

# The Impact of Emerging Global Missional Paradigms on the Perspective of the Relationship between Mission and Conversion

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## Samevatting

*Die verband tussen, en inhoud van sending en bekering word grootliks deur konteks, teologiese tradisies en heersende paradigmas bepaal. Hieruit ontstaan vrae soos: Hoe sou ons begrip van die missio Dei ons beskouing van sending en bekering beïnvloed? Of, behoort die ontstaan van sogenaamde missionele geloofsgemeenskappe enige betekenisvolle invloed op ons siening te hê? Of, tot watter mate het die postmoderne of post-christelike konteks 'n bepalende uitwerking? Of, hoe groot is die effek van ons persoonlike sendingbeskouing? Hierdie artikel spreek hierdie kwessies aan deur:*

- *'n Holistiese sending- en bekeringsbeskouing as vertrekpunt te bevestig.*
- *Te besin oor hoe ontwikkelende internasionale missionêre paradigmas die beskouing van en die verband tussen sending en bekering raak en te oordeel tot watter mate internasionale gesprek en besinning rondom die gedagte van die missionele (gestuurde) gemeente, die potensiaal het om daartoe by te dra dat die hele kerk die hele ewangelië na die hele wêreld neem.*
- *Die artikel kulmineer in enkele kort gevallestudies van geloofsgemeenskappe met 'n transformerende invloed op die breër gemeenskap.*

## 1. Introduction

If approached in a superficial way it is possible to regard Mission and Conversion as two separate, related and unvarying theological concepts. Such a view can and probably will lead to an attitude towards the missionary task of the church that will be uncontextual, insensitive and ineffective. This statement is supported by the unwavering and mostly unsuccessful attempts

of Christians to witness to post-modern and post-Christian populations in ways that are completely irrelevant and alien to modern societies. If the global church is determined to take the whole gospel to the whole world, such a rigid and inappropriate approach would blur its God-given vision.

The author believes, as indicated by the subject of this article, that we should allow for the intimate but ever-adapting relationship between mission and conversion. We should accept that the content of and relationship between mission and conversion reacts and responds continuously to the dynamic, vibrant and vigorously changing world in which and to which the church is called as God's missionary people. This does not imply that the sound Scriptural foundation of mission and conversion should be compromised or eroded.

To substantiate this statement the author need not discuss the in depth meaning of mission and conversion, although the author will shortly have to consider the implications of various definitions. The author also does not want to deliberate on the relation between these two theological concepts, although I will have to reflect briefly on that as well. The author would like to take a somewhat futuristic position in presenting this paper – he would dare to venture into the future of ecclesiology and missiology. The author would like to attempt to stimulate you with a few thoughts and perspectives on how developing paradigms can, and probably are changing our understanding of mission and conversion.

Therefore the topic of this paper: The Impact of Emerging Global Missional Paradigms on the Perspective of the Relationship between Mission and Conversion. Let the author start off by clarifying what he means by the last part of the topic: "Perspective of the relationship between mission and conversion".

## **2. Perspective of the relationship between mission and conversion**

How clear is the Bible on the concepts of Mission and Conversion? The author asks that because if the Biblical perspective is evident, unambiguous, unmistakable – if it is apparent, if it is rigid – there is no need for us to discuss our perspectives on this matter. Because in such a case our perspective becomes, in a sense, irrelevant. Then we should concur with this apparent Biblical perspective of mission and conversion and it would be needless and invalid to allow for a changing point of view or even to allow for the influence of changing paradigms.

But, the author believes that most Bible scholars will agree that defining these concepts is much more complex than that. There are far too many

diverse perspectives in the global church on the subject of mission and conversion to support a clear mono-Biblical point of departure. There are so many interpretations of Scripture. There are so many variables we face. The fact that we have conferences on this subject, accentuates the fact that there are different perspectives and orientations in church and theological circles. The fact is – the Bible is not so clear on these concepts and therefore does not allow for a universal understanding and acceptance of mission and conversion. We do not have a narrow, clear, simple Biblical definition of mission and conversion – and even if there were such undebatable descriptions, we probably would have found reasons to differ about it.

But that is not the only reason why perspectives of mission and conversion differ. Our perspectives vary because of differences in:

- context;
- theological traditions and backgrounds;
- interpretation of current theological paradigms; and
- because of personal experience.

Why does the author stress the difference in perspective? Because we will never be completely in accordance when we think and speak and write about mission and conversion. We must accept variances in our perspectives and recognize that this will ultimately determine our view on the content of, and the relationship between mission and conversion.

But it is not only the difference in perspectives that complicates our subject, but also the fact that perspectives change over time. And the author would like to claim that emerging and changing global missional paradigms can and will always have a significant effect on our perspective of mission and conversion.

## **2.1 Mission**

Martin Goodman wrote a thought-provoking book on Mission and Conversion. He argues that proselytism or mission to gain active converts, was extremely rare and not a feature of Judaism.

“From where then came the Christian urge to acquire converts?” he asks.

Furthermore he states that “it is well known that this (referring to mission) was not an inevitable development, and that Paul appears to have been the crucial figure in setting this path for the church. But where did Paul get the idea?” Goodman asks.

He suggests that:

- Eschatological fervour;
- the peculiar personality of Paul; and

- the gradual disappointment of early Christians waiting in vain for the Parousia contributed to the enthusiasm of those believers to do something. In such conditions lack of action might too easily lead to depression and loss of faith. But some extra factor was needed to ensure that the direction taken by these enthusiasts was the mission to the gentiles. This extra factor was a Christian reaction to “hostility inside their own ranks to the indiscriminate acceptance of gentiles”. The reaction was to declare that the acceptance of gentiles was not only permitted, but in fact, desirable (Potter, 1995).

That is the viewpoint of Goodman. Needless to say, such a point of departure will surely challenge the generally accepted Biblical foundation for mission.

Just by searching libraries and the internet accentuates the fact that we do not agree on the concept of mission – in fact, we cannot even agree on a clear Biblical definition of mission. David Bosch describes it “as a sign in the sense of a pointer, symbol, example or model. It is a sacrament in the sense of mediation, representation or anticipation” (1991:11). In another publication he defines mission “as the Church in the form of a servant reaching out over boundaries” (1979:248). Some popular perceptions simply describe it as cross-cultural evangelism. Views on mission ranges from a very narrow perspective to a wide, more holistic, ecumenical viewpoint (Hancke, 2001:1).

One opinion focuses on the salvation of as many people as possible. Personally I think this is a rather narrow and simplistic perspective. Another popular viewpoint accentuates the whole Church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world (Bosch, 1987:9). But it is relevant for my topic to take note of Bosch’s comment that “a comprehensive definition always includes an appeal for repentance and faith in Christ” (1987:9). We hear our conference theme echoing from the pen of Bosch. To rephrase it – a comprehensive understanding of mission always includes a form of appeal which may lead to conversion.

The author hears other viewpoints about mission which confirm the existence of different perspectives. Bosch builds on the definition of Stott and concludes that “mission is the total task of the Church with the salvation of the world as goal. Executing this task, the Church steps out of its limited existence and crosses geographical, social, political, ethnic, cultural, religious and ideological barriers. To all these different spheres of life, the Church-on-mission carries the Good News of salvation”

(1987:11). Another viewpoint describes mission as “nothing less but the way in which the Church gets involved in the salvation of the universe and the glorification of God” (Bosch, 1987:11). Stephen Neill describes mission “as the intentional crossing of barriers from Church to non-Church in word and deed for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel” (Van Engen, 1991:28).

It must be kept in mind that nowhere in the Bible an exact, clearly defined, unchanging presentation of mission will be found. Such searches will “rather highlight a variety of accentuations and approaches within a broader framework interpreting mission as God’s involvement in the world for the salvation of mankind” (Bosch, 1979:47).

As there are different perspectives of mission inside the Christendom - it is interesting to note that there are just as many different opinions on Christian mission among non-Christians. Recently I had to review a book for a Theological periodical: *A History of the first cross cultural mission in the Mar Thoma Church* by Alex Thomas. Thomas accentuates how millions of Hindus in India, in the past and still today, perceive Christian mission as politically driven (2007:xii) – in my words. as a sort of Neo-Colonialism. The author’s conclusion: there is a vast range of perspectives on mission.

## **2.2 Conversion**

In the same way there are wide-ranging views of conversion. For many it is an event and for others it is a life-long process. For some there are different types of conversion. For some it is a personal choice and for others it is the sovereign work of God. For many it is a confusing combination of both. In his doctoral dissertation Scheepers simply defines conversion as “*a change in faith affiliation*”. He stresses that as in Christianity, even in Islam it is widely accepted that conversion is more than just a personal choice and that there is a theological dimension applicable because it is ultimately God who calls people into a faith relationship with Himself (Scheepers, 2001). In his brilliant publication – *God’s Missionary People*, Charles van Engen writes about conversion: “When a person becomes part of the ‘people of God’ much more is involved than going forward at an altar call, burning old fetishes, or beginning to attend corporate worship. Our understanding of conversion must be broadened” (1991:152).

Conversion in this sense is the change of those who were *not a people* to become the *ministering people of God, the active, involved, serving body of Christ* (1 Pe. 2:10) (Van Engen, 1991:152). This is a conversion “out of

selfishness, out of self-centeredness, out of serving the rulers of darkness and into agape love, discipleship, and serving Jesus Christ”. This conversion moves “from decision through a process of discipleship, with the disciple seeking to minister in Christ’s name as a follower of Jesus”. In fact a case could be made that “full and complete conversion in the biblical sense is a three-part process involving:

- conversion to God in Jesus Christ;
- conversion to the Church, the body of Christ; and
- conversion to ministry in the world for whom Christ died” (Van Engen, 1991:152).

In their publication *Changing the mind of missions - where have we gone wrong?*, Engel and Dyrness write: “The process of becoming a disciple is never completed in this life. Conversion is just one, essential stage in the process, but it is not in and of itself the goal. The Great Commission will never be fulfilled prior to the return of Christ” (2000:102). The author’s conclusion: there is a vast range of perspectives on conversion.

### **2.3 Relationship**

This brings me to a few comments about the relationship between mission and conversion. As there are different perspectives of the conceptual content of mission on the one hand and conversion on the other, there are different perspectives of the relationship between the two concepts. And as it is the case with the concepts of mission and conversion, the diversity of views on the relationship between mission and conversion is just as vast, or even greater. Mission can easily be diluted to become nothing less but self-centred humanistic endeavours. In such a case it’s difficult to find conversion in the equation.

Just as easily mission can become callous, heartless and insensitive to context and the realities of daily needs – as long as we get so-called decisions for Christ. In such a case it is difficult to find the love of Christ in the equation.

In the early nineties the author was part of an initiative to reach out to communities in war-torn Mozambique. Confrontation with the hard physical realities facing communities was so overwhelming that the project team many times completely lost sight of the spiritual needs of the people.

Some three years ago the author had interviews with theologians in Scotland who are adamant that in their mission there is never *an appeal to repentance and faith* – to use the expression of David Bosch.

“We just don’t do it because it is in the hands of the sovereign God”, they said. “More-over, how can we be so presumptuous to confront people with choices and decisions? Do you really believe a loving God will allow people to be damned?” the author was asked.

In the multi-denominational environment in which the author function and minister, some people believe that conversion is all about a so-called sinner’s prayer, or a reaction to an alter call. For many people conversion is all about life after death, to ensure a safe transition. In that sense conversion has little to do with life before death. Sometimes conversion appears to be a confusing mixture of counting heads and sometimes hands. And tragically, many times, it leaves in its wake a reality of unchanged lives and unchanged communities.

How would you react to the goal of a mega South African Reformed church to see ten million people “coming to Christ” within the next ten years? Does a goal like that reflect something of their perspective of mission and conversion? That is why the author accentuates the expression the Perspective of the relationship between Mission and Conversion. Because at the most we can evaluate and discuss the different perspectives in the global church, and again we are not on solid ground.

The relationship between mission and conversion – can there be mission without conversion? Definitely. We experience millions of people who are exposed to the Gospel and who are resistant to the message and its invitation and implications. We even experience situations where mission is aggressively opposed – as was recently the case in Orissa, India. So it is obvious that mission does not necessarily lead to conversion.

Can there be conversion without mission? Definitely. The conversion of Paul (Acts 9) would be a clear example of how God through His Spirit sovereignty transform the apostle’s life. The author presumes most people will interpret Paul’s conversion as a demonstration of the *missio Dei*. We also know that there are many well-recorded modern day examples of Christians who were converted without any human missionary involvement.

Are there a deterministic relationship between mission and conversion? Is the growth in Christianity, the growth in converts dependant on mission? Or solely on God? Can we say: more missionary activity and initiatives will necessarily lead to more converts – therefore greater growth in Christianity? Does our approach to mission have an effect on the outcome of missionary endeavours? Does the adopted strategy influence conversion? Or maybe the type of expected conversion?

### 3. Emerging global missional paradigms

It would be valid to ask if there are at all global paradigm shifts in missiology. Probably one of the most significant confirmations that such shifts are taking place is supported by the content of David Bosch's monumental work: *Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in theology of mission*. Even the subtitle of this globally acclaimed publication refers to such paradigm shifts taking place in missiology.

James Ferguson refers to a paradigm shift in the theology of mission (Ferguson, 1984), while Alexander Bolyanatz writes about paradigm shifts in Christian witness (Bolyanatz, 2008). Robert J. Schreiter acknowledges that missiologist Charles Kraft “*has indeed shifted perspectives within missiology and brought new methods of interpretation to bear upon our understanding of Christian mission*” (Van Engen, 2008:129).

Alan Kreider in *Beyond Bosch: The Early Church and the Christendom Shift* creates a table of significant paradigm shifts in respect of mission taking place from pre-Christendom to Christendom (Kreider 2005). Pachuau reflects on the “*confusion*” concerning the place of mission study in Theological education and concludes that this is the result of “*drastic changes in the understanding of mission and the resultant multiple faces of mission*” (Pachuau, 2000).

Guder refers to “*beginning to see the purpose of the community as cultivating a people of a contrasting lifestyle*”. He consistently mentions how new insights and understanding changes missiological and ecclesiological viewpoints (Barrett, 2004:126-129). Equally, Padilla in his introduction to the publication on the local church as agent of transformation, refers to a changing paradigm in regard to integral mission (Yamamori, 2004:19).

Against the background of numerous references to changing and emerging Global Missional Paradigms, the author believes these shifts are very relevant to the subject of mission and conversion.

In preparing this article the author was struggling with the question: Whose paradigms should we consider? Whose paradigms are relevant? The changing paradigms of Theologians? Or of church leaders? Or of denominational leaders? Or of so-called lay people? It must be accepted that changes in missional paradigms are not mutually excluding but that they are continually influencing each other.

Although the author knows that there are obviously a mutual influencing effect, he is personally more interested to try and understand how the



changing paradigms of lay people, people living and working and operating in the marketplace, will influence their perceptions of mission and conversion.

Why does the author say that? Because ultimately it is the whole body of Christ who should impact the world. For too long we have seen the meagre results when a small disproportionate part of the global church are missionally active. More so, because it is my passion to help, stimulate, motivate and encourage local churches to live as God's transformational agents in the world.

It is true that the way we perceive and evaluate emerging paradigms will also differ. Our understanding of its relevance will differ. Even the validity of so-called developing paradigms can be debated. It is exactly here where we move, to my opinion, onto futuristic terrain. It is exactly here where writers and researchers like Barna and others rock the steady boat of Ecclesiology and Missiology. Where they stir the calm waters of theological pondering. It is exactly here where our traditional ways of thinking about God, the church, the world, missions and conversion are challenged to a point where it becomes very uncomfortable for our existing paradigms to prevail. Pardon this crude expression, but this is the point where what is happening out there, many times does not fit the box. Maybe does not fit our Theology. But we cannot ignore the realities of changing missional paradigms and an upcoming generation living out their faith in ways which are alien to how many of us thought the church should express itself.

That does the author mean by emerging paradigms? He refers to discussions and writings and debates about concepts like the so-called:

- emerging church;
- what some people call integral church;
- the thoughts and practical manifestations of what is called the missional church;
- the birth of gospel communities;
- missional communities worldwide; and
- what some people call holistic church.

### ***3.1 A general reflection on ecclesiological and missiological shifts***

The author is convinced that in considering Mission and Conversion we should take note of major Ecclesiological shifts. George Barna leads a church research institute, and is currently the most-quoted person in the Christian church in the USA because of his statistical work. His con-

clusion in a recent publication with the title *Revolution*, supports the global research of Barrett and Johnson. To summarize his most important conclusions:

The number of Christians attending local church in the USA is declining rapidly. Today, 70% of Christians (take note, of Christians) attend traditional churches. The number of followers of Jesus who do not attend a local church will grow from 30% to 70% in the next 20 years. Alternative fellowship forms will grow to make up 30-35%, while another 30-35% will live out their faith in the fields of media, arts and culture. The remaining 5% of Christians attending non-traditional forms of church will have a family-based spiritual life. His conclusion is that a minority group, presently not even noticed by many, will become the mainstream of North American Christianity in only two decades (Barna, 2008).

Barrett and Johnson reports that globally there are already more than 111 million Christians without a traditional local church. Barrett particularly highlights the development of the so-called 'Neo-Apostolic' networks and movements, of which there are already over 20 000 around the world, numbering around 394 million Christians. According to Barrett, these Christians reject historical denominationalism and all restrictive central authority, and attempt to lead a life of following Jesus, seeking a more effective missionary lifestyle. They are the fastest-growing Christian movements in the world. He estimates that by the year 2 025, these movements will have around 581 million members, 120 million more than all Protestant movements put together (Barrett, 2001).

How will such a major movement or shift influence mission and conversion? It would be very naive to ignore such major trends and expect that the global church will be untouched by that. The author would like to go even further – he thinks it would be naive to think that this metamorphoses of the global church will leave the world untouched. It will have a determining influence on Theology. It will have a determining influence on the Christendom. It can have a determining influence on the world.

Against that background it is interesting to note what George Hunter of Asbury Theological Seminary says: "Churches after 15 years typically plateau. After 35 years, they typically can't even replace those (members) they lose. New congregations or fellowships reach a lot more pre-Christian people". In other words new converts. "Those who study churches say established congregations tend to turn inward, no matter how hard they try to resist the trend. But new fellowships must look outward to

survive” – therefore a different approach to mission and conversion (Hunter, 2007).

### **3.2 Missional church**

Because the author thinks it will have a marked effect on mission and conversion I would like to venture into a phenomenon that is generally known as the missional church. Personally I think there is unprecedented accent or focus on Jesus’ words in John 20:21 - *As the Father has sent me, I am sending you*. The author wonders if in recent times, any missiological subject created so much discussion, so much debate, so much fierce differences, so much misuse, but also so much enthusiasm, as the so-called missional church. Apart from traditional ways of publishing, the internet abounds with websites, blogs, uTube video streams and countless electronic publications about this subject.

Recently the author was a speaker at a Missions Conference in Potchefstroom – organised and attended by Church leaders, missionaries and ordinary church members from a variety of denominations coming from all over South Africa. The undertone of most presentations was rooted in the concept of the missional church. And if we take note of what researchers like Barna, Barrett and Johnson writes about so-called new-apostolic fellowships and missional communities, it is very relevant to take note of this emerging paradigm and its possible influence on mission and conversion. In regard to this we should take note of Eugene Peterson’s statement that “the way of Jesus is always local and ordinary” (Peterson, 2007).

At the Presbyterian Global Fellowship Conference in Houston, Michael Frost argues that for a church to be missional means “that mission must be the organizing principle of the church, and when you step into a missional paradigm there will be a fundamental shift in how you see God, the church and the world” (Frost, 2007). Wilbert Schenk identifies a very significant shift taking place in the global church. He calls it “a shift from an ecclesiocentric mission outlook, under which the church advanced itself toward other parts of the world, to a theocentric vision of the *missio Dei*, within which the church is understood to be the called and sent people of God” (Schenk, 1995:38).

And it does not end with debate, discussion and publications, because simultaneously, translating theory into practice, there are hundreds, probably thousands, of missional communities coming to life in different parts of the world. Jason Zahariades writes that “the rapid growth in missional communities worldwide is based on a missional Ecclesiology

that is rooted in God's character and purpose as a sending or missionary God. Therefore the starting point is the missional nature of the Trinity. God the Father sent the Son. God the Father and the Son sends the Spirit. God the Father, the Son and the Spirit sends the Church. The church is God's sent missional people. So just as Jesus was the fullness of God incarnated and embodied in a human being, the missional church follows Jesus' model – learning from him how to embody the fullness of God as a new way of being human for the sake of the world. That is the very identity and essence of missional communities" (Zahariades, 2008).

These are the developments, the author believes, that will change and challenge our perceptions of mission and conversion.

#### **4. Emerging paradigms which will influence perceptions of mission and conversion**

Some of the emerging paradigms taking place in the global church include:

- An increasing convergence between ecclesiology and missiology. At a recent global consultation of the World Evangelical Alliance the author was part of the work group, study group, on Missional Ecclesiology. Listening to theologians from all over the world it was clear that the integrated character of missiology and ecclesiology was a given reality and that a growing consciousness of this fact was developing worldwide.
- The author believes there is a growing prominence of missiology – this is supported by the previous statement – and one of yesterday's newspapers which also referred to this trend.
- There appears to be a new awareness of certain theological concepts like missional; the so-called sentness of the church; incarnational; and the *missio Dei*.

But there are also more general paradigm-shifts which will play a part in our understanding and view of mission and conversion. The author refers to a changing view of:

- the church;
- institutions and structures;
- the role of laity;
- the role of leadership; and
- the place and role of spirituality.

Let the author mention a few practical examples reflecting these paradigm shifts he is referring to.

What would you think of a church in Durbanville, South Africa, with its roots in the Church of England, who sends a team of members just to spend time with a community of Ovambos in Namibia. No tracts, booklets or colourful materials to evangelise. Just spending time with people in a Cooka Shop (pub). Listening, speaking, reflecting, demonstrating love and understanding. No strings attached – but trusting God to change lives. It's a different approach to mission and conversion.

Or what would you think of a church who intentionally uses a well-known restaurant-owner – a church-member – to expose non-Christians to the household and life of a Christian family by inviting groups of people to have a meal with him and his family. Why? In order for them to become interested in Christianity, creating the opportunity to reach out to them. It's a different approach to mission and conversion.

Or what would you think of a church mandating a prominent corporate leader who plays a transformational role in the lives of business associates, to play golf on Sunday in order to have the best natural opportunity to impact the lives of business leaders. It's a different approach to mission and conversion.

Or what would you think of a church creating a missional community between mainly poor, coloured farm workers in the Western Cape – by even considering the relocation of a family of church members to stay among the workers – helping them to grow in their way of understanding what it means to be followers of Christ and transformational agents in their community. It's a different approach to mission and conversion.

The author has an unpublished report from Rev. Colin Banfield from the Durbanville Community Church, reflecting on a recent visit to the UK. What would you think of professional young people, scaling down their lifestyles to relocate themselves as missional communities in areas where there are no Christian presence in order to demonstrate an alternative lifestyle. Demonstrating the love of Christ. Illustrating a completely different manifestation of the church. No formal strategies but gradually allowing non-Christians to witness and experience an alternative way of life. Through mentoring and modelling allowing people to discover Christianity in a relevant way – and in realizing that, they often come to faith in the Lord. It's a different approach to mission and conversion.

What would you think of the radical approach of a German church reaching out to a community of Turkish Muslim migrant workers by supporting them with advice while they were building a mosque. And through their loving conduct Muslims started to take note of this faith

community. And fundamental Muslims are converted. It's a different approach to mission and conversion.

The author has tried to convey my view on the Impact of Emerging Global Missional Paradigms on the Perspective of the Relationship between Mission and Conversion. The author has tried to indicate that in spite of a Biblical point of departure, there are still diverse perceptions of mission, of conversion and of the relation between these two theological concepts. He has also tried to indicate that these perceptions are continuously influenced by changing global paradigms. We are never untouched by the influence of changing paradigms. As the global church expresses itself differently, experience itself differently, finding itself in an ever-changing context, the global church's approach to and understanding of mission and conversion will change.

## **5. Conclusion**

The author would like to conclude with a few remarks on how this will probably have an influence on mission and conversion. Let him start of on a somewhat negative note.

Apparent changes in missional paradigms can revive the threat of cultural Christianity. It is possible that a so-called missional lifestyle and approach to conversion can imbed itself in such a way, as part of a normal lifestyle, that in fact, it becomes non-existent. This will mean that the global church has to fight this battle against cultural Christianity as it has done since Constantine. Secondly, the new awareness and focus on the church as being sent naturally puts emphasis on making a difference within the context where the church is. The author is worried that this Biblical truth can be misused and misapplied to diffuse another truth – the church's responsibility to bring the Good News to all peoples.

On a more positive note. The author believes that mission and conversion will increasingly become less of just being concepts and more of a natural but also intentional way of life. More natural – less programs and processes. More of a spontaneous transition from exposure to the gospel, to conversion – less of a methodology how to ensure converts. This will undoubtedly lead to a narrowing in the existing schism between so-called mission-minded-Christians and the so-called rest. Some publications even refer to these mission-minded Christians as Great Commission Christians. Given the growth in extremism in various world religions this change in approach can probably lessen the radical onslaught on Christianity. The author believes that changing paradigms will lead to a more subtle boundary between mission and conversion, Furthermore, he trusts and

believe that such a change will ultimately lead to more people being exposed to the Gospel and that through that we shall witness transformed lives and transformed communities.

The author created an expression – situational-mission. In management and leadership we identified a style that is described as situational leadership. It fundamentally means that leadership should not be moulded in a fixed, rigid, pre-programmed, insensitive style. But that an effective leader should possess the ability to adapt his style to fit the situation or context. That is what he means by situational mission. The church should be able to evaluate and consider its context and situation in reaching out to people. The author believes that changing paradigms will lead to a greater sensitivity about mission and conversion within different contextual realities.

The author also believes that paradigm changes will allow more Christians to understand the content, meaning and implications of the *missio Dei*. Instead of a forced or constrained approach to mission and conversion, a natural approach will increasingly allow us to respect the sovereign work and conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Lastly, the author believes that changing paradigms are increasingly helping the global church to understand that mission is more than what the church does – it is much more about who we are. It will lead to a deeper understanding that mission is part of the very fibre, the nature, the character, the DNA of God's people. This deepening understanding will have an unprecedented effect on mission and conversion.

The author believes that if the global church approach and apply changing missiological paradigms wisely and with grace we are probably standing on the brink of a fresh and vibrant approach and understanding of mission and conversion. And because of that, more of humanity will experience the love of Christ through his Church. And because of that, more people will come to faith in Jesus. And because of that, we will experience transformed lives and transformed communities – an ever-increasing number of people bowing their knees and confessing that Jesus is Lord (Rm 14:11). A new dimension of the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world.

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