

Mission in Theological Education: Review and Prospects

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A. Understanding of Christian Mission

An evolution has taken place in the understanding of mission among Christian missiologists and missionaries since the time of modern missionary movement. Let me begin with Edinburgh 1910 when 'evangelising the non-Christians' was seen as the main task of Christian mission. The theme 'the evangelisation of the world in this generation' was the main agenda of the conference¹. It is clear that this was the only agenda even before Edinburgh 2010 for the missionary movement and also for many churches in terms of understanding Christian mission.

The problem with evangelisation has not been proclamation or the conversion of non-Christians to Christian faith, but rather the fact that conversion has been seen as a means of expanding Christendom – the power of some rulers above others. This view has often been criticised. Even today, in countries including India, proclamation of the gospel is criticised because of the practices of allurements, with threats, fear and force being used by some Christians to persuade non-Christians to come to Christianity.

At the Jerusalem Conference 1928, two major questions on mission emerged to which no real consensus was found: the relation between the Christian message and other religions, and the theological interpretation of Christian social and political involvement. The communist revolution of 1918 had made the dream of evangelising the whole world within one generation unrealistic. The First World War provoked by western countries had profoundly challenged the ideal of the western civilization as an embodiment of the gospel. The discussion at Jerusalem centred around the relationship of such councils or missions to the 'home' church on the one hand and to the indigenous (younger) churches on the other. The dealings of the missionary societies with the indigenous churches were through these missions or councils. At Jerusalem, the younger churches desired a direct link between them and the societies and the churches they represented. They desired a church to church relationship.

The discussion of the Christian message in Jerusalem centered on two major issues. First was the antithesis between those on the one hand (mainly continentals) who wanted to stress the absolute uniqueness of the gospel revealed in Jesus Christ, and those on the other hand (some of the Anglo-American) who had been influenced by the comparative study of religions and did not want to overlook the religious values in the non-Christian religions. The other issue had to do with the difference of opinion over the social responsibility and concern of the church in the world. These differences reflected the outlook of the delegates on the motives, purpose, and goals of mission. In such a situation the drafting of the message of the assembly was not easy.

According to Henry Venn, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society in the nineteenth century, the missionary aim should be to help the Christian communities in the mission field to grow into self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing churches. At the end of the process, the mission passes into a settled Christian community. In 1918 Karl Barth published his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. He pointed out mission as an activity of God (1932[1957]).

The third mission conference (the second so-called 'enlarged meeting' of the IMC) took place in 1938 in Tambaram, near Madras, India. In a world context where peace was increasingly threatened by fascist-type regimes (Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Japan), the discussions focused on the importance and centrality of the church (in particular the local church) in mission. Representatives

¹ Walls, Andrew F. *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2002.

from the so-called 'younger' churches were in the majority in Tambaram. Tambaram also defended the ultimate truth of the Christian message vis-à-vis other religions, while advising missionaries to a listening and dialoguing approach in practice.

It is the church and the church alone (*Missio Ekklesia*) which can carry the responsibility of transmitting the gospel from one generation to another, of preserving its purity and of proclaiming it to all creatures. It is the church and church alone which can witness to the reality that man belongs to God in Christ with a higher right than that of any earthly institution which may claim his supreme allegiance. It is within the church and the church alone that the fellowship of God's people receive together the gifts God offers to his children in word and sacrament.

For Henry Kramer, God's revelation in Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible is the fundamental starting point and criterion of all Christian and theological thinking. It is from this stand point Kramer speaks about the Christian attitude towards the non-Christian religions. For a Christian 'the only standard of reference can be the new and unmeasurable world which has been revealed and made real by God in Jesus Christ and his life and work, and which is accessible to faith alone ... Christ, as the ultimate standard of reference, is the crisis of all religions, of the non-Christian religions and of empirical Christianity. This implies that the most fruitful and legitimate way to analyze and evaluate all religions is to investigate them in the light of the revelation of Christ'.

Findings: We do not think that God has left himself without witness in the world at any time. Men have been seeking him all through the ages. Often this seeking and longing has been misunderstood. But we see glimpses of God's light in the world of religions, showing that his yearning after his erring children has not been without response. Yet we believe that all religious insights and religious experiences have to be fully tested before God in Christ; and we see that this is true as well within as outside the Christian Church. Christ is revolutionary; he brings conversion and regeneration when we meet him, from whatever point we may have started.

The 1947 IMC conference in Whitby, Canada, was a small one. It reflected on the fundamental changes in what was considered a 'revolutionary' world after the shock of the second world war. There was a need to rebuild not only countries, but also relations between people who had been in conflict. Whitby became famous for its slogan, 'partnership in obedience'. The term 'partnership' had been used earlier, but it received particular emphasis at Whitby. Delegates abandoned the use of the language of 'Christian' and 'non Christian' countries, opening the way to new paths in mission theology. They also insisted on the importance of good relationships with the new World Council of Churches, which was to hold its first assembly in 1948.

The next enlarged meeting of the IMC was in Willingen, Germany, in 1952. Under the threat of events in China to the traditional mission enterprise, delegates rediscovered that mission depends first and foremost on God's own activity. Mission is the purpose and action of the triune God. Willingen 1952 is rightly considered to have had the most lasting influence on ecumenical mission theology. Indeed, the idea of *missio Dei*, that was taken up in the follow-up of Willingen, proved to be most creative. The strong emphasis on the centrality of the church in mission (important since Tambaram) was replaced by an enlarged perspective that allowed an interpretation of world events as determining factors for mission.

Hoekendijk: The Missionary movement of which we are a part has its source in the Triune God himself. Out of the depths of his love for us, the Father has sent forth his own beloved Son to reconcile all things to himself. that we and all men might, through the Spirit, be made one in him with the Father in that perfect love which is the very nature of God.... We who have been chosen in Christ, reconciled to God through him, made members of his Body, sharers in his Spirit, and heirs through hope of his Kingdom, are by these very facts committed to full participation in his redeeming mission.

There was also an understanding that the Christian mission can be done only by the churches – *missio ekklesia* against which mission of God (*missio Dei*) concept was developed in Willingon. In 1958, the IMC met in Achimota near Accra, Ghana, and debated a proposal to unite with the World Council of Churches, with which it shared several programmes and enertained intensive relations. The proposal was accepted by a great majority, while certain theologically more conservative mission councils refused to integrate mission and church. They wanted to preserve missionary freedom, and not become dependant on ecclesiastical authorities and agendas.

In 1961, the 'integration' of church and mission - in practice of the IMC with the WCC - became effective at the assemblies of New Delhi. The mission councils affiliated to the IMC became affiliated to the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC (CWME, later called Conference). The Division on World Mission and Evangelism (DWME, later, Commission) took over the programmatic work and responsibility of the IMC, which ceased to exist. From then on, the world mission conferences could really be called 'ecumenical' because of the much larger denominational participation, including Orthodox churches and, soon after Vatican II, also Roman Catholic observers.

In 1963, the first CWME met in Mexico-City under the theme of 'mission in six continents'. The perspective of mission was enlarged to encompass all continents, and not only those of the 'south'. Meeting during the first development decade, the conference dealt intensively with witness in a world where God was active, inviting the churches to join in *missio Dei*. It was the time of a positive appreciation of secularization and of non-religious formulations of Christian faith and action, in particular in the West.

In Geneva 1966, WCC CWME: As Christians we are committed to working for the transformation of society. In the past, we have usually done this through quiet efforts at social renewal, working in and through established institutions according to their rules. Today, a significant number of those who are dedicated to the service of Christ and their neighbor assume a more radical or revolutionary position. They do not deny the value of tradition or social order, but they are searching for a new strategy by which to bring about basic changes in society without too much delay.

In Uppsala 1969: Since Christ lived, died and rose again for all mankind, catholicity is the opposite of all kinds of egoism and particularism. It is the quality by which the Church expresses the fullness, the integrity and the totality of life in Christ. The Church is Catholic, and should be catholic in all her elements and in all aspects of her life, especially in her worship. Members of the Church should reflect the integrity and wholeness which is the essential character of the Church.

The report also speaks of dialogue with people of other faiths. In dialogue we share our common humanity, its dignity and fallen-ness, and express our common concern for that humanity. It opens the possibility of sharing in new forms of community and common service. Each meets and challenges the other; witnessing from the depth of his existence to the ultimate concerns that come to expressions in word and deed. In dialogue we share our common humanity, its dignity and fallenness, and express our common concern for that humanity. It opens the possibility of sharing in new forms of community and common service.

WCC Bangkok 1972: To the world he comes as the Lord of the universe, with deep compassion for the poor and the hungry, to liberate the powerless and the, oppressed. To the powerful and the oppressors he comes in judgement and mercy. Without the liberation of Churches and Christians from their complicity with structural injustice and violence, there can be no liberating Church for mankind. We seek the Church which initiates actions for liberation and support the work of other liberating groups without calculating self-interest.

Melbourne 1980: The next CWME took place in Melbourne, Australia, in 1980. Reflecting on the theme 'Your kingdom come', the conference insisted on the particular role of the poor and churches of the poor in God's mission. Influenced by the Latin American liberation theologies, the delegates highlighted the radical aspects of the kingdom message, and the serious challenge it threw to traditional missiology and mission programmes.

Kasemann: 'Jesus will abolish every kind of domination, authority and power and he is destined to reign until God has put all enemies under his feet. For us the Kingdom of God is not primarily theory but praxis. Nor is it a praxis concerned mainly with changed conditions, new possibilities and goals. From the New Testament, the Christian standpoint, the kingdom of God denotes that praxis in which Jesus of Nazareth is our Lord and Saviour of the world.'

The concept of *Missio Dei* is also critically studied and some have highlighted furthering it with *Missio Humanitatis* (Thomas Thangaraj) as showing solidarity with the poor and marginal communities as part and parcel of the mission of God.

While ecumenical understanding of mission is widened with WCC's concept of 'Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation' (commonly known as JPIC), the evangelical groups have struggled to include

some of the contextual issues into their agenda. Unfortunately the ecumenical agencies struggle to get their funding though their causes are genuine and transformative.

The World Council of Churches' statement from 1980 to 2000 have introduced as many as eight terms in relation to Christian mission – which are: liberative, prophetic, dialogic, participatory, development oriented, proclamation, building communities and nourishes culture. Such concepts are developed and reflected in Catholic documents (the 1971 Synod of Bishops, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* in 1975, and *Redemptoris Missio* of 1990) [Bevans]. In 1984, Secretariat statement highlighted the following elements of Christian mission: (1) presence and witness, (2) development and liberation, (3) liturgical life, prayer and contemplation, (4) interreligious dialogue, and (5) proclamation and catechesis². Andrew Kirk added ecological concerns and peacemaking as integral part of Christian mission. Schreiter argues for adding reconciliation into Christian mission³.

Some scholars have suggested a new concept which is 'Reconstructing Mission' (particularly – Robert Schreiter) where a proposal for reconstructing alternative spaces for doing mission is suggested. Schreiter says, 'two principles – seeking middle axioms and discovering points of interdisciplinary collaboration – map out a procedure for a theology of reconstruction'.⁴ Valentin Dedji in his book on Reconstruction emphasises the importance of breaking the winner-loser or the oppressor-oppressed dichotomy and to transcend the divergences between inculturation and liberation theologies. So it is a remedial and compensatory theology and thus is (according Jose Mugambi) it is to celebrate its own reformation and its own renaissance.⁵

Mission cannot be defined with a universal statement or definition. In every context the understanding, practice and reflection of mission can vary and even stand in contradiction with what in other context is understood as mission. We may have to remember what Bishop Neil wrote long back saying if everything is mission nothing is mission. Christian mission in some contexts have to emphasise the invitation of God to take part with him in his saving and preserving acts for this world while in other contexts restore broken human relationship and dignity which is often ignored or neglected. The questions are: How wider the ecumenism can be? How narrow the doctrines can be?

Some criticism – Christian mission is not a mere social activism. Christian mission is not a mere fundamentalism trying to increase the number of Christians through proselytising methods similar to Christendom missionary approaches. Christian mission can no more be offensive of other faiths. Christian mission includes witnessing (Martrya); evangelism (evangelion); preaching (Kerygma); serving (diakonia); emptying (Kenotic); uniting (Koinonia); listening (Pous); transforming (ktizo) and repenting (metanoia). In each context this can vary. Where there is no witnessing Christian mission has to be seen as witnessing. Where there is no evangelism there Christian mission should be defined as evangelism. Where there is no peace Christian mission has to be described as peace building. Where there is no transformation, Christian mission has to be explained in terms of transformation. Christian mission has to take the people and their context seriously. This challenges the present understanding Christian mission and enable us to begin from the context of the people.

Recently people have brought the orthodox idea of 'Theosis' back into Christian mission. This has contributed a bit in shifting the idea of *Missio Dei to Missio en Deo*. This is developed by Paul S Fiddes (participating in God) and Veli-Matti Karkkainen (One with God) in their recent books. It is yet to be developed fully.

Recently there is enormous growth in pentecostal and charismatic groups in various parts of the world. Their mission history has to be included as part of the history of the mission of the world

² Secretariat for Non-Christians, 'The Attitude of the Church toward the Followers of Other Religions (Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission,' *Bulletin Secretariatus pro non Christianis*, 56, 2.

³ J. Andrew Kirk, *What Is Mission? Theological Explorations* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1999); Robert J. Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997).

⁴ Robert J Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*. 2004, New York: Maryknoll, p.110.

⁵ Valentin Dedji, *Reconstruction and Renewal in African Christian Theology*. 2003, Nairobi: Action Publishers.

Church. The migration of people from one part to the other has brought different cultural groups and their Christian faiths. Particularly in the West blacks and Asian Christians try to maintain and spread Christian faith. This migration also brought people of other faiths into different contexts and thus made many countries multireligious countries – particularly in the West. In such contexts mission has to be undergo paradigm shifts in order to engage with these new emerging issues.

In a context where church going has declined, people have lost the ways of telling stories of faith to their own. It is essential to find new ways of sharing gospel stories and their faith experience narratives to each other so that Christian faith is handed over from one generation to another. In a context where individualism is growing Christian communities can develop models of relating to each other in God's love. Emphasis on relationship between each other becomes the main task of Christian mission where it is often broken or misunderstood. In a context where power and authority are questioned and institutions are looked at suspiciously then there gospel has to be lived and proclaimed without power and authority and even without being identified with institutions. So it is essential to take God's love to the people. Any ministry without mission is dead as mission involved movement of the church. Mission takes ministers to the borders where people are and thus engage with them. This has risks but for the sake of God's love it is worth taking this risk.

B. Mission in Theological Education

Mission is the Mother of all theologies: This statement is developed from Martin Kahler's statement 'mission is the mother of theology'.⁶ There is no theology without missiological studies as a discipline in it though every theological area claims to have it within themselves. This is where many theological colleges fail to survive without giving mission studies its due.

'The entire Bible is a missionary book' – C J Wright⁷. Though every area within theological colleges such as Biblical studies and ethics and so on have missiological aspects it is the separate discipline that can bring mission elements to the fore. The argument is because it is contained in every area so we cannot have a separate centre for mission studies nor missiology cannot be different area of study and research.

Neglect of Mission studies - In 1867 Alexander Duff was appointed to a chair of Evangelistic Theology at New College Edinburgh only after convincing the faculty that other disciplines would not be affected by this chair⁸.

German Gustav Warnek, who was appointed to the chair of missiology at the University of Halle in 1897. Catholic missiology would have to wait until 1914, when Joseph Schmidlin was appointed to the chair of missiology at the University of Münster. Münster would argue for the goal of mission being primary the salvation of souls; Louvain under the leadership of Pierre Charles would argue that the purpose of mission was primarily the establishment of the church. The debate was solved at the Council in AG paragraph 6: 'the special end of this missionary activity is the evangelisation and the implanting of the Church among peoples or groups in which it has not yet taken root.' In a real sense, both sides had 'won' the debate.

In the USA Pierce Beaver pointed out that after the World War II mission studies had disappeared from many catalogues of the seminaries. David Bosch too pointed this out. WCC conducted a survey on 115 colleges in North America and found 33% of the theological college had no course on mission and 50% had courses only as integral part but are fragmentary courses. James Scherer called missiology as new discipline, barely 120 years old with no secure place in theological curriculum.

Missionary Origins of Theological Education: Just a week after International Mission Conference in 1910, by realising the importance of the ecumenical theological education, many missionary organisations jointly started the United Theological College, Bangalore for academic excellence and quality leadership in South Asia. In 1938 IMC council in Tambaram, it was expressed

⁶ Martin Kähler, *Schriften zur Christologie und Mission* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1971 [originally published in 1908]).

⁷ Christopher J. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006);

⁸ Andrew F. Walls, 'Missiological Education in Historical Perspective,' in J. Dudley Woodbury, Charles Van Engen and Edgard J. Elliston, eds., *Missiological Education for the 21st Century: The Book, the Circle and the Sandals* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 17).

that theological education was the weakest element in Christian mission and so it resulted in setting up Fund for Theological Education in 1958. The purpose was to promote theological excellence and developing indigenous theological education. Oxley points out that 'The TEF was to encourage churches in the South to share in responsibility for decision making about ministerial training. Sharing in responsibility was a step forward, encouraging the taking of responsibility would only come much later'⁹. John Pobee remarks about the funds, 'The three marks of TEF's work were *quality*, combining intellectual rigour, spiritual maturity and commitment; *authenticity*, involving critical encounter with each cultural context in the design, content and purpose of theological education; and *creativity*, leading to new approaches and deepening the churches' understanding and obedience in mission.'¹⁰

Nyambura Njoroge from ETE -WCC comments: Ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation is not an end in itself but is a means of systematically and intentionally enlightening and educating those called to ministry in its various manifestations for lay and ordained persons. The process of training women and men to interpret scripture and understand the faith of the church so that they can follow Jesus in God's mission in preaching, teaching, healing and feeding is inevitable. Because of the many evil challenges we face in society, every generation of theological educators must discern how best to equip those who receive the call to ministry so that in due course they can return to the churches and society 'to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ' (Ephesians 4: 12-14).¹¹

Missiological Challenges for Theological Education: David Bosch in his *Transforming Mission* writes, 'Missiology acts as a gadfly in the house of theology, creating unrest and resisting complacency, opposing every ecclesiastical impulse to self-preservation, every desire to stay where we are, every inclination toward provincialism and parochialism, every fragmentation of humanity into regional or sectional blocs.'¹²

From this quote it is essential to note that missiology disturbs theology by taking it to risky places where crisis is the reality. Kosuke Koyama pointed out that in mission Crisis is both danger and opportunity.

Learning Ecumenically: First it was missionaries and their agencies that initiated ecumenical interactions and learning together in sharing their mission areas, in organising and training local leaders and also in creating atmosphere among new churches to come together. It was the mission agencies that founded ecumenical theological colleges in many parts of the world. Five characteristics from the missiological reflections on the ecumenical learning which are: transcending barriers; orientation towards action; learning in community; learning together; intercultural learning.¹³ Ecumenical learning should engender enthusiasm and passion of missionary passion¹⁴. Phyllis Anderson, a theological educator in the US argues:

⁹ Simon Oxley, *Mission, Theological Education and Ecumenism*, Theological Education as Mission – Mission in Theological Education Conference International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague World Council of Churches, Education & Ecumenical Formation February 2005

¹⁰ Pobee S, *Education* in Lossky et al, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, WCC Publications, Geneva, 2002 p387

¹¹ Nyambura J Njoroge, Searching for Ways of Promoting Christian Unity in Theological Education and Ministerial Formation, in *Ministerial Formation* 101, July 2003, WCC, Geneva p34

¹² David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*. 1991, page 496.

¹³ See Ulrich Becker, *Ecumenical Learning* in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, WCC Publications, Geneva, 2002 p379f

¹⁴ Simon Oxley, *Mission, Theological Education and Ecumenism*, Theological Education as Mission – Mission in Theological Education Conference International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague World Council of Churches, Education & Ecumenical Formation February 2005

If the church is going to participate in God's mission by manifesting the unity given to the people of God, its members and its leaders will need to be converted to this larger vision and be formed in an ecumenical consciousness.¹⁵

Reflecting Contextually

a. **Common Witnessing** - In today's context where fundamentalisms are taking away the religions into their hands and play with their gods to destroy other people who do not accept or agree to their ideologies or faiths. In such contexts there is a need to witness together in Christ (Common Witness). It is essential to witness Christ together and thus raise our voices against the unchristian ways of converting people (through allurements, threat and abuse of power) while emphasising strongly on sharing Christ to all and thus inviting them to Christian fold. Such unchristian ways of proselytising can be confronted through our theological education and training. In the WCC statement *Towards Common Witness - A call to adopt responsible relationships in mission and to renounce proselytism*,¹⁶ the 1996 Salvador world mission conference is quoted: 'We decry the practice of those who carry out their endeavours in mission and evangelism in ways which destroy the unity of the body of Christ, human dignity and the very lives and cultures of those being evangelised'; we call on them to confess their participation in and to renounce proselytism.'¹⁷

It is also essential to speak against Christian Zionism which calls for public support of violence and injustice caused to people in the name of religion and race. Such issues are already addressed in various ecumenical circles because of the ecumenical theological education. Today Christian missiological studies have brought wide range of discussions on these issues which the ministerial candidates need to become aware of not only at local level but also at global level. It is also essential to recognise the difficulties that arise out of the contexts of multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual communities trying to live together. Sharing some local contextual and mission theologies to wider level might enable theologians to find their own ways to addressing these issues. For example theology of Vanua and the struggles the Fijian theologians are trying to evolve in order to live together with their Indian neighbours can certainly contribute to global intercultural theological understandings and to rethink understanding of land and space in the light of God's grace.

b. **Contexts of Poverty and Violence** - This has become a taunting task for theologians to engage and reflect in such contexts ecumenically and missiologically. The Globalisation has made the situation worse in some contexts. In many African contexts religious leaders have realised the fact that only by coming together we may be able to address some of these issues and so the Congo reconciliation is an excellent example of such cooperation between government and religious leaders¹⁸. Poverty is sin. It is essential for the theological educators to sensitise the churches as their mission responsibilities to address this issue in every possible way. In some contexts HIV/AIDS makes many people's lives very difficult both in terms of expensive medicines, attitudes and rejection from the communities. It is the missiological task to enable the churches to face such realities and thus participate in the life struggles of the communities in their local and national contexts. In the present context one of the major challenges in missiology is to recognise the gender issues both in terms of their role in the mission of God and also in recognising issues of justice and dignity of all people including transgender community.

Missiological Contributions: John Roxborough lists the success of all the missiological contribution to theological learning and thinking. '*Whatever the frustrations, missiology has facilitated dialogue between*

¹⁵ Phyllis Anderson, *Formation of an Ecumenical Consciousness* in *Ecumenical Review*, January 2005, WCC, Geneva 2005

¹⁶ WCC Central Committee, September 1997

¹⁷ Christopher Duraisingh, *Called to One Hope: the Gospel in Diverse Cultures*, WCC Publications, Geneva 1998, p74f

¹⁸ http://www.caritas.org/activities/peace_reconciliation/PeaceCentralAfrica.html

mission theory and mission practice. There are those who value the ideal of being ‘reflective practitioners’. As noted, missiology has contributed to the breaking down of the polarization oversocial action and evangelism. It has encouraged cognate disciplines to ask missiological questions. Biblical studies started reading the bible as a missionary text – even if not all the Bible is primarily missiological. Missiology has encouraged Christian anthropology and seen a reduction in tension between missionaries and anthropologists. It has faced the flaws in the theology of Church Growth while allowing its questions and concerns to continue to stimulate. Has helped ensure that religious studies and inter-religious dialogue is grounded in the experience of lived religious traditions¹⁹. He raises sensible questions about missiology in theological education. They are:

1. How can we convince colleagues in the academy and seminary that mission is God’s and therefore the most important topic in the curriculum deserving of better resources? How at the same time do we convince them that missiology is a scientific discipline?
2. How can we convince the church that it should live up to its identity and reinvigorate its missionary commitment? What part do we have to play in the missionary reanimation of the church? What role do we have helping all the players understand that the indices of missionary commitment have changed?
3. How can we convince missionary pragmatists and mission agencies that there are missiological questions they ought to be thinking about?
4. How do we convince theologians that mission is ‘the mother of theology’ without appearing to be wanting to tell them what to do?
5. How do we sustain a relationship between theology and praxis?

Roxborough has highlighted important issues in the interaction between theological education and mission. He argues that if the threat of removing or reducing missiology is removed it is good but then it reduces a sense of relevance. He along with Andrew Walls pains in saying, The recognition of the theological centrality of mission has not translated into appreciation for what mission studies can yet offer the church. He also argues that The desire to integrate missiology with other theological disciplines takes theology seriously but may blur the contribution that each has to make to our overall understanding of the mind and purposes of God²⁰.

New Directions for a leading Ecumenical theological College: For me all Christians are called to do the mission of God. Mission is the centrality of Christian faith and learning. Mission makes Christianity as a movement. An institution without a movement remains only in our memories. Today mission brings in our midst God’s grace and mercies and thus make our theological education to risk and engage with those people who did not have a chance of hearing God’s love and experience Christ’s compassion locally and globally. Mission takes theological education to its boundaries and thus makes it a risky and slippery but it is worth of risking and slipping down for sake of sharing God’s love for all.

Missiology should be a separate field of study while attempting to integrate it with other disciplines. Without mission studies the theological colleges can be closed in a number of years as people are interested to support financially where mission is alive. Such missiological courses can help not only global churches but also local churches. Christopher Duraisingh advocated a similar perspective by saying ‘the *undergirding perspective* of the educational [i.e., theological education]

¹⁹ John Roxborough *Missiology after Mission? From Edinburgh 1910 to Edinburgh 2010 - Witnessing to Christ Today: Perspectives from Aotearoa New Zealand.* ANZAMS Symposium : Laidlaw College, October 30-31st, 2009.

²⁰ John Roxborough *Missiology after Mission? From Edinburgh 1910 to Edinburgh 2010 - Witnessing to Christ Today: Perspectives from Aotearoa New Zealand.* ANZAMS Symposium : Laidlaw College, October 30-31st, 2009.

process itself'.²¹ Wolfhart Pannenberg proposed that missiology should be included within or combined with Practical Theology²². James Scherer emphasised that 'essential missiology' should be operative in the integration of different disciplines. Essential missiology for him means 'touch with the roots, motives, classical foundations, and goals of the discipline—i.e., God's glory, 'conversion of the Gentiles,' planting of the church, hastening and preparing for the kingdom'.²³ My argument is integration of missiological studies did not help either theological training. Because the missiological issues were at the mercies of those who taught the subjects. If it is a different field under practical theology then it can contribute with its special emphases on different contexts and mission issues around the world. Such contributions will be enormous for the ministerial formation as it takes them to borders and risk certain experience as part of their training and education.

Missiological formation is the essence of ministerial formation. I think the churches have think of missiological reflection as part of their core of their message and practice. Mission agencies and theological colleges can correct each other in prophetic ways; nourish and enrich each other as shepherd; support and serve each other as servants; provide strategies as academics and philosophers and bring unity among each other as ecumenical agencies. When missionaries thought of themselves and the churches at the centre of mission it was theologians who identified *missio dei* as a concept where God was recognised at the centre of mission. When the message of the gospel and the means of proclaiming the gospel became more important than the people who received them it was theologians who highlighted the importance of people and their contexts. When theologies also became too much word centred then it was missiologists who emphasised on the inculturation and dialogue between different communities. In this way without mission ministerial formation often becomes a traditional way of learning – classroom based and fixed curricula with dominant subjects. Such theological training becomes irrelevant and insensitive to the context and people among whom the ministry and mission are carried out. This is one of the main reasons the churches are claiming that theological education is increasingly become academic and ideal and irrelevant to the contexts. It is very interesting to see that ecumenical theological colleges are already trying hard to bridge this gap between mission and ministry of the church.

Through the centre for mission studies, the theological colleges should themselves reach out to non-formal theological education. As the campus based education becomes financially difficult, the online based education with regular interactions can be helpful. Such education can go beyond the regular ministerial training. For such kind of theological education one needs to think about networking which can take beyond borders. Networking of Missiological Centres can help the resources available to those who can no more buy any printed resources for reading and references as they are expensive and has to be subsidised. It is also essential to bring some of the archival resources online so that people can share and use and even pay a little money to maintain them not only in the developed countries but also in the developing countries. There is no such international network among theological colleges nor among mission centres exist. This could be a great mission for the theological college in future.

There are very interesting possibilities of coming together in a genuine partnership in exploring missiological studies between some theological colleges in the West and among the developing countries. The mission task for an ecumenical theological colleges is not only to train the

²¹ Christopher Duraisingh, 'Ministerial Formation for Mission: Implications for Theological Education,' *International Review of Mission* LXXX, No. 321 (January, 1992): 38. I have taken from LalsangKima Pachuau's article in the website - file:///I:/Missiology%20in%20Theological%20Education/showarticle.asp.htm#_edn34 This article appeared in the *International Review of Mission* 89/No. 355 (October 2000): 539-555.

²² Laurent Ramambason, 'The Study of Mission in Theological Schools: A Critical Synopsis,' A Paper Presented at the International Consultation on Mission and Ecumenics, Bangalore, The United Theological College, September 10-13, 1998.

²³ James A. Scherer, 'Missiology as a Discipline and What It Includes,' *Missiology: An International Review* XV (October, 1987): 507-522. The same article is also reprinted in *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 2: Theological Foundations*, eds. James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 173-187. In this paper, I use the former. Again I acknowledge that these quotes are taken from lalsanKima Pachuau

local or national level ministers but also to engage with those colleges in those countries in developing staff, libraries and sharing resources. Such a 'Capacity Building' needs to be seen as part of missiological doing and learning. It is to bring in and encourage them to qualify with higher degrees and also allow them to share their churches' experiences here among the students, which becomes a multicultural and multinational education. Through such international training and capacity building the mission blood line connects the body of Christ and nourishes each part of the body of Christ in one way or the other.

In the missiological studies new methodologies, new approaches and new directions have evolved which can also become part of the theological formation. It is not only the praxis but also concepts that can contribute to various disciplines of theology and provide a holistic and balanced formation for ministerial students. One of the recent areas of mission is also Christian Communication which was developed by a number of centres around the world – where the gospel, culture and new methods and models of communication contributed to all disciplines (Charles Kraft, V. Soggaard, B B Scott, Crosson and others).

There are a few conceptual hypotheses for consideration in support of the above argument.

Mission as a subject would enable people to maintain the tension between the Christian movement and Christian institutions correcting each other as in the Old testament the temple and prophetic movement did for each other (Walter Bruggemann)

Mission takes the ministry to its borders or margins. It means to take up a lot of risks to address the crises. As Kosoko Koyama wrote, Crisis is both danger and opportunity and so addressing the crisis can be a danger. It is danger because the people within the churches do not want to accept the new venture and change of traditions and so on. It is danger because people are not sure about new ventures whether it will bear fruit or not. It takes us to a future of further risks. It leads at time to risk Christ for Christ's sake (MM Thomas) in order to create space for those who may not know about the Gospel, to engage and establish relationship with them, and thus find a time to share God's love with them.

Mission education also enables the people to listen to the world at large, listen to people of other faiths, their concerns and their problems with Christianity. It also enables the leaders to listen to their own congregational diverse voices. In a sense the whole pedagogical or ministerial style changes to some extent. The leaders try to listen rather than dump their views on the people as it depends on the old style of learning and studying. In this sense mission should not become a mere experiential but learning and listening together not only based on their contextual experiences but also on the basis of reflections and critical studies that are already made through other resources. It reminds us of the dialogical model of Paulo Freire on Education

Mission education would highlight some of the contemporary issues such as development of the communities and their participation. Some of these paradigm shifts have already happened within the Missiological studies. Incorporating such struggles linking the socio-cultural and political issues together doing theology would certainly bridge the gaps between the churches and the society at large. Mission has to enable theologians to identify themselves with the poor and marginalised though the support for the church at times come from the rich and middle classes. While participating in the mission of God (*Missio Dei*), theologians has to take participating in the solidarity and advocacy programmes and see it part of their inevitable mission. I would agree with Thomas Thangaraj that to participate in the mission of God means to participate in the struggles of the poor and marginalised in their process of liberation and upliftment which he calls as *missio humanitatis* (mission of human beings).

Mission education takes the popular and mass culture seriously. This certainly can enable people to do mission in the public sphere along with their ministerial work. In this sense some ministerial may specialise in the area of mass media and mission which would enable to speak, write and produce programmes for the public at large making sense of the relevance of the churches today.

Mission education has to promote community orientation along with individual freedom. It has to follow the 'UBUNTU' s concept of spirituality in Africa. It means – I am because we are (Mbiti 1969). Since we are therefore I am. we are all connected, we cannot be ourselves without community, health and faith are always lived out among others, an individual's well being is caught up in the well being of others.

Mission has to bring together many diverse aspects of theology together and has to maintain the *creative tension* between different views, perspectives and practices. Very often those who worked among the HIV/AIDS, disasters, conflicts have not been recognised as mainstream mission workers. They themselves have struggled to define their own work besides being charity work. Even those who engaged in interfaith relation building find it hard to convince the churches for support and encouragement. It is essential to maintain the creative tension (Bosch) between diverse perspectives and practices of mission and be promoted among the Christian public as an essential task of mission.

I have highlighted a few points for making mission relevant and important in today's context. This in simple terms means getting mud on our coats and suits as theologians. Mission would certainly take us to the muddy grounds where the people are. Mission is to enable the theologian to accept people as they are. Mission is to take theologians to where the people are. Mission is also to train the theologian to communicate within the people's understanding and communication. Mission enables the theologian at times to play constructive prophetic role in public (not only providing critique but also alternatives with hope), kenotic immersion with issues in multicultural and multi-religious context in working along with different people and communities and also to engage in others' search meanings of life and of God while letting them to participate in our own search. If these conceptual shifts are considered theological education would become relevant and effect and may address some of the issues stated above to many extent. If people's level is considered to be the muddy grounds, it is essential for theologian to go those places where they would get the mud on them. The aim of the mission education is to lead and guide theologian to these muddy grounds