

MISSION

Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited , *The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993),

Shenk has been director of the Mission Training Center, taught at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (Elkhart, IN). Served on the staff of Mennonite Board of Mission. He was professor at Fuller Theological Seminary from 1995 to 2005. He has written and edited numerous articles and books on mission history and missiology, and church renewal.

INTRODUCTION By Wilbert Shenk

Mission did not originate with Jesus the Messiah. A missionary tradition was established within Judaism before Jesus. The importance the rabbis placed on proselyte is evident in the Talmud (유대 법전). The rabbis was enthusiastic about the prospect of winning proselytes from among the *goyim*, in fulfillment of the vision of the nations learning to worship Yahweh.¹ (Bernard J. Bamberger concludes, “We have seen that both in Palestine and Babylonia, throughout the entire space of time considered, despite the fall of the state, despite persecution, despite the rise of Christianity, the Rabbis wanted converts and got them – and held them. The success in the face of such discouraging odds is the best proof of their missionary ardor, and of the warm welcome which proselytes received” (1968-291).

In his criticism of the Pharisees, Jesus included a sharp attack on this proselytizing mission, “for you cross sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves” (Matt. 23:15, NRSV). Jesus did not reject the mission. Rather he denounced the Pharisees for replicating (반복하다) in their converts the same legalism they themselves practiced (Matt. 23:2-7).²

Such religion reinforced ethical behavior that ratified the status quo rather than transforming unjust sociopolitical structures and mores that have been roundly condemned by the prophets. Instead of calling people to true worship of God, they fixed attention on a religious system. That is a piety that is outwardly correct but lacking in godly compassion. At this point, Jesus’ attack on the religious leaders is consistent with the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament. **The true test of religion is whether the people of God practice justice and live righteousness. This is measured concretely by the way of the socially powerless – widow, orphan, and alien (Jer. 7:5-7; 22:3; Mic. 6:8) – are treated. Religion which does not result in justice and righteousness falls under the judgment of God.**³

Jesus the Messiah did not reject mission; he transfigured it. Soon after selecting his twelve associates, Jesus dispatched them on missions with the instruction to do what he had been doing. They were to announce that the kingdom of God was at hand and confront and repel evil powers – thus liberating the oppressed, healing the sick, and inviting all people to repent and turn toward God (Matt. 10: 1, 7-8). The mission of the disciples was to be characterized by

¹ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited , *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 8. –Bernard J. Bamberger concludes, “We have seen that both in Palestine and Babylonia, throughout the entire space of time considered, despite the fall of the state, despite persecution, despite the rise of Christianity, the Rabbis wanted converts and got them – and held them. The success in the face of such discouraging odds is the best proof of their missionary ardor, and of the warm welcome which proselytes received” (1968-291).

² Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited , *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 8.

³ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited , *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 8-9.

vulnerability and dependence on the people among whom they served (Matt. 10: 9-11). Jesus enlisted the disciples fully in his mission of introducing the reign of God.⁴

Mission is always at risk of being distorted or misdirected. Over time the Jewish mission had become deformed; but this model of mission was to exert considerable influence on the understanding of mission of the earliest followers of Jesus. Within the original Christian community, a momentous struggle developed between the Judaizers and the party of Paul. The only kind of mission that made sense to the Judaizers was that modeled on the earlier Jewish mission. Paul struggled mightily against this understanding on grounds that it negated the gospel of Jesus the Messiah.⁵

Down through the centuries, mission has continued to be at risk. Starting in the fourth century C.E., methods based on coercion began to be used in gaining adherents. This particular deformation was a direct result of the alliance between church and state initiated by the Emperor Constantine.⁶

Whenever the church has accommodated itself to the controls of culture, it has lost its sense of being in the stream of Messiah's mission. Such accommodation usually means that a particular worldview – such as modernity – rather than Messiah's message, has become dominant for the church in its mission.⁷

In short, there is never a time when Messiah's mission is not at risk. The scene of mission is the world. In changing world, the messianic community must continually discern the path of faithfulness.⁸

In our quest for greater effectiveness in mission, we must avoid what has been called “the fallacy of misplaced concreteness.” Is not the purpose of mission to extend the church, the body of Christ, in the world? Does not this call us to concentrate on the growth of church?

The answer seems so obvious – but it is spurious. If we emphasize the church instead of focusing on Jesus Christ, we have misplaced our loyalty. This fallacy sets us up to proselytize, that is, merely to win more people to our side. Keeping attention fixed on Jesus the Messiah does not diminish the importance of the church; rather, it recognizes that the church must continually draw on its head for life and direction. The grand purpose of mission is that the world might encounter the living God revealed in Jesus the Messiah.⁹

Repeatedly throughout history, messianic resurgences have renewed the meaning of obedience to the mission of Jesus the Messiah for the disciple community and for the world. One thinks of movement such as the Lollards, the Waldensians, the Czech Brethren, the Anabaptist, the Moravian Brethren, the Pietists, and the Wesleyans. All arose on the margins of the church and were rejected by the church leaders. These movements sought the renewal of the church through new encounter with the gospel and are responsible for fresh creativity in the church's

⁴ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited, *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 9.

⁵ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited, *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 9.

⁶ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited, *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 9.

⁷ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited, *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 9.

⁸ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited, *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 9.

⁹ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited, *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 10.

ministry to the world. The Pietist-Wesleyan movements in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries set in motion much of the missionary and philanthropic work that followed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁰

Today we are being prodded to “complete the evangelization of the world by the year 2000.” The very phrasing invokes shades of the Chistendom tradition – a tradition established through the forced conversion of entire groups of peoples and held intact through the coercive powers of state and church controlling the whole of life. There is no disputing the urgent need for evangelization in this generation, but we must reject any implicit note of cultural triumphalism. We must not think it in our power to complete the task within a particular time frame or according to a particular methodology.¹¹

Theology of mission should be integral to the entire theological enterprise. This posits the normative relationship of church to world to be that of missionary witness as modeled by Jesus the Messiah. In the twenty century the Christian churches – and the missionary movement by extension – have been plagued by reductionisms that put limit on the scope of the gospel. This has resulted from the way Christians have reacted to the challenge of modernity, especially as expressed through modernism and fundamentalism. This has produced dichotomies that divide the gospel into component parts so that some groups emphasize proclamation (the Word) while others advocate witness through compassionate services (the deed).¹²

Increasingly it has come to be acknowledged that both extremes, however, earnestly and honestly, diminish the scope and power of the gospel. But the practical effect of this earlier conflict continue to be felt, even in those churches which did not subscribe consciously to either extreme. An adequate theology of mission must be faithful to the fullness of the gospel. Only a theology based on the kingdom of God present and coming, led by God’s Messiah, is capable of holding the whole together.¹³

Western theology has weakened the force of the gospel message by drawing a distinction between evangelism and ethics. This has created a situation in which gospel, the basis of evangelization, has been emptied of its ethical content, while ethics are severed from the foundational message of the gospel. Thus the evangelist is expected to preach about Jesus Christ who will forgive sins and restore to right relationship with God; but Christian ethics have been dominated by the idea that the life and teachings of Jesus – especially as found in the Sermon on the Mount – cannot possibly have been intended as the basis for ethical guidance. This distinction reaches a particularly crucial point when questions of violence, unjust and oppressive systems, and warfare must be considered.¹⁴

The missionary task is to invite men and women into a new kind of community, one in which even enemies can be reconciled. The mandate is to go to all nations. Thus the new community by definition consists of people drawn together under the leadership of the Suffering Messiah regardless of race or nationality, forging a new allegiance that supersedes all other

¹⁰ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited, *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 10.

¹¹ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited, *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 10.

¹² Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited, *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 11.

¹³ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited, *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 11.

¹⁴ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited, *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 11.

loyalties . It is urgent that Christians reclaim the unity of evangel and ethics as we witness in a world divided by nationalism, classism, racism, and religious loyalties. ¹⁵

The goal of mission is the establishment of God's new order in which righteousness, justice and peace dwell. The gospel of peace is nothing less than the vision of shalom into which God invites all people. The gospel is not first of all a program but an invitation to new relationship within a new order of reality. Evangel and ethics are not opposite or even separable parts but an identity which is the basis of both missionary witness and discipleship. ¹⁶

Mission is a continuation of the narrative, begun with the calling out of Abraham, continued through the people of God in the Old Testament, transfigured by Jesus, and mandated to be extended by his messianic community under the leadership of the Holy Spirit throughout time to the ends of the earth. ¹⁷

Jesus the Messiah took an existing form of mission and transfigured it. Proselyting cannot be the means of transforming men and women into the likeness of Jesus himself. Proselyting represents to us human efforts that deform mission. Much of the criticism that has been made of missionary work, especially during the modern period, is directed against deformed mission practices. The argument put forward here is that mission in every generation is at risk because of the temptation to resort to methods and tactics that produce proselytes, on the one hand, or rely on various forms of coercion, on the other. ¹⁸

As we approach the beginning of the third millennium since Jesus the Messiah, and as we ask what the outline of the missionary task will be in the future, we believe we must turn again to the source of mission: The God who creates and redeems as revealed in the work of Jesus Messiah. ¹⁹

What will authentic mission modeled by Messiah mean for the community concerned to follow obediently its Messiah leader in a world ever-widening chasms? What is authentic mission in a world with rifts widening between rich and poor, social classes and ethnic groups; a world of exhausted modernity and threatening technologies; a world driven by the relentless quest for power by all sorts of special interests; a world wanting to be reassured that there is an anchor but increasingly unable to have faith and hope? Amid the extremisms of the day, the erosion of the past, and the uncertainties of the future, the messianic community is privileged to bear witness to the life-transforming power of the reign of God which alone can make "all things new." ²⁰

¹⁵ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited , *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 11.

¹⁶ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited , *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 11.

¹⁷ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited , *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 12.

¹⁸ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited , *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 12.

¹⁹ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited , *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 12.

²⁰ Wilbert R. Shenk, Edited , *Introduction in The Transfiguration of Mission* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 12.

CHAPTER 1: THE RELEVANCE OF A MESSIANIC MISSIOLOGY FOR MISSION TODAY By Wilbert R. Shenk

Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993),

The faithful stance of the messianic community in the world is that of missionary witness. the basis for this stance is the work of Jesus the Messiah. The essential meaning of the messiahship of Jesus was that he was sent into the world in the name of the Father and in the power of the Spirit for the salvation of the world.²¹

Meaning of the term “mission:” Mission denotes action: Being sent with a commission to perform a certain task, acting in the name of a superior, carrying out an important mandate, serving as ambassador on behalf of one’s leader. It is not a specifically religious term. It is used by military, government, business, and many other secular groups.²²

However, missiology is the formal study of the Christian mission, including the biblical and theological foundation of mission; the history of the course taken by the missions; analysis of the contemporary context; and a discernment of social, political, economic, and religious trends that will influence the direction of mission in the future.²³

Church own political power and wealth – lost its essence: In the era of Christendom, the Emperor Constantine gave Christianity official standing. This change of status fundamentally altered the position of the church in society. From being a marginal, socially interior, and economically weak group, the church became one of the dominant institutions in society. It acquired immense wealth and political power. From being an oppressed minority, the church now became an oppressor, enabled by its alliance with the political military authorities to coerce the unwilling to become “believers.” Without this fundamental change in the identity of the church there could have been no Christendom.²⁴

The modern mission is being criticized by two groups: The first groups asserts that the church in the West, including Western missions, has compromised them and the Christian message by an uncritical hand-in-glove alliance with Western political, economic, and military power.²⁵

The other class of critics, largely unsympathetic to the Christian faith and its mission –

²¹ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 17.

²² Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 18.

²³ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 18.

²⁴ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 19.

²⁵ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 20.

scores missions for cultural and religious imperialism. In this regard missions, lacking critical distance from their sending cultures, were only continuing to play the role assigned by Christendom.²⁶

Part of the censure (criticism) of modern mission is that they, at worst, were confused as to which authority they were representing, or at the least, left people around them confused. Did not they uncritically follow the flag of empire while protesting their allegiance to the cross?²⁷ This statement challenge us for having two flags in the church – one church flag and the other American flag. What this behavior means? Does it mean that we worship both? Even if we say “no” in reality we seem to worship the empire and the cross at the same time.

Modern days, the state collaborated with the church in maintaining this so-called Christian society...One implication of this religiopolitical arrangement was that there was no place for mission to the West, for the whole society was “Christian” by fiat. The church as a missionary presence in society was unthinkable, an anomaly to a corpus Christianum. Thus the church of Christendom was a church stripped of its missionary consciousness, prostituted by connivance (묵인, 공모) between state and church hierarchy.²⁸

Augsburg Confession (1530), Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion on the Church, Heidelberg Catechism (1563) all of which emphasized the *being* rather than the *function* of the church. These authoritative declarations do little to help the church realize its calling to be the instrument of the Messiah’s continuing mission to the world. The focus is decidedly inward; the emphasis is on control.²⁹

Since the period of cold war between the two main systems – the capitalist led by the United States and the communist championed by the Soviet Union. This led to an arms race of unprecedented proportions between the superpowers which as consumed staggering amounts of previous resources at a time when the world’s poor were sinking ever deeper into their poverty.³⁰

The rich nations became involved in development aid to the less developed countries. So-called development aid was viewed by the West primarily as a tool of foreign policy and as an opportunity to develop markets for domestic exports.³¹

Modern Christology largely devoid of mission to the world. It is a scholarship detached from life.³²

²⁶ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 20.

²⁷ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 21.

²⁸ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 22.

²⁹ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 23.

³⁰ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 24.

³¹ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 24.

Varieties of Mission: The following three types are incomplete or inadequate approaches to mission:

Cultural mission: This type encompasses a range of response to human needs based largely on cultural resources. Human needs in one culture responded to with the resources of another culture. – education, medicine, agriculture, community development, emergency relief, and social-service missions. Over time it came to be recognized that healing, educating, and improving the quality of life of a people could not be done successfully only with materials and techniques imported from another culture. The people being served had to be active participants in the process. Enlightenment worldview and values, Western wealth, and more elaborate technology became significant barriers to the effectiveness of missions conceived largely in cultural terms because they came into conflict with the worldview and values of the other culture. Missions operating at this level did not take people and culture with sufficient seriousness.³³

Spiritual mission: This has emphasized the Jesus of personal piety and spiritual salvation. The result was a concentration on the soul and salvation in the future life.³⁴

Post –Christian mission: The argument proceeds from the observation that we live in a new historical situation inasmuch as religious and cultural pluralism has become a dominant feature in many countries –but especially in the West claiming that there are many paths to God, with no one religious tradition enjoying a privileged position. In this view, the church’s historical understanding of Jesus Christ as unique Savior and Lord poses an especially troublesome stumbling block to achieving rapprochement among the religious traditions.³⁵

Messianic Mission: Our conviction is that God’s saving mission is disclosed to us most fully in Jesus the Messiah. It is in sending of the Son that we are finally enabled to see God the Father. God’s purpose in creation, having been temporarily thwarted by the Fall, are being accomplished in redemption. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14) means that God has established a new means of access so that the communion and harmony of Eden may be realized. It is the particularity of the incarnation that establishes the universal validity of Jesus Christ.³⁶

Jesus, instead of sending his disciples out to win converts who would pattern themselves after a law code, Jesus authorized the disciples to invite people into a life transformed through reconciliation with God, a relationship which meant liberation from the bondage in which they had been held. Rather than resorting to coercive tactics to win converts, Jesus told his disciples

³² Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 25.

³³ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 26.

³⁴ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 26.

³⁵ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 27.

³⁶ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 29.

not to impose themselves on anyone (Matt. 10:14). Their appeal was to be based on God's gracious action on behalf of all people in sending the Messiah: "You received without payment; give without payment" (Matt. 10: 8).³⁷

The mission of Jesus the Messiah was to liberate people from sin of ego-centeredness and se them free to serve God and others.³⁸

According to St. Paul, at the heart of biblical faith is surrender of the self into the hands of God, an act modeled supremely by Jesus the Messiah during his passion (Luke 22:42). It is in surrendering to God's will that the way is opened to enter into the fullness of God's gracious provision.³⁹

Whenever the church accommodate itself to the control of culture, it has lost its sense being the stream of Messiah's mission.

A RELEVANT MISSIOLOGY

Shenk intends to find a model of mission from the norms given to us in God's Messiah. He claims this norm holds together all the elements necessary to the *Missio Dei*. Such elements include: *Jesus the Messiah*, God's anointed one, in whom God's reign is inaugurated in the world and through whom that reign will be fully established; who makes the peace by the blood of the cross, reconciles former enemies, and forms of them the messianic community. *The Holy Spirit*, who continues the mission of the Messiah in the world during this missionary age. *The Messianic community*, the instrument of Messiah's mission in whose life the reign of God is actualized through its living out of the messianic ethic – overcoming the sins of "isms" which have destroyed fellowship and thus life itself. *The eschatological framework of mission*, which keeps present and future together by allowing the power of the eschaton to shape the life of the messianic community now while they, in hope, anticipate the glorious consummation of all things. All this is of the essence of evangelical faith, and evangelical faith cannot but be expressed in response to what God has done in Jesus the Messiah. This, we submit, is the norm for mission.⁴⁰

³⁷ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., "The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today," in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 29.

³⁸ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., "The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today," in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 29.

³⁹ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., "The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today," in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 29.

⁴⁰ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., "The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today," in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 31.

CHAPTER 6: MESSIANIC MISSION AND THE WORLD – Wilbert R. Shenk P 153-173

Wilbert R. Shenk, ed. “Messianic Mission and the World,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993),

Messianic mission is inextricably linked to the world. God the creator instituted the *missio Dei* because the creation was alienated from its Creator. The God of Creation is also the God of redemption. God sent Messiah into the world for one compelling reason. God’s love is world-embracing. Jesus the Messiah was mandated to liberate and redeem the world from the power of sin and death, reconciling it to God (Is. 49: 8-13; 61:1; Matt. 4:23; Luke 4:18-19; 9:10; John 10:10b; 2 Cor. 5:20). This is to be accomplished by establishing God’s order where there has been fundamental disorder. God’s kingdom alone represents this new possibility. This is the “good news.”⁴¹

The mission of Jesus led to his death by crucifixion at the hands of those who bitterly opposed his liberating and redemptive ministry. And the course of messianic mission down through history has always included long passage of persecution and martyrdom.⁴²

The Context for Messianic Mission

Shenk includes culture, world, and worldview as the context for Messianic mission .

Culture (P. 154):

Culture consists of the learned patterns of behavior which enable an individual to participate in a society acceptably. A culture is a system of folkways, values, and preferences which a people hold in common and by which they live.⁴³

Culture is essential to human existence as a life-support system. The human being begins life as a complex, vulnerable, and highly dependent organism that cannot survive without much care from immediate family and society. In this sense it is not possible to describe a person apart from culture. The human being is always “in culture.”⁴⁴

A culture never remains static: it is constantly changing in response to the challenge of external circumstances and internal impulses. Culture is an important means of expressing human autonomy from the Creator and may become an act of rebellion (Gen. 11:1-9).⁴⁵

⁴¹ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 153.

⁴² Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 154.

⁴³ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 154-155.

⁴⁴ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 155.

⁴⁵ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 156.

World (p. 156)

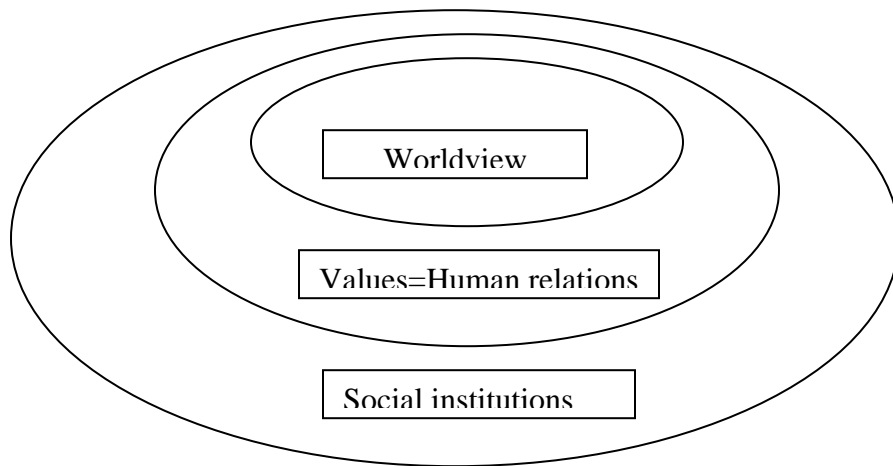
The term “world” is widely used in the Bible in at least five distinct senses.

1) it is used to refer to the **Physical universe** described in the creation accounts in Gen. 1:-2: God created the world and everything in it. 2) The Bible speaks of the **human inhabitants of the earth** as the world. Ps. 9:8 says God judges the world with righteousness. God promises to “punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity (Ps. 9:8). 3) World refers to the **scene of human activity**. The world is the theater of human actions – for good and for ill: for godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death (2 Cor. 7:10). 4) World signifies **the forces arrayed against God and God’s purposes**. This usage encompasses fallen and unrepentant peoples as well as spiritual forces (Eph. 3:10). Hebrew 11:38 speaks of the martyrs “of whom the world was not worthy.” 2 Peter 1:4 warns of “the corruption that is in the world.” 5) The world is the **object of Messiah’s mission**. The world that hates God is the world God has loved to the extent of giving “his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Messiah is acclaimed “Savior of the World”(John 4:42).⁴⁶

Worldview

CULTURE is consisted of several layers: At the heart of culture is worldview. A second layer is comprised of the values and controls which regulate human relationships. The outer layer is made up of a series of institutions which furnish the framework for human activity – family, economy, laws, policies, education.

CULTURE (Shenk P. 158-159)



These layers are interconnected. The second layer directly reflects the core, that is, the worldview; the third layer represents a working out in social institutions of the values of the

⁴⁶ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 157.

second. But the worldview is being modified over time by changes in the experiences of the members of a cultural group.⁴⁷

Charles Kraft suggests that a worldview performs five functions.

- 1) It **explains** matters of ultimate concern to members of a culture
- 2) Setting a standard by which members of a culture **evaluate** life
- 3) A worldview **offers psychological reinforcement** for members of a culture.
- 4) **Integrate** perceptions of reality.
- 5) Helps a culture's members **adapt** to fundamental change by coming to terms with contradictions and conflicts that threaten disintegration unless resolved.⁴⁸

The worldview of a culture is the “command center” out of which emanates cultural impulses. A worldview shapes and animates the way a particular culture views the world. This is the point at which the biblical notion of “world” and what we commonly call ‘culture’ meet and merge. When Paul made his twofold appeal to the Christians at Rome to “present” themselves wholly to God while refusing to “be conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:1-2), he clearly called for a basic reorientation – a re-centering – of this “command center.” This was to be accomplished through a transformation of their minds, that is, their worldview. In other words, conversion must begin at this fundamental level if the thorough renovation Paul envisages is to be actualized. The Messianic community was being called to understand that God has a radically different view of the world and this was the view that was to be normative in the life and witness of this community.⁴⁹

THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION WHY CHURCHES MUST DO SOMETHING

P. 161

Old Testament

Human Predicament: Original Sin

The Bible unfolds the implications of human attempts to become godlike (Gen. 4:1-16; 6:5-8:22; 11:1-9) when they assert their independence of God by rejecting and an accountable relationship to God. By Contrast, God models true interdependence God, who is totally independent of creation, including humankind, in *agape* chooses to be in relationship with humankind, demonstrated most fully and concretely in Jesus the Messiah. The human rejection of God ends in the embrace of and deepening on other powers. These powers are in rebellion against God; they are powers which cannot give life or liberate from creaturely limits.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 159.

⁴⁸ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 160.

⁴⁹ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 160.

⁵⁰ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 161.

Human beings are powerless to save themselves. The temptation to become godlike is in fact an attempt to save self independently of God.⁵¹

God takes a series of initiatives. In the Old Testament the most significant step is the calling out of Abraham to be a means of blessing (Gen. 12:1-3) to the peoples of the world.⁵²

Holiness:

The covenant people have a special vocation to the world. Their calling is to be a holy people. To be holy is to be set apart from the ordinary. Holiness involves becoming godly precisely by rejecting the world's way of rebellion against God and entering into covenant relationship.

Prophetic Critique: Use this quote for what church can do section-church repent

The prophetic writings of the Old Testament provide an extended critique of Israel's bent toward covenant breaking manifested through the worship of idols, moral compromise, and unfaithfulness to their vocation as the people of God. The prophets repeatedly issue the call to "repent" and return to Yahweh as true leader.⁵³

An important theme in the prophets' preaching was the coming of Messiah. The people were encouraged to look for Messiah who would transform their present predicament into a new age of justice/righteousness characterized by *shalom*. Israel people perceived the enemy as being external. But the prophets uniformly emphasized the enemy within-the people's hardheartedness toward God and weaker members of society, the widow, orphan and alien. The prophetic prescription was the transformed heart, an inward conversion, for that alone could produce the fruits of social righteousness (Mic. 6:8; cf. Amos 5:21-24; Jer. 31:8, 12-13, 17, 31-34).⁵⁴

New Testament (p. 164)

Matthew reports, "Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Matt. 4:17; cf. Mark 1:15). In John 3:16, God makes an unconditional commitment to the salvation of the world in sending of the Son as God's Messiah (Shenk P. 164). Commissioning in John's Gospel links Jesus' own martyrdom with the commission to the disciples to go into the world (John 20:20ff.).⁵⁵

Here I can add statement of the Kingdom from Evangelism.

⁵¹ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., "The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today," in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 161.

⁵² Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., "The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today," in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 161.

⁵³ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., "The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today," in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 163.

⁵⁴ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., "The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today," in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 163.

⁵⁵ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., "The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today," in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 164.

As Jesus constantly faced tension between him and the world, so did apostles in the first century and they responded “ We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29b).⁵⁶

The world through media preaches market economy every day. Churches must preach this Messiah and act out his principle but we don’t do it.

Jesus challenged the coalition of religious leaders for their false piety and unjust administration and he called for a discipleship based on holy living, thus renewing the Old Testament emphasis on being a holy people.⁵⁷

Add Wesley’s interpretation of **holiness**.

Jesus the powers

In the ministry of Jesus, the clash between Jesus and the powers is most intense in relation to the religious leaders and the state. His teaching so threatened their *authority* that they began early to plot this assassination (Mark 3:6) It was the Roman government that acted in collusion with the religious leaders and arraigned the crucifixion of Jesus.⁵⁸ In today’s world, too many churches are in collaborative relationship with the state.

Paul and the powers

The Pauline phrase “principalities and powers” captures in the popular mind Paul’s thought about the powers- these are sinister forces bent on subverting and destroying the work of God in the world.⁵⁹

A power joins the inner or spiritual and the outer or material reality. The one cannot exist without the other. Whenever a power structure overreaches its proper role and demands absolute allegiance, it has become demonic. Unsubmitted power tends not to know its limits. It is in the nature of power to seek to enhance itself further.⁶⁰ This is like the power of corporations and dictatorial leadership.

The Rationality of Power

Power is self-justifying. The more it shields itself from criticism the more unable it is to accept criticism.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 164.

⁵⁷ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 165.

⁵⁸ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 167.

⁵⁹ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 167.

⁶⁰ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 168.

⁶¹ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 168.

The Messianic Response: Cross and Resurrection

The cross and resurrection is the way God chose to bring the rebellious powers to heel. Jesus did not accept the “rationality” of the Roman authorities and it meant oppression and death. It however exposed their moral bankruptcy and their actual impotence. The resurrection of Jesus in the power of God’s Spirit was the beginning of the end for all these rebellious powers.⁶²

Jesus rejected all the conventional trappings of power. Instead he submitted himself to God, to humankind, and to death by crucifixion. This means he refused to acknowledge the claims of any other god, to exploit other humans, or to insist on his rights even on pain of death.⁶³

The New Creation

The path to the new creation is by way of conversion. To be converted is to leave the old and to join the new one. Breaking with the old and joining the new involves the double action of repentance and conversion. The basis for this conversion was the covenant. The covenant obligation entailed rejection of idolatry, authentic worship, and social righteousness. Jeremiah expected that the people would be able to enter fully into their covenant responsibilities only when they experienced a change of heart so that their wills inclined toward God (Jer. 24:4-7; 31:31-34; 32:37-41; 33:7-9; cf. Heb. 8:8-12; 10:16-17).⁶⁴

Jesus picks up the same note of repentance and call to covenant relationship in his message (Matt. 4:17, 23; Mark 1:14; John 3:3-6). Conversion signifies the complete change in personal orientation from bondage to the powers of this world by liberation into service in the kingdom of God. It is both a conscious turning to God and continuing process of bearing the “fruits of repentance.”⁶⁵

The new creation takes concrete form in the new community. He characterized it as being the source of salt and light for the world. Every time the church actualizes the joining together of “Jew and Gentile,” it overrides the powers of extending the life-giving power of Jesus the Messiah (Eph. 2:11-22).⁶⁶

The Church in the World: Resident Aliens

The community that names Messiah as its leader can never find full acceptance in the world so long as these “lordless” powers continue to exert influence. Abraham called himself “stranger” (Gen. 23:4a); Jacob called himself a sojourner in Egypt (Gen. 47:9);

⁶² Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 169.

⁶³ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 169.

⁶⁴ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 170.

⁶⁵ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 171.

⁶⁶ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 171.

David pled before God: “For I am thy passing guest, a sojourner, like all my fathers” (Ps. 39:12). The epistle to the Hebrews describes the faithful in the same terms: “They were strangers and exiles on earth” (Heb. 11:13).⁶⁷

Jesus is linked with this line: “So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go forth to him outside the camp, and bear the abuse he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come” (Heb. 13:12-14; cf. Phil. 3:20). Peter appeals to the faithful as “alien and exiles” to live a life of holiness and thus commend the world to God (1 Pet. 2:9, 12).⁶⁸

In fact, the community is never instructed to go elsewhere to seek its safety or well-being. Rather the situation is one of critical engagement. The metaphor of “resident alien” does not focus on the inward life of the disciple or call for quietism. Rather it keeps clearly in view the tension between God and God’s people in the world. It assumes the messianic community is the bearer of that tension and that it will allow its mission to be shaped by that tension: total loyalty to the Messiah and unbounded compassion for a world in bondage to the “lordless” powers.⁶⁹ However, today’s church has been too comfortable in allegiance with the state and its policies some of which are unjust for the most vulnerable in our society and world. This is about time when church needs to repent, convert and restore its original God-given task in the face of injustice in the world.

.....

⁶⁷ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 172.

⁶⁸ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 172.

⁶⁹ Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., “The Relevance of Messianic Missiology for Mission Today,” in *The Transfiguration of Mission*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 173.

CHAPTER 2: JESUS THE MESSIAH: MESSIANIC FOUNDATION OF MISSION - David A. Shank p.37-

David A. Shank, "Jesus the Messiah: Messianic Foundation of Mission," *The Transfiguration of Mission*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993),

"Messiah" implies a specific historical personality who poses as effective redeemer and liberator in a given context of oppressive alienation. Yet the term "Christ" in the Greek tradition often ignored the holistic Hebrew dynamics, with their social, economic, and political implications for faith, all of which are inherent in the language of "messiah" (Shenk p. 39).

Jesus' total openness to persons of all social classes inspires Christologies of relationship and personhood. His rejection of power has contributed to kenotic Christologies. Since all of his filial service to God was seen as love (*agape*) for others including the enemy, it has inspired Christologies of love and the "man for others." One cannot but be impressed with Jesus' preoccupation with service to the marginal: the poor, inspiring a Christology oriented to "God's option for the poor"; women, inspiring a feminist Christology ("Jesus was a feminist"); publicans and harlots, with a "Christ for the outsiders"; his "set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18), inspiring a Christology of liberation. All of them together indicate the way of the Son, the Messiah (Shenk p. 67).

Jesus can become a human model to follow. His response to the sick and lame; the blind, deaf, and the leper is one of healing and wholeness (Shenk p.67).

The ways and means of Jesus' life, action, and service were expression of his obedient sonship and a servant exegesis-revelation of the "Father"; he saw them to be in fact the very signs of his God-sent messianity. "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me" (Mark 11:4-6) (David Shank p. 68). Here in this text Jesus tried to tell John what he did (his mission activity) meant who he was, Messiah.

Suffering Servanthood of Jesus' Messianism (Shenk P. 69).

It was Jesus' active and faithful filial obedience in that mission that brought on the opposition which inflicted suffering and ultimately his death; it was "written," given his mission and its context of disobedient humanity, both in Israel and among the nations. At any point Jesus could have turned away from that mission and avoided the wrathful outworking of that disobedience in violent oppositions and its consequence; but his calling was to absorb that injustice and preserve, to assume the consequence and persevere, vicariously to take upon himself that wrath (Shenk p.69).

The obedience of *agape*/love unto death defined the nature of the messianic mission, and the bearing of sin with the forgiveness of the cross fulfilled the way into the new humanity. The resurrection confirmed this for the disciple witnesses and assured them of the risen Messiah's ongoing mission and magistracy in view of the restoration and salvation of all Israel and all the nations. Moreover, they were themselves commissioned

by the risen Jesus for this mission with him through the preaching of the good news of his messiahship, his mission of governance, and his coming for its fulfillment (Shenk p. 71).

CHAPTER 3: THE KINGDOM OF GOD: GOAL OF MISSIANIC MISSION **John Driver P. 83-103**

John Driver, "The Kingdom of God: Goal of Messianic Mission," *The Transfiguration of Mission*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Scottsdale PA: Herald Press, 1993),

The kingdom of God is a primary image for understanding the biblical vision of God's salvific activity, first of all in the vocation of Israel and then in the saving mission of his Messiah. While the term *Kingdom* is found in all parts of the New Testament, it plays a dominant role in the synoptic Gospels (Shenk p.85).

The exercise of God's kingly rule was not a vague abstraction in ancient Israel. God's kingship does not merely mean a general insistence on moral values as such. God's reign has to do with the concrete forms which life takes among his people. It is in the relationships among God's people that his righteous rule is manifest. The Kingdom of God is not abstractly defined in the Old Testament as "wherever God reigns." God's kingdom is manifested in the concrete forms in which social relationships are practiced in response to his intention for his people, in particular, and for all of his creation in general (Shenk p. 86).

Psalms 145 and 146 reflect this view of the kingdom expressed in concrete relationship of covenant righteousness. Here the elements of God's reign include bringing justice to the oppressed, providing food for the hungry, setting prisoners free, opening the eyes of the blind, lifting up the bowed, watching over the sojourners, sustaining the widows and orphans (Shenk p. 87).

The Decalogue is the most concise and clearest description of God's intention for human relationships under his rule. .. The second table of the Decalogue contains specific descriptions of the forms which Israel's response to Yahweh's gracious kingship will take. Covenant Law was not a mutually beneficial legal contract but was based exclusively on Yahweh's saving act of grace, liberation from Egypt. Life under Yahweh's kingship takes the concrete social, economic, and political forms sketched out, in principal, in the Decalogue (Shenk p. 88).

The sabbatical and jubilee provisions offer another example of the concrete forms which social relationships take under God's rule (Lev. 25; Duet. 15:)

The land
 Slaves

Throughout its history of monarchy, Israel's rulers failed miserably in their understanding of the nature and demands of God's rule. The prophets continually called them to "seek justice," correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widows (Is. 1:17). Contrary to the thinking of many Christians throughout the church's history, the prophets did not perceive of God's rule as a purely spiritual and future reality (Shenk p. 88).

God's kingdom embraced concrete political and social events; **Mic. 4:1-4**; They foresaw a submission to God's rule which would bring about the cessation of warfare as a solution to differences. This would mean the conversion of weapons into instruments for the production of food (4:3). The fear and deprecation, so common under evil rulers, would be superseded under God's righteous rule (4:4) (Shenk p. 88).

The **kingdom vision** shared by the **prophets** was primarily historical. In all probability they were not thinking of a fulfillment beyond history as we know it. But this does not mean that they envisioned the kingdom coming as a result of mere cause and effect in human history. It would be the result of the sovereign activity of God who had saved his people in the past and whose coming anew was continually awaited (Shenk p.88).

God's rule is characterized by the wholeness of life as he has always intended it to be, in marked contrast to the social injustice and suffering, of which Egypt was a paradigm in Israel's experience (Shenk p. 89).

The great prophets of Israel expected that the messianic age would be characterized by God's sovereignty over his people in a new order of salvation with personal, social, spiritual and material dimensions (Shenk p.89).

An authentic salvation of covenant love, justice, and peace would become reality because God would dwell in the midst of his people, shepherding them as all good kings should (Shenk p. 89).

The political aspiration of the Sadducees, the revolutionary impatience of the Zealots, and the social withdrawal of the Essenes. This is the broad background of against which we must understand the New Testament announcement of the good news of the Kingdom of God on the part of John the Baptist, Jesus, the messianic community in the synoptic Gospels (Shenk p. 90).

JESUS AND THE KINGDOM

The Jewish people in general expected that the Messiah would establish God's kingdom, vindicating the righteous (the Jewish political and religious establishment) and destroying Israel's enemies (Shenk p.90).

It soon became clear that Jesus' perception of the kingdom differed from the popular views. He began his ministry making it clear that God's kingdom is for all peoples. In the synagogue in Nazareth Jesus read the prophetic vision of messianic fulfillment from Isaiah 61:1-2a. And then, instead of announcing divine judgment on Israel's enemies, Jesus went on to recall God's gracious dealings in the past with foreigners including the widow from Sidon and Naaman the Syrian. Jewish opposition was so violent that they almost killed Jesus. Scholars have suggested

that Luke 4:18 may well have been intended as a brief preview of Jesus' messianic mission (Shenk p. 90).

Two more ways in which Jesus' perception of the kingdom differed from popular understandings are reflected in his response to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). This text has often been interpreted to mean that the kingdom has nothing to do with social structures. This interpretation is probably more attractive to modern readers than it would have been to Jesus' contemporaries who generally viewed God's rule as a concrete social reality – if not present, then at least future (Shenk p.90).

First, Jesus' response to Pilate is perceived as a reference to the world to come, in contrast to this world. This view understands the kingdom of God as a reality to be experienced in the distant future, beyond the scope of history. This strongly futuristic view of the kingdom has appealed to many in the church, especially since the fourth century. However, it seems to contradict the plain sense of the words of Jesus recorded by both Matthew and Luke: "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt. 12:28; cf. Luke 11:20). The sense of the verb here leaves no doubt that Jesus viewed the kingdom as a present reality. Thayer has suggested the following translation: "The kingdom of God has come upon you sooner than you expected" (Shenk p. 91).

Second, the kingdom is often perceived as an inner, spiritual reality, the right relationship of an individual with God. Jesus' words in Luke 17:21 are interpreted, "the kingdom of God is within you," as referring primarily to an inner, personal experience. It would seem to be more in line with the intent of Jesus here to interpret Luke's text, "The kingdom of God is among you," or "in your midst" (Shenk p. 91).

From the context of John 18:36 the meaning of Jesus' words becomes clear. His kingship is not of this world, in that he does not resort to coercive violence, either for self-protection or for the establishment of the kingdom. So God's rule does affect the political, social, and economic decisions of his people who hold values which offer a radical alternative to those of the world, rather than withdrawing into the inner spiritual nature of the person or projecting into a future beyond history. God's rule calls for life in his community as he has always intended it to be (Shenk p. 91)

The collection of Jesus' teaching into the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel would seem to show that the early community understood Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom in the light of the Sinaitic Covenant: Yahweh's act of liberation and the Decalogue which ordered social relationship under his sovereign reign. In Matthew's Gospel, the description of Jesus' salvific ministry and the giving of the Sermon on the Mount offer a remarkable parallel to the Sinai experience. In effect, life under God's kingship takes the concrete social, economic, and political forms sketched out in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus did not abolish the covenant righteousness reflected in the Decalogue and the sabbatical provisions which characterize Yahweh's kingship. Rather, he radicalized it, discerning its deepest meaning by going to its very root in God's intention (Matt. 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) (Shenk p.91).

In effect, the mission of Jesus has been to reverse the consequence of evil in the world: disease, demon possession; the hostility of nature; social, religious, and ethnic rivalries; hunger; economic exploitation; empty religiosity; alienation; and death. The conflict which characterized Jesus' ministry was, in reality, the struggle of the new order to displace the era of sin and death. Therefore, all who trust in wealth, power, and prestige for security react violently because the value of the new order threaten the false source of security (Shenk p.93).

Luke saw the proclamation of the kingdom of God as the core of the early church's message. Paul mentions the kingdom of God in Romans 14:17 in the context of a discussion about problems arising out of Jewish ritualistic practices in the Christian community. Based on the life and teachings of Jesus (Matt. 5:-6:), Paul was convinced that the coming of the kingdom of God has cancelled out an earlier era concerned about details of ritual purity. I Cor. 15:24-28. Ps. 110: Rom. 8:18; Col. 2:15; Gal. 3:28 – New community; Eph. 2:13-18; Col. 3: 10-11; (Shenk p. 94).

KINGDOM, CHURCH, AND MISSION

Even Jesus' disciples shared the popular nationalistic expectations right up to Pentecost (Matt. 20:21; Acts 1:6). It was well nigh impossible for Jews to conceive of the restoration of Israel under God's righteous rule apart from a restoration of political power and economic wellbeing. This was the context in which the eschatological coming of the nations to worship Israel's God was expected (Shenk p.94).

In contrast to this vision, the suffering servant of the prophetic vision of Isaiah became the messianic model. Jesus saw himself as a servant who comes in weakness and humility. Therefore, the kingdom, as Jesus presented it, was a mystery to the masses and religious leaders alike. On the other hand, people from the most unlikely sectors of Jewish society thronged to Jesus. Judaism's outcasts – the tax collectors and prostitutes, the poor and disinherited, Galileans and Samaritans, the humble and the "little ones" – crowded to enter into the kingdom which was rejected by their leaders (Matt. 21:31) (Shenk p. 95).

God's rule of righteousness was so mysteriously different it was rejected out-of-hand by Israel's authorities. Of course, the kingdom which Jesus inaugurated was so radically different it was also soon discarded by major sectors of the Christian church. The concept of the kingdom was redefined to make it compatible with the interests of the powerful and the prosperous. This was done by practically identifying the kingdom with the church, or by conceiving of the kingdom as almost entirely future. The kingdom of God was thus stripped of its power, and its message was no longer good news ((Shenk p. 95).

The meaning of this radically upside-down kingdom (Kraybill, 1978) can be perceived only through the eyes of faith. It is a matter of "hear(ing) the word and understand(ing) it, " i.e., grasping it in obedient faith (Matt. 13:23) (Shenk p.95).

THE KINGDOM OF GOD: THE PRESENCE OF THE FUTURE

In the mission of Jesus, the future has been brought into our midst. The ministry of Jesus only the beginning of the end. All that he did points to the consummation of all things which he will usher in at his parousia (Shenk p.96).

In its “other worldliness” the church is tempted to flee from the real world – which is the object of God’s love – into an unreal and spiritualized sphere. Instead of offering a message of hope for the present, the church tends to limit its offer of hope to the future. Some have conceived of the Sermon on the Mount as primarily intended for the future. But this is to deprive the church of kingdom blessedness here and now (Shenk p.97).

THE PRIMACY OF THE KINGDOM

In our attempt to understand the identity and mission of the church we must begin where the New Testament begins – with the kingdom. The primacy of the kingdom of God is stated quite explicitly: “Seek first the kingdom and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). In other parts of the New Testament, the priority of the kingdom is implied. Jesus begins his messianic mission in the synoptic Gospels with his proclamation of the kingdom (Shenk p. 98).

The kingdom is God’s righteous rule in human history to which people are invited to respond in loyal commitment. God reigns in a radically new order. Those who responded to Jesus’ call were incorporated into a messianic community, a new people of God, the church. Therefore, the church may be understood as the people of the kingdom. The kingdom and the church are closely related: however, they are not identical. The church preaches and teaches the gospel of the kingdom. It continues Jesus’ kingdom actively (Shenk p. 98). The church is to proceed in exactly the same way as Jesus did in its use of the keys of the kingdom. ... The church must never forget its servant role. It is at the service of the King and of his righteous reign. To commit oneself to the kingdom of God will ordinarily involve participation in the community of the King (Shenk p.99).

Jesus warned his followers that “no one can serve two masters” (Matt. 6:24). Jesus calls people to renounce their allegiance to the “prince of this world” and to submit to the rule of God. Just in the case of the Messiah himself, faithfulness in the witness of the church will take the form of a cross. ... “he who loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matt. 10:39b). According to the New Testament, there is no other path to faithfulness in mission (Shenk p. 100).

GOD’S KINGDOM AND GOD’S MISSION

The church must understand its role in instrumental terms rather than in managerial and imperial images, as has often been the case. The church does not build the kingdom. According to the New Testament use of the image, God is the builder and the church is the building. The church is not the agent or representative of the kingdom. According to the pertinent New Testament images, the church is servant and messenger of the King. (Shenk p. 100).

CHAPTER 4: HOLY SPIRIT: SOURCE OF MESSIANIC MISSION

Roelf S. Kuitse p. 106-126

Roelf S. Kuitse, “Holy Spirit: Source of Messianic Mission,” *The Transfiguration of Mission*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993),

CHAPTER 5: THE CHURCH AS MESSIANIC SOCIETY: CREATION AND INSTRUMENT OF TRANSFIGURED MISSION – Larry Miller P. 130-150

Larry Miller, “The Church as Messianic Society: Creation and Instrument of Transfigured Mission,” *The Transfiguration of Mission*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993),

MESSIANIC GROUPS

Jesus chose as his mission strategy the creation of a new community composed of people already living transformed lives. While the original group of most intimate disciples was itinerant –most others-apparently composed of sympathizers in given localities- were less mobile. They multiplied relatively rapidly, spilled over the boundaries of Palestine, and spread across much of the Roman Empire by the turn of the century. These groups were directly or indirectly created by the Messiah, and the task of continuing his mission fell to them (Shenk p. 136-137).

MICROSOCIETY

The first Christians were not simply human individuals interacting with superhuman powers. When reading the New Testament text in socioreligious and sociopolitical context, messianic groups look as much like small societies as other first-century religious communities (Shenk p. 137)).

Like any society, **messianic groups** were concerned not only with religion but with all of life. They were totalistic in a way no pagan cultic association was. Their goals, having to do with “salvation” in a comprehensive sense, were less segmented. Almost any reading of Scripture shows them to be people with a common social life shaped by common convictions, values, and models. Their life together included potentially every category of human relations; peoplehood, friendship, family, politics, economy, education, piety, ritual, festival, and all the rest (Shenk p. 137).

Viewed sociologically, messianic groups constituted – more or less consciously, explicitly, comprehensively, and radically – **an alternative** to the established socioreligious order. In New Testament perspective, it was the only viable alternative in a broken and dying world (Shenk p. 137).

Alternative society meant *alternative* peoplehood, friendship, *alternative* family, *alternative* politics, *alternative* economy, *alternative* education, *alternative* piety, *alternative* ritual, *alternative* festivals. Messiah’s followers were to live life in another manner that it was normally lived in macrosociety (Shenk p. 137-138).

Messianic community was told to live a transformed life. Schlabbach interprets the Sermon on the Mount as a form of transformed life:

The most concisely formulated vision of this **different approach to life** is the **Sermon on the Mount**. “You have heard that our forefathers were told But what I tell you is this, “Messiah repeatedly said (Matt. 5:21-48). Does established society tell you not to commit murder? I tell you not even to nurse anger against your brother. Does society tell you not to commit adultery? I tell you not even to look at a woman lustfully. Does Society tell you not to break your oath? I tell you not even to swear at all; plain “yes” or “no” is all you need to say. Does society tell you to love your neighbor? I tell you to love also your enemy. Does society use charity and piety as means to social recognition? I tell you to do good, to pray and to fast secretly. Does society encourage you to accumulate possessions or wealth? I tell you not to do so; seek God’s justice and you will receive what you need (cf. Matt. 5-7) (Shenk p.139).

1. **Alternative peoplehood.** “Once you were not a people at all; but now you are God’s people,” Peter wrote to messianic groups in Anatolia sometime during the middle third of the first century (I Pet.2:10). Pagan, too, soon came to view Christians as somehow forming another people, neither pan nor Jewish. A “third race” was their expression for the Christian movement which brought together typical people in atypical ways (Shenk p. 138).

The “otherness” of messianic peoplehood was not only religious or ethnic. People previously separated by social or economic boundaries united in messianic groups. Luke’s description of the micro society in Jerusalem (acts 1-6) suggests that city folk with some financial resources soon joined the core group of rural, relatively poor Galileans. Hellenists – Greek speaking Jew of the Diaspora – converted and entered the first messianic community; culturally, they were probably a far cry from the simple Galileans and looked down upon by many Jews. This sort of heterogeneity continued to distinguish the messianic movement as it spread across the Roman Empire (Shenk p. 138).

Messianic groups gathered most under privileged people in that society. Few members of messianic groups came from the dominant layer of the established order. In Greek and Roman cultural settings, the extreme top of the social scale seems absent in the messianic group (except Paul); most of the members of the messianic groups from the Empire were slaves, freedmen, freeborn Roman citizens of low rank, non-Romans (Shenk p. 139).

Community gatherings and agape meals: For many members, especially those of the humbler social strata, the Christian assemblies and meals provided a more than adequate substitute for benefits, both physical and social, than they might otherwise have obtained from membership” in other groups or from the municipal festivals and (Meeks, 1983: 104). They were a family. They were children of God and also of apostle. They were brothers and sisters: they refer to one another as “beloved” (Shenk p. 139).

FROM THE FIRST CENTURY TO THE TWENTY-FIRST: MESSIANIC CHURCHES IN MESSIANIC MISSION

A sociologically informed reading of the New Testament suggests that it was churches which took the form of a messianic movement clustered in interdependent messianic groups whose members were present in and continually interacting with the established societies of the day. Mission done today in Messiah’s way still leads to the creation of churches of the same type. As long as mission has something to do with the renewal of all things, the churches it produces will

resemble little societies whose life together potentially addresses all areas of human existence in this world. As long as mission has to do with an introduction to a new way of life destined to replace all other ways of life, the churches it spawns will be alternative societies, incarnating a system of values in tension with established systems. ... As long as this kind of mission calls converts to witness in the world rather than to withdraw from it, new churches themselves will be missionary – in lifestyle, in action, and in word. And as long as mission calls believers to follow the path of the suffering Messiah, mission churches will respond peacefully to repression, preferring martyrdom to violence (Shenk p. 149). However, today’s churches try to prosper instead of emptying, live instead of dying and conform or bought to established society instead of being an alternative society that present alternative life style that Jesus taught us to live.

Larry Miller conclude that only churches which are alternative societies, transformed in relation to existing society because they are already conformed to Messiah’s vision of the future, can demonstrate the nature of life in the coming kingdom. Churches which reproduce life as lived in the present order reveal only what the world is already like, not “what the world could be like if it, too, repented and submitted to God’s will” (Shenk 150).

CHAPTER 7: MESSIANIC MISSION AND ETHICS: Discipleship and Good News by Neal Blough

Neal Blough, “Messianic Mission and Ethics: Discipleship and Good News,” *The Transfiguration of Mission*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993),

Ever since Paul’s epistles and the period of the New Testament, Christians have had to struggle with the relationship between faith and works, between justification and sanctification, between what one believes and what one does, between what God has accomplished and once for all in Christ and how Christians respond to that gracious act. In reaction to what was perceived as “works righteousness” in the Roman church, Martin Luther and the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation demonstrated the continuing importance of the same question and formulated theological categories that continues to shape contemporary discussion on the subject (Shenk p. 178).

In the minds of Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin, European Christendom needed to be “reformed,” but not “evangelized.” Mission consciousness came later to Protestants and Evangelicals, and when the time came, mission was done in the Reformation heritage of *sola gratia and sola fide*. Mission and evangelization have essentially been understood to be a matter “preaching the gospel” (Shenk p.178).

Presently there is much discussion about the relationship between word and deed, proclamation and presence, evangelism and sociopolitical involvement. Liberal Protestants, who place a great deal of emphasis on sociopolitical involvement as part of missionary presence,

characterize “conservative” evangelical concern for conversion and personal ethics as “synergistic” and a form of works-righteousness (Shenk p. 179).

Ethics cannot be separated from the incarnation, God’s sending of the Messiah. Its contents is the kingdom reality manifested in Jesus. Neither can it be conceived of without the formation of the new covenant community, the body of Christ, which in turn is sent in to the world as was the Messiah (Shenk p.179)

CHAPTER 8: MESSIANIC EVANGELIZATION (P. 199) by John Driver

John Driver, “Messianic Evangelization,” *The Transfiguration of Mission*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993),

As the church moved farther and farther from its roots in Jesus of Nazareth, the content and the methods of its evangelization have concentrated less on the forming of disciples of Jesus and more on communicating the church’s teachings about Jesus. In the process the goal of evangelization has moved from the creation of Jesus’ likeness in his followers to the formation of orthodox believers who receive the appropriate sacraments and assent to correct doctrines (Shenk p. 199).

More serious consequence is the tendency to privatize salvation, accompanied by an almost exclusively individualistic evangelistic practice. This has often led to an evangelization largely bereft of the universal scope which characterizes the biblical vision. The ultimate reconciliation of all things to God through the Messiah is the goal toward which authentic evangelization points (Shenk p. 199-200).

Subversive Evangelization

In the New Testament the saving gospel comes to us from a position of socioeconomic and political weakness, humanly speaking, rather than from a position characterized by human power. In this sense, the saving power of the gospel comes to us from below, rather than from above, as has been generally taken for granted by the church throughout most of its history. The Messianic movement described in the New Testament was a minority movement which originated on the periphery of Judaism (Shenk p. 200).

GALILEE

The great commission is prefaced by reference to Galilee, “Galilee of Gentiles,” located as it was on the geographical, sociological, and religious periphery of Judaism, is clearly identified in the Gospels as the point of departure for God’s eschatological initiative of messianic salvation. The Gospels are really quite emphatic about the Galilean provenance of the messianic movement and its evangel (Shenk p. 200).

This is the note on which the evangelization of Israel began. “ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee... Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:9a, 14b-15; cf. Matt. 4:12-17; Luke 4:14-21 (Shenk p. 200).

The evangelization of the Gentiles, begun by Peter in the household of the Roman centurion, Cornelius, also took the [Galilean origins](#) of the messianic movement as its point of departure (Acts 10:36-38).

The ultimate insults by the Jewish religious leaders was “Are you from Galilee too?”(John 7:52). That the Messiah could possibly come from Galilee was, for respectable Jews, highly doubtful (John 7:41). And those who insisted that it was impossible for a true prophet to arise out of Galilee claimed scriptural support for their view (7:52) (Shenk p. 201).

The implications of a gospel which mediated from below and by outsiders have rarely been grasped by a church allied, in one way or another, with power (Shenk p. 201).

The Galilean provenance of the messianic movement is not just an isolated element of merely geographic importance in the gospel story. It is a part of a larger picture in which God’s saving initiative arises from the bottom side of the social and religious structures and from the periphery of the political sphere. In Luke and John especially we find a seemingly disproportionate emphasis on Samaritans, for example, in spite of a very strong Jewish prejudice to the contrary. The disenfranchised within Israel – the poor, the “little ones,” the prostitutes, the publicans, those afflicted with leprosy, the foreigners –not only appear in the Gospel narratives as special object of God’s grace, but they are also active protagonists in God’s project of evangelization. These examples all point toward a salvific economy which is subversive. God’s kingdom initiative emerges from below (Shenk p. 201).

The New Testament is full of evidence which points to the [lowly beginnings](#) of the messianic movement. Among the earliest self-designations which the primitive community applied to itself are “the way,” “strangers and sojourners,” “exiles” or “pilgrims,” “the meek,” and the “poor.” These images reflect the early church’s understanding of its nature and evangelizing mission. Jesus himself was poor. In earliest childhood he is presented as a political refugee. All of the women named in his genealogy would have been considered social outcasts (Shenk p. 202).

The messianic community understood that Jesus, “who, though he was in the form of God ... emptied himself, taking upon himself the form of a servant,” was its model for a “manner of life .. worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 2:6-7; 1:27) (Shenk p. 203).

We can understand better the truly radical character of Jesus’ message. There was a profound difference between the approach of Jesus and that of all the other political, social, and religious groups of the period. Sadducees and Pharisees, Zealots, and Essenes all had in common their willingness to accept, in one way or another, the Jewish social system: the monarchy, the temple, the priesthood, and the right of the Jewish people to a place of divine favor among the family of nations. For his part, Jesus rejected all of this (Shenk p. 203).

Jesus was not a reformist. He was radical in that he did not accept the validity of the system. He called for radical change. In this Jesus stood in the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament. But he went beyond the prophets of the Old Testament. They called for justice in the context of what they seem to have believed to be essentially valid social institutions. Jesus did not simply call for justice on behalf of the oppressed. His was a movement of even more radical renewal. He announced a kingdom characterized by “blessedness” (Matt. 5:3-10). Under the rule of God

humans are offered freedom from the idols of wealth (the desire to possess), prestige (the drive to be somebody), and power (the will to dominate). According to the messianic evangel, there is sharing instead of accumulation, there is compassionate service instead of seizing selfish superiority, and there is love in a context of peoplehood instead of rivalry and violence (Shenk p. 204).

Truly radical critique of the system is possible only when the prophet, in some sense, stands outside of the system. God's Messiah could not arise in Jerusalem. He needed to come from Galilee, from the periphery and from below, in order truly to evangelize. Jerusalem killed him because his evangel, a fate which he shared with the authentic prophets before him (Shenk p. 204).

Kingdom of God

God's kingdom embraces concrete political and social events. According to the prophetic vision, warfare are a solution to differences would cease, weapons could be converted into implements for the production of food, and the fear and deprivation, so common under evil rulers, would be superseded under God's righteous rule (Mic. 4:1-4) (Shenk p. 206).

The meaning of conversion is illustrated in John's response to queries about the meaning of repentance (what shall we do?: Luke 3:10-14). The alternative to selfish accumulation of possessions is generous sharing; to the oppressiveness of economic greed, transparent dealings within the covenant community; to violence, the solidarity of genuine compassion (Shenk p.206).

The Gospels are unanimous in their conviction that Jesus' messianic mission is salvific. And when the Gospels indicate that Jesus began his saving mission by announcing the kingdom, they clearly imply that salvation is to be found under the rule of God (Shenk p. 207).

The prophetic vision of God's reign found in Is. 61:1-2 furnishes Jesus with his point of departure for understanding messianic salvation in Luke's Gospel (Luke 4:16-22). Here salvation is understood in terms of the restoration of God's gracious covenant relationship, and concretely, in terms of sabbatical and Jubilee's evangelizing mission (Shenk p. 207).

The "blessings and the "woes" found in the Sermon on the Plain are perfectly comprehensible in light of the Jubilee paradigm (Luke 6:20-26). Those who are poor, hungry, afflicted, and persecuted will find salvation in the new era of messianic salvation. But for the rich, the powerful, the uncompassionate, and the oppressors who are unrepentant the message of messianic restoration spells judgment (Shenk p. 207).

Jesus' compassionate solidarity with the "harassed and the helpless," bereft of the benefits of God's righteous rule, provides a model for the evangelizing mission of his followers (Matt. 9:36-38). For Jesus this meant rejection and persecution at the hands of the Jewish establishment. It is this innocent and vicarious suffering which became the focal point of Jesus' evangelizing mission (Shenk p. 212).

HOPE LIES IN THE CHURCH, BUT THE CHURCH MUST BE TRANSFORMED TO TRANSFORM CULTURE OF OUR DAY.

WHAT THE CHURCH CAN OR MUST DO BY OTHER SCHOLARS

Dr. John Buchannan, former moderator of Presbyterian Church (USA) writes, “Mission is Why We are Here,” and “The Church Exists for the World.” He quotes Theologian Emil Brunner saying. *“the church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.”*

What one person can do? One person can make a difference, but only if he or she joins with others in forging collective responses to human need. Individualism only deepens human poverty (Schlabach p. 17).

The world can never be freed from the gods and idols of power-nationalism, materialism, militarism, classism, self-centeredness – apart from God’s intervention (Shenk p. 31).

Read my paper on Church and Society