The Making of a Mission Field:
Paradigms of Evangelistic Mission in Europe

Stefan Paas

J.H. Bavinck Professor of Church Planting and Church Renewal,
VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands
lecturer in missiology,
Theological University Kampen, the Netherlands
s.paas@vu.nl

Abstract

Since the Second World War Europe has increasingly been considered as a 'mission field'. Sometimes it is suggested that this belief could only emerge after the collapse of the colonial empires, effectively abolishing the difference between the 'Christian' and the 'pagan' world. However, this is only partially true. There has always been a strong undercurrent within European churches, especially among missionary practitioners, that Europe was not all that 'Christian', even when its institutions and laws were influenced by Christianity. In this article I argue that this consciousness even increased in the post-Reformation centuries. In fact, 'home missions' were in every bit a part of the great Protestant missionary movement, just as 'foreign missions'. Before the 20th century the awareness of Europe as a mission field was embodied in two missionary paradigms that I have termed 'confessional' and 'revivalist'. In the 20th century a new paradigm emerged that I have called 'ideological'.

Keywords

Europe, mission field, baptized pagans, confessional missions, home missions, ideological missions

> We do not believe any longer that 'all people are Christian', even though they belong to the state church. Thereby we are taken back to the New Testament situation — the missionary situation. That is, after all, were we should have been all the time.
> — Finn Jor, *Drømmen om det kristne Europa*[1]

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[1] Finn Jor, *Drømmen om det kristne Europa*, Oslo: Land og Kirke 1964, 209. Quoted in Jan-Martin Berentsen, 'The Dream of Christian Europe', in: Aasulv Lande and Werner Ustorf (eds.), *Mission in a Pluralist World*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang 1996, 105.

1. Europe, a 'Mission Field'?

In 1963 the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism adopted the slogan 'mission in six continents'.[2] This sentence, according to Emilio Castro, attempted to express 'the fact that the day is over when countries could be divided into 'Christian' and 'pagan' areas.'[3] It is often assumed that this insight could emerge only after the collapse of the colonial empires. For centuries, it has been said, Europe considered itself as Christian territory, a mission base rather than a mission field. However, this is only partially true. For example, the World Mission Conference in Edinburgh (1910) is generally considered as the prime example of the conquest mentality of colonial missions. The initiators divided the world in 'Christian' and 'non-Christian' nations (even if there were Christians and churches in those nations), and made abundant use of militaristic metaphors.[4] Nevertheless, one of the reports discussed there ('The Church in the Mission Field'), recalled that 'the whole world is a mission field, and there is no Church that is not a Church in the mission field. Some Christians are younger and some are older, but that is all the difference'. The report views as 'popular but inexact' the 'usage of calling only those regions 'mission field' where the Church has been more recently planted, and where its history falls, roughly speaking, within the last two centuries.'[5] Statements like these, being exceptional at the time, antedate developments in the second half of the 20th century, emphasizing the local church as missionary by its very nature. If every church is an instrument of God's mission, every context becomes a 'mission field' by definition.

In this article I will show that, while frequently speaking of 'Christendom' and 'Christian nations', there have always been European Christians who were open to the challenge of (further) evangelizing their own nations, thus relativizing the opposition of 'Christendom' vs. 'mission field'. Also they often

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[2] R.K. Orchard, *Witness in Six Continents: Records of the Meeting of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches held in Mexico City, December 8th to 19th, 1963*, London: Edinburgh Press 1964.

[3] Emilio Castro, *Freedom in Mission: The Perspective of the Kingdom of God. An Ecumenical Inquiry*, Geneva 1985, 161.

[4] Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994, 30-31.

[5] Quoted in Teresa Okure SHJC, 'The Church in the Mission Field, Edinburgh 1910: A Nigerian/African Response', Edinburgh, 26 April 2003 (http://www.towards2010.org.uk/downloads/t2010 paper02okure.pdf, accessed on 28 August 2010; or http://www.theologyinafrica.com/papers/t2010paper02okure.pdf).

employed terminology that reflected their own view of Europe as a mission field like any other. It seems, therefore, that the general awareness of Europe's spiritual condition in the 1960s was not a sudden breakthrough caused by the end of colonialism and the atrocities of the Second World War. It was rather the formal acceptance of grassroots insights that had been present for a long time among missionary practitioners. Speaking of 'Christian' Europe, it is therefore important, to distinguish between a formal and a material discourse. Formally, until deep into the 20th century even the Northwestern part of Europe was considered 'Christian', as far as government, societal structures, institutions, and widespread baptism were concerned. But materially, many Europeans were quite prepared to admit that Europe was not very 'Christian' at all. In fact, Europe has never been *not* a 'mission field', even if it was a 'mission base' at the same time. This is not something that was discovered in the 20th century; thoughtful Europeans have been recognizing it all along.

2. Christianization and Reform (c. 500-c. 1500)

2.1. *Initial Christianization*

The Christianization of Europe happened in two stages. The first period, one of peaceful propagation, started in the first half of the first century and ended somewhere in the fourth century, with the accession of Constantine and his Edict of Toleration (313 CE), or the establishment of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire, under Theodosius (381 CE). During these centuries Christianity was mainly spread by the spontaneous witness of ordinary believers, and it was concentrated around the Mediterranean. It was not forced on people from above. On the contrary, more than once and on several locations Christians were persecuted, which means that becoming a Christian required determination and conviction.[6] Probably, the number of Christians in the West of the Roman Empire was quite small, until the measures of Constantine and Theodosius made it attractive if not profitable to become a Christian.[7]

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[6] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions: Revised Edition*, Penguin Books: London, 3rd edition 1990, 35-39 (first edition 1964).

[7] Cf. Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*, San Francisco: Harper 1997, 3-27.

The collapse of the Western Empire (476 CE) had been preceded by an increasing decentralization. Several Germanic tribes who were allies of Rome, like the Visigoths and the Franks, had been living for some time already rather independently within the borders of the Empire. They were allowed to do so if they accepted Christianity as their religion. After the fall of the Empire these Germanic kingdoms became the heirs of Roman Christian civilization. In the next centuries this civilization was spread among the remaining pagan peoples of Europe.[8] This was done, partly through the violent submission of pagan tribes by Christian kings, partly through 'disparate initiatives from Church authorities (most famously Gregory the Great)', and partly by 'a stream of inspired ascetics (of whom Celtic Christianity produced a prodigious number).'[9] However, whether it happened violently or more peacefully, Christian mission was always backed by the earthly powers.[10] The new concept of a Christian nation emerged, inviting theologians of the time to draw parallels between Old Testament Israel with its theocratic laws and the territories ruled by Christian kings.[11] Many Europeans were converted by force, and in general the Christianity of these Northern tribes seems to have been superficial to say the least.[12] An exception to this rule, at least in some areas and periods, were the monasteries, that developed as centres of Christian learning and practice in these days.[13] This period lasted until the end of the Middle Ages, with the eventual conversion of Scandinavian and Baltic rulers to Christianity, as late as the 13th and 14th centuries.[14] It is important to note that today's differences in religious practice in Europe may extend some of their roots into these very different histories of their Christianization. Even today the Nordic countries, with their late and violent submission to Christianity, show very low levels of Christian

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[8] See Neill, 39-96.

[9] Andrew F. Walls, 'The Translation Principle in Christian History', in: Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 8th edition 2004 (first edition 1996), 37.

[10] See e.g., Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200-1000*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2nd edition 2000 (first edition 1996), esp. 217ff.

[11] Andrew F. Walls, 'Culture and Coherence in Christian History', in: Walls, *Missionary Movement*, 20.

[12] Cf. Anton Wessels, *Europe: Was It Ever Really Christian?*, London: SCM 1994; Alan Kreider, *The Change of Conversion and the Origins of Christendom*, Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press International 1999.

[13] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 24th edition 2008 (first edition 1991), 230-236.

[14] The baptism of the Lithuanian king Jagiello on 15 February 1386 'marks the end of European paganism as an organized body . . .' (Neill, 96).

belief and practice, contrary to the deeply embedded folk Christianity of the South. 'In the end, it is doubtful that the masses in northwestern Europe, and especially in Scandinavia, were *ever* truly converted.'[15]

2.2. *Reformation*

From the days of Charlemagne, in the 9th century, occasional campaigns had been launched to raise the level of Christian knowledge and commitment of baptized Europeans. Usually this was done by setting stricter demands and providing better education for clergy. Also the establishment of monasteries and new religious orders offered opportunities for those who wanted to take their religion more seriously. The word *conversio* ('conversion') was used in this context for those who rejected existing 'worldly' patterns of life and turned towards a *vita perfecta* ('perfect life').[16] However, this was never seen as an ideal for the masses. In the Catholic (and Orthodox) churches of the Middle Ages a tension was accommodated between a radical commitment to Christ and the requirements of ordinary life. According to Charles Taylor 'we can read mediaeval Catholicism in one way as incorporating a kind of equilibrium based on hierarchical complementarity.'[17] In other words, the functions of the celibate clergy and the married laity complemented each other. Both were valuable and necessary in their own way, but in this system the clergy possessed the higher, somehow vicarious, vocation.

At the end of the mediaeval period this mutual balance started to shift. The end of the Middle Ages is characterized by a series of attempts to 'lift up' the masses to levels of piety that used to be required only for the elites. This 'drive to Reform' was a rather unique phenomenon; it was peculiar to Western (Latin) Christendom. Attempts by more dedicated people to spread their forms of practice and devotion by preaching, encouragement and example are common in all kinds of religions. But this Reform was different. It was an attempt to *abolish* less dedicated forms, to declare them illegitimate, and to call all people to the 'higher' life of devotion.[18] In successive waves popes, priests, and pastors tried to convert Christians, i.e. they tried to raise the level of Christian knowledge and commitment among the baptized populations of Europe, by

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[15] Rodney Stark, 'Efforts to Christianize Europe, 400-2000', *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 16 (2001), 108. Italics in the original.

[16] Adriaan H. Bredero, *De ontkerstening der middeleeuwen: Een terugblik op de geschiedenis van twaalf eeuwen christendom*, Baarn: Ten Have 2000, 217.

[17] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007, 45.

[18] Taylor, *Secular Age*, 61-63.

preaching, instruction, obligatory confession and church attendance, liturgical innovation, and a more effective church organization.

The Protestant Reformations in the 16th century can be considered as examples of this type of Reform Christianity. Their 'affirmation of ordinary life',[19] viz. their emphasis on the priesthood of *all* believers, was characteristic for the Age of Reform. According to the Protestant Reformers, the fullness of a Christian life was possible (and needed) for married workmen, just as much as for celibate priests. The discussion continues as to whether the Reformers had much sense of 'mission'.[20] Much depends, of course, on the definition of the word. Since the Roman Catholic nations Portugal and Spain stood in direct contact with unbaptized peoples in South America, the idea of worldwide evangelization could strike root much earlier among Roman Catholics, something that Catholic theologians did not hesitate to hold against their Protestant opponents. In this respect the 16th century Protestant Reformers generally had a more limited horizon, sometimes affecting their concept of mission. However, I would suggest that we must not focus too much on the presence of words like 'mission' in the works of the (Catholic and Protestant) Reformers of the 16th century. I believe that the massive move to 'Reform Christianity' in early modern Europe, with its attempts to convert whole populations to a serious and personal type of Christianity, is a prefiguration of the missionary movement that started in the late 18th century. To a great extent, in its totalizing approach ('the ends of the earth') and its emphasis on personal Christianity, this missionary movement was all about repeating the reform experience within European Christianity during the previous centuries. So instead of attempting to 'read back' the missionary movement of the 18th and 19th century in the Reformation age, we might do better to 'read forward' the ethos of the Age of Reform in the younger movement (cf. section 3.2 below).

This ethos can also be demonstrated in evangelistic missions within Europe. Surely, the Protestant Reformers maintained the mediaeval territorial conceptions of Christian nations and Christian magistrates. In this respect they did not differ from their Roman Catholic counterparts. But on the other hand, the

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[19] Cf. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989, 211: 'Ordinary life is . . . those aspects of human life concerned with production and reproduction, that is, labour, the making of things needed for life, and our life as sexual beings, including marriage and the family.'

[20] Cf. Paul Wetter, *Der Missionsgedanke bei Martin Luther*, Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft 1996; Thomas Schirrmacher (ed.), *Martin Bucer als Vorreiter der evangelischen Mission*, Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft 2006; Thomas Schirrmacher (ed.), *Calvin and World Mission*, Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft 2009.

Reformers were convinced, in agreement with Augustine, that only few baptized people were true Christians.[21] Although the word 'evangelism' was invented much later, it is a well-established fact that both Luther and Calvin, and other Protestant Reformers, emphasized the need to win unbelievers by preaching, personal witness and the example of a godly life. It is rather arbitrary to deny that this was genuine mission. The early Protestant missions in Europe, especially Calvinistic evangelism campaigns in France, were just as dangerous and demanding as any mission overseas.[22] Nevertheless, this was done within the framework of Christendom. Protestants and Catholics agreed on the concept of one religion within one nation, even if at the time it could not be decided yet which religion a country would accept (as in France). The Augsburg Treaty of 1555 transferred the transnational Christendom system to a national level: people had to accept the religion of their rulers or move to an area where their own religion was practised (*cuius regio eius religio*). In a system like this, 'evangelism', to use the anachronism, was meant to 'normalize' the religious situation within a certain territory. In other words, its function was to bring as many people as possible into the church of the realm, and thus establish a truly Christian polis. Other churches were persecuted (as in France and Germany), or at least severely restricted in their attempts to 'evangelize' (as in Holland and England).

Within the early Reformation tradition, only the 'radical' wing of the Reformation could think without limitations of Europe as a true mission field. The Anabaptists rejected the assumptions of territorial Christianity (such as infant baptism), and believed that the Great Commission applied to all believers at all times. Also they criticized the magisterial Reformers' (especially Luther's) emphasis on justification by faith alone, since they believed that this resulted into a separation of justification and ethics, and thus in a superficial, nominal religion. In this way they preserved — at least for a while — a mobile Christianity, consisting of committed disciples, as in the early church (a 'believers' church').[23] Today's critics of 'Christendom' find much of their inspiration in this left wing of the Protestant Reformation.[24]

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[21] See, for instance, Luther's and Calvin's commentaries on the Parable of the Sower (Lk. 8: 4-15), or the words of Jesus about the 'narrow gate' to eternal life (Mt. 7: 13-14).

[22] Cf. Kenneth J. Stewart, 'Calvinism and Missions: The Contested Relationship Revisited', *Themelios* 34 (2009). See the website of *The Gospel Coalition*, http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/publications/34-1/calvinism-and-missions-the-contested-relationship-revisited/ (accessed on 28 August 2010).

[23] Wilbert R. Shenk (ed.), *Anabaptism and Mission*, Eugene: Wipf and Stock 2001.

[24] See e.g. the website of *The Anabaptist Network*, www.anabaptistnetwork.com.

To what extent did the Reformers succeed in their attempts to raise the general level of commitment? This question has some importance for our assessment of today's secularization. Is our current religious condition indeed an exceptional period in Europe's history, or is it basically a return to a European 'default mode' of large-scale religious indifference, after a relatively brief religious high tide from, say, 1850 until 1950? It seems that the answer to the question differs, depending on what country we are speaking of. Generally, however, one should not be too optimistic about the success of the Reformation in terms of serious mass conversions. In the Netherlands, for example, there is enough anecdotal evidence to suggest otherwise. In 1600 only 20% of the population of the Northern provinces were active church members, both Catholics and Protestants.[25] A case study from the city of Haarlem reveals that, according to the leaders of the Reformed church, the majority of the population in 1581 were 'children of the world who must be brought to Christ'.[26] The Dutch historian Van Deursen shows that the Reformed church in the Netherlands had two types of membership in the 16th and 17th centuries: members (*lidmaten*) and a larger group of 'sympathizers of the Reformed religion' (*liefhebbers van de gereformeerde religie*). The first category had made a public confession of faith, had accepted church discipline, and was allowed to share communion. The 'sympathizers' were more distantly involved: they attended church services (now and then), they donated money for buildings, and the like. But they were not subjected to disciplinary measures and they were not allowed at the communion table. This early distinction in membership had a missionary ('Reform') character. It was not meant as a static division, as in the 'hierarchical complementarity' of the mediaeval system, but as a way for the masses to get gradually involved in church life and thus become more attracted towards the gospel. However, it is significant that at the start of the 17th century the category of 'members' was small. Nowhere it exceeded 15% of the population, and usually it was far less — sometimes no more than 1-2%.[27] Only in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries larger groups were included as church members, together

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[25] Cf. Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 4th edition 1998), 366 (first edition 1995), 366: 'In the late sixteenth century, the majority of the Dutch population . . . cannot unequivocally be described as Protestant or Catholic. For the majority constituted a non-confessionalized, or barely confessonalized bloc . . .'

[26] These examples can be found in Hijme Stoffels, 'Opkomst en ondergang van de buitenkerkelijke: Enige historische ontwikkelingen', in: Gerben Heitink and Hijme Stoffels (eds.), *Niet zo'n kerkganger: Zicht op buitenkerkelijk geloven*, Baarn: Ten Have 2003, 13-15.

[27] A.Th. Van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen: Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt*, Franeker: Van Wijnen, 3rd edition 1998 (first edition 1974), 128ff.

with a relaxation of requirements for membership and discipline. At the end of the 18th century practically everyone in the Netherlands belonged to one of the churches.

3. 'Confessional' Missions, 'Baptized Pagans', and 'Home Missions' (c. 1500-c. 1900)

3.1. *'Confessional' Missions in Europe*

Of course, there are no objective criteria as to what constitutes a 'mission field'. It is, rather, in the eye of the beholder, and as such it implies a mental decision to look differently at things familiar. From a pragmatic point of view we might say that an area is a mission field as soon as others decide to send missionaries into it. Exactly this had been happening all along in Europe, since the Reformation. For at least two centuries Protestants and Catholics waged a, sometimes bitter, war for souls. Historian Benjamin Kaplan describes the situation in 17th century France:

> Catholic clergy portrayed the situation as one of two armies, one composed of themselves, the other of Calvinist ministers, ranged against one another, fighting over the simple lay folk, who were the terrain of combat. Protestant leaders . . . too attributed frightening powers to Catholic missionaries.[28]

Similar battles were fought in Germany and the Netherlands. From both sides no measures were shunned in order to persuade people. In areas where they were strong, Protestants and Catholics tried to convert secular rulers, they prohibited mixed marriages, organized diaconal activities, built schools, rejected the use of church buildings together with other confessions, and sometimes offered financial rewards to converts. Competitors were forced to work in secret, or they were persecuted.

In 1622 pope Gregory XV founded the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith — SCPF), with the

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[28] Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 2007, 269. For Jesuit missions in the French countryside during the last part of the 16th and the 17th century, see Dominique Deslandres, '*Exemplo aeque ut verbo*: The French Jesuits Missionary World', in: John W. O'Malley *et al.* (eds.), *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2nd edition 2000 (first edition 1999), 258-273.

explicit goal not only to reorganize foreign missions, but also to re-establish ecclesiastical structures in territories that had been lost to the Reformation, in order to reunite Christendom.[29] The Jesuit Order (established in 1534), already having achieved notoriety in Protestant areas, was deployed towards that aim. In fact, this made every Protestant territory into a mission field. Missionary priests were sent everywhere, often at great personal risks. Their methods varied, depending on the local context. Under sympathetic governments they used the whole range of methods mentioned above. Where their power was limited, as in the Netherlands or in England, they tried to strengthen wavering Catholics (who were still a majority in some regions), and provide secretly in their spiritual needs, without targeting convinced Protestants. Overall, these counter-reformed missions were not without success. The Southern Netherlands (Belgium) had been violently recatholicized already in the 1580s by a combined effort of the Spanish Inquisition and Jesuit priests. In France, Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1689) broke the power of Protestantism in the end. Jesuit missionaries succeeded to bring Austria, the Southern part of Germany, and parts of Hungary back into the Church.

Initially, Protestants had difficulties to deploy the same missionary energy. Throughout the 17th century Lutheran orthodoxy confined itself to defending the *ius reformandi*, viz. the responsibility of Christian rulers to evangelize their non-Christian subjects as a consequence of the Augsburg Treaty. Evangelistic campaigns were undertaken, for example, to the Lapps in Northern Sweden, but generally Lutheranism said 'no' to world mission. According to Lutheranism, 'missionary responsibility ceased when one went beyond the territories ruled by an evangelical prince, whether at home or abroad.'[30] With England's and Holland's rise to colonial power in the 17th century, a view of worldwide mission could develop only in the Reformed branch of the Reformation. Today it is widely acknowledged that here the foundations were laid for the great Protestant missions in the next centuries. Especially in the Dutch movement of the *Nadere Reformatie* (Further Reformation) and the intimately connected Puritanism of England, Scotland and America, a Reformed theory and practice of mission emerged. Gisbertus Voetius, for example, the greatest Protestant Dutch theologian of the 17th century, was concerned about the explosive

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[29] Neill, 152-153. Cf. A. Camps, 'The Catholic Missionary Movement from 1492 to 1789', in: F.J. Verstraelen *et al.* (eds.), *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1995, 219-221.

[30] James A. Scherer, *Gospel, Church, & Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Missiology*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House 1987, 67.

growth of Catholic missions within and without Europe. This stimulated him, according to J.A.B. Jongeneel, to develop a 'comprehensive theology of mission'.[31]

For the purpose of this article it is important to see that Voetius' concept of 'mission' was wide. For him there was no essential distinction between mission within or without Europe. Mission was the continuation and propagation of the Reformation, wherever this was deemed necessary. As such, it included mission to 'unbelievers' and 'heretics'.[32] For Voetius this was a task of the church; secular governments were not authorized for evangelization. However, Voetius expected them to prohibit and impede 'false religion', and to protect and facilitate Reformed missions. Just like his Roman Catholic counterparts, and in agreement with most of his fellow Protestants in Europe, Voetius could not imagine a Christian nation where complete freedom of religion would exist. Although nobody should be forced to change his religious views under the threat of violence, there could be no freedom to publicly exercise another religion than the Reformed version of Protestantism.[33] In their acceptance of territorial Christianity (*Corpus Christianum*) Voetius and other Calvinistic promoters of mission remained within the patterns set in the Middle Ages. As a consequence, their overseas mission enterprises in America, India and were all undertaken in the context of colonial expansion, or, in other words the expansion of the Christian realm.[34]

Although in the course of the 18th century confessional identities had become entrenched throughout Europe, mutual polemic did not subside. Especially after the Enlightenment, Protestants tagged Catholic countries as superstitious, collectivist, backward societies, tyrannized by 'Papacy'. In their own assaults, Catholics emphasized the vitality of Catholicism, compared to the massive religious indifference in Protestant countries (especially Germany), Protestantism's sectarianism, and its infection with modernism and 'subjectivism'. These prejudices fed into the new upsurge of 'confessional' missions in the 19th century. From the Catholic side, the breakthrough of the Ultramontane movement around the middle of the century led to an upswing

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[31] J.A.B. Jongeneel, 'Voetius' zendingstheologie: De eerste comprehensieve protestantse zendingstheologie', in: J. van Oort *et al.* (eds.), *De onbekende Voetius: Voordrachten wetenschappelijk symposium Utrecht, 3 maart 1989*, Kok: Kampen 1989, 120.

[32] Jongeneel, 'Voetius' zendingstheologie', 129, 132-133.

[33] Jongeneel, 'Voetius' zendingstheologie', 119.

[34] Bosch, 255-260. On 'expansion' as a missionary motive of the Puritans, see also Yates, 7-12.

of missionary work.[35] New attempts were made to reinforce the Roman Catholic Church in areas with Catholic minorities, like remote Scandinavia.[36] Protestants aimed their newly found evangelistic zeal at the Catholic South of Europe. For them this was virtually 'pagan' territory, only superficially moistened with the water of baptism. The Catholic masses were to be pitied, entangled as they were in spiritual delusion and suppressed by clerical elites who denied their people the true gospel. Early in the 19th century efforts were made to assist small Protestant communities in France and Italy (Waldensians). In France and in Belgium Protestant Societies (*Sociétés Évangeliques*) were established, occupying themselves with the diffusion of Bibles and tracts.[37] In the 1820s Ireland was targeted by an evangelical campaign, labelled as a 'Second Reformation'.[38] Remembering that the first Reformation in Spain had been 'quenched in blood', various English and Scottish missionary societies had also tried to work such a second Reformation in this 'desolate, unhappy' country, 'bound under the iron yoke of Rome'.[39] This resulted in 1855 in the establishment of the Spanish Evangelization Society in Edinburgh. German Protestants took their part too. In 1870 missionary work was started in Spain, eventually leading to the constitution of the Spanish Evangelical Church (1899).

So, in a sense post-Reformation Europe has never ceased to be a mission field. Far short of today's ecumenical sensitivities, Catholics and Protestants considered their evangelistic activities as genuine mission, different perhaps in gradation but not in character from overseas mission. In 1908, when ecclesiastical hierarchy in Britain, Holland, and Luxembourg had been firmly reinstated, these countries were removed from the jurisdiction of the scpf. However, in the same document that ordered this rearrangement, it was said that a missionary situation remained wherever the 'sacred hierarchy has not been

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[35] K.J. Rivinius, 'Die Entwicklung des Missionsgedankens und Missionsträger', in: E. Gatz (ed.), *Geschichte des kirchlichen Lebens III: Katholiken in der Minderheit*, Freiburg: Herder 1994, 251-265. Cf. Neill, 335ff.

[36] Yvonne Maria Werner, 'Catholic Mission and Conversion in Scandinavia: Some Reflections on Religion, Modernisation, and Identity Construction', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 35 (2010), 65-85.

[37] Michèle Sacquin, 'L'Évangile au village: Le colportage évangelique en France', in: Frédéric Barbier *et al.* (eds.), *Le livre et l'historien: Etudes offertes en l'honneur du Professeur Henri-Jean Martin*, Geneva: Droz 1997, 697-699.

[38] Irene Whelan, *The Bible War in Ireland: The "Second Reformation" and the Polarization of Protestant-Catholic Relations, 1800-1840*, Dublin: Lilliput Press 2005.

[39] Quotes from Maria Denoon Peddie, *The Dawn of the Second Reformation in Spain*, Edinburgh: Colston and Company 1871 (partly digitalized by Google), 1-3.

constituted'.[40] Thus, the Catholic Church continued to send its 'heralds of truth'[41] into Northern Europe, until well into the 20th century. Although in the next decades papal encyclicals maintained a very confrontational tone against Protestants, this has softened since, and especially after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Instead of 'servants of error', Protestants have become 'separated brethren'. Mainline Protestants have also refrained from evangelizing Catholics in Europe. However, evangelical Protestants are still sending missionaries into Catholic majority areas in Europe.

3.2. *'Baptized Pagans' and 'Home Missions'*

Already in the 17th century Jesuit workers who evangelized nominal Catholics in the French countryside, considered their own work as mission in every meaning of the word. Their experience in the North American mission field taught them that there was not so much difference between Breton farmers and Native Americans (Indians). 'On both sides of the Atlantic, Jesuits shared the same apostolic ideals and the same ideas of the mission; they had a similar attitude towards the people they sought to convert, used similar methods of persuasion, and expected similar results.'[42]

More or less the same was true in Protestant areas. The limited success of the Reformation and its aftermath in converting the baptized masses of Europe caused a growing discomfort within circles of committed Christians in the 17th and 18th centuries. In Germany, the Pietist movement broke with the formal Christianity of Lutheran orthodoxy. They aimed at a true conversion of individuals, and the formation of small groups of believers within the national church (*Volkskirche*). They redefined mission as an enterprise of ordinary Christians, rather than (colonial) governments and church hierarchies. Also, they relativised 'national' or 'territorial' Christendom. Instead, they promoted the fellowship of believers, transcending national or confessional borders.[43] More or less the same can be said of the Moravian Brethren (*Hernhutters*), who under guidance of Ludwig Count of Zinzendorf, planted churches in the Baltic, Bohemia, Russia, England and the Netherlands, during the 18th century.

The emphasis on a deep-felt, individual experience of conversion, connecting the newborn Christian with brothers and sisters in different nations and denominations, was also typical for the 18th and early 19th century revivals in

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[40] Quoted in Bosch, 229.

[41] Bosch, 218-219, quoting Benedict xv's encyclical *Maximum Illud* (1919), where Catholic 'heralds of truth' are described as struggling with Protestant 'servants of error'.

[42] Deslandres, 267.

[43] Bosch, 252-255.

England and America. Discussions abound as to what extent these revivals were continuous with the Reformation period and the Puritan movement that preceded it. At least two new features can be observed, however. First, most Pietists and revivalists left behind the close alliance between the national church and Christian rulers that was characteristic for Christendom. Instead, they established missionary societies, consisting of 'ordinary' Christians from all denominations. Second, this movement of mission 'in the wake of the Enlightenment' (David Bosch) also assumed a connection between Christianity and civil behaviour.[44] Of course, this in itself was not a new idea, but in previous times personal discipline was generally seen as something flowing naturally out of conversion, and as proof of a true conversion, but not as a goal in itself. In the 18th and 19th centuries, however, there emerged a new emphasis on the civilizing effects of conversion. Christianity was seen as a major force of social and personal discipline, both by churches and secular authorities, and therefore essential in the creation of civilized societies. Increasingly, Christianity was seen as an answer to all kinds of social evils — from class conflicts to drinking, and from poverty to crime.

This mixture of piety and social discipline was the matrix out of which the Protestant missionary movement in the 19th and 20th centuries was born. It was also the driving force behind missionary attempts within Europe, for example in projects of urban mission to industrial workers, or in programmes carried out by churches to create better coverage in backward countryside areas. An example is the foundation of the Dutch Society of Missionaries (*Nederlands Zendelingen Genootschap*) in 1797. Inspired by the London Missionary Society (1795) its founders wanted to further the cause of overseas missions. However, on its first national meeting a report was presented that elaborated on the sad state of religion and morale in *Europe*! The Society did not want to be accused of forgetting the 'baptized pagans' (*gedoopte heidenen*) in the Netherlands and France, and it recommended several strategies of evangelism.[45]

The intimate connection between foreign and home missions is illustrated by the use of the term 'baptized pagan'. Since the Middle Ages the word 'pagan' or 'heathen' had been used to denote peoples living outside the borders of Christendom. The word had roughly the same meaning and contained the same implications as the Greek word 'barbarian'. It referred to people distinct in skin colour and language, and with an inferior level of civilization. If these

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[44] Bosch, 262ff.

[45] G.J. Mink, *Op het tweede plan: Evangelisten in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw*, Leiden: J.J. Groen en Zoon 1995, 47-48; Gerrit Noort, *De weg van magie tot geloof: Leven en werk van Alb. C. Kruyt*, Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum 2006, 117-118.

people became Christians, their descent was not erased by baptism. For example, in mediaeval sources Roma people ('Gypsies') were called 'baptized pagans'. Although they lived within Christendom, they were sufficiently distinct to be considered as a different race. In the age of colonial missions, a converted Native American, an African slave, or an Indian Christian, was usually called a 'baptized pagan' (*païen baptisé, getaufte Heiden*). However, as early as the 17th century Puritan preachers began to apply this term to Europeans who in morale and belief did not distinguish themselves from 'primitive' people overseas.[46] This rhetorical strategy was imitated by the great revivalists of the 18th century. For instance, in a number of sermons George Whitefield (1714-1770) used 'baptized heathen' to describe the general condition of his audience, and to shock them into repentance.[47] Since then, 'baptized pagan' served as an equivalent of 'nominal Christian', and as such it was used by many preachers and evangelists in the 19th century, often together with a criticism of infant baptism.

   This kind of rhetoric shows that, regardless all theoretical distinctions between 'foreign missions' and 'home missions' that have been drawn later, both types of mission were organised along the same lines, out of the same motives, and more than once by the same people, right from their beginnings. In the 19th and early 20th century Protestant missionary societies were established everywhere in Europe, for example in England ('domestic mission'), Germany (*innere Mission, inland-Mission, Volksmission*), the Netherlands (*inwendige zending*), Denmark (*indre mission*), and Hungary (*belmisszió*). They emerged as a response to Catholic emancipation, but even more as an answer to industrialisation, and the massive dislocation of workers that was a result of it. These types of 'home mission' were inspired by concern about the increasing secularization of industrial workers, but also by their difficult living conditions. This double concern characterized their activities: evangelism (a word that was coined in the 19th century), moral uplifting (e.g., schooling, anti-alcohol programmes) and diaconal service (relief of poverty).

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[46] Cf. for example, Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686) in his sermon *The Knowledge of God*: 'And are there not many among us, who are no better than baptized heathen, who need to seek the first principles of the oracles of God? It is sad, that after the sun of the gospel has shined so long in our horizon, that the veil should still be upon their heart.' Similar terminology was applied in that time by Dutch preachers from the circle of the Further Reformation.

[47] E.g., Sermon 22 (*The Folly and Danger of parting with Christ for the Pleasures and Profits of Life*): 'If we were but sensible of the great necessity there is, in this our day, of being real Christians, sure we should not be contented with being nominal ones; but we are sunk into I know not what; we are no better than baptized heathen.'

This mindset was not so different from the one that inspired overseas missions. It reflected the same mix of evangelical and Enlightenment ideals. Also, just like the French Jesuits in the 17th century, the initiators of these societies for 'inland' mission thought that they were much like foreign mission organizations. Johann Hinrich Wichern, who established the German *Innere Mission*, stated in 1857 that his mission was the 'continuation or resumption' (*Fortsetzung oder Wiederaufnahme*) of the earlier mission work in Europe, 'to conquer the Judaism and paganism that was still unbroken or had regained its strength'. In his opinion, mission to the pagan world (*Heidenmission*) and *Innere Mission* were 'two aspects of the same service'.[48]

Of course, this was in the face of German *Kulturchristentum* (cultural Christianity), this typical late 19th century mix of European cultural arrogance and liberal theology. In the decade preceding the First World War, Adolf von Harnack wrote that it was a task of Christian mission to lead new brothers and sisters into 'the great circle of the civilized world'. According to him, 'only in this way will the European nations fulfil their historic calling'.[49] And Ernst Troeltsch defined mission as 'the expansion of Europe's and America's religious ideas closely related to the expansion of the European sphere of influence as a whole'.[50] However, theoretical protests against Wichern's approach of mission only serve to show how widespread his feeling about Germany's spiritual condition was. For example, at the end of the 19th century, the German missiologist Gustav Warneck underlined that the term 'mission' was to be reserved for the activity of the church among non-Christians (*Heidenmission*). This happened outside the realm of Christendom, in the 'non-Christian world', among Jews, Muslims and pagans. 'Home missions' should be termed 'diacony' (*Diakonie*) instead.[51] In the light of everything that has been written above we may ask to what extent Warneck's view represented a majority view even at that time.[52]

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[48] Quotes derived from H.J. Margull, 'Über die Einheit von Weltmission und Volksmission', in: H.J. Margull, *Zeugnis und Dialog: Ausgewählte Schriften*, Hamburg: Missionsakademie an der Universität Hamburg 1992, 49-50.

[49] Adolf von Harnack, *Reden und Aufsätze*, Bd. II, Giessen 1904, 113-115. Quote in Berentsen, 111.

[50] Ernst Troeltsch, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. II, Tübingen 1913, 797. Quote in Berentsen, 111.

[51] Gustav Warneck, *Evangelische Missionslehre. Ein missionstheoretischer Versuch. Erste Abteilung: Die Begründung der Sendung*, Gotha: F.A. Perthes, 2nd edition 1897, 1-2, 4.

[52] An excellent discussion of this subject can be found in Klaus Schäfer, ' "Weltmission und Volksmission": Geschichte, Bestandsaufnahme, Perspektiven', lecture May 2005 (http://www.a-m-d .de/fileadmin/user_upload/ Texte/weitere_Autoren/Schaefer20040525.pdf, accessed on 18 August 2010).

Majority view or not, at that time few would have been prepared to accept the provocative conclusions of Gerhard Hilbert, a Rostock theology professor. Affirming Wichern's analysis and extending his conclusions, Hilbert declared in the middle of the First World War (1916) that Germany had become a 'mission field' (*Missionsfeld*).[53] Wichern and other observers[54] had already noticed in the 1860s that in the big cities only 2-3% of the baptized Lutherans attended church at all, while some years later Pastor Wittenberg from the island of Rügen in rural Pomerania (Northeastern Germany) concluded that the average Pomeranian was 'largely indifferent' towards Christianity, with church attendance not exceeding 3%. According to him Pomerania was a 'spiritual graveyard'.[55] Hilbert added to this observation that more than 300,000 Germans were 'self-declared modern pagans'. Ten times bigger was the number of those who had actually broken with Christianity, even if they still remained church members. Moreover, the majority of the population was a 'mass of indifferents' (*Schar der Gleichgültigen*). They did not care at all about Christianity and church. According to Hilbert, this worrying situation was largely due to ecclesiastical failure. The Lutheran church was only concerned with its most loyal adult members; it was completely inward-focused. It was no wonder, that people with a 'burning interest' in religious questions would look elsewhere for answers. Moreover, the *Innere Mission* projects started by Wichern had become diaconalized and professionalized, neglecting the task of evangelism and making them (again) the exclusive responsibility of professional clergy.[56] Therefore, a complete restructuring of the church was required. The Lutheran church should turn into a missionary church (*Missionskirche*), not just for a while, but permanently. Evangelizing the German people (*Volksmission*) was to be its core task, since there would always be unbelievers, and believers would always need further conversion.[57]

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[53] Gerhard Hilbert, *Volksmission und Innere Mission*, Leipzig 1917, 4 (partly digitalized by Google).

[54] For example, Theodor Christlieb in a lecture, held in 1888, in defence of his establishment of the German evangelization league (*Deutsche Evangelisationsverein*) in 1884. For a discussion, see Martin Werth, *Theologie der Evangelisation*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 2004, 15-30.

[55] H. Wittenberg, *Die Lage der ländlichen Arbeiter in Neuvorpommern und auf Rügen*, Leipzig: Reinhold Werther 1893, ²1894. Interestingly, a recent study of missionary church planting in Germany, concludes that in Pomerania (esp. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) evangelism is very difficult (*sehr mühsam*). This may be caused in part by the ,mentality of the inhabitants' (Sabine Schröder, *Konfessionslose erreichen: Gemeindegründungen von freikirchlichen Initiativen seit der Wende 1989 in Ostdeutschland*, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag 2007, 190-191).

[56] Cf. Werth, 53-54.

[57] Hilbert, 5, 6, 9.

Hilbert may have been the first European to call his own country a 'mission field'.[58] It was the logical consequence of the application of missionary concepts on what used to be Christendom. In fact, it implied that there could not be such a thing as a 'Christian' country, and that there never had been such countries in the first place. Christian mission, in Hilbert's view, did not result in Christian countries, but in the founding of churches being responsible for permanent mission within this particular area. Hilbert emphatically argued that 'mission', even in Germany, would never come to an end.

A theological issue in all this was, of course, the significance of (infant) baptism. These early European critics of 'Christian' nations did not reject infant baptism, as the Anabaptists had done, but they did criticize the assumptions of 'automatic' salvation or conversion that were implied in an ecclesiastical practice that contented itself with baptism without further 'missionizing'. This emphasis on infant baptism as an impulse to evangelize, instead of being a replacement of it, has remained the core of all attempts to 'missionary church building' within a national church setting since.[59] Rephrasing this in theological language, one might say that infant baptism in a *Volkskirche* situation is not *indicative* of the people's condition (defining them somehow as a 'Christian' nation), but rather *imperative*: it implies that the baptizing church has accepted an evangelistic responsibility to win these baptized people for the Kingdom of God.[60] If this sense of responsibility is absent or merely lip service, there is — at least in a Protestant view — nothing special about a 'baptized nation'. Thus, massive infant baptism would not take away from a country its character as a mission field. On the contrary, it would be a pre-eminent sign that it had become one.

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[58] Cf. for example the British secretary of the World Missionary Conference and editor of the *International Review of Mission*, J.H. Oldham. In his *The World and the Gospel*, published in the same year as Hilbert's contribution (London: Christian Literature Society for India 1916), the distinction between 'Europe' or 'Christendom' on the one hand, and the 'mission-field' on the other, is still completely operational (138ff). Text can be accessed on the website of the *Internet Archive* of the University of Toronto, http://www.archive.org/details/worldgospeloooldh.

[59] Cf. Michael Herbst, *Missionarische Gemeindeaufbau in der Volkskirche*, Stuttgart: Calwer, 4th edition 1996 (first edition 1987).

[60] Whether the instrument of massive baptism still is the most sensitive or contextual instrument to express this acceptance in post-Christian Europe, is a matter of discussion. In today's pluralistic societies churches are certainly not in the position to live up to the promise implied in baptizing as many children as possible, regardless the seriousness of their parents' faith. They simply lack the authority, the infrastructure and the power.

4. Europe as a Mission Field in the 20th Century

4.1. *Two Missionary Frameworks*

At the dawn of the 20th century evangelism in Europe was approached from two different perspectives. The first I have termed the 'confessional' model, inspiring Catholics and Protestants to target each other's territories, that were believed to be enveloped in spiritual darkness. This model originated in 16th century France, received great input from the Jesuits and Calvinists, and was revived during the 19th century throughout Europe. The second may be called the 'revivalist' model. Its goal was the awakening of nominal Christians or the reconversion of lapsed ones. This model was born in England during the 18th century, although it had been preceded by many smaller movements in various countries during the previous centuries. It was the main motivation behind 'inner mission' projects and evangelism programmes during the 19th and a good part of the 20th century.

   Both models operated within the framework of a formally Christian Europe. This means primarily the assumption of baptized populations, and the presence of a general cultural sympathy towards Christianity as prime representative of the good life. The confessional model materializes these assumptions along the lines of 'true (orthodox)' vs. 'false (heretic) Christianity', whereas the revivalist model does this by employing the distinction between 'serious' (born-again) and 'nominal (unregenerate) Christians'. In both models 'conversion' would mean a turn towards something at least vaguely familiar. It would imply intensification or better understanding of what one believed already to some extent, but not a complete change of worldview. As a consequence evangelists could generally count on some Biblical knowledge in their audiences, a general trust in Christian leaders, the presence of belief in God, and so forth. Evangelism could therefore be brief and focused, aiming at 'decisions'. This, however, was about to change in the 20th century.

4.2. *The Ideological Framework of Mission*

Although much evangelistic mission in Europe still works within one or both of these historic paradigms, its framework has been challenged during the 20th century. For example, while the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh in 1910 was still cherishing a rather unproblematic territorial understanding of Christendom that should be expanded to the ends of the earth (but see section 1 above), a completely different chord was struck in Jerusalem

1928.[61] The American missiologist Rufus Jones contributed a paper to the conference, with the significant title 'Secular Civilization and the Christian Task'. He made it clear that the time of 'Christian nations' was over, if it had ever existed at all.

> We go to Jerusalem then, not as members of a Christian nation to convert other nations which are not Christian, but as Christians within a nation far too largely non-Christian, who face within their own borders the competition of a rival movement as powerful, as dangerous, as insidious as any of the great historic religions.[62]

In a reflection on this conference, published a year later, Basil Mathews concluded that in Jerusalem the Western world had learnt to see itself as a 'mission field'.[63] Even more interesting, perhaps, was Jones' introduction of the 'rival movement' of 'secular culture'. This terminology was consciously modelled after the way non-Western religions, like Hinduism or Islam, had been described in the Edinburgh conference of 1910. In other words, Jones suggested that Christianity within the borders of its historic heartland had found a formidable adversary, an alternative 'religion', as it were. It was yet another way to say that Europe had become a mission field as any other part of the world where Christianity had to struggle with other religions and philosophies, every bit as resistant as the great world religions. Even within the West it was no longer self-evident to be a Christian, either nominally or seriously.

We might say, therefore, that Jerusalem 1928 saw the birth of a new, 'ideological' paradigm of mission in Europe. Around the Second World War this would be expanded further by adding 'neo-paganism' as another competitor of Christianity, one that had been suppressed by formal Christianity for a long time, but would now reappear at the surface of society.[64] In 1938 the Dutch

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[61] Cf. a.o. Thomas F. Foust *et al.* (eds.), *A Scandalous Prophet: The Way of Mission after Newbigin*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2002, 18-19.

[62] Rufus M. Jones, 'Secular Civilization and the Christian Task', in: International Missionary Council, *The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Non-Christian Systems of Thought and Life*, Report of The Jerusalem Meeting I, London 1928, 273.

[63] Basil Mathews, *Road to the City of God*, New York: Doubleday 1929, 211.

[64] E.g., W. Visser 't Hooft, 'Evangelism Among Europe's Neo-pagans', *International Review of Mission* 60 (1977), 352: the European pagan tradition 'is far more deeply rooted in European history than is generally realized'. See also Alfred C. Krass, *Evangelizing Neopagan North America*, Scotdale: Herald Press 1982; Michael Cooper, 'Contributing Factors in the Resurgence of Paganism in Western Society', *Sacred Tribes: Journal of Christian Mission to New Religious Movements* 2/2 (2004).

missiologist Hendrik Kraemer published his famous *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. Here he defined Western 'relativism' and 'secularism' as rebellious ideologies, forgetful of their Christian origins. Especially the rise of Nazism ('tribal religion') was a matter of concern. According to Kraemer nothing demonstrated more clearly 'that the Christian Church, religiously speaking, in the West as well as in the East, is standing in a pagan, non-Christian world, and has again to consider the whole world its mission field, not in the rhetorical but in the literal sense of the word.'[65]

This opposition of Christianity against other, competing philosophies of life would be the basis for the worldview-driven approach of mission to the West that characterized the post-War contributions of influential writers like Lesslie Newbigin and David Bosch. Alongside the conceptual pairs of 'true vs. false Christianity' and 'serious vs. nominal Christianity' a new pair came into being, that of 'Christianity/Gospel vs. culture'. This relationship of Christianity with what has been termed 'secular culture', remained an important part of discussions in missionary conferences. Within the ecumenical tradition, as represented by the World Council of Churches, this resulted in a remarkable embrace of secularization (not: secularism) in the 1960s.

In the meanwhile however, the progressive dechristianization of some parts of Europe could not escape attentive observers. In France, for example, vast parts of the countryside were declared *terres de mission* ('mission fields') already in the 1930s.[66] In the decade of World War Two, the awareness that Europe had become a mission field established itself in almost every nation. Representatives of all the major confessions articulated it. For example, in 1945 the Commission for Evangelism in the Church of England published *Towards the Conversion of England*.[67] The Report stated that there was 'a wide and deep gulf between the church and the people' (par. 4). Drawing from the ideological paradigm of mission the writers claimed that the church in Britain was opposed by a formidable opponent — 'humanism' (par. 12). The decline in churchgoing and the demise of Christian morality confronted the Church of England with a 'far harder task than to evangelise heathen'. At least, pagans do 'worship a

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[65] Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, New York: Harper & Brothers 1938, 16-17.

[66] Gerd-Rainer Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology, 1924-1959: The First Wave*, New York: Oxford University Press 2008, 235. He quotes Victor Bettencourt, *L'apostolat rural: Programme d'action catholique*, Paris 1937.

[67] *Towards the Conversion of England: The Report of a Commission on Evangelism appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Pursuant to a Resolution of the Church Assembly passed at the Summer Session, 1943*, London: Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly 1945.

Power higher than themselves', whereas 'in England the Church has to present the Christian Gospel to multitudes in every section of society who believe in nothing; who have lost a whole dimension of (the spiritual dimension) of life; and for whom life has no ultimate meaning' (par. 33). The Report signals a lack of creative leadership, and suggests a renewed equipment of the clergy to enable them to lead their church into evangelism.

As for Catholic Europe, in 1941 the *Mission de France* with its worker priests (*prêtres ouvriers*) was founded. Two of its members, Henri Godin and Yvan Daniel published their *La France: pays de mission?* in 1943.[68] This book is usually considered as the first major study by Catholic clergy defining a Catholic country as a mission field. Since the geographical paradigm was rooted so deeply in Roman Catholic missiology, this book was an important landmark. It pointed out that not just the countryside but also the industrial workers in the cities had left the churches long ago. Invoking traditional missionary rhetoric, Godin and Daniel spoke unashamedly of 'pagan workers'. They considered that the attempts by the church leaders to create a missionary movement in France had largely failed, because a missionary community was missing. The standard traditional parish was inwardly focused (*un milieu fermé*), and therefore unfit as a carrier of any missionary movement. According to the authors, 'the lack of true Christian communities in the working-class milieu was (…) the true cause of dechristianization — and not the process of industrialization as such'. Only the creation of such communities would help the Catholic Church to regain the initiative.[69] Thus, this study raised 'with urgency, *pars pro toto*, the question of "mission in Europe" ',[70] and helped further to destroy the geographical myth of mission — the idea that the world consisted of 'mission bases' and 'mission fields'.[71]

In Germany the Jesuit priest Alfred Delp lectured in October 1941 on Germany as a *Missionsland* (mission land). He would be the first of a long series of German Catholic clergy to use this term.[72] More famous have become the words of the Protestant pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer from his prison cell in Tegel. In 1944 he wrote: 'We are moving towards a completely religionless time; people

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[68] Lyon: Abeille 1943.

[69] Quoted in Horn, 230.

[70] E.g., J.A.B. Jongeneel and J.M. van Engelen, 'Contemporary Currents in Missiology', in: Verstraelen, 442.

[71] Bosch, 10, 365.

[72] Cf. Roman Bleistein SJ, 'Deutschland — Missionsland? Reflexen zur religiösen Situation', *Stimmen der Zeit* 6 (1998), 399-412.

as they are simply cannot be religious anymore.'[73] Bonhoeffer spoke of a 'world come of age' (*mündig gewordene Welt*), that could do without God. 'Methodist' attempts to bring modern man to a sense of guilt and despair in order to make him sense his need for Christ, had to be labelled as pointless and infantile, since they tried to turn back the clock of man's maturity.[74]

In the Netherlands, Hendrik Kraemer stated in 1947 that the primary duty of the church was 'to evangelize, to evangelize, to evangelize'.[75] His work was a major influence in the 'theology of the apostolate' (*apostolaatstheologie*) of the Dutch Reformed Church in the 1950s. After the War leading theologians in the Netherlands advocated a church that would take up the work of mission in its widest sense. The church was to confess Christ amidst national life, in words and deeds. Essentially, however, this theology maintained the traditional framework of a Christian nation that had to be called back to obedience to God by a prophetic, apostolic church with a national responsibility.[76] In this respect the discussion in the Netherlands had not yet reached the point where Hilbert was in 1916.

Nonetheless, in the middle of the 20th century there was a general awareness, at least among leading theologians, that many (Western) Europeans, perhaps even the majority, were not Christians, and that Christianity had to dialogue and compete with other, very strong, life views in its own historic heartland. Also, there was a widely shared opinion that the churches were to turn towards mission, to find ways to the hearts and lives of secular people. However, there were other voices, Bonhoeffer being the most outspoken of them, claiming that even this analysis would not go far enough. The whole traditional missionary framework, dividing the nation in Christians and potential Christians had crumbled. Modern man had lost a sense of ultimate meaning; he did not need God anymore to explain the world, to support morals or to give meaning to his life. Influenced by Bonhoeffer's analysis of culture the Dutch missiologist Johannes Hoekendijk rejected the church-centred idea of mission in the theology of Kraemer and others. The church should not try to draw the world into its fold, but it should follow the agenda set by the world, since this

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[73] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, edited by Eberhard Bethge, translated by Reginald Fuller and others, New York: The Macmillan Co., 2nd revised edition 1967, 139.

[74] Bonhoeffer, 169.

[75] Hendrik Kraemer, *De kerk in beweging*, The Hague: Boekencentrum 1947, 78. My translation.

[76] A brief history of the theology of the apostolate can be found in A. Noordegraaf, *Vijf broden en twee vissen: Missionair gemeentezijn in een (post)moderne samenleving*, Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum 1998, 52-95; Bert Hoedemaker, *Met anderen tot Christus: Zending in een postmissionair tijdperk*, Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum 2000, 30-37.

was the place where God realized his purposes.[77] From this point of departure new, 'post-ideological' (or even 'post-missionary') perspectives have emerged in our days, rejecting allegedly worn-out oppositions like 'Christianity' vs. 'secularism', and turning to more inclusive approaches, such as the common search of humanity for wisdom, unity, love, liberation and redemption.[78]

However, for all the new ideas that have come up among the theological elites, the traditional paradigms of evangelistic mission (confessional, revivalist and ideological) remained popular in the churches. Their influence became even stronger by the influx of North American missionaries, a phenomenon rapidly increasing after the Second World War. This, however, is another story.[79]

5. Conclusion

The slogan 'mission in six continents' (Mexico 1963) did not come as a surprise. In fact, it was a rather late and formal recognition of a consciousness that had been very much alive among European missionary thinkers and practitioners for a long time already. As early as the 17th century the term 'baptized pagan' as a label for the majority of the populations of Western Europe reflected this. Although the formal framework of European nations was determined by Christendom until deep into the 20th century, the fact that Europe had never stopped to be a 'mission field' had been voiced time and again since the Reformation. Thus, the distinction between 'foreign missions' and 'home missions' has always been somewhat artificial, since both emerged from the same matrix of thoughts and feelings, while they were often established by the same organizations and people.

Stefan Paas (b. 1969) is involved in the missionary church plant Via Nova in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He is J.H. Bavinck Professor of Church Planting and Church Renewal at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (s.paas@vu.nl), and lecturer in missiology at the Theological University Kampen, the Netherlands (spaas@tukampen.nl). His most important publications are *Jezus als Heer in een plat land* (2001), *Creation and Judgement* (2003), *De werkers van het laatste uur* (2003), *Vrede stichten* (2007), co-author: *Als een kerk (opnieuw) begint* (2008), and *Onder spanning* (2011).

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[77] J.C. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, Philadelphia: Westminster 1966.

[78] Cf. Werner Ustorf, 'The Philanthropy of God and Western Culture', in: Lande and Ustorf, 115ff. See also many publications by the Dutch missiologist Bert Hoedemaker.

[79] See Stark, 'Efforts', and (a bit more critical) William Lyle Wagner, *North American Protestant Missionaries in Western Europe: A Critical Appraisal*, Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft 1993.