

Which Conversion and Whose Conversion?

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Samevatting

Die indringende vraag wat deur hierdie artikel gevra word is wie werklik tot bekering moet kom en waartoe die bekering moet lei. Verskeie pogings om bekering en die sendingaktiwiteit van die kerk, soos byvoorbeeld die missio Dei en die koninkryksperspektief te beskryf, word ondersoek. Bekering moet egter altyd bekering na Jesus Christus die Opgestane, maar ook juis gekruisigde Here wees en doop moet altyd doop in sy dood wees. Dit is die kerk self wat allereers tot bekering moet kom deur mag en heerskappy prys te gee en die lewe in Jesus self te vind.

1. Conversion as transition to the church

When we deal with this issue, we must first ask the question: What does conversion mean in the perspective of mission?

The first and obvious meaning seems to be: bringing people who do not believe to the church. This meaning is clear from expressions as ‘church growth’ and ‘new members’. They are often considered as the measure of success in missionary work. Conversion means that people are transferred from outside to inside the church, and mission is a means to attain this end.

If we maintain this definition, we must wonder what argument brings people to this transfer? What makes the difference? In order to answer this question, we should not turn to idealistic thought, but focus on the real church as it is present in society. What does the church uniquely offer that causes people to join it?

We can make various proposals, such as: the church takes care of the poor and disadvantaged. Does she really? And if so, is it only the church that does so? There are many people and many organizations that focus on care for the poor and the disadvantaged, and often do more than the church.

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Another proposal: the church gives people a home – a place where they are socialized. But again, is it only the church that does so? And is not precisely this socialization sometimes a form of exclusion of others? A new proposal: the church is the community of love. Is there not love outside the church? And is the church a community of love? Sometimes it is, but often the church is a place of conflict, exclusion, and hurt – of which many people bear the scars during their whole life.

Actually, if we think about why the church should be attractive to other people, there is not so much to boast about. If we can point to something, it is not exclusively the church that offers it. Thus there are no strong arguments for conversion as a transfer from outside to inside the church. And if there are no arguments, the only reason can be a mere increase of numbers of an arbitrary group of people.

Next to the problem that the present day church does not make a real difference to other societal communities and that its members do not make a real difference to other human beings, proselytizing – as such – is suspect. It has the image of power and, often, of manipulation. It does not fit the idea of human freedom. Moreover, it is precisely this option of merely increasing numbers that is left, since other arguments are not valid.

If we take this into account, we can understand that this whole idea of conversion as transition to the church has been abandoned, and new perspectives are opened for the missionary task of the church.

2. Mission as contributing to the Kingdom

In the mid-twentieth century, missiological theories shifted from a quantitative approach to a qualitative perspective. The final goal of mission is not to make as many converts as possible, but to change reality according to the law of the kingdom of God. The new church law of the Dutch Reformed Church of 1951 was a wonderful expression of this change (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* 1956). After long debates, it was decided that the article about the church's apostolate should precede the article on the confession of the church.² Apostolate was the goal and the confession was a means. Apostolate was understood as the proclamation of the kingdom of God. God is Lord over all aspects of life and the whole world should be transformed according to his righteousness. It is the main task of the church to be an instrument in this history.

2 For the deliberations that led to this decision, see: Haitjema 1951: 202-211; Van den Heuvel 1991: 135-137; Van Ruler 1948.

The Dutch Reformed Church has operated with this perspective for decades. The paradigm of the constitution of the church was made operative by a document, ‘Being Church in the Dutch Society’, that was accepted by the synod in 1954 (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* 1955). The attention of church leadership was increasingly focused on this issue – actually not understood as an issue, but as the church’s very being. Most of its energy was given to political and societal questions. Leading theologians such as Arnold van Ruler and Hendrikus Berkhof contributed to it theologically. Van Ruler contributed by his stress on kingdom and creation, and his explicit involvement in politics.³ Berkhof contributed by his famous book, *Christ the meaning of history* (Berkhof 1966),⁴ and later with the influential chapter, ‘The Renewal of the World’, in his main work, *Christian Faith* (Berkhof 1979: 499-520).⁵ The synod issued several documents on political, societal, and ethical questions, such as nuclear weapons (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* 1962)⁶ and euthanasia (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* 1972).⁷ The churches in the Netherlands increasingly became the voice of societal critical movements with the demonstrations against nuclear weapons in the 1980’s as its apex.⁸

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- 3 Van Ruler took a theocratic position. In his opinion, the whole world should become the kingdom of God’s and the state should be transformed according to its standards. Politics should aim to achieve this reality. Van Ruler not only contributed to this thought by several publications, e.g. Van Ruler 1947a; 1947b; 1947c, but also by his involvement in a theocratic political party – the *Protestantse Unie* – which never became a success.
 - 4 Original Dutch version, Berkhof 1958.
 - 5 Original Dutch version, Berkhof 1973: 520-542. Berkhof was not directly involved in political activities. He contributed to the thought of the moderate middle class with a view for development of a better world in the perspective of the power of the Spirit of Christ. It conformed to the optimistic ideas of the decades after World War II, and he stressed this thought more strongly after the student revolts in 1968. In this regard, he shared Van Ruler’s aversion against left wing, societal, critical movements. See Berkhof 1981: 19.
 - 6 This rapport was preceded by *Oorlog en vrede* (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1952) and followed by *Kernbepapening* (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1981).
 - 7 Other publications on behalf of the Netherlands Reformed Church on societal-political issues in this period are: *Rapport over de kunstmatige inseminatie bij de mens* (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1957), *De kerk en het alcoholvraagstuk* (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1957), *De kerk en de Nederlandse Vereniging voor Sexuele Hervorming* (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1958), *Het rassenvraagstuk* (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1963), *Kerk en sport* (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1963), *De politieke verantwoordelijkheid van de kerk* (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1964), *Revolutie en gerechtigheid* (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1975a), *De kerk in de sociaal-politieke spanningen* (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1975b), *Wat te denken over abortus-provocatus* (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, 1976; in cooperation with the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*).
 - 8 While the church leadership participated in demonstrations and other political actions, culminating in two demonstrations against cruise missiles (first of about 400,000 people in

The Dutch Reformed Church was not an exception, although it was exemplary for the developments in the understanding of the church in the world. The NRC was aware of this, and therefore it produced a new document about her self-understanding: *Being Christian in the Dutch Society* of 1954 was completed by *Being Church in the Mondial Society* in 1988 (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* 1988). Actually, this publication was merely an expression of decades long praxis of the church. Since the 1950's, the NRC was involved in various worldwide issues, and she did so as an influential member of the WCC and in cooperation with churches all over the world. It was a worldwide movement in the churches to turn to political issues as an expression of the church's task for a world of peace and justice. Although theologians might disagree about the way to express it, and how to theologically found and anchor it, the main development was directed towards a new world society to which national societies should contribute. This was the case in the well known booklet by Karl Barth, *Christian Community and Civil Community* (Barth 1946), and this was the case in the founding of the World Council of Churches wherein Work and Life was always more in the picture than Faith and Order. Programs to combat racism, weapon competition, and later on ecological issues were the markers of the worldwide community of churches.

Increasingly, this approach was summarized in the concept of *missio Dei*.⁹ Mission is not something of the church, but it is God's very nature. God is directed to the world with love, and His love will be fulfilled in the world. The church is instrumental in this movement of God himself, and she is only one of his instruments. God's aim is not to fill the church with as many members as possible, but to fill the world with justice, peace, and love. This aim is his very being. Thus the mission of the church should be understood as a contribution to this comprehensive mission of God.

Later on a shift occurred in the churches. Since the turn of the millennium, people in the congregations are not so much interested in societal and

the streets of Amsterdam in 1981, and then of 550,000 demonstrators in The Hague in 1983) many people in the more conservative or traditional liberal congregations were very critical about this development. As early as 1970, a group of classic orthodox theologians issued an open letter, the *Getuigenis (Witness)*, with a plea against the stress on politics and for the classic Reformed focus on atonement from sin (Van Isterzon *et al.* 1971). See also: Van der Graaf (Ed.) 1973. When around 1980 things culminated, they took the helm by voting a new secretary-general of the General Synod from their midst against the societal critical candidate that was proposed by the church leadership. This did not imply a U-turn, but more a fixation of the status quo of the parties.

9 For a short but clear summary and literature on the concept of *missio Dei* see Bosch 1991: 389-393; see also Kramm 1979: 185-190.

political issues. The time of huge demonstrations for peace and a process for justice and integrity of creation has disappeared. I notice that church members are searching for peace for themselves – a quiet life. They develop a theology of security and safety, and ministers support them in this and share their view.¹⁰ God is a loving father or caring mother. God does not require anything; He is only caring and comforting. God does not call you to action, but gives you peace and consolation – or for those that are not in need for consolation, security and pleasure. The present day god is a fine god – not judging, nor urging, a god without wrath or condemnation. In his presence, life is good and safe. The community of the church is a place to share this life, and worship on Sunday is a moment to be confirmed in it.¹¹

What was the cause of this shift from a theology of calling to a theology of security? What was the cause for the shift from a theology of the mission for the kingdom to no mission at all? The author thinks there are several causes. He will just mention some.

First, in the case of short-term, local issues, a shift of situation is enough to end theological focus. When Christians were involved in combat against Apartheid, they were motivated. Their very being as a Christian was understood as a combat against racism. But the moment Apartheid was over, they entered a theological vacuum. What should theology be about? What was the mission of the church in the post-Apartheid era? Of course, we can find some issues, but they do not have the drive and motivation that can be labeled as ‘mission’. On the other side, those who understood the calling of the church as maintaining God’s creation ordinances by keeping people apart were even more impacted when Apartheid was abolished. They turned out to have been on the wrong track. They defended a society in the name of God that was not viable for the future. Ashamed by their error, they had to redefine their theological convictions, and they too can find some issues like outreach to the poor and disadvantaged communities – but here power is also lacking that

10 See about this, Van de Beek, 2005.

11 There is also a shift back to a quantitative approach of church growth (see e.g. Peters, 1981). This movement, however, attracts mainly people from other denominations –especially mainline churches –so that it is not real church growth, but a reshuffling of members. Often a longing for a warm and vivid community plays a role in this shift, and in that case, it is just a variation of the theology of security. When real church growth occurs, it is usually not from aggressive mission, but by the sufferings of Christians by oppressive regimes like in South Korea and China. When the political climate changed, a vivid church arose from the caves of persecution.

would make ‘mission’ a proper word to name it. Actually, in both cases, theology was not a deeply rooted calling as *missio Dei* should be, but a mere theological painting of societal and political conflicts.

There is more, however, than winners and losers in the Apartheid case. That might be immediately clear because the transition is not a South African matter only, but a worldwide change in the churches. It also has to do with disappointment that real global change did not occur. Wars are happening; injustice is not defeated; and ecology for the salvation of the whole creation is too heavy a task for human beings. It is hard to understand how my actions will contribute to the whole. If the calling requires too much, people get frustrated and cannot understand their own life as a mission. And even if they would conceive of themselves as a part of the *missio Dei*, they do not see any improvement worldwide.

This is not merely a matter of frustration. We should add that human beings soon tire of claims that call on them. We cannot endure the tension that is involved in a strong calling for too long. Then we are in need of rest and recreation. The author thinks the worldwide community of Christians is in that mode now.

So far, however, the most important reason is not yet mentioned – that involvement in building the kingdom of God, as understood – for instance— in the programs of the WCC, cannot be the main focus of mission. The main reason is human nature. Human nature is sinful, and human beings will continue to make war and conflicts. They are inclined to take the better part for themselves. They are inclined to take what is left when resources are limited. They are inclined to power play. They are inclined to nationalism, exclusion, and egoism. Certainly even these vices are limited in human beings. However, society and politics cannot deny them, and theology should not deny them either – *especially* theology should not do so. A theology of the kingdom is far too optimistic about human capabilities and human intentions. And such a theology does not understand the meaning of the fire of the Holy Spirit. This fire is not the fire of inspiration, but the fire of judgment and burning down human projects.

That is the situation where we are after half a century of mission as a qualitative concept for a new world. Some ecumenical theologians or church leaders may hold to it, but it has turned out to be a vain idea of idealistic hope. It was a dream – but it turned out just to be a dream. Reality is different, and this is not only a temporary matter, but it belongs to the very nature of sinful and limited humanity. There is more needed than a call for improvement and optimism.

We are now in a situation that we have to make up our mind: what is mission – and what is conversion in the 21st century?

In order to answer this question, we must turn to the beginnings of Christianity. We should not do so with a romantic idea of the wonderful old time of perfect Christians in the beginning. Such a wonderful time never existed. We only must do so because we have to turn to the sources for a good understanding of Christian faith. Actually, we are in need of a new Reformation: by taking in account the beginning, finding a way for the future mission of the church.

3. The proclamation of Christ

When we turn to the beginnings of mission, we must notice that it began with Christ. The mission of the church cannot be isolated from Him. The church does not have a message in general, but is preaching the gospel of Jesus. That is the way the apostles worked as the book of Acts tells us. It is Christ who is proclaimed by Philip in Samaria (8:5) and about whom he explains to the Ethiopian (8:35). Paul understands his missionary activities in the same way. Again and again he says that he proclaims Christ (e.g. 1 Cor. 1:23, 24; Phil. 1:15). It is the one and single focus of his message: “I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 2: 2).

Preaching Jesus Christ is not the same as preaching the message that Jesus gave. It is preaching about Jesus himself. This first implies that the gospel is not just a moment on the track of God’s activities in dealing with the world. That is the risk of the concept of *missio Dei*: that there is a drive through history from the very beginnings to the consummation wherein Christ is a momentum, and that goes on by the Spirit in the activities of the church. Not even as the only track of God’s activities, but as one of the tracks God draws in history.¹² That is not the way the New Testament deals with the missionary activities of the apostles and the church. Christ is the only name by which we are saved (Acts 4:12). The mission begins with Him. There is no mission into the world without the coming of Christ. It is both historically and theologically incorrect to break this unsolvable connection of Christ and mission in the world.

The content of mission should not be understood as the message *of* Jesus. He is not the one who only gave a new turn to the message of God and his dealings in the world. Certainly, He does so as well, but it is not the main

12 See e.g. the declaration of the Lutheran World Federation, *Together in God’s Mission*, of 1988: 8. Cf. Kramm 1979: 188-190.

focus of mission. It is not about what Jesus preached as a new prophet with a revised or brand new message, but about who He is: God's ultimate revelation of his very being; as the letter to the Hebrews says: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by his Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (Heb. 1:1-3). He is God's revelation in the end of the days – in the fulfillment of time (Gal. 4:4). The event of Christ's coming and acting is ultimate and decisive. It is not just an event among many other events. It is the one and final event by which all events are judged. As Paul says to the philosophers of this world: "For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). That ends all speculations about Being or Being itself – an end to all systems and ideologies. The decisive judgment of the cosmos is Jesus whom God raised from the dead.¹³

Therefore, we have to take the next step: It is not about the person of Jesus as an abstract concept of revelation by his incarnation. It is about his acting as is revealed in his resurrection. We proclaim that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus is the event that apostles and preachers proclaim in the world. It is the proclamation of an *event* and not of a set of *ideas* about justice, peace, or love. It is about an event that happened to this person and in which He was fully involved – so much that preaching this event is preaching Him – his very being.

Then we have to take the final and decisive step: preaching about Jesus Christ as the One who has risen from the dead is preaching about the One who was crucified. That is the most amazing and brand new experience of the apostles: that the One who was crucified has risen to a glorified life (Acts 2:32-36). For the gospel writers and the apostles, the crucifixion of Jesus is the apex of God's revelation in the world. This is the content of the first sermon by the first apostle, after the Spirit of Christ filled him with words to be sent to the world (Acts 2:14-36) beginning from Jerusalem to the end of the earth (Luke 24:47; cf. Acts 1:8). It is this message that Paul summarizes in this one sentence: "I resolved to know

13 Certainly, Paul preaches contextually in Athens for the philosophically interested Greeks, but he uses this contextuality to clarify that he has a totally different message: it is not about the highest Being that he preaches, but about a man in history that is even raised from death. For the Athenians, this is bare nonsense.

nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ *and Him crucified*” (1 Cor. 2:2).

Matthew summarizes this message in a different way, but with the same content, when Jesus – leaving his disciples after his resurrection – says: “Go and make disciples of all nations ... and teaching them to obey everything that I commanded to you” (Matt. 28:19f). It looks like most of present day mission concepts. But the evangelist inserts: “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Certainly, missionaries have baptized throughout all centuries, although baptism does not actually fit in the theology of the kingdom of God that transforms the world. It does not fit at all in the concept of *missio Dei*.¹⁴ But even where baptism, for whatever reason, the intrinsic relation of making people disciples of Jesus and baptism is often lost. Baptism means, as Paul says, being buried with Christ in his death (Rom. 6:3). It means becoming one body with Him and participating in his being – that is: sharing his death and his resurrection. And sharing his resurrection always implies in this world: sharing his cross because He was crucified to the world.

The church, as the people who are baptized into Christ, is a new being – even a new creation as Paul says. They belong to another reality than the world, as John expresses it. It is this message that shaped early Christian thought.¹⁵ We are a people that is scattered among the nations – a crowd that is uncountable from all nations and tongues.

This implies that they are foreigners in the world, as Peter especially stresses (1 Peter 2:11). Christians are strangers because they belong to the Stranger from heaven (see De Jonge 1977) who came to his own, but could not be grasped by the world and its darkness (John 1:5-11). They are his body in the remembrance of his death in the Eucharist. It is *there* where their very being is, and it is *there* where they are at home. This implies that their life is marked by death as Irenaeus says: “The business of the Christian is nothing else than to be ever preparing for death” (Irenaeus, Fragment 11). It is this faith that is wonderfully summarized in the *Heidelberg Catechism*: “My only comfort both in life and death is that I am not my own but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.” It

14 Cf. Augustine’s conclusion that the Pelagians should not practice infant baptism because they do not believe in the need of the fundamental rebirth of human beings, but think that Christ calls us to the kingdom of God without such a renewal (Augustine, *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians*, 1:41).

15 See extensively about this: Van de Beek, 2008.

means, indeed, that I am not my own. It means that I must be saved – saved by losing my ownership on myself – saved from myself. We belong to a different being, the being of Jesus as the apostle says: “Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set ... your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:1-3). For our *politeuma* is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). As Origen says: “We recognise in each state the existence of another national organization, founded by the Word of God” (Cels. 8,75). And *Ad Diognetum* explains: “They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers” (ch. 5).

What is conversion? *This* is conversion – to belong to this reality. That means that national churches are square circles. They cannot exist. That means that a church based on cultural or social identity cannot exist. That means that language, ethnicity, or any other aspect of creation cannot be an identity marker of the church. That means that no denominational borders may separate the body of Christ. We belong to the one body of Christ, or we do not belong to it. It is that simple.

What is conversion? Losing ourselves and being owned by Jesus Christ, and belonging to his heavenly community as we celebrate the Eucharist after being baptized. It implies a wonderful new life. You are totally different. You have clothed yourself with Christ (Gal. 3:26). We live his life of surrender and servanthood – of dying, as the old baptismal instruction says: this life that is nothing else than an ongoing dying. We do not fight for our property and status. We do not fight for our rights. We do not fight at all. It does not matter whether we express this by the words of one of the earliest hymns of the church: “Your attitude should be as suits to being in Christ who ... made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant and ... humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:5-8), or with the words of Peter: “To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example ... When they hurled their inflictions on Him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered he made no threats” (1 Peter 2: 21, 23). These are well known words. They should, however, be the reality of life, not only for others but for myself as well, so that we can join the author of the letter to the Hebrews: “You joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property” (Hebr. 10:34). The one who now draws the conclusion that confiscation of goods is a right and proper means in the kingdom of God did not understand anything of it. For the kingdom of God is the kingdom of which the nameplate was fixed above Jesus’ crucified body: “This is the king of the

Jews.” Welcome to the kingdom of God. The proclamation of this kingdom is the mission of the church, and conversion is the transfer from this world of striving for rights and possessions to the wonderful nation of the body of Christ.

4. Whose conversion?

If this is conversion, it is clear who should be converted. They are not the people outside the church, but it is the church herself. She should understand what it means to be baptized. She should understand what it means to be a new creation in Christ. She should understand what the remembrance of his death in the Eucharist implies.

If we look to the reality of Christians’ life, it is totally different – totally different indeed from what Christian life should be according to its beginnings. And the main problem is that it is accepted and taken for granted that it is not as living in Christ should be. If we compare the old rule of the *Apostolic Tradition* (about 200) about the admission of catechumens with present day standards, there is a large gap. According to this rule, no soldier could be accepted as a catechumen. Neither could a magistrate, nor a barkeeper or brothel owner. They dealt very critically with teachers (*Traditio Apostolica* 16),¹⁶ obviously since teachers read classic literature.¹⁷ The later *Apostolic Constitutions* (about 400) say that no participant of the Olympic Games or their supporters can be a Christian (*Constitutiones Apostolicae* VIII, 32). Of course, it is not about isolated professions as such, but about a way of life and an attitude of Christians. Who will accept confiscation of property today? How many Christians fight in the army? How many churches are national churches? How many church members fight for their rights? Moreover, how is it possible to speak about churches in the plural if it is not about the multitude of local congregations of the one Church – one, holy and catholic as her Lord is one, holy, and the head of all?

We are in need of a new Reformation. Returning to the sources means learning to live in full surrender to Christ – to give up yourself, to listen to those who are in office, and for those who are in office, to be an example of the surrender of Christ, obedient unto death. It means not fighting for

16 *Traditio Apostolica* 16 (Sources Chr tiennes 11bis: 72). The *Traditio Apostolica* is probably written by Hippolyt about 215. Similar strict conditions for admission to Christianity are found in other writings of that time. See Meijering 2004: 350.

17 See e.g. Johannes Cassianus, *Collatio XIV, 12*; cf. Reedijk 2003, 76-78.

our rights, but suffering as a slave. It means not defending your property, but suffering on behalf of the Name. It is a life totally different from present day Christian life. It is learning again that our citizenship is in heaven and that we are strangers in the world.

What will be left of the church if she would be like this? What will be left if she does not defend herself? What will be left of Christianity if there is no army to defend us? What will be left if we surrender to submission to any power who wants to overcome us?

We can see the answer in early Christianity. It was *this* community that overcame the Roman Empire. It was *this* community that changed the face of the world. That is not only something of former times. The Christians exiled to little villages in Tibet by the Chinese government changed the communist regime so that now an evangelical bookstore is in the buildings of the government, and the Protestant seminary is the heart of the new university in Nanjing. The Olympic Games were the show for the world, but what is going on in China is a different change – not on the billboards, but in the praxis of life of millions of Chinese people.

We speak about mission and conversion. Because early Christians were indeed converted, lost themselves, and belonged to Christ – willing to be crucified in his name – many people were converted to Christian faith. Their faith did not consist of mere words. It consisted in faithfulness. They were a missionary community. They proclaimed the gospel. They proclaimed Christ. They proclaimed Him by their very being. That is how Christ is proclaimed in the world.

Let the church stop speaking about mission; let her stop calling for conversion if she is not prepared and willing to convert herself to be the one body of Christ – in the remembrance of his death, preparing for death every day because our citizenship is in heaven where Christ is.

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