Journal Title: Missionalia: The South African Missiological Society

Volume: 31
Issue: 
Month/Year: 2003
Pages: 355-83

Article Author: Christoph W. Stenschke


Call #: BV2000 .M57 v.31 2003
Location: 
Item #: 
Name: James Kelhoffer

Imprint: 

- A unique collection of pictures, which is arranged according to mission fields, synods and mission stations, as well as according to persons and special themes. This collection consists of close to 30,000 photographs, postcards, drawings, glass negatives, glass prints, printing plates and wood carvings the majority of which are more than a hundred years old. The first photographs were taken in a studio in Berlin around 1876.

- A collection of maps and a small ethnological collection. The maps were prepared by the missionaries in the process of land registration and the establishment of mission stations, for their own geographical orientation but also to illustrate their written reports. The oldest maps dates from 1834. In the BMS archives there is, therefore, a multitude of sketches and site maps of a few dozen mission stations, which can contribute today to the clarification of the land rights of black congregations.

- Documents on the relationships between German Missions and German settlers overseas, as well as a few documents, totally unknown until recently, on the following specific countries and regions: the Pacific, Nepal, Mauritius, Singapore, North America, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Namibia.

- Important documents for writing the history of the church and the regions of Berlin-Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and the former Prussian provinces in present-day Poland.

The general physical condition of the archival material is a matter of critical concern. Several documents have already been damaged, due to bad physical conditions but also due to outside interference. This represents an irreparable loss to academic research. It was only in 1992 that the oldest documents could be accommodated in acceptable containers. The same is true of the picture collection, which has primarily been damaged due to physical neglect. The implementation of encompassing security measures in the BMS archives are not possible due to a longstanding lack of funds and personnel.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it should be pointed out that in Germany we have a huge responsibility regarding the mission archives. This applies in the first place to the owners of the archives, but also to the researchers who use the

MISSION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:
NEW TRENDS IN RESEARCH
A review article


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2 This is an expanded translation of a review article by the author that appeared in the European Journal of Theology. It was translated from German by Professor WA Saayman and appears here with the permission of the publishers.
INTRODUCTION

For many years the exegetical discussion on mission in the New Testament was dominated by a small number of monographs and essays. Among these older studies was that by F Hahn (1965). It appeared in English as Mission in the New Testament (1965). There was also the overview in the collection edited by K Kortelje (1982). Other studies were those of D Senior & C Stuhlmuehler (1983) and L Legrand (1990). In the past few years quite a few more substantial monographs on the theme have been published. I present and evaluate these in this article, while referring briefly to some other contributions.

COLLECTIONS OF OVERVIEWS

First I wish to mention two evangelical overviews of mission and theology of mission in the New Testament which were published in English. The first is by A J Köstenberger and P T O'Brien (2001). In this volume they trace a theology of mission through the whole Bible. After a brief introduction and statement of their own approach and point of departure, the authors illuminate Old Testament topics such as creation and God's purpose for humanity, the fall, the calling of Abraham and the nations, Israel and the Exodus, the Davidic house, Jerusalem in God's purpose, the restoration of Israel and the new covenant, Jonah and mission, the Servant of the Lord, Israel and the world, etc.

In a chapter on the inter-testamental period, the authors present an excellent overview of the discussion on this period. They conclude (p.64),


"Was second-temple Judaism a missionary religion? If by 'mission' is meant a conscious, deliberate, extensive effort to convert non-fellow-religionists to one's religion, the available evidence does not sustain such a conclusion" (cf. R Riesner below). They also analyse the spread of Graeco-Roman religions and philosophies (pp.55-71). Further chapters deal with the Gospels of Mark (pp.73-86) and Matthew (pp.87-109). Unfortunately in the latter only five pages deal with the so-called Great Commission. When read with Matthew 10:23 and 24:14, the Great Commission places Christian mission in an eschatological perspective: "Mission is the church's primary task between Christ's first coming and his return. The striking open-endedness of the commissioning scene, similar to the open-endedness of the book of Acts, is pregnant with anticipation and potential. The eleven, as representatives of later generations of believers, are to embark on their mission, at the command and on the basis of the authority of the exalted Christ, the eschatological ruler, the son of God" (p.108).

Luke-Acts (pp.111-159) presents the clearest exposition of universal mission in the New Testament: "The conclusion of Luke's second volume describes an open-ended mission to Jews and Gentiles ... This reminds readers of an unfinished task and the urgency of being identified with the ongoing advance of the gospel of salvation" (p.159). The section on Paul presents his own statements on the comprehensive theme of mission, not the view of Acts. The authors investigate the meaning of his encounter with the risen Christ, Paul's mission and God's providence, the gospel as Paul proclaims it, the content of the Pauline mission, Paul as apostle to the Gentiles, Israel in God's plan of salvation, as well as the place and role of other believers in the Pauline mission (pp.161-201). In the discussion the Apostle Paul's deep connections with the Old Testament, both in his theology of mission as well as his missionary strategy, becomes clear.

Other chapters deal with the Johannine Gospel and Epistles, the General Epistles and Revelation. In the last chapter (pp.251-274) the various contributions are summarised and a conclusion presented. God's plan of salvation is the over-arching message of Scripture. Messiah Jesus, in whom the Old Testament Scriptures find fulfillment, stands at the centre of

God's salvific purposes. Jesus sent out his witnesses to continue his mission. In all of this God's sovereignty in mission remains guaranteed. The spreading of the gospel leads to the foundation of settled Christian communities. The central meaning of mission is incisively formulated as follows:

Between Eden and the eternal state, between Abraham and Armageddon, between Babel and the beast's confinement to the lake of fire, few biblical topics are as important as mission. This is because mission, while purposed by God even prior to sin, is inextricably linked to man's sinfulness and need for redemption and God's provision of salvation in the person and work of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. This 'good news' of salvation in Jesus, however, must be made known. Thus mission is the ingredient that both precedes Christian existence and constitutes the foundation of Christian mission, and the Christian gospel is the message of mission, a mission that is not optional but mandatory (p. 19).

Apart from a theology of mission, the authors also present a comprehensive biblical inquiry into the essence and scope of God's salvation (even *salvation to the ends of the earth*).

This volume presents a comprehensive and solid overview of biblical material, especially useful for orientation and teaching purposes. In several instances a more detailed debate would have been desirable for example, the identity and role of the Samaritans in Luke-Acts and a debate with the points of view of J Jervel.

WJ Larkin and JF Williams are the editors of the concise American collection *Mission in the New Testament: an Evangelical approach* (1998). It contains the following contributions:

- FL McDaniel: "Mission in the Old Testament" (11-20);
- CH Bedell: "Mission in Intertestamental Judaism" (21-29);
- JD Harvey: "Mission in Jesus' teaching" (30-49);
- DP Semmuth: "Mission in the early church" (50-60);
- DN Howell: "Mission in Paul's epistles: Genesis, pattern, dynamics" (63-91);
- DN Howell: "Mission in Paul's epistles: Theological bearings" (92-116);
- JD Harvey: "Mission in Matthew" (119-136);
- JF Williams: "Mission in Mark" (137-151);


The volume aims at "[presenting] a comprehensive articulation of the New Testament teaching on the theme of mission. Such a study hopefully will contribute to a fresh statement of the biblical foundations of mission and serve as a catalyst for the completion of the church's universal mission in this generation" (p.1). Williams concludes his summary of the individual contributions by stating, "In summary, the picture of mission in this book is that of weak believers sent by a great God to bring salvation to the world through an improbable means, by scattering seeds. The task may be difficult; there is no easy triumphalism. Nevertheless, God is both powerful and gracious, and he is in the process of accomplishing his will on earth" (p.247).

The contributions are of a varying standard. Most successful are the contributions on Paul and Luke-Acts. On the whole the volume is a helpful Evangelical overview of the unity and plurality of New Testament sayings on mission. Without generalising too much, the book will be valuable especially for mission educators and practitioners of mission and also those in the non-Western context. The footnotes and bibliography lead the way into deeper reflection.

**STUDIES ON SPECIFIC TOPICS**

Wolfgang Reinbold (2000) in *Propaganda und Mission im ältesten Christentum: eine Untersuchung zu den Modalitäten der Ausbreitung der frühen Kirche* analyses the ways and means through which Christianity...
spread in the times of the New Testament (p.5ff). In the past decade New Testament scholars have been especially interested the spread of early Christianity and of various ancient religions such as the Mithras cult.

After an introduction in which he explains his understanding of concepts such as mission, propaganda, individual propaganda, and organised propaganda, Reinbold analyses the mission of the apostles (who is recognised as apostle? E.g. Simon Peter, James, the brother of Jesus, Joseph who was also called Barnabas, Paul's 'super-apostles', and others called apostles – pp.32-116). Reinbold opposes the general point of view that the early church grew as a result of planned and structured mission: "Our review of the accounts signifies caution against this point of view. Perceptions such as that the apostles were energetically involved in mission and soon penetrates distant areas, in this way laying the foundation for the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire, must be treated with caution" (p.116 – my translation).

In the second substantial chapter, "Paul, apostle to the heathens" (pp.117-225), Reinbold investigates the target groups and the modalities of Paul's mission according to Acts. He concludes, "Paul's mission, which can consistently be called a world mission, was exceptional; no matter how one regards questions of detail, it cannot be considered representative" (p.280 – my translation).

Further chapters deal with the hypothetical messengers of the "Q source," the Seven (including Stephen, Philip and their followers – pp.241-252), and the question about other missionaries (the twelve disciples, Apollos, the brothers of Jesus, 3 John). In an excursus on "The extension of the church in apostolic times" Reinbold concludes by way of theses as follows: In the first decades of the existence of the Christian church its spread was decisively due to individual witness of Christians, who, "caused the slow but steady growth through their everyday contacts with others. Missionaries, ... mission and conscious propaganda, mission journeys, missionary calls and the like played a much smaller role in this process than is often [mistakenly] assumed in the light of the Great Commission ... and the atypical figure of Paul" ("One should guard against the deception of

Since the late 1950s there have been no detailed studies on the theme of Jesus and die Völkermission (Jesus and mission to the nations). Instead I refer to the excellent older studies by J Jeremias (1958) and DJ Bosch (1959). F Wilk has tackled this theme anew in his Jesus und die Völker in der Sicht der Synoptiker. He presents a brief overview of the topic of the Gentiles in Gospel research as well as the literary prehistory (Vorgeschichte) (pp.13-24; Jeremias and Bosch together occupy about 20 lines). As brief is the following description of the present state of the research and methodology (pp.25-28). In the light of the post-Easter missionary task of the disciples in every gospel, “to make disciples of all nations (Matthew), to proclaim the Gospel (Mark), or to be witnesses to Christ (Luke)” and the simultaneous reality that Jesus himself worked nearly exclusively among Jews (the fundamental tension between the Israel-centredness of Jesus on the one hand and openness to the Gentiles on the other), he raises the question: “In what measure were the disciples as bearers of the message of Christ true representatives of Jesus?” (p.13). If one considers the reality of Jesus’ crossing of the boundaries of Galilee one has to ask whether this refers to his concern for and interest in the Gentiles, or rather to his concern for the Jews living among the Gentiles.

In terms of his method Wilk lets himself be guided by the stated concern of the gospel authors (pp.21-27). They considered it their task to compose the Jesus story as a chain of events “which as such is conclusive for the faith and hope of the contemporary congregation”. They had to indicate that “the universal spreading of the message of Christ was the indicated and necessary consequence of the work of Jesus in Israel. This necessity expresses itself in Jesus’ acts as expression of his sending by God and also as proof that Jesus is the mediator of eschatological salvation not only for Israel but also for the Gentiles” (p.13). According to all three gospels the question about the character of Gentile mission as well as of the relationship of Christian communities to the people of Israel is a legitimate one.

Furthermore,
In the first substantial part of the research Wilk analyses “Jesus and the Gentiles in the gospel of Mark” (pp.29-82). Although Jesus was sent by God to all of Israel, his death “for many” (10:45; 14:24) inaugurated the end times in which the temple becomes “the house of prayer for all nations” (11:17), so that “the disciples of Jesus as proclaimers of the gospel in the whole world call together Gentiles and Jews in equal measure in order that the elect can be saved at the parousia” (p.70f). Jesus’s ministry in Israel prepares for this universal new beginning of the Gentile mission. Jesus’s acts were aimed that Israel “would preserve its faithfulness to God on the basis of the gospel and in accordance with Scripture in building a faith-and-life community open to non-Jews” (p.77).

The second part deals with the gospel of Matthew (pp.83-153). According to Wilk, Jesus’s messianic ministry in Israel is fulfilled in his ministry as son of man for all nations. God’s promise to Abraham to make him a great people who will bear the light to the nations, is fulfilled in Jesus. “Only as Christ for Israel is Jesus also ‘Lord’ of the nations; in the true sense of the word Gentiles can only share salvation on the basis of the fulfilment of Jesus’s mission to Israel, on becoming his disciples” (p.146). Jesus’s ministry in Israel is aimed at lighting this light among the nations. The Israelites who follow Jesus in that way prove themselves as true children of Abraham and become bearers of the light.

The relationship between Israel and the nations also occupies the central place in Luke’s gospel (pp.154-237). “The mission of Jesus to Israel is, precisely in its new constitution of God’s people, the foundation of the Gentile mission; for on the basis of his suffering and resurrection the same message is pronounced to Jews and non-Jews: ‘Repent and receive forgiveness of your sins’” (p.233)25. The rising light of salvation events in Jesus is meant to be both the “glory of Israel” (2:30-32) as well as the “light for the nations”.

In conclusion, Wilk compares the views of the gospel writers (pp.287-291). Which main thoughts determine their views? (p.253) What are the focus areas in their expansion? (p.269f). Which Jesus sayings and which narratives relating Jesus to the non-Jews are employed? (p.285ff). Despite many commonalities (e.g. as universal eschatological ambassador of God to Israel, Jesus is also the eschatological mediator of salvation for the nations; similar salvation-historical foundations, p. 244), there are also distinctions in their understanding of how Jesus’s mission concerns the nations: “Marx, Matthew and Luke witness together to the universal character of Jesus’s mission; they do this by employing different concepts which cannot be simplistically harmonised in the light of the contemporary views on the relation between Israel and the nations” (p. 291) “It is especially a contentious issue among them in which way Jesus as the exalted one, sitting on the right hand of God, incorporates the Jewish nation and in what way discipleship after Easter must be judaistically determined” (p.286).

In countering Wilk’s theses one has to ask whether the relatively few treatments of Jesus and the nations by the writers of the synoptic Gospels unavoidably lead to such conclusions. Are Wilk’s views perhaps (co)determined by the fact that he studies Israel and the nations in the view of the synoptics and deduces his conclusions on the nations partly from statements about Israel? Does this correspond to the stated intentions of the authors? As there are now serious claims of a greater continuity with the earthly Jesus in the synoptics transmission process it is necessary to investigate whether Wilk does not over-estimate the extent of theological interpretation and forms by the gospel writers themselves. It is also worth considering whether the various views cannot be more easily merged into a general picture.

Clearly all Jesus’ disciples and all subsequent Christian mission can rightly call on his example and continue his mission in theirs. Researchers in theology of mission and/or in New Testament theology who wish to engage seriously with Jesus and the nations and Israel and the Gentiles in synoptic theology cannot afford to ignore Wilk’s stimulating contribution.

James Kelhoffer,20 in his Miracle and mission: the authentication of missionaries and their message in the longer ending of Mark (after the introductory research overview on pp.1-47) studies first (pp.48-244) the background and origins of the so-called “longer ending” of Mark’s Gospel

(Mark 16:9-20)\(^{27}\). Kelhoffer indicates that the editor of the longer ending, which originated between 120-150 AD, oriented himself strongly to the gospel of Mark and the other canonical gospels. He therefore wanted to give Mark's gospel an ending which corresponded to the endings of the other gospels. One can also assume literary dependence on the canonical Gospels and Acts.

In the second part Kelhoffer studies the missiologically relevant statements of the longer ending ("And these signs will follow those who believe ... the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs" pp.16&20). These statements because of their secondary character receive very little attention and thus are seldom studied in detail (in Gnirka only 16 lines in a 680 page commentary!). In "Wonders and mission: the expectation of signs as authentication of proclamation" (pp.245-339) Kelhoffer studies the relationship between wonders and mission in the New Testament, in the apocryphal Acts and other early Christian writings of the second and third centuries. Apart from John14:12 (does "works" really refer to miracles?) and 1 Corinthians 12:9f (which Kelhoffer unfortunately treats superficially and too hastily disqualifies as in contradiction with other Pauline statements) we find no other analogous statements in the New Testament. (According to Luke-Acts and Paul, wonders serve to authenticate the apostle). The expectation that believers generally would perform wonders occurs frequently in the writings of early Christian apologists. This finding corresponds with the results (dating) of the first part. The comprehensive and well-founded statement of the New Testament results concerning mission and wonder on pp.248-281 is especially noteworthy.

While the picking up of snakes (pp.340-416) has some possible biblical precedents (Exodus 4 & 7, Acts 28:3-6), there are many analogies in the history of religions in the Graeco-Roman environment of late antiquity. These might have influenced the author. In addition the public and individual exercise of power over snakes confirms the status of human messengers and they "strengthen the group's credentials and demonstrate the divine power working with them" (p.409). The fourth accompanying wonder ("when you drink something poisonous") is also "hardly a unique formulation of antiquity" (p.467), but quite widespread.

Kelhoffer's study again confirms that, in the light of these literary-critical and exegetical findings, the unautho\(\text{r}^{\text{R3}}\) Markan ending cannot be utilised for a New Testament understanding of the task, promises and actions of Christian missionaries. This is all the more so when canonicality is linked to the assured apostolic origins of a written document\(^{28}\). In the discussion on the working of wonders as spiritual gift one should refrain from using Mark 16:17f and rather call on 1 Corinthians 12:9f. In the light of the textual transmission\(^{29}\) and the content, Mark 16:9-20 should, in the biblical text of versions of the Bible, be much more clearly distinguished from the original text of the Markan Gospel if for no other reason than to avoid confrontation between Christians and their opponents around the alleged promises of miraculous signs which have occurred since Porphyry (d.ca 305 AD, p.417f)\(^{30}\). These confrontations have also occurred in recent years in Muslim countries.

The thorough analysis of the verses and the verses themselves may be of interest to the history of the spreading of Christianity in the second century and for an understanding of non-Christian influence on Christians' self-understanding as well as the essence and task of Christian mission.

Roger Gehring studies the use of houses by Jesus and his disciples, as well as the use of houses in the early Jerusalem congregation in his comprehensive study Hausgemeinde und Mission: Die Bedeutung antiker Häuser und Hausgemeinden – von Jesus bis Paulus\(^{31}\). He studies the Jerusalem houses specified in Acts (pp.128-155) and the references to Jerusalem house-churches. House mission happened in mutual conversation, for which the homes provided the ideal setting. "The missionary attitude, to which every early Christian felt called, most probably was strengthened by the social setting, specifically the immediate oikos-setting. The ancient 'oikos' with its 'network of relationships' presented a favourable opportunity for missionary contacts" (p.178). Gehring sees a good analogy for the probable situation in Jerusalem from the events in Caesarea in Acts 10:23-48. In this respect it also centred on lifestyle


By the simple fact of their existence house churches were of great significance for the spread of the Gospel... They introduced a reality into the Greco-Roman context which could stir the curiosity of the environment. The spontaneous community, loving brother- and sisterhood, solidarity as members of the body of Christ, out of which a mutual existence for each other in the agape grew and should grow (1 Cor 11-14), drew the attention of their neighbours and led to questions about the ground of their existence. (p. 326f)

Throughout it becomes clear what great significance the ancient household had for church growth and the spread of early Christianity. It also becomes clear to what extent early Christian mission oriented itself to the example of Jesus.

In conclusion Gehring outlines the “ecclesiastical and missionary function and meaning of house churches” from Jesus to Paul (the house as building – architecturally; as community – socio-economically; and as congregation – ecclesiologically, pp.478-492). He draws the intra-congregational and missionary meaning of the house church model for the present (pp.493-507). This comprehensive yet very readable volume provides rich practical stimuli, but also tasks, for many forms of mission work in and through, houses.32

To conclude this section on specific themes, it may be helpful to mention a number of other significant publications that appeared in the recent past:


Regarding the concrete missionary events in Acts, a number of recent historical studies devoted to specific passages in Acts are significant Cf. my overview “Hinweise zu einem wiederentdeckten Gebiet der Actaforschung,”


PAULINE MISSION

In 1995 the Australian PT O’Brien, vice-principal of Moore Theological College, Sydney, published an outstanding study on mission in the Pauline epistles, Gospel and mission in the writings of Paul: an exegetical and theological analysis33 In the Festschrift dedicated to him on his 65th birthday, The gospel to the nations: perspectives on Paul’s mission, edited by PG Bolt and M Thompson34 O’Brien’s theme of Pauline mission is taken up by a group of mostly evangelical international researchers. They illuminate the theme from various perspectives, as illustrated in the following overview:


Six random test samples from the abundance will have to suffice. On the basis of his research into Paul's mission work, Silva (pp. 51-61) concludes:

It should be evident that nothing would have been more foreign to Paul's sense of mission than the notion of a brief evangelistic campaign that, aiming at a large number of quick conversions, failed to establish solid and prolonged involvement. Those who responded to the gospel call have begun a race that is anything but straight and smooth. Hindrances and conflicts will meet them at every turn. Accordingly, Paul clearly saw his evangelistic and missionary work as all-encompassing. It was not merely the task of beginning something, but of continuing and completing it as well (p. 59).

Marshall (pp. 99-113) draws the picture of Pauline mission according to Acts (divine and human aspects, the missionary journeys-model, evangelisation and follow-up work, Paul and his companions, mission to Jews and Gentiles, missionary support, Paul as missionary and prisoner as well as missionary and apostle). He argues against the widespread new literary approaches to the text ("what the implied author appears to be doing for his implied readers"): "The danger of this approach is to explain everything on this level, without bearing in mind that the authors of narratives are (or should be) constrained by what happened (or their understanding of what happened) and therefore are by no means free agents, able to mould their material at will. Acts is a historical narrative and must be evaluated as such. It is true that tensions have been found with the evidence of the Pauline Epistles as regards "facts" of Paul's career, but a by-product of this essay will be the claim that these tensions do not affect the broad picture (p. 99).

Seccombe (pp. 115-129) argues that the sparse use of "Jesus-story material" in Acts and the Pauline epistles does not prove a lack of interest in Jesus by Paul nor show a lack of the gospel tradition in his mission. On the contrary, two gospel writers were his co-workers and their literary work grew out of the concrete need for the Jesus-story in the newly-formed congregations, first presented orally and then also in written form. On the one hand, the confession "Jesus is Lord" presents a solid understanding of and personal commitment to a divine-human Saviour-King, and on the other proves familiarity with the person and life of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth. This Jesus of Nazareth is now worshipped as the risen Lord. God is recognised and his glory reflected in the face of the human Jesus. Consequently "Christian mission then as now must combine theological explanation of the person and work of the crucified, risen, ascended Christ along with the narration of the story, works and words of the man from Nazareth" (p. 128).

Krusse (pp. 205-220) describes the results of Pauline mission. The congregations founded by Paul were nearly always "charismatic" communities and Kruse notes, "Equally striking is the fact that these 'charismatic' communities also had an 'official' ministry" (p. 126). He further indicates the widespread co-operation of women in the service of the Pauline mission congregations. Köstenberger (pp. 221-247) writes as follows on the role of "Women in the Pauline mission":

Winter (pp. 285-295) describes the dangers and difficulties which Paul had to endure as missionary (dangers on his journeys and as a result of the contemporary unusual weekly congregation of Christians, difficulties as a result of the proclamation of the crucifixion -- "A crucified Messiah as God's means of reconciling a lost world was a bizarre message. Crucifixion was reserved for those who lacked any legal persona (p. 292), and as a result of Emperor cult and "Christian" opponents). He warns us that this picture should preclude any nostalgic view of the past history of the early church, especially if one presumes that the circumstances for the spread of Christianity in Syria and Greece were ideal (p. 294).

The question about Paul's anthropology and soteriology in the light of his variegated picture of Gentiles and Gentile religions is not addressed in this volume. One could also raise deeper questions about the meaning of the Old Testament for Pauline mission (cf. the contribution of JM Scott), the implication of houses for Pauline mission, the meaning of the Letter to Philemon, and the controversial mission to Spain. Also lacking is a
contribution on Paul’s co-workers. Later research will have to take note of this volume, as it provides valuable information on essential aspects of Pauline mission such as foundations, the practical application, individual themes, and results.

In the comprehensive study by D Alvarez-Cineira: Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Claudius und die Paulinische Mission, the author attempts to explain aspects of Pauline mission against the background of contemporary imperial politics of religion. In the first part (pp.10-224) Alvarez-Cineira investigates references to the religious politics of Emperor Claudius (41-54 AD), which impacted on early Christian mission, as is evident from Acts 18:1-3. The significance of this must be taken into account in a truly contextual exegesis of the Epistle to the Romans. After an overview of existing sources the author sketches the attitude of the Emperor to Roman religion, to foreign Western religions, to several Greek cults, to Oriental religions and to the Jews (with a good description of the Jews in Rome, pp.187-216). It can be described as “... efforts for the revival of the ancient Roman cult as well as tolerance throughout the Empire towards other religions, in so far as these created no danger to the pax Romana” (p.411).

After introductory comments and statements on the first period of Pauline mission (pp. 226-259), the author turns in the second part, dedicated to Pauline mission in general, to the edict of Claudius as a factor for the worsening of relations between Jews and Christians (pp. 260-290). Also, Christianity was a probable cause of political unrest within Jewry and was therefore considered a threat in the light of the concrete imperial religious politics. According to the imperial edict Christians constituted a political threat to Jewish survival – that is, if one can talk about its implications for the empire as a whole. This might explain the harshness of the clash. Against this background Alvarez-Cineira understands the conflict between Jews and their leaders and the Christians in Thessalonica (Acts 17:6f, 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). While the thesis is instructive in a consideration of Acts 17:5-10, 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 gives no evidence of Jewish measures.

Alvarez-Cineira further views the edict of Claudius as the trigger of the Christian anti-Pauline mission of the opponents which reveals itself in the letters to the Galatians and Philippians (pp.291-340). The Jewish-Christian measures against Paul, opportunistic and politically motivated, are based on this reaction of the Jews against the Christians in the diaspora. The opponents wished to prevent the establishment of the Christian movement as moulded by Paul (without Law and circumcision) as a separate Jewish sect, as this might have led to the loss of privileges the Jews had up till then enjoyed. They could even be declared a collegium illicitum, which might have had serious consequences also for the non-Pauline congregations. If the author is correct in his conclusions, this may be a further indication of the date and recipients of the letter to the Galatians.

In conclusion Alvarez-Cineira applies the acquired insights from the first part to “Paul and the Christians in Romé” (the origins of Christianity in Rome and conditions in the congregations after the Claudius edict, as well as the portrayal in Romans, especially references in 16:17-20 and 13:1-7). Contributions on the opponents in Corinth and Paul as Roman citizen complete the volume. The author regards the claim of Paul’s Roman citizenship as unhistorical, because as Roman citizen he would not have been implicated by the edict and he could therefore have gone to Rome before the death of Claudius (for other explanations of his delayed visit, e.g. involvement with the collection for Jerusalem and difficulties in Eastern Mediterranean congregations, see Haacker (above) p.34). Although this reconstruction of the historical background of the Pauline mission is impressive and comprehensive, in my opinion it is necessary to point out the


39 cf. C vom Brocke, Thessaloniki (see details above).

dearth of clear references to the *Corpus Paulinum*. If Alvarez-Cineira's reconstruction is correct, why does Paul not expose the motivation and intentions of his opponents more clearly? The author also does not take sufficient cognisance of Acts, the historical value of which he grossly under estimates. Acts does not seem to support his view, since it contains clear references to issues of persecution, Imperium Romanum, Judaism, etc.

This study illustrates that knowledge and consideration of the overall political and religious landscape open new perspectives on our understanding of the essence and progress of early Christian mission. Paul did not move in a vacuum, but was confronted with constraints and circumstances which had to be mastered for the sake of the gospel. Paul's attitude and his sayings with regard to these factors (for which there are modern parallels such as the gospel to evoke possible persecution) can provide direction for contemporary missionaries and missionary congregations.

In conclusion, the following significant publications on Paul's mission should also be mentioned:


**COLLECTIONS/ANTHOLOGIES**

Apart from these monographs one should in conclusion take into account two collections of essays. For a long time F Hahn's *Das Verständnis der Mission im Neuen Testament* (see above for details) determined the exegetical discussion on mission in the New Testament. The recent volume *Mission in neustamentlicher Sicht: Aufsätze, Vorträge und Predigten* is a further collection of contributions on this theme by him. Five of these have not previously been published.

Under the heading "Basic considerations" the first part presents "The missionary commission of the resurrected Christ. Mt 28:16-20" (pp.11-20); "Sending of the Spirit – sending of the disciples: the pneumatological dimension of the mission commission according to the witness of the New Testament" (pp. 43-53) "... which has its preparatory phase in the universal faith in God and the promises of the Old Testament for the nations. The decisive founding was however given with the person and work of Jesus, because with him, his deeds, death and resurrection, the eschatological salvific work of God began. Whatever the disciples dare do on the basis of the plenary power of Jesus in the time between Easter and Pascha, is premised upon Jesus and his mission, but it is a ministry which is essential for the realisation of the salvation of this world" p. 53; "Mission in the New Testament and the early church" (pp.55-66) and "The Christian mission commission in the light of the New Testament" (pp.67-76).

Under the heading "Historical perspectives" Hahn examines the "History of early Christianity as mission history" (pp.79-89) as well as "Political, cultural and theological aspects of the earliest history of Christianity" (pp.91-101). In this contribution Hahn traces how early Christianity and Christian mission progressed phenomenally in a context of various supportive as well as inhibiting political, cultural and religious conditions. Hahn describes how the Christian message took form in various ancient contexts and claims:

The central theme of the Christian message considers the breaking in of salvation and the promise of salvation bound to the person of Jesus. This is the specifically Christian and therefore central theme of the gospel as good news. It was the task of theological reflection in the Jewish as well as the Gentile context to make that completely recognisable ... What I have said means that the Christian message must take on new forms all the time. It must be interpreted in such a way in other thought structures and another way of life that the Specificum Christianum is not lost, but that people in their respective situations are always challenged and feel affected (p.100).

In the third part Hahn deals with "Possibilities and promises of a dialogue with non-Christian religions (pp.105-110) and "The theological programme


after the symposium.

The editors present an overview of the papers in their Introduction (pp. 1-13). The main part (pp. 17-83) deals with the gospel of Matthew and its missionary commission and is focussed strongly on the question of mission among Jews in the early church. P. Stuhlmann, starting his contribution ("Matthew 28:16-20 and the course of mission in the apostolic and post-apostolic age" pp. 17-43) with a list of the exegetical problems of the passage. He himself finds in the text (on good grounds and contrary to the historical-critical consensus) an early Jewish-Christian tradition on the worldwide mission of the apostles, which is strongly determined by the Old Testament, especially the call stories. Stuhlmann argues that for the earliest mission history, "Controversial was not the evangelization of the Gentiles as such, but only the question of the relationship of Gentile converts to the Mosaic law" (p. 3). In this respect an actual mission command of the risen Christ, as Evangelicals understand it, better explains the development of the early church as recorded in Acts.

H. Kvalbein asks, "Has Matthew abandoned the Jews? A contribution to a disputed issue in recent scholarship" (pp. 45-82), and U. Luz reacts to this contribution in, "Has Matthew abandoned the Jews? A response to Hans Kvalbein and Peter Stuhlmann Matt 28:16-20" (pp. 63-88). O. Skarsaune studies the early reception of the Great Commission ("The mission to the Jews – a closed chapter? Some patriarchic reflections concerning the Great Commission", pp. 69-83). He concludes: "Contrary to modern applications, the oldest interpretations do not regard the Great Commission as a permanent mandate for the church but only as a personal commission to the first apostles. The Commission was given to them and had already been fulfilled by them. They had brought the gospel to Israel as well as to the Gentiles. Bluntly spoken: not only was the mission to the Jews a closed chapter, but also the mission to the Gentiles" (p. 5). However, it also becomes clear that the great respect for the great work of an apostle precluded an enduring missionary witness to Jews and Gentiles.

The articles by JM Scott, "Acts 2.9-11 as an anticipation of the mission to the nations" (pp. 87-123) and J. Adna, "James' position at the summit meeting of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15)" (pp. 125-161) are concerned with Acts. Scott shows that the comprehensive list of peoples in Acts 2.9-11, from among whom the Jews in the diaspora came to Jerusalem, is a prefiguration of the Gentile mission of which Acts later reports. The peoples' list in a symbolic way prefigures the return of the scattered tribes of Israel as well as of the eschatological assembly of the nations to worship.

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To be a disciple is to be a witness; for that reason the disciples are sent out by the Risen Lord. The customary description "mission command" is therefore not correct. It is a command and an inseparable one at that, but at the same time it is meant even more as an empowerment. Wherever mission is done, the message of the gospel is announced and it bears the legitimation of the Lord of heaven and earth. Mission is human ministry, but not simply the work of human hands. Mission is the special ministry of the disciples to call other people to follow Jesus and in that way to "make disciples"... It is primarily a "going out" to other people and means above all that all people and all nations can participate in the same way in God's salvation, that there can and may be no distinction before God (p. 25).

Most contributions present generally accepted views which give a good overview of the chosen themes from a moderately historical-critical point of view. However, they do not really take the exegetical discussion forward in a decisive way. They are especially suitable for quick orientation and as discussion starters for seminars, and prove that Hahn was a researcher who occupied himself with mission in more than an exegetical sense.

The other collection, edited by the two Norwegians, J. Adna and H. Kvalbein contains the printed papers of a symposium on The mission of the early church to Jews and Gentiles, which was held in April 1998 at the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger. Three essays were added.

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in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{44}

In his thorough study of James’ speech at the so-called Apostolic Council (Acts 15.13-21), Adna pleads for the historical trustworthiness of the speech as representation of the factual position of James ("The accumulated evidence in favour of authenticity is considerable" p.8.\textsuperscript{45} With this assessment Adna is in agreement with the trend in several new studies of Acts, which value its historical accuracy and authenticity in the narrative passages throughout more than is customary (see Reinbold above). For this reason the author concludes, "Because God has rebuilt the fallen booth of David by raising up his ekklesia, the time has come for gathering in those Gentiles over whom God’s name has been invoked, in order that they may join Israel in seeking and serving the Lord. In James' opinion, the mission to the Gentiles, particularly represented by Paul and Barnabas, is the current fulfilment of the prophecy in Amos 9.11f" (p. 8).

The next two contributions are concerned with sayings of Paul on mission and suffering. S Hafemann, who is an expert on this theme, writes on "The role of suffering in the mission of Paul" (pp.165-184); on Galatians 4.13, "Paul’s suffering was the instrument by which he publicly portrayed the crucified Christ. His weakness had a central and positive part to play in his mission" (p. 8). H Stettler attempts "An interpretation of Colossians 1:24 in the framework of Paul’s mission theology" (pp.185-208).

In the last section, "Historical contributions", R Riesner explores the question of pre-Christian Jewish mission, which – as is often assumed – acted as the role model for Christian mission ("A pre-Christian Jewish mission?" pp.211-250). Riesner concludes "The evidence... does not support the existence of a pre-Christian Jewish mission. The mission of the Early Church cannot be derived from Jewish predecessors, but has its roots in Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah and in his message of the Kingdom of God" (p.10).\textsuperscript{46}


Stavanger symposium becomes a regular institution.47

SUGGESTIONS AND EPILOGUE

The volumes discussed in this article present rich stimuli for the biblical theology of mission, the history of early Christianity, as well as for New Testament theology and research.

There are some defects however. Two areas can be mentioned as example. In the first place comprehensive exegetical studies on mission and universalism in the Old Testament are lacking.48 In the second place comprehensive exegetical studies on the missiological concepts of inculturation and accommodation in New Testament gospel proclamation are lacking, both in a Jewish as well as a Gentile context. Apart from relevant separate instances (for Acts cf Stenschke, Portrait) there is a huge field to survey here, including the literary genres chosen by the New Testament authors (cf M Reiser, Sprache und literarische Formen des Neuen Testaments: Eine Einführung; Paderborn, München, Wien: F Schöningh, 2001).

The grounds for this intense interest in mission in the New Testament are to be found also in the ecclesiastical situation in the mother countries of Western Christianity. Reinbold begins his study as follows:

The meaning of mission for the present and future existence of Christianity is being discovered anew today. In many papers and publications churches are encouraged to discover their missionary heritage, to give mission more space in future. An example of such a Christian existence... is often found in the early church. People often suppose that its existence was truly missionary (p.1).

After the preparatory work of EJ Schnabel49 as well as several competent reviews of various contributions to the debate (see above), one now welcomes his announced opus magnum, Die urchristliche Mission.50 It is gratifying that this comprehensive volume (which may be the standard work on the theme of mission in the New Testament for years to come) and some of the other volumes discussed above, were written by evangelicals.

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