organisation is always to be carried out in realistic interaction with the distinctive cultural context within which the people of God respond to God's sending” (Guder 1998 :222). As body of Christ, its witness has always the form of a *translated and contextual witness*. The translation of the gospel into particular cultural contexts is required in order that the witness to Jesus Christ becomes culturally multilingual. A missional church has continually to learn how to translate the language of faith into the language of its particular context (on this see Newbigin 1989: 97 – 102, 141 – 154; Sanneh 1989: 1 – 8; and Walls 1996: 26f). This is what Barret calls the “catalytic moment” in ecclesiological discernment, stating that churches “are what they are today, and that is different from what they were yesterday or what they will be tomorrow”(2004:42). At the same time, we have to remember that missional discernment has to remain in continuous dialogue with the tradition of the church. This is of extreme importance for the missional identity of the congregation : in this dialogue, the church has to realise that missional engagement of its tradition with new contexts has to test, refine and redefine, in the end and where necessary, to reform that tradition as new missional potential is discovered in every time and place. Close-reading of the tradition, history and culture will therefore be of extreme importance in developing new missional and liturgical practices.

3.5 The integral relationship between missional theology, ecclesiology and missional practice determines the shape and image of the church *as missional church* in every generation, context and culture (on the missional *models* of the church see van Gelder 1999: 148f and also 2000: 168f; Bosch 1991: 369f; Nussbaum 2005:115f and Brueggemann 1997: 99f). A missional congregation does not only discern the vocation of the whole church, but also its vocation

in its own place and time – and this has deep-rooted implications for its specific shape and witness in every place and time. To be missional determines the character and direction of the church, what the church is and where it is going.

3.6 All these factors determining the basic missional ecclesiology, mentioned so far, again determines its *witness, the ethos, the practices and disciplines it nourishes*. The missional congregation is the overall setting in which the gospel proclamation materialises, that is where it can be heard, but also seen and felt, especially in the way Christians behave toward one another. It will be often a case of “crossing boundaries” in the existing patterns (see Barret 2004:86 and van Gelder1999; xvi on seeing the new location of the church on the margins as its missional opportunity). When existing boundaries are crossed and new frontiers are seen as opportunities, calling for creative innovation, it assist the church to embody new practices of mutual care, reconciliation, lovingly listening to one another and becoming accountable and hospitable to the so many strangers in our modern social, economic and political marketplaces (see Keifert 1992). In its witness, its critique of existing attitudes in church and society, expressing the hopes of the gospel and creating islands of hope, the missional church models and proclaims a different way of life, modelled on the way of Christ (on the church in the power of the Holy Spirit, see Moltmann1977 as well as Coenie Burger 1999 and Nieder-Heitmann’s comments on Burger in his 2001: 99f).

3.7 This missional ecclesiology also determines *the type of community* it establishes and maintains: *as the setting in which the gospel proclamation, the total missio dei materialises*. “In, with, and through this community, by its intricate web of relationships and patterns of social behaviour, the gospel of the reign of God is declared” (Barret, 2004: 85). The public proclamation (Paul refers in 2 Corinthians 4:2 to it as the “open statement of the truth”) is heard believably “only where there is a gospel-formed community to manifest it visibly” (Barret: 85). As the household of God the community of faith does not exist for itself but for God’s mission, the setting in which He makes his presence felt and known. The church is indeed a very distinct social community, reconciled to God and to one another: a people of God, a body of Christ, a communion of saints (Romans 9: 25,26; 12:4,5; 1 Corinthians 1:9). As God’s *ecclesia*, as his elect (1 Peter 1:2) the missional church grapples with the congregational, cultural, ethical and structural implications of this divine calling and setting: as God’s elect they are a distinct, unique community, aliens in the surrounding world, a contrast community, a holy nation (1 Peter 1:1f, see in detail Hauerwas & Willimon 1989 and Elliot 1981). The missional church is indeed *ecclesia crucis* where a theology of “Christian awkwardness...and disengagement from dominant cultures” are practised, without abandoning society, as such (see Hall 1996: 198f and Dietterich 1996: 347f on a faithful and effective ecclesiology). Modelling themselves on Christ’s disciple-community, they seek primarily the coming of the Kingdom and establishment of signs of it and thereby becoming willing to be transformed and renewed into agents of this Kingdom (Matthew 6;33 and Romans 12:2). This places the community *at risk* because the dominant cultures often resist the manifestations of the contrast community – it can even be dangerous, like in the early centuries (see 1 Corinthians 4:8,9). But called to proclaim the praises of God and his *missio dei* (1Peter 2:9), *they do not do this by living in “splendid isolation”*. Living as aliens is not living in a fatal exclusiveness but living as church for others, indeed as a church *of* others, *with* others! It is indeed a company *of* strangers (Palmer1991), a community of the poor (see fully Bosch1991:434f: it is a community “ hearing the cry of the hungry and exploited who demand bread and justice...”). It is a community of presence with the poor and

the weak, creating generosity to those on the edges of society.

3.8 There is a *linkage between missional identity and proclaiming God's reign in an ecumenical sense all over the world, that is proclaiming God's mysterious rule at work around the world and through history*. Missional renewal leads to more than mere institutional ecumenism; it leads to seeking new ways of connecting and interacting beyond existing patterns. This basic ecumenical identity of the church, expressed by the unity of the church is demonstrated in the missional outreaches in New Testament times (see especially Acts, Galatians and Ephesians). This was repeated in the creeds of the church as van Gelder quite rightly states that the Nicene creed is clearly "both catholic and local, universal and contextual...foundational and missionary, authoritative and sent" (2000: 118f).

3.9 This finally leads to the *relation of the Christian church to other faith communities*. Bosch (1991:483f) underlined the following rules in connection with the relation to other faiths: accepting the co-existence of different faiths willingly; in dialogue with them expecting to meet the God who has also been working in them; and, admit that Christianity does not have all the answers. This missiological directive of an honest discourse with other faith communities needs to be worked out in the 21st century.

4. THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF THE MISSIONAL CHURCH

4.1 The ministry of the missional church is firmly rooted in its *Christological foundation*. "The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord" has been confessed and sung by the church through its history, in good and especially in bad times. This has to be expressed in every branch of its public ministry.

4.2 Especially in the Calvinistic tradition the Christian church is seen as a *creatio verbi*: and then in terms of *the unity of the verbum audible and verbum visible, as proclaimed and as obeyed in the church*. "Dass die Kirche durch das Wort Gottes begründet und gebaut wird, wo und wann das auch immer sei, ist deshalb das entscheidende, unaufgebbare Charakteristikum eines evangelischen, ja man muss auch sagen: eines christlichen Kirchenverständnisses" (Huber1979:61). The Holy Spirit who inspired the Word is also the guarantee of the *efficax verbi*. This centrality of the Bible as containing the good news of the gospel (Jonker1976: 58f on the sermon as preaching of the gospel of the text) has in the ministry of the church a continuing, energising, formative, and where necessary, a converting role in the church as missional church. This proclamation as a rehearing of the Word and of the gospel must lead the ministry of the church in every age to *retrace its ministry* back to its roots, experiencing what initiated, made and still makes the church and drives it forward to the end of times. "Becoming a missional congregation can be described as a process of biblical formation and discipling. The missional transformation of a congregation is directly related to the priority assigned to the Bible and the way in which the Bible shapes that community" (Barret 2004:59,61). There is, however, a *real* problem: a congregation can have a Bible-centred ministry, can experience so-called biblical preaching but not be a congregation that practices its overarching missional calling. The ministry can easily be regarded as truly biblical and mobilising outreaches and resources to support it – but in practice lacking the formative and dynamic exposition of the text nourishing a biblical faithful and missional discipleship. Mission mindedness, even proclaimed in terms of "for the Bible tells us so" can so easily remain (even an important)

theme in the ministry, but not *the central focus* of the whole ministry! It is then a ministry that produces converts, but not disciples. And let us be honest: there is often a great resistance to this radical, foundational and formational missional transformation of the church, a resistance often experienced particularly among the self-confident heirs of many mainline traditions, even very satisfied with their mission outreaches – but not faithful to their missional calling!

4.3 It is therefore possible to preach the text “correctly” and apply a “narrow” gospel intent, in order to show what it means to be saved by the grace of God in a very personal and individualistic and subjective way, *but still missing the central focus on being converted to discipleship!* Therefore there is a need for a *missional hermeneutic*: how we read, interpret and understand the text and the gospel is determined by the type of questions we bring to it. A missional hermeneutic does not so much ask the question: what do I get out of the text personally? The missional hermeneutic rather asks: how does this specific Word of God, as heard in this text, call, shape, transform and send us, often against our will, to be faithful to our missional calling? What are the challenges against ingrained attitudes in the church; what are the calls issued in the text to repentance and conversion...? What is called for is indeed a missional hermeneutic of suspicion (Bosch 1991:430; see also Brownson 1996:228f on a hermeneutic of diversity and at the same time faithful to the gospel and Wyatt 1999:157f on the way postmodernism and changing cultures influence the process of “from text to sermon”). It is a hermeneutic that explicates the whole missional gospel of the text as it involves both word and deed and *thereby describing the character of the Church, as being governed by Christ and his mission, as expressed in the biblical text. Christ is not only the content of the mission mindedness of the text - He is the abiding and driving force of the missional challenge of the text.*

5. THE DEVELOPMENT AND FORMATION OF A MISSIONAL LITURGICAL REORIENTATION

The power of liturgical celebration in theological, ecclesiological and ethical formation has been argued very well in various theological publications (see Müller 2002a:197f, 2002b:29f; Smit 1997:259f; Hauerwas 1981; Senn, especially 1993, also in general 1997; Wainwright 1980; Warren 1993 and many others). Our missional theology in all its components needs to be liturgically shaped and practised - then we can hope that the above mentioned changes and shifts will materialise in the life and witness of the church. The liturgy and the worship of the congregation provide the energy and spaces where transformative and creative changes can be most clearly experienced and celebrated. Indeed our understanding of the work of the triune God and of our Christian faith is nearly always revealed in our liturgy. Magesa (2004: 202) quite rightly states that “ the power of Christian liturgy rests in the fact that it makes present and effective, under the veil of sacred times, places, and sacred signs and symbols, the mysteries of human salvation, brought about by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And, says Westerhoff: “every reform movement in the history of the church has involved liturgical reform” (1976:57). In the same vein, because a missional theology and ecclesiology has to address the centrality of corporate worship and on account of the inherent relationship between the missional task and worship, *the missional character must come to a clear focus in every aspect of the liturgy.* The central missional intention and direction of the congregation have therefore to *determine* the missional what and the how of the liturgical celebration in all its elements, in the practices and disciplines it cultivates, in the way it equips the congregation for its mission (Ephesians 4:12f), and in the type of community it nourishes. The use of rituals, for example baptism and Eucharist, must be placed in a missional context, as signs and bearers

of its missional character .

5.1 Worship being the centre of any missional communities' organised life, "serves as a centring function in the life of the church" (van Gelder 2000: 151). As the celebration of God's creative purpose, of his redemptive activity and his transformative presence, liturgy is a basic form of spiritual empowerment, nourishing to all dimensions of the ministry. It shapes the celebrating community into a distinct and particular people of the Kingdom, discovering its missional vocation, to be actualised in discipline, fellowship, service and witness. Thereby, through the work of the Holy Spirit it cultivates a missional vision of a community of God's new age. Revisioning the church and its liturgy can be nothing else than recapturing its fundamental missional calling in every new context!

5.2 Worship celebrates the gracious presence of God in the midst of the gathered community of faith. It does it on special occasions, in specific locations and on specific times; but take note: the Greek word *leitourgia* also points to celebrating the liturgy of daily living in the presence of God. Worship therefore has a *public character*. In this sense it is also the central act which celebrates with joy and thanksgiving God's presence and promises for the world in the public realm. It celebrates the coming of God's reign in its public proclamation in words and deeds, in its liturgical practices and disciplines inspired by the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament as well as in the New the worship is the glue that holds God's people together as well as energising them towards God's high calling in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14).

5.3 All missional liturgies, also the public liturgy, must remain *God-directed* (see Hauerwas 1995: 156). Liturgy is re-remembering this God who acts: in all its forms and expressions it must signify and enact this central focus on God. This focus can easily be lost when different forms of worship are devised only to attract people, satisfying their tastes and preferences. These services may attract large numbers, but they do not necessarily produce missional congregations (on "the difference between worship and evangelism", see Dawn 1999: 271f). Schattauer quite rightly criticised this instrumental and functional view of liturgy. Then he commends a missional liturgical approach which "locates worship within the larger scope of God's reconciling mission toward the whole world...the visible act of assembly (in Christ by the power of the Spirit) and the forms of this assembly – what we call liturgy – enact and signify this mission. From this perspective, there is no separation between liturgy and mission...the assembly for worship *is* mission" (1999:5). The impetus of all the different worship styles must be evaluated in the light of whether they express and celebrate the presence of God and *his* missional activity. In the end the quality of worship is not determined by what people get out of it, but what they put into it, what they give to God in it: adoration, praise, confession, faith, love, loyalty – and thereby being formed by it as a missional community.

5.4 A missional liturgy draws upon the rich resources of Holy Scripture, the Christian tradition and its different expressions in a variety of ever-changing cultural and historical contexts. In all these, there is a great consensus that worship should be regarded as celebration of the presence of the triune God as its Subject and Object; the gathering and formation of believers in the *communio sanctorum*; as the proclamation of Word and sacrament and finally as the sending forth of the congregation into the world: praising and praying to God for his blessing (see Huber 1979:98f). *In the movements of the worship service from one element to the following, it should mirror the typical movements of a missional congregation.* Being gathered as a

missional community of praise, it characterises all life as praise of God; confessing its missional vocation, the congregation does so in accordance with the historical creeds of the church; confessing the sins of disobedience and asking forgiveness, it does so by being continually trained in confession through worship; in the reading of Scripture and through preaching the congregation is reminded of the biblical foundation of its total missional identity; through baptism it enters into the community of God's new age and in the Eucharist it celebrates its missional life in this new community, generated by the grace of God and living henceforth in gratitude and generosity, as eschatological acts. All of these are glorious foretastes of the missional unity in the communion of saints, in the presence of the living God – *praesentia dei realis!*

5.5 Missional liturgy celebrates God's reign: it is therefore a declaration of allegiance to God and his mission - over against all other allegiances of the present order, culture and power . Missional liturgy is *contest liturgy, born in the struggle against all forms of satanic temptations*. It is interesting to note that all three of Christ's temptations by the devil are temptations to succumb to the present order of things. Missional liturgy celebrates, in an eschatological but real sense, the *reality of an alternative order, of a new regime* and thereby it resists all temptations to become subservient to the "old" (2 Corinthians 5:17). As *contrast liturgy*, it interprets the world it lives in a new way: missional liturgy is indeed world making (on this aspect of contrast liturgy, see Müller 2006b:600f).

5.6 Missional liturgy is expressed in the "mother tongue and home language" of the worshipping community. The missional liturgical language, expressions and actions are theo-logical: the prayers, the hymns, the confession of sins, the celebration of baptism and the Eucharist are primarily directed towards God. All these are forms of mother tongue expressions – *but they must be translated continually into the language of the piazza and its culture*. Not adapted, but literally *trans-lated*: it is taken over from the "motherland" of the *missio dei* to the new localities and the new mother tongues of the marketplace (see Barrett 2004: 112f on the role of inculturation in the liturgy). This trans-lation *must follow the model of the incarnation*: it must be en-fleshed and em-bodied in the culture of the surrounding contexts and cultures. Liturgical renewal is not fresh developments of new rituals, but the process of re-generating the liturgy in the presence of God and by his Holy Spirit (see Schreiter 1985: 18f on the two agents in this regeneration: the Holy Spirit and the local missional community; in general see Bosch,

1991: 454f on the role of culture, especially 455 on the limits and critical dimensions to be honoured in the dialogue with culture and context – the latter discussed on 426f). *Liturgical renewal is in the first place not developing new attractive and inviting new practices but rediscovering afresh its Theo centric basis in the presence of God and his missio dei in the liturgy*.

6. THE MISSIONAL CHURCH IN THE MODERN MARKETPLACE.

Because missional theology and a missional church have to demonstrate what God intends for the whole world, missional theology *views the world in a very specific way – and this determines the theology, the ministry and practices of the missional church in its totality*. The missional church lives in a completely new context, always on the frontiers of the old and the new. But it sees its so-called loss of securities (a la Berger's plausibility structures) not as a loss of influence, but sees it *as the crisis of a challenge*. It regards the marketplace as a very specific frontier where the varied cultures can be met with the Gospel and the practices flowing out of it (see Nussbaum

2005:122f on the relationship of missional church to the world; also Huber 1979:80f on “Kirche in der Welt”). This implies

6.1 The missional church as public church has to play a role also in matters of politics and society: dealing with poverty, injustice, health, ecology (see Bosch 1991: 434f on the relationship of mission to social justice; also Nussbaum 2005:97f) – not forgetting that as God’s elect it has not so much to be a magisterium but a ministerium (Huber 1979: 94f).

6.2 It has to demonstrate God’s missional intent and relationship to the world in visible practices such as mutual care, reconciliation, living accountably and with loving hospitality to every stranger in the market square (see the well written book by Keifert, 1992).

6.3 Living on the frontiers in dialogue with the surrounding cultures there is a real danger of succumbing in the marketplace to the market driven strategies of these cultures – also in the liturgy. In a way it then becomes a practice of legitimising the ideological presuppositions embedded in every culture, instead of transforming it in the sense of Romans 12:2f. *In its missional ministry it must remain a redemptive contrast community busy with its ministry on the frontiers, especially in the marketplace.*

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KEY WORDS

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Kontakbesonderhede:

Prof BA Müller

Fakulteit Teologie

Universiteit van Stellenbosch

Privaatsak X1

MATIELAND 7602

E-posadres: bamuller@sun.ac.za