

# *A Critical Examination of David Bosch's Missional Reading of Luke*

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## *Listening to God in the Text*

The contention of this paper is that if we want to hear what God is saying to his people when we read Luke we must employ a missional hermeneutic. Such a statement entails two bold claims that are certainly controversial within biblical studies. A faithful reading of the biblical text enables us to hear what God is saying to his people; that is, hermeneutics and God's address are two sides of the same coin. Moreover, mission is central to a faithful hermeneutic. Mission is not just one of the many things Luke talks about, but undergirds and shapes the text so that to read Luke in a non-missional way is to misread Luke and misunderstand what God is saying.

On the first claim, Craig Bartholomew says, 'Hermeneutics is a sophisticated word for knowing better how to listen to the text so as to hear properly *what God is saying* to his people, at this time and in this place.'<sup>1</sup> Al Wolters has offered a helpful model that explores this claim. According to Wolters, one of the hallmarks of biblical scholarship in the last two centuries is the yawning chasm that has opened up between critical readings of Scripture and religiously committed readings. That is, attention to the historical, cultural, and literary (and even theological) details of the text have been separated from hearing God speak today in the text. Like Bartholomew, Wolters wants to see God's speech and human interpretation as two sides of the same coin. He calls his approach 'confessional criticism'. 'Criticism' affirms that this is a scholarly analysis that recognises all the human dimensions of the text; 'confessional' means that Scripture is the Word of God.

Wolters distinguishes nine levels of biblical interpretation: textual criticism which establishes the text; lexicography which determines the meaning of the words; syntax which resolves the syntactical relation between the words; diachronic literary analysis which traces the prehistory of the canonical text as it stands; synchronic literary analysis which deals with the final form of the text viewed as literature; historical analysis which examines the original historical context; ideological criticism which probes the significance of an author's social location; redemptive-historical analysis which looks at the text in light of the overarching story that binds the canon together and find its centre in Jesus Christ, and; confessional discernment which 'has to do with the basic belief that God speaks in the Bible, that he conveys a message to believers of all ages by means of the Scriptures.'<sup>2</sup> The relationship between these levels moves in two directions: In a bottom-up relationship the lower levels are foundational for the higher levels. While these various levels of criticism are necessary to hear what God is saying, it would be reductionistic to limit biblical interpretation to them. In a top-down relationship the upper levels will shape the lower levels. On the one hand, lexicography, syntax, diachronic and synchronic literary analysis, historical, ideological and redemptive-historical analysis are all prerequisites for hearing God speak. On the other hand, our theological assumptions will be formative for the levels below. For Wolters, good hermeneutics involves numerous levels, and it is precisely through good hermeneutics that we can hear what God is saying in the text.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Redeemer University College, *From Ivory Tower to Parish Ministry*, 18, (emphasis mine).

<sup>2</sup> Wolters, *Confessional Criticism*, 103.

Expanding on the level Wolters calls ‘redemptive-historical analysis’ enables us to clarify the second claim: mission is central to biblical interpretation. Since the Bible is a ‘grand narrative which climaxes in Jesus Christ’ a redemptive-historical reading seeks to understand all the subordinate parts within the whole metanarrative and in relation to its centre.<sup>3</sup> Thus Wolters rightly calls for a Christocentric reading of Scripture. Christopher Wright develops this: a redemptive-historical interpretation is not only messianic but missional.<sup>4</sup> Referring to Luke 24:45-47<sup>5</sup> Wright argues that Jesus himself articulates a hermeneutic that is both Christocentric and missional when he elaborates ‘what is written’ in the Old Testament story in terms of its centre and climax in Jesus *and* the mission of the church to the world.

He [Jesus] seems to be saying that the whole of the Scriptures (which we now know as the Old Testament), finds its focus and fulfilment *both* in the life and death and resurrection of Israel’s Messiah *and* in the mission to all nations, which flows out from that event. Luke tells us that with these words Jesus ‘opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures’, or, as we might put it, he was setting their hermeneutical orientation and agenda. The proper way for disciples of the crucified and risen Jesus to read their Scriptures is from a perspective that is both *messianic* and *missional*.<sup>6</sup>

Since the term ‘mission’, and its more recent adjectival equivalent ‘missional’, carries so much mistaken semantic weight, these words must be briefly elaborated. Mission is often understood to refer to something the church does to bring the gospel to other parts of the world or to unbelievers. While evangelism, service projects, church-planting, cross-cultural missions and the like are certainly parts of the missional calling of the church, a missional hermeneutic assumes a much broader and deeper understanding of mission. Wright captures it in the following words: ‘In short, a missional hermeneutic proceeds from the assumption that the whole Bible renders to us the story of God’s mission through God’s people in their engagement with God’s world for the sake of the whole of God’s creation.’<sup>7</sup>

This understanding of mission focuses attention on a number of assumptions that are important for a missional hermeneutic. First, the Bible tells one unfolding story of redemption. All characters and parts of this story must be understood in terms of this unified narrative plot line.<sup>8</sup> Thus to rightly understand God, his people, and their relationship to the world one must see how each is rendered in this story. Second, this story is about God’s mission to restore the creation from sin. Mission is used here in the general sense of a ‘long-term purpose or goal that

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<sup>3</sup> Wolters, *Confessional Criticism*, 102.

<sup>4</sup> Chris Wright comments: ‘Down through the centuries, it would be fair to say, Christians have been good at their messianic reading of the Old Testament, but inadequate (and sometimes utterly blind) in their missional reading of it. . . . a messianic reading of the Old Testament has to flow onto a missional reading . . .’ (Wright, *Mission as Matrix*, 108).

<sup>5</sup> Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Lk.24:45-47).

<sup>6</sup> Wright, *Mission as Matrix*, 107.

<sup>7</sup> Wright, *Mission as Matrix*, 122.

<sup>8</sup> This is not to say the Bible gives us a tidy and simple plot or story. Cf. Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 92-93).

is to be achieved through proximate objective and planned actions.’<sup>9</sup> Mission is first of all about what God is doing for the renewal of his creation; God’s mission is theologically prior to any talk about the mission of God’s people. Third, God carries out his redemptive purposes by choosing a community to partner with him in his redemptive work. The mission of God’s people must be understood in terms of participation, at God’s calling and command, in God’s own mission to the world. Fourth, the existence of God’s people is for the sake of the world. The community God has chosen exists to bring God’s saving love and power to a world under the sway of sin. This mission defines their identity and role in the world.

Another way of saying this is to say in that in the biblical story we see closely connected God’s mission, Israel’s mission, Jesus’ mission, and the church’s mission. God’s mission is to redeem the world from sin. God chooses Israel to be a light to the nations, and a channel of God’s redemption to the world. When Israel fails in her task, Jesus takes up and successfully accomplishes that mission. He gathers a renewed Israel and sends them to continue the mission he has begun. This mission defines the existence of the church until Christ returns. The Bible then is a product of and witness to this mission.<sup>10</sup> Thus a missional understanding becomes a ‘central hermeneutical key’ by which we interpret any part of Scripture.<sup>11</sup>

Yet in biblical studies mission has not been a central category for interpretation. Perhaps this highlights the distorting presuppositions that shape biblical scholarship. Our reading of texts is shaped by what Gadamer refers to as anticipatory fore-structures or ‘prejudices’ that orient our interpretation. These interpretive categories allow us to enter into dialogue and interpret the text, which is likewise engaged with the self-same matter at hand. As Lash puts it:

If the questions to which ancient authors sought to respond in terms available to them within their cultural horizons are to be ‘heard’ today with something like their original force and urgency, they have first to be ‘heard’ as questions that challenge us with comparable seriousness. And if they are to be thus heard, they must first be articulated in terms available to us within *our* cultural horizons. There is thus a sense in which the articulation of what the text might ‘mean’ today, is a necessary condition of hearing what that text ‘originally meant.’<sup>12</sup>

The problem is that our ‘missional anticipatory structures’ have been closed by a non-missionary self-understanding making us unaware of the centrality of mission in the Scriptures. In an article written almost thirty years ago Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza states this clearly.

Exegetical inquiry often depends upon the theological and cultural presuppositions with which it approaches its texts. Historical scholarship therefore judges the past from the perspective of its own concepts and values. Since for

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<sup>9</sup> Wright, *Mission as Matrix*, 104.

<sup>10</sup> Wright, *Mission as Matrix*, 103, 120. Wright offers a helpful way of making the point that mission is central to the Biblical story. We can speak of a biblical basis for mission but just as meaningfully speak of a missional basis for the Bible. We could not say that about work or marriage. For example, we can speak of a biblical basis for marriage but not of a marital basis for the Bible. 106.

<sup>11</sup> Wright, *Mission as Matrix*, 108. See the whole article by Wright for an excellent articulation of a missional hermeneutic.

<sup>12</sup> Lash, *What Might Martyrdom Mean*, 17-18.

various reasons religious propaganda, mission, and apologetics are not very fashionable topics in the contemporary religious scene, these issues have also been widely neglected in New Testament scholarship.<sup>13</sup>

Today we are moving into a changed setting. Our culture is increasingly less influenced by the gospel; the church has lost its place of privilege and is pushed to the margins. Consequently, there is growing in the Western church a ‘raised consciousness of mission.’<sup>14</sup> Can this new setting re-open our ‘missional anticipatory structures’?<sup>15</sup> Can the work of contemporary missiology pose questions to the biblical text that helps recover our understanding of the essential missionary thrust of Scripture? Specifically what would a missional reading of Luke look like? Answers to these questions will be probed especially by examining David Bosch’s reading of Luke.

A number of studies on the Bible and mission, that also treat Luke, have appeared in recent years,<sup>16</sup> but this essay engages David Bosch for several reasons. First Bosch must be considered one of the leading missiologists of the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He taught missiology at the University of South Africa until his untimely death in 1992. His book *Transforming Mission* is widely considered to be the most important book published in mission studies in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Second, he was originally trained as a New Testament scholar and maintained his interest in biblical studies throughout his life. His doctoral work was completed under Oscar Cullman.<sup>17</sup> Of *Transforming Mission* New Testament scholar J. G. Du Plessis notes that his ‘extensive bibliography leaves the professional exegete somewhat astounded at the range of his biblical scholarship’ and that he must be ‘reckoned as a formidable exegete with a comprehensive and penetrating knowledge of trends in biblical scholarship.’<sup>18</sup> Third, throughout his career he maintained a vital interest in exploring the relationship between biblical studies and mission. In the process he has provided significant foundational hermeneutical reflection on the use of the Bible for mission. Besides a number of papers on the subject, the first section of his *magnum opus* treats New Testament models of mission. After reflecting on the New Testament as a missionary document he explicates the contributions of Matthew, Luke-Acts, and Paul to mission.<sup>19</sup> The remainder of this chapter will examine critically Bosch’s missional reading of Luke.

### *Bosch’s Missional and Critical Hermeneutic*

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<sup>13</sup> Fiorenza, *Miracles, Mission, and Apologetics*, 1.

<sup>14</sup> LeGrand, *Unity and Plurality*, xiv.

<sup>15</sup> In his 2003 Epworth Institute lectures entitled *Recovering Mission-Church: Reframing Ecclesiology in Luke-Acts* Joel Green speaks of a missional ‘reframing’: ‘. . . where we stand helps to direct our gaze and influences what we see in Scripture. With the image of “reframing” I want to call to our attention the way picture frames draw out different emphases in the pictures they hold. Similarly, even if the essential nature of the church has not changed, new frames bring to the forefront of our thinking and practices fresh emphases. If we take seriously the missional orientation of the work of Jesus and his followers as these are narrated in the Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles, what do we see?’

<sup>16</sup> Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations*, Larkin and Williams, *Mission in the New Testament*, Köstenburger and O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, Nissen *New Testament and Mission*.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Bosch 1959.

<sup>18</sup> Du Plessis, *For Reasons of the Heart*, 76.

<sup>19</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 15-178.

Bosch's hermeneutical approach can be seen against the backdrop of several contrasts he observes between the way biblical and mission scholars approached Scripture during the 1980s and early 1990s. The first contrast concerns the *historical conditioning* of the biblical text: what is the relation between the ancient text and the contemporary situation? Biblical scholars oriented by the spirit of the Enlightenment insist on an uncommitted approach to Scripture and in turn produce a 'distancing effect' by which the text becomes a strange object to be examined and dissected rather than heard and obeyed.<sup>20</sup> Consequently biblical scholars are reticent to draw any kind of direct connection between the text and our situation. Thus they 'frequently fail to show whether, and, if so, how, the Bible can be of significance to the church-in-mission and how, if at all, a connection between the biblical evidence and the contemporary missionary scene can be made.'<sup>21</sup> By contrast missiologists, seeking contemporary relevance, frequently fail to respect the cultural distance between text and context, and thus read their own concerns back into the biblical text. Sometimes they are guilty of 'simplistic or obvious moves' from the New Testament to our missionary setting in an attempt to make a direct application of Scripture to the present situation.

Not only do biblical scholars emphasize the historical conditioning of the text, they also stress the tremendous literary, theological, and semantic *diversity* of the New Testament record. Thus biblical scholarship has become a highly specialized science in which biblical scholars seldom look beyond their own fields of competence. Missiologists, on the other hand, tend to overlook this rich diversity and reduce their biblical foundation for mission to a single word, idea, or text as the unifying hermeneutical framework for approaching Scripture.<sup>22</sup>

To move beyond these problems Bosch takes his cue from a shift he sees taking place in biblical scholarship from the Enlightenment paradigm to a postmodern paradigm.<sup>23</sup> To understand the text one must be interested, not only in its pre-history and *sitz in leben*, but also its post-history, not only in what it originally meant, but also what it means today. Bosch follows Gadamer who argues that the application of a text is important for properly interpreting that text. Interpretation does not mean seeking to escape our historical horizon—this is both undesirable and impossible. Understanding occurs when our present horizon meets or fuses with the horizon of the text.

There is no simple direct line between the ancient text and contemporary situation. To establish a direct relationship between the language of the text and our situation is to risk 'concordism' which 'equates the social groups and forces within first century Palestine with those of our own time.'<sup>24</sup> (Gutierrez, quoted in Bosch 1991: 22-23). The historical, cultural, and social gaps are such that there can be no 'simplistic or obvious moves from the Bible to the

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<sup>20</sup> Bosch, *Toward a Hermeneutic*, 72.

<sup>21</sup> Bosch, *Mission in Biblical Perspective*, 532, *Toward a Hermeneutic*, 66.

<sup>22</sup> Has Bosch characterized both biblical scholarship and missiology in ways that give the impression that they are more unified than they are? Does not biblical scholarship present more of a 'diverse, if not hopelessly fragmented and feuding front' (Du Plessis, *For Reasons of the Heart*, 80)? Are there not a growing number of works from mission studies sensitive to the historical conditioned and diverse nature of the New Testament record?

<sup>23</sup> It is intriguing to note that Bosch's use of Biblical scholarship does not seem to reflect this emphasis: '... it is striking that he exclusively uses exegetical material from the historical-critical tradition or related disciplines. The vast mass of material produced in recent years in New Testament studies which make use of the literary or textual communicative approaches (especially in the United States of America) is not taken into account at all' (Du Plessis, *For Reasons of the Heart*, 80).

<sup>24</sup> Gutierrez, quoted in Bosch *Transforming Mission*, 22-23.

contemporary missional practices.<sup>25</sup> Rather we bring our missionary context into dialogue with the original text and seek to shape practices that are ‘consonant’ but not identical with that text.<sup>26</sup> We hold simultaneously the constancy of the meaning of the text and the contingency of that meaning for various circumstances. The biblical text remains the firm point of orientation but understanding it is a creative process. Biblical scholarship and the historical-critical method are essential in taking the ‘pastness’ of the biblical text seriously; one may not read the past anachronistically. Yet a faithful reading of the Bible cannot end there.

Bosch expresses this, not only with the notion of ‘consonance’, but also in terms of an historical ‘logic.’ He is fond of quoting Hugo Echegaray<sup>27</sup>: ‘Jesus did not set up a rigid model for action but, rather, inspired his disciples to prolong the logic of his own action in a creative way amid the new and different historical circumstances in which the community would have to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom in word and deed.’<sup>28</sup> The New Testament authors carefully retained the traditions about Jesus but modified them to meet new historical circumstances and missionary settings. Likewise our interpretation of the New Testament text is an attempt to read the past to speak to the present, to dialogue with the text in terms of our contemporary missional situation.

Bosch terms the approach he advocates ‘critical hermeneutics’<sup>29</sup>—a term he borrows from D. T. Nel<sup>30</sup> but whose content is indebted to Ben Meyer.<sup>31</sup> The key concept for this hermeneutical approach is ‘self-definition.’<sup>32</sup> Critical hermeneutics seeks a view from within the community by inquiring into the self-definition of that community. The approach ‘requires an interaction between the self-definition of early Christian authors and actors and the self-definition of today’s believers who wish to be inspired and guided by those early witnesses.’<sup>33</sup> How did the early church understand itself? How do we understand ourselves? How does the interaction of those self-definitions affect our view of mission?

For Bosch, the early church’s self-definition was thoroughly missionary.<sup>34</sup> The mission of the early church was prompted and motivated by a new self-definition. It was this *new* self-definition arising from their understanding of the self-definition of Jesus that compelled them to be involved in a missionary outreach to the world. This missionary self-understanding and involvement in mission on the part of the authors who give birth to the New Testament means that approaching the Bible from the vantage point of mission will lead to the centre of its message. Thus Bosch follows those who believe that mission is central to the New Testament. For Martin Hengel the history and theology of the early church are essentially mission history

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<sup>25</sup> Brueggeman, *Bible and Mission*, 408. Cf. Bosch, *Toward a Hermeneutic*, 77.

<sup>26</sup> Bosch, *Toward a Hermeneutic*, 75-76.

<sup>27</sup> Bosch references p.xv-xvi of Echegaray’s *Practice of Jesus*, which is in fact Gutierrez’s quote of Echegaray. Echegaray’s comment is found on page 94. Bosch paraphrases Echegaray in various ways; I have provided the original quote.

<sup>28</sup> Bosch, *Toward a Hermeneutic*, 76, *Transforming Mission*, 21, 34, *Reflections*, 179.

<sup>29</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 23.

<sup>30</sup> Nel, *Kritiese Heremeneutiek*.

<sup>31</sup> Meyer, *Early Christians*.

<sup>32</sup> Meyer argues that it was a changing self-definition that led to the launching of the mission to the gentiles. Self-definition, according to Meyer, has three moments: horizons, self-understanding, and self-shaping. One’s self-understanding is shaped within a certain field of vision or historical horizon and leads to the self-shaping, the intentional drive to live in harmony with that self-understanding (*Early Christians*, 26-28).

<sup>33</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 23.

<sup>34</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 41.

and mission theology.<sup>35</sup> Heinrich Kasting says that in the early church mission was ‘a fundamental expression of the life of the church.’<sup>36</sup> Martin Kähler avers that mission is ‘the mother of theology’: the New Testament record is the product of a missionary encounter between the early church and the world.<sup>37</sup> It is from within this missional self-understanding that the New Testament authors interpret the ministry of Jesus to give direction to their own missionary calling. Understanding our missionary calling from the standpoint of the gospels will mean a dialogue between our self-definition and this missionary self-definition of the early church, testing continually whether our self-definition corresponds or is consonant with that of the first witnesses.

There are a diversity of understandings of mission among the first witnesses of the New Testament: ‘. . . the New Testament does not reflect a uniform view of mission but, rather, a variety of ‘theologies of mission.’<sup>38</sup> No single overarching term for mission can be found in the New Testament. Each author interprets the mission of Jesus from within the situation of their own missionary setting. Yet Bosch speaks of a single paradigm of the early church that underlies these various theologies of mission. Within each book we find different expressions, ‘sub-paradigms’, of this paradigm. Luke, Matthew, and Paul all interpret mission in different ways in their particular contexts according to differing historical circumstances and self-definitions but all share fundamental assumptions about mission rooted in their understanding of Jesus and his mission. Before looking at the unique contribution of Luke to the early church paradigm of mission, what is it that he shares with the other gospels? More specifically what is the missionary thrust of Jesus’ life that shaped the early church’s missionary existence?

### *Missionary Thrust of Jesus and the Missionary Paradigm of the Early Church*

The missionary paradigm of the early church was rooted in the person and work of Jesus. If we explore what Bosch refers to as the self-definition of early Christians ‘we will be forced to ask about the self-definition of *Jesus*’ since the mission of the early church is ‘moored to Jesus’ person and ministry.’<sup>39</sup> Jesus is the primal missionary, and the ultimate basis for Christian mission lies in his person and work. Bosch explores five features of what he terms ‘the missionary thrust’ of Jesus’ person and work that shapes the early church paradigm of mission, and thus is common to all gospels.

The first feature is his all-inclusive mission to Israel. The ministry of Jesus must be understood in the context of a struggle for the true Israel. What distinguished Jesus was his resolute stance against sectarianism. His ministry was to *all* Israel: ‘There undoubtedly is a difference between Jesus and the Jewish religious groups of his time, between his self-definition and theirs. All of them . . . concern themselves with the salvation of only a *remnant* of Israel. Jesus’ mission is to *all* Israel.’<sup>40</sup> Jesus consistently challenged all attitudes, practices and structures that restricted or excluded any from membership in the Israelite community. Jesus

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<sup>35</sup> Hengel, *Origins of Christian Mission*, 53.

<sup>36</sup> Kasting, *Die Anfänge*, 127.

<sup>37</sup> Kähler, *Schriften zur Christologie*, 190.

<sup>38</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 16.

<sup>39</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 24.

<sup>40</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 26. Italics his. Here Bosch is dependant on the analysis of Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations*, 154.

turns to people who have been marginalized from Israel on cultic, ritualistic, moral, religious, and political grounds.

If Jesus restricted his mission to the reconstitution of Israel, why, asks Bosch, is there so much in the gospels that nourish the idea that the covenant will reach beyond the Jews? The primary inspiration for this thrust 'could only have been the provocative, boundary-breaking nature of Jesus' own ministry.'<sup>41</sup> There is a natural logic that moves from this boundary-breaking mission within Israel to the mission to the Gentiles as the 'fundamental missionary dimension of Jesus' earthly ministry.'<sup>42</sup>

The second feature is Jesus' understanding of the reign of God. Central to his missionary self-understanding are two characteristics of Jesus' understanding of God's reign that fundamentally differ from his contemporaries. In the first place God's reign is both future and already present. Since it is present, God's power to heal and save has flowed into history. Since it is future the counter-forces remain a reality. And so, secondly, the conviction that God's reign has come impels Jesus to launch an all-out attack on evil in all its manifestations because 'God's reign arrives wherever Jesus overcomes the power of evil.'<sup>43</sup> Thus Jesus erects signs of healing and salvation that point to the presence of the kingdom. Again we see the missionary thrust of Jesus' ministry. His ministry inspires us to prolong the logic of his mission. Since God's reign has *already* come, it *will* come. God's reign is both gift and promise, celebration and anticipation. The church's mission is to live in the tension of the already-not yet so that 'something of the 'not yet' may take shape in the here and now.'<sup>44</sup> Thus the church, like Jesus, erects signs of God's reign; it commits itself to attack evil in its manifestations and 'to initiate, here and now, approximations and anticipations of God's reign' especially in the life of the church.<sup>45</sup> The church's communal life itself will be a sign to the coming kingdom, a people in whom something of the 'not yet' is in evidence.<sup>46</sup> As sign the church will embody new relationships that point to the love and justice of the kingdom. As such it will be a 'radically revolutionary movement' providing an attractive alternative.<sup>47</sup>

Jesus' attitude toward the *Torah* is the third feature of the missionary thrust of Jesus' work. For centuries the *Torah* marked off and distinguished the people of God. In contrast to his contemporaries Jesus loosens the connection between God's people and the *Torah*. He attacks the hypocrisy of those who embrace the authority of the *Torah* yet don't obey it; he radicalizes the law in an unparalleled manner; and he abrogates certain aspects of the law.<sup>48</sup> Now the reign of God and not the *Torah* is the decisive centre for the people of God. The missionary thrust of this attitude to the *Torah* is found in the basis it provides for the outreach to Gentiles that issues in a 'Torah-free self-definition of Gentile Christianity.'<sup>49</sup> Now the covenant community can take root and embody salvation in all cultures.

A fourth feature is the relationship of Jesus to his disciples. The announcement of the gospel leads to the calling of the first disciples. From the beginning there is an explicit

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<sup>41</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 30.

<sup>42</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 32.

<sup>44</sup> Bosch, *How My Mind Has Changed*, 9.

<sup>45</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 35.

<sup>46</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 374-376.

<sup>47</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 47-49.

<sup>48</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 35.

<sup>49</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 44.

missionary purpose in their call: ‘The calling of the disciples is a call to follow Jesus and a being set aside for missionary activities. Calling, discipleship, and mission belong together.’<sup>50</sup> This missionary identity holds ‘not only for those who would walk with Jesus but also for those who would respond to this call after Easter.’<sup>51</sup> Jesus’ understanding of discipleship differed in fundamental ways from his contemporaries but perhaps what stands out is what they were called to become disciples for. It was ‘to be with him’ and ‘to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons’ (Mark 3:14f.). ‘Following Jesus or being with him, and sharing in his mission thus belong together.’<sup>52</sup> Jesus gives the disciples the authority to do his work (Luke 9:1-9). They become the vanguard of the messianic people of the end-time. Those who would follow the original disciples also appropriated the term disciples to themselves, and so they took up that same calling and relationship to Jesus. Thus Jesus’ ministry issued in a disciple-community marked by participation in his mission, and this carried forward into the early church.

Participation in the mission of Jesus is not merely a matter of specific activities that define the church. Mission is also the social embodiment of the good news of the kingdom in a community. Mission is the manifestation of salvation as seen in renewed relationships in a renewed community. Thus the attempt to understand various understandings of mission in the New Testament will involve an attempt to ascertain what kind of community the particular author is attempting to shape. For example, how are the communities to which Luke writes to embody the good news in their particular setting?

The missionary thrust of Jesus’ resurrection is the final feature. The resurrection determines the early church’s self-definition and identity. The gospels narrate the mission of Jesus from a post-Easter standpoint. The early church interprets the cross as the end of the old and the resurrection as the beginning of the new. The missionary significance of the resurrection is threefold. The resurrection puts the seal of approval on the practice of Jesus. In fact it is ‘precisely the Easter faith that enables the early Christian community to see the practice of Jesus in a specific light—as the criterion for understanding their own situation and calling.’<sup>53</sup> Now their lives are to be characterized by Jesus’ mission; their mission is to continue the mission of Jesus. Moreover, the resurrection and exaltation shows the victory of the cross. Therefore, mission is ‘the proclamation and manifestation of Jesus’ all-embracing reign, which is not yet recognized and acknowledged by all but is nevertheless already a reality.’<sup>54</sup> Finally, the outpouring of the Spirit means that the forces of the future world are streaming into the present. Yet the counter-forces remain. Mission is a constitutive element of this eschatology: the power of God’s reign is present and yet not arrived in full. This creative tension led the church to its missionary engagement with the world.

These five features form a paradigm of mission that early church shared. Thus Luke holds them in common with other New Testament writings. Luke’s writing constitutes a ‘sub-paradigm’ of this broader understanding of mission.

### *Starting Points: Occasion, Acts, and Luke 4:16-30*

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<sup>50</sup> Pesch, *Berufung und Sendung*, 15. Quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 36.

<sup>51</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 36.

<sup>52</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 38.

<sup>53</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 40.

<sup>54</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 40.

Bosch's reading of Luke starts with the occasion for the writing, Luke's connection to Acts, and the fundamental significance of Luke 4:16-30.<sup>55</sup> Luke writes to a community in transition facing a crisis situation.<sup>56</sup> Following LaVerdiere and Thompson, Bosch believes that Luke writes his gospel in the eighties for a number of Gentile communities.<sup>57</sup> Much water had gone under the bridge since the time of Jesus and even since the time of the missionary journeys of Paul. The church, which had begun as a renewal movement within Judaism, was now primarily a second-generation Gentile church. There were at least three elements that comprised their crisis: Identity (Who were they? How did they relate to their Jewish roots? How did they relate to Jesus?<sup>58</sup>), stagnation (As a second-generation church they did not share the fervour of the first generation, and a flagging enthusiasm plagued the church.), and hostility from both Jews and pagans. In light of these new circumstances in which the community found itself, Luke returns to the tradition of Jesus shaping it to challenge his contemporaries to form an identity and self-definition in continuity with Jesus' own identity. For Bosch, Luke is concerned primarily with ecclesial formation rooted in, consistent with, and an extension of Jesus' mission.

Underlying Bosch's missional reading of Luke is the conviction that the 'principle manner in which Luke attempts to articulate his theology of mission is by writing not only one book, but two.'<sup>59</sup> Acts is not an afterthought but Luke intends from the beginning to write two books: 'the two volumes were, from the beginning, planned and written as a unity.'<sup>60</sup> The two books are unified in several ways that have missiological significance. In interaction with Conzelmann's seminal study on Luke<sup>61</sup>, Bosch articulates three connections.

First, Luke employs a *geographical* structure as a vehicle for conveying missiological meaning. In Luke Jesus' ministry unfolds in three stages *to Jerusalem*: Galilee (4:14-9:50), journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51-19:40), and final events in Jerusalem (19:41-24:53). Flowing from the prophets, the Jews saw Jerusalem as a highly concentrated theological symbol, as the redemptive centre of the world, as the place where the Messiah would appear, and where the nations would be gathered to praise God. Luke shares this view of Jerusalem with his contemporaries, and so it is here that all the central events of the gospel—passion, death, resurrection, appearances, and ascension—take place. In Acts the church's mission also proceeds in three phases *from Jerusalem* (Acts 1:8)—beginning in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47), into Samaria and the coastal plains, and finally into the Roman empire ending with Paul's arrival at Rome. This geographical structure discloses the close 'relationship between the mission of Jesus and the mission of the church.'<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> See also Green, *Proclaiming Repentance*, who analyses Luke's understanding of mission from the standpoint of Luke 4:16-30 along with Acts 2:1-41. Green speaks of Luke 4:16-30 as the 'missionary programme' for Luke.

<sup>56</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 85.

<sup>57</sup> LaVerdiere and Thompson, *Communities in Transition*, 582-583.

<sup>58</sup> '... the church which [Luke] represented confronted a set of conditions calling for a new formulation of Christian identity' (LaVerdiere and Thompson 1976:582).

<sup>59</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 88.

<sup>60</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 104.

<sup>61</sup> Conzelmann, *Theology of St. Luke*, 1960.

<sup>62</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 89. The relationship between Jesus and the church is conceived in at least two ways for Bosch. 1) The mission of Jesus lays the *historical foundation* for the church's mission. Luke treats Jesus' mission as 'universal in intent but incomplete in execution' while in Acts, the church then takes up and completes that universal mission. 2) The mission of Jesus becomes a *criterion* for the church's mission. The church continues the mission of Jesus in his way.

In the second place there is *redemptive-historical* significance. Conzelmann suggests that Luke introduces the idea of salvation-history which is comprised of three epochs: 1) The epoch of Israel, up to and including John the Baptist; 2) The epoch of Jesus' ministry as the middle of history (cf. German title of his book—*Die Mitte der Zeit*); 3) the epoch of the church beginning at Pentecost. This theological interpretation of history highlights both the central significance of Christ's work but also the close connection of the mission of the church to that work. The mission of the church continues the mission of Jesus. Or perhaps more accurately, the exalted Christ continues his mission by the Spirit through the church (Acts 1:1). Bosch believes that Conzelmann has overstated his case and that these three periods cannot be subdivided so absolutely. While the era of the church during Luke's time differed in significant respects from the era of Jesus' ministry, they were also united in one era of the Spirit.

And this takes us to the final perspective—the *pneumatological*. In Luke Jesus' mission begins with the coming of the Spirit (Luke 3:21-22); in Acts the church's mission begins with the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:1-1-13). The Spirit is prominent not only as the initiator, guide, and power of the church's mission; he also empowers Jesus for his (cf. Luke 4:18; cf. Acts 10:38). The Spirit is the Spirit of mission and connects the two books. While the Spirit has only been marginally related to mission throughout the church's history, renewed study in Luke has enabled us to see the 'intrinsic missionary character of the Holy Spirit.'<sup>63</sup> This has implications also for the division of redemptive-history: 'Luke unites the time of Jesus and the time of the church in one era of the Spirit.'<sup>64</sup> On the one hand, there is clearly a distinction between the epochs of Jesus and the church. Luke realized more than any other New Testament author that he was living in a time that differed significantly from the time of Jesus' earthly mission. On the other hand, there is a close relationship between the eras. The church lives in historical continuity with the life and work of Jesus.

Various missional readings of Luke take different clues for their analysis. The text, which functions as a significant clue for Bosch, is Luke 4:16-30. Although Bosch does not derive his whole approach from this text, it does operate in a formative way. One of the reasons Bosch is led to foreground this pericope is that it has replaced Matthew 28:16-20 in missiological discourse as the primary text for providing a foundation for the mission of the church. In it Jesus announces a 'unique and revolutionary missionary program.'<sup>65</sup>

The event narrated in this section takes place much later in Jesus' ministry in Mark and Matthew (Mark 6:1-6; Matt. 13:53-58) but Luke moves it up to the beginning. Further the story is modified 'almost beyond recognition.'<sup>66</sup> This shows that for Luke the content of the story is exceptionally significant. The account is a 'preface to Jesus' entire public ministry'<sup>67</sup>, 'a

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<sup>63</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 115. Likewise in *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Berkhof argues that to properly understand the Spirit, one must first see the Spirit in a mission context, not an ecclesiological or soteriological context. An older work that also highlights the connection between the Spirit and mission is von Baer, *Der Heilige Geist*.

<sup>64</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 87.

<sup>65</sup> Harms, *Paradigms from Luke-Acts*, 49.

<sup>66</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 89.

<sup>67</sup> Anderson, *Broadening Horizons*, 260.

condensed version of the gospel story as a whole<sup>68</sup>, a ‘programmatic discourse’<sup>69</sup>, ‘a sort of manifesto’<sup>70</sup> and ‘the basis of Luke’s entire gospel and a prelude to Acts.’<sup>71</sup>

Bosch notes three fundamental concerns of Luke’s gospel as a whole that are revealed in Jesus’ inaugural sermon: the Gentile mission, the centrality of the poor in Jesus’ mission, and the setting aside of vengeance.

### *Jew, Samaritan, and Gentile*

Luke is concerned to demonstrate how the Gentile mission has been motivated theologically. A number of features in Luke demonstrate that the mission to the Gentiles is rooted in the mission of Christ. First of all, that Luke writes two books and not one is significant. The connection between Luke and Acts shows that the church’s mission flows from the ministry of Jesus. Specifically while the mission of Jesus is universal in intent it is incomplete in execution. Jesus confines himself to Israel. However, he explicitly commissions his disciple-community to move from Jerusalem to all nations. Acts narrates that mission as the historical logic and continuation of Jesus’ mission.

Further, within the gospel of Luke there are three implicit references and one explicit reference to a mission beyond Israel. The infancy narratives seem to point to a mission beyond the bounds of Israel (e.g., 2:31f.; 3:6). Jesus’ sermon in Nazareth also points in this direction (Luke 4:16-30). It is precisely the challenge of Jesus to their ‘ethics of election’ that so antagonizes the Nazareth congregation. God is not only the God of Israel but also of the Gentiles. He tells the story of God’s grace on a Gentile woman through Elijah and on a Gentile man through Elisha (4:25-27). In fact, it appears he tells these stories to challenge the Jews with the fact that if God’s offer to the Jews is refused, God’s redemptive work will move to the Gentiles.

The final implicit reference to a mission that moves beyond Israel is the way Luke treats the Samaritans. Luke, unlike Mark and Matthew, narrates several stories that involve Samaritans, all of which are found in the journey section. The background for these stories is the hatred of the Jews for the Samaritans. Jesus prohibits calling down judgement on the Samaritans (9:51-56). He also speaks positively of Samaritans in his stories of the good Samaritan (10:25-37) and the healing of the ten lepers (17:11-19).

There is also one explicit reference to the Gentile mission in Luke, and that is Jesus’ final words to his disciples (Luke 24:46-49). In this closing story of the gospel, there is no more ambiguity. The risen Christ meets his disciples and opens their minds to the redemptive-historical progression of Scripture, which will involve preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations.

Bosch is concerned that for a long time it has been ‘customary among scholars to interpret Luke’s two-volume work almost exclusively in terms of the Gentile mission only.’<sup>72</sup> However, he believes that is only part of Luke’s message. In fact, Luke has an ‘exceptionally

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<sup>68</sup> Dillon, *Easter Revelation*, 249.

<sup>69</sup> Dupont, *Salvation of the Gentiles*, 20-21.

<sup>70</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 100.

<sup>71</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 89, 112.

<sup>72</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 91.

positive attitude toward the Jewish people.<sup>73</sup> Luke's concern, according to Bosch, is to provide a framework for the Gentile mission that shows its co-ordination with the Jewish mission.

Luke's 'beginning from Jerusalem' (Lk.24:47) is not just a matter of geographical fact; it carries theological substance. Jerusalem is the centre, not only for the Gentile gathering but also for a mission to Israel: 'Anyone who wanted to address all Israel had to do so in Jerusalem.'<sup>74</sup> The gospel is for the Jew first and then for the Gentile. This is not a matter of historical sequence or of communication strategy because Jews were more likely to respond. Rather the Jews have theological priority in redemptive history. The Jews must first be gathered before Gentiles are incorporated into Israel. Further, the turn to the Gentiles is not on the basis of the rejection of the gospel by the Jews. To be sure, resistance and rejection are part of the story. However, Luke also highlights the great acceptance of the gospel by Jews (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 21:20). It is the combination of rejection and acceptance, more specifically the division within Israel (cf. Luke 2:34) that leads to the Gentile mission.

These issues can be properly seen when one recognises that Luke is concerned with the restoration of the true Israel. This restoration is a matter of the conversion, purification, and incorporation: Many within Israel are converted to Jesus; many within Israel reject the gospel and are purged from Israel; then Gentiles are added and incorporated into the true Israel. The church is not a 'third race' but the true Israel made up of those who are converted and now share in the Abrahamic covenant.<sup>75</sup>

### *Good News for the Poor and the Rich*

Luke has an interest in the poor and other marginalized groups. Jesus opens his ministry with the words 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor' (Lk.4:18) and this concern continues throughout the gospel. Particular categories of people are prominent in Luke—poor, women, tax-collectors, and Samaritans.<sup>76</sup> We have noted Luke's positive treatment of Samaritans. Likewise Luke includes only positive references to tax-collectors.<sup>77</sup> Of Jesus' association with women it was a 'stunning crossing of a social and religious barrier in the patriarchal society of his day.'<sup>78</sup>

Closely related to his interest in the marginalized is Luke's attention to economic issues, like poverty and wealth as seen: 1) in the material that is unique to Luke such as Mary's words in the Magnificat (1:53), Jesus' words of blessing on the poor and woe on the rich (6:20, 24), the parable of the rich fool (12:16-21), the story of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31), and the exemplary conduct of rich Zaccheus (19:1-10); 2) in the way Luke edits the tradition handed on to him, for example, when John the Baptizer spells out the fruits of repentance in terms of economic relationships; and 3) in the language frequently employed by Luke to indicate need such as *ptochos* (poor), but also in the language of wealth such as *plousios* (rich) and *uparchonta* (possessions).

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<sup>73</sup> This positive attitude is seen in 1) Luke's redaction of the tradition where he is more positive toward Israel than Matthew; 2) his use of two books to remind the Gentile Christians of their Jewish roots; 3) elaborating the theological significance of Israel in redemptive-history.

<sup>74</sup> Hengel, *Origins of Christian Mission*, 59. Quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 94.

<sup>75</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 96.

<sup>76</sup> Bosch, *Mission in Jesus' Way*, 5-7.

<sup>77</sup> Bosch, *Mission in Jesus' Way*, 16. Cf. Scheffler *Suffering in Luke's Gospel*, 69.

<sup>78</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 86. Cf. Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations*, 261.

Bosch does not offer a novel contribution to the debate on the identity of the poor. He believes it to be primarily a social category, a ‘collective term for all the disadvantaged’ or ‘all who experience misery’,<sup>79</sup> like the captives, the maimed, the blind, and the lepers. This is seen in the fact that ‘poor’ either heads or concludes lists of the disadvantaged. It describes those who have been deprived of dignity and selfhood, of sight, of voice, of health, and of bread. It may also have a spiritual nuance, of those who are devout and humble, and live in utter dependence on God but this is secondary. The term points to those on the margins, those who have been excluded for various reasons.

Luke also spends a great deal of time talking about the rich. ‘Rich’ is to be understood against the background of the ‘poor.’ The rich are greedy, arrogant exploiters, whose life’s entire orientation is the love of money. They are the insiders, the powerful in the community who are ‘not rich toward God’ (Luke 12:21). On such folk, Jesus pronounces his woe-sayings (Luke 6:24f.). It is in light of this situation, where there are the insiders and outsiders, the poor and the rich, the marginalized and those who belonged, that Jesus announces a reversal that has come about in Jesus (Luke 1:51-53, 4:18; 6:20-26, 16:25).

Such themes are clear but what is Luke’s purpose? Two works on Luke shape Bosch’s answer. A key phrase and idea he picks up from Senior and Stuhlmüller plays a significant role—‘the boundary-breaking ministry of Jesus.’<sup>80</sup> Jesus’ ministry was inclusive, to all Israel. It is this boundary-breaking thrust of Jesus’ ministry that is to be carried forward in the mission of the church. Luke is concerned for inclusion of the poor and marginalized, but also the rich in the church. Moreover Bosch also leans heavily on the work of Schottroff and Stegemann. These authors ask about the significance of this theme in Luke. Some in church history have drawn a straight line from some texts in Luke to their own situation and have pursued poverty. Others have dismissed this theme as belonging to an age now long past. However, they argue, Luke had in view a particular situation in which there were tensions between the rich and poor. Luke tells the story of Jesus to address this tension and to foster ‘solidarity between rich, respected Christians and poor, despised Christians.’<sup>81</sup> Jesus announces a ‘reversal of the dismal fate of the dispossessed, the oppressed, and the sick by calling on the wealthy and healthy to share with those who are victims of exploitation and tragic circumstances.’<sup>82</sup> Luke ‘wants the rich and respected to be reconciled to the message and way of life of Jesus and the disciples; he wants to motivate them to conversion that is in keeping with the social message of Jesus.’<sup>83</sup> Bosch develops this in a missiological way. The church is to embody eschatological salvation today so others might see. The church Luke writes to is to be a community that embodies economic justice, generosity, solidarity between rich and poor, and economic repentance on the part of the rich.

Luke carries this out in a number of ways. He contrasts Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10) with the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-30). The repentance of the disreputable Zaccheus’ is demonstrated when he gives half of his possession to the poor while the upstanding young ruler refuses Jesus’ call to conversion because he was very rich. Further Jesus includes in his Sermon on the Plain, material which differs decisively from Matthew (Luke 6:30-35). This material ‘is shot through

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<sup>79</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 99.

<sup>80</sup> Stuhlmüller and Senior, *Biblical Foundations*, 265, cf. 257, 259,

<sup>81</sup> Schottroff and Stegemann, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor*, 67-120.

<sup>82</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 118.

<sup>83</sup> Schottroff and Stegemann, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor*, 91. Quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 102.

with references to what the conduct of the rich ought to be toward the poor.<sup>84</sup> The rich are to renounce large portions of their possessions and waive the recovery of debts. Finally, Luke speaks of almsgiving as an expression of the mercy and justice of God's inbreaking salvation.<sup>85</sup> In light of this, Bosch concludes, Luke cannot be called an evangelist of the poor but more correctly an evangelist of the rich.<sup>86</sup>

Bosch rejects an exclusive interpretation of a 'preferential option for the poor.' This is because the poor as well as the rich are also called to repentance. Further, there is hope for the rich if they are willing to repent and live in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, to be converted to God and to each other. Luke's controlling motif is that God's salvation has broken into history in Jesus, and the communities to which Luke writes must embody that good news in their social and economic lives.

### *Good News of Peace*

Relying almost exclusively on the book of J. Massynghaerde Ford, Bosch develops peace-making as a major theme in Luke. The communities to which Luke wrote lived 'in the wake of the devastation of the Jewish War, in which the political hopes of the Zealots were crushed; many of his readers lived in a war-torn country, occupied by foreign troops who often took advantage of the population; violence and banditry have been their meat and drink for many a year.'<sup>87</sup> In this situation Luke presents them with a challenge: rooted in the mission of Jesus, the church is to pursue a ministry of peace-making and non-violence, especially by loving one's enemy in word and deed. This embodied the peace of the kingdom and was a call to their enemies to repentance and salvation: '... the preaching of love even to enemies in order that, if at all possible, such enemies may be won over.'<sup>88</sup>

Bosch's analysis hinges on a certain interpretation of Luke 4:16-30 that is dependent on Jeremias and Ford. Luke's account of Jesus' inaugural sermon comes in the context of the revolutionary messianism of the first chapters of Luke. According to Ford, Luke intentionally structures his first few chapters to highlight the 'seething cauldron' of Palestine rife with revolutionaries, apocalyptic thinking, and messianic expectations.<sup>89</sup> Against this backdrop in Luke 4 Jesus announces the good news of peace: 'no more vengeance.'

The clue to understanding this message in Jesus' inaugural sermon is coming to terms with the dramatic shift that takes place in story from acceptance (Luke 4:16-22) to murderous intent (Luke 4:23-30). Bosch finds this volte-face inexplicable, even an impossible story as it is normally read. He finds the solution in pursuing the question of how Isaiah 61 would have been read by the Jews of that time.<sup>90</sup> To disheartened exiles living under foreign power, the prophet

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<sup>84</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 102.

<sup>85</sup> *Eleemosyne* (almsgiving) is found ten times in the Lukan writings (Luke 11:41; 12:33; Acts 3:2, 3, 10; 9:36; 10:2,4,31; 24:17) and is unique to Luke except for its appearance in Matthew 6:1-4.

<sup>86</sup> Willem Saayman is concerned that Bosch's words here can be misunderstood in two ways: 1) Since Luke's message is aimed at the rich, it is up to them to improve the plight of the poor; 2) Since Luke's gospel is equally for the rich and poor, this implies that Christians should feel equal concern for both groups. Saayman disputes both of these misunderstandings (*South African Perspective*, 42).

<sup>87</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 112

<sup>88</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 28.

<sup>89</sup> Ford *My Enemy is My Guest* Ford, 1-52.

<sup>90</sup> Ford, *My Enemy is My Guest*, 53-64.

predicted the year of the Lord's favour but also a day of vengeance on Israel's enemies (Is.61:2). The further words of the prophet look forward to a day when foreigners would serve Israel (Is.61:5-7). The original audience in Nazareth would hear these words as an announcement of liberation from Roman, not Babylonian, domination. Further, the Melchizedek scroll from Qumran interprets the Jubilee (which Jesus announces here) in terms of a day of vengeance on God's enemies. Thus Jesus' contemporaries would have interpreted Isaiah 61:1-2 in terms of violent political liberation.

When Jesus reads Isaiah 61:2, he stops in the middle of a Hebrew parallelism. He proclaims the favourable year of the Lord but refuses to announce the day of the vengeance. The eyes of the congregation are fastened on him in suspicion. To a congregation longing for retribution and judgement, Jesus' termination of the Isaiah quote sparks consternation. In light of this Jeremias takes a fresh look at what is normally interpreted as a positive response in verse 22.<sup>91</sup> He retranslates that verse: 'They protested with one voice and were furious, because he only spoke about (God's year of) mercy (and omitted the words about the messianic vengeance).' Jesus' further words serve only to fan the flame of astonishment and hostility, and so they attempt to assassinate him.

Luke introduces Jesus' ministry in this Nazareth pericope. It is a ministry in which vengeance has been superseded. This sets the stage for Jesus' entire ministry. Bosch finds this motif elsewhere in Luke: Jesus, in response to the question of John's disciples, again omits vengeance (Luke 7:22f.); Jesus when dealing with the Samaritans refuses to embrace the vengeance that his contemporaries would certainly have espoused in light of the defilement of the temple by Samaritans (6-9 A.D.) and the murder by Samaritans of a large company of pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover (48-52 A.D.),<sup>92</sup> Jesus' unexpected response to the news of slaughtered Galileans (Luke 13:1-9);<sup>93</sup> Jesus' whole conduct through his arrest, trial, and execution (e.g., Luke 23:34; 23:43).<sup>94</sup>

Against the background of a vengeful and holy wrath against their enemies, Jesus exhibits forgiveness and healing. The call to the communities to which Luke writes is to continue Jesus' mission of peace-making so that perhaps those hostile to the gospel may repent and experience salvation. Bosch's appropriation of this peace-making is missiological in contrast to the way other Lukan scholars have adopted this theme. Peace-making is not motivated by self-interest for the sake of self-preservation in a hostile empire. Rather peace-making is motivated by love of enemy so that they might be reconciled to Christ, be enfolded in the new community and enjoy eschatological salvation.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise*, 41-46.

<sup>92</sup> Ford, *My Enemy is My Guest*, 83-86.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Ford, *My Enemy is My Guest*, 89-101.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Ford, *My Enemy is My Guest*, 108-135.

<sup>95</sup> Commenting on Ford's theme of peace-making Powell says: 'It is interesting to compare Ford's understanding of Luke's intention with that of Conzelmann and others. Like Conzelmann she believes that Luke wants to establish peaceful relations between the Christians of his day and their enemies in Roman society. She does not define this motivation, however, in terms of the Church's self-interest . . . Luke's concern for peace is grounded in the theological concept of love for enemies, rather than in some practical program for self-preservation and expansion' (*What Are They Saying*, 90-91). Ford stresses that the church is to follow the example of Jesus because it is the right thing to do. Bosch stresses the missional and ecclesial importance of this stance to win over enemies.

## *Salvation, Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins*

It is clear that the closely related themes of salvation, repentance, and forgiveness are central to Luke's gospel. Luke uses the words *soteria* or *soterion* (salvation) twelve times in Luke-Acts, compared to no occurrences in Matthew and Mark, and one in John. Further, among the synoptics only Luke calls Jesus *soter* (Saviour). Similarly the term repentance (both *metanoeo* and *epistrepho*) appear regularly throughout Luke, and is often linked to sinner (*hamartolos*) and forgiveness (*aphesis*). Examples of repentance and forgiveness are found throughout Luke's gospel (e.g., Zaccheus, prodigal son, thief on the cross). The message the church is to carry to all nations is repentance and forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47).

In Lukan perspective, Bosch argues, salvation cannot be reduced to the vertical relationship between God and humankind. Rather he stresses the comprehensive nature of salvation. He cites Scheffler who argues that salvation in Luke has six dimensions: economic, social, political, physical, psychological, and spiritual.<sup>96</sup> 'Salvation involves the reversal of all the evil consequences of sin, against both God and neighbour.'<sup>97</sup> Evil takes many forms: pain, sickness, death, demon-possession, personal sin and immorality, the loveless self-righteousness of those who claim to know God, the maintaining of special class privileges, the brokenness of human relationships. The proclamation of salvation in Jesus responds: 'If human distress takes many forms, the power of God does likewise.'<sup>98</sup> Like *soterion* another favourite word-group of Luke, usually translated 'forgiveness' (*aphesis/aphiemi*), also has a wide range of meanings which includes the freeing of slaves, the cancellation of monetary debts, eschatological liberation, healing, exorcism, and forgiveness of sins.<sup>99</sup> This is an imprisonment metaphor: Jesus has been sent to release *all* those in bondage.

Jesus announces salvation with his words, demonstrates it with his deeds, and embodies it in his solidarity with the marginalized. In a paper prepared for an ecumenical conference on world mission Bosch argues that mission in Jesus' way according to Luke includes these three closely-intertwined dimensions: empowering the weak and lowly, healing the sick, and saving the lost.<sup>100</sup> Communal solidarity, deeds, and proclamation all are part of Jesus' assault on evil.

Three other aspects of this salvation in Luke are significant for Bosch. First, it is the economic dimension of salvation that receives prominence. It is economic justice and a new relationship between rich and poor that is given attention in Luke.<sup>101</sup> Second, there is a strong emphasis on the social dimension of salvation. Salvation involves the breaking down of barriers that stand between people. Those on the margins find a place in God's kingdom. Finally, salvation is an assault on the demonic power of evil that lies behind all evil, especially seen in the exorcisms (e.g., Luke 11:20).<sup>102</sup> Evil was something experienced in the ancient world as real and tangible. It was the demons and evil forces in first century society which deprived men and women of health, dignity, and fullness of life.<sup>103</sup> Luke uses the word salvation to describe what Jesus did in the face of this sickness, demon possession, and exploitation.

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<sup>96</sup> Scheffler, *Suffering in Luke's Gospel*, 57-108.

<sup>97</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 107.

<sup>98</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 32-33.

<sup>99</sup> Bosch, *Mission in Jesus' Way*, 10, 16; *Transforming Mission*, 33.

<sup>100</sup> Bosch, *Mission in Jesus' Way*.

<sup>101</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 117.

<sup>102</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 33.

<sup>103</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 98.

The missional thrust of this theme is evident. No doubt Bosch would agree with I. Howard Marshall that the missional importance of Luke's theme of salvation, repentance, and forgiveness is that it gives content to the message the church must proclaim.<sup>104</sup> But it is more: Bosch's understanding of mission moves beyond evangelism. The wide scope of salvation means that the church not only proclaims it but embodies it in deeds and life. Since salvation is cosmic, the church's embodiment of this salvation will be cosmic. Mission will be the assault on evil in all its manifestations in its communal embodiment, its deeds, and its proclamation.<sup>105</sup> Bosch's later missiology continues to work with these conclusions based on Luke's understanding of salvation challenging the many dualisms and ways salvation has been reduced in various Christian traditions.<sup>106</sup>

*Summary: The Ecclesiological Shape of Mission*

Differing views of mission will issue in differing missional readings of Scripture.<sup>107</sup> In fact, there is much difference on this fact among those who advocate a missional reading of Scripture. For Bosch, mission is as broad as the salvation of the kingdom.<sup>108</sup> His shortest definition of mission, repeated often, is: 'Mission is the totality of the task which *God* has *sent* his *Church* to do in the *world*.'<sup>109</sup> Another helpful definition that highlights the breadth of his understanding of mission is that mission is 'the proclamation and manifestation of Jesus' all-embracing reign, which is not yet recognized and acknowledged by all but is nevertheless already a reality.'<sup>110</sup> He says further:

The theology of mission is closely dependent on a theology of salvation. Therefore the scope of mission is as wide as the scope of salvation; the latter determines the former. According to Scripture salvation is cosmic . . . It is, in a very real sense, re-creation, new creation. . . . One biblical word for this restoration is the *Kingdom of God*; it refers to the deliverance of humanity from sin, evil structures and brokenness. . . . Mission serves the Kingdom, proclaims it, and gives expression to it.'<sup>111</sup>

A central feature of mission for Bosch is the way the church gives communal expression to the kingdom of God. Mission is not simply the discharge of certain tasks like preaching or showing mercy or doing justice. While these are all essential to a missionary church, all these things flow from the communal life of the church. Central to the missionary existence of the church is the embodiment of the all-embracing salvation of God's kingdom revealed and ushered

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<sup>104</sup> Marshall, *Luke*, 159-161. Cf. Powell, *What Are They Saying*, 118-119.

<sup>105</sup> Bosch does not use the language of word, deed, and communal embodiment. Yet this threefold understanding of mission underlies much of what he says. Bosch was a theological broker who attempted to mediate opposing parties (Du Plessis, *For Reasons of the Heart*, 75-76). His stress on community, word, and deed challenged reductionistic views of mission in both the ecumenical and the evangelical traditions.

<sup>106</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 393-400

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Köstenberger, *The Place of Mission*.

<sup>108</sup> Kritzinger, *Mission and Evangelism*, 147-154.

<sup>109</sup> Bosch, *Why and How*, 36. Emphasis his. Cf. *Mission and Evangelism*, 169.

<sup>110</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 40.

<sup>111</sup> Bosch, *Mission and Evangelism*, 173.

in by Jesus Christ. Bosch often pictures the church in terms of an attractive alternative community,<sup>112</sup> which is also revolutionary as it challenges the powers of the culture that oppose God's kingdom.<sup>113</sup>

It is not surprising, then, that when Bosch unfolds Luke's paradigm of mission he is often drawn to New Testament scholars who take a compositional-critical<sup>114</sup> approach to the gospels.<sup>115</sup> These scholars read Luke in terms of ecclesial formation rooted in the historical ministry of Jesus. Bosch likewise reads Luke in these terms. Luke's presupposition is that central to the church's mission to continue what Jesus began is the call to embody his comprehensive salvation in their lives *for the sake of the world*.

Yet the embodiment of salvation means different things for various communities at different times and places. As Bosch puts it: 'Mission means "incarnating the Gospel in time." This means that mission is always contextual. In its mission the Church must always ascertain what the issues of the day are and address those. . . . The concrete expression of mission may therefore vary—and indeed does—from place to place, from situation to situation.'<sup>116</sup> Thus Luke and Matthew, while sharing similar foundational assumptions about mission, shape their gospels to speak to different issues. Luke addresses the questions of identity, stagnation, and hostility. We might summarize Luke's missional message, as Bosch understands it, as follows. Luke challenges the church to whom he writes to be:

- A community where Jesus is present by his Spirit
- A community, that though living in a new situation, continues the mission of Jesus
- A community that embodies, demonstrates and announces a comprehensive salvation
- A community whose identity is defined by a witness to God's kingdom in life, word, and deed
- A community whose faithful witness will bring suffering
- A community with roots in Israel and the Old Testament story with a mission to Jew and Gentile
- A community that practices and proclaims repentance and forgiveness
- A community that practices and proclaims solidarity with marginalized
- A community which practices and proclaims a gospel of peace especially toward their enemies

### *Bosch and a Missional Hermeneutic*

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<sup>112</sup> 'Perhaps it would be correct to say that, in the course of time, the essence of my thinking in this area has crystallised in the concept of the church as the "alternative community" ' (Bosch, *How My Mind Has Changed*, 8).

<sup>113</sup> Bosch, *Church as Alternative Community; How My Mind Has Changed; Transforming Mission*, 47-49. Livingston, *David Bosch*, 11-16.

<sup>114</sup> Holladay, *Contemporary Methods of Reading the Bible*, 134.

<sup>115</sup> E.g. LaVerdierre and Thompson, *Communities in Transition*, 570; Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Biblical Foundations*, 211-212; Schottroff and Stegemann, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor*, 68.

<sup>116</sup> Bosch, *Mission and Evangelism*, 173.

Bosch has made an important contribution toward a missiological hermeneutic in general and a missional reading of Luke in particular. His reflection generally on hermeneutics, and specifically on Matthew, Luke, and Paul is rich and repays careful study. His contribution is best assessed by placing it in the context of the historical development of a missiological hermeneutic, noting his important place, but noting how the move toward a more consistent missional hermeneutic has continued to progress.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century mission was understood rather narrowly as a geographical movement from a Christian nation to a mission field to win converts and plant churches. Mission advocates focussed on certain texts and detached incidents from Scripture that authenticated this view of mission. Toward the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a broadening understanding of mission caused mission scholars to return to the Bible afresh. The division of the world into the Christian West and the pagan non-West, and the separation of mission and church as two different enterprises began to break down. The International Missionary Council held in Willingen, German (1952) offered a new theological paradigm for mission—the *missio Dei*. The concept of the *missio Dei* emerged as an organizing structure that allowed numerous insights from the past twenty-five years to be co-ordinated. This coincided with the biblical theology movement, which had shaped the ecumenical movement during the decades of the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>117</sup> Johannes Blauw was commissioned by the World Council of Churches to survey and appraise the work of biblical scholarship, and to bring those insights to bear on the mission of the church in light of this new understanding of mission. Blauw expressed a general consensus about the biblical foundation of mission.<sup>118</sup> Blauw's work served as the major work for Bible and mission until the mid 1970s. New developments in biblical studies and significant changes in the world church rendered Blauw's work inadequate. During the 1970s and 1980s mission scholars returned to the issue of the Bible and mission producing a number of studies. Perhaps the book by Senior and Stuhlmüller is most noteworthy work to be produced during this period.

Bosch entered the conversation at this time. He produced a number of works in this area, but the arrival of *Transforming Mission* was a watershed. It gathered up the insights and steps taken toward a missional hermeneutic, and gave sophisticated expression to a missional reading of Matthew, Luke, and Paul.<sup>119</sup> A number of significant themes that advance a more consistent missional hermeneutic can be found in the corpus of Bosch's work: mission as a central thrust of Scripture's message, the centrality of the *missio Dei*, various mission theologies rooted in the mission of Jesus, the missionary identity of the church, the broad scope of mission centred in the comprehensive salvation of the kingdom of God, the communal dimension of mission, a hermeneutic of 'consonance' or historical logic<sup>120</sup> that enables the ancient missionary paradigms to speak authentically to the present. All of these themes have contributed toward a missional reading of Luke as the preceding analysis shows.

The development toward a missional hermeneutic has appropriated the insights of Bosch and has continued to move forward toward a more consistent expression of the centrality of mission in Scripture. Perhaps the most helpful articulation of a missional hermeneutic to date is

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<sup>117</sup> Cartwright, *Hermeneutics*, 454.

<sup>118</sup> Blauw, *The Missionary Nature of the Church*.

<sup>119</sup> A book that follows in the tradition of Bosch but moves beyond Matthew, Luke and Paul to most of the other books of the New Testament is Nissen's *New Testament and Mission*.

<sup>120</sup> Bosch's appropriation of Echeagaray is especially helpful in this regard.

Chris Wright's article soon to appear in book form.<sup>121</sup> Wright wants to move beyond a 'biblical foundations for mission' (the term used most often by Bosch), beyond multicultural hermeneutics, beyond use of the Bible to support the world mission of the church, beyond important themes in Scripture for mission, to a missional hermeneutic. For Wright mission is what the biblical story is all about: God's mission, Israel's mission, Jesus' mission, and the church's mission. When we view Bosch through this lens two things become clear: 1) Bosch has taken us a long way along the road toward a missional hermeneutic with his work; and 2) others have continued to travel along that road developing his insights toward a more consistent missional hermeneutic.

The following makes this clear: Bosch rightly critiques a 'foundations of mission' approach that isolates texts important for mission, an enterprise that is already understood ahead of time. Rather Bosch wants to attend to the missionary thrust of Scripture as a whole and the missionary thrust of whole literary units. A critical analysis of Bosch's treatment of Luke provides with an opportunity to see how this can be done even more consistently.

### *Luke and God's Mission in the Metanarrative of Scripture*

The first question is: Does Bosch enable us to understand Luke in terms of the missionary thrust of Scripture as a whole? While Bosch employs the mission of God as the underlying structure for understanding Luke, this is seriously weakened by his failure to place Luke in the context of the broader metanarrative of Scripture which narrates the unfolding purpose of God. In *Transforming Mission* Bosch devotes about 184 pages to developing a biblical foundation for mission. Only four pages are devoted to the Old Testament, and his approach is to elaborate themes important for mission to the nations. Bosch quotes Rzepkowski approvingly when he says: 'The decisive difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is mission. The New Testament is essentially a book about mission.'<sup>122</sup> This is because there is 'in the Old Testament, no indication of the believers of the old covenant being sent by God to cross geographical, religious, and social frontiers in order to win others to faith in Yahweh.'<sup>123</sup>

Köstenberger has called attention to this weakness in Bosch.<sup>124</sup> He rightly notes that 'a salvation-historical approach to Scripture is imperative for an accurate understanding of the

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<sup>121</sup> Wright, *Mission as Matrix*.

<sup>122</sup> Rzepkowski, *Theology of Mission*, 80. Quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 17.

<sup>123</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 17. This raises another issue that I will not address: the consistency of Bosch's definitions of mission. Throughout his copious writings one can find numerous 'mission is . . .' statements. He is not always consistent in defining mission as broadly as we indicated earlier. Mission as crossing boundaries to do certain things lingers. His fear is that he may fall into the error termed 'panmissionism' by Freytag (*Reden und Aufsätze*, 94), and articulated by Stephen Neill (*Creative Tension*, 81): 'If everything is mission, nothing is mission' (Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 511). In analysing Bosch's broad view of mission Kritzingler raises similar questions about the boundary of mission (*Mission and Evangelism*, 153-154). He fears even Bosch's view is too comprehensive. Kritzingler already hints at the direction I would want to move to critique both Kritzingler and Bosch. One may distinguish between missionary dimension and missionary intention. If mission is seen as a dimension of all of life Neill's criticism loses its force. Further mission is not about something we do but about our committed participation in purposes of God for the redemption of the whole creation (Wright, *Mission as Matrix*, 137). Looked at in this way mission is as broad as life.

This will be treated below.

<sup>124</sup> Köstenberger, *The Place of Mission*, 356-357.

Bible's own teaching on mission.<sup>125</sup> LeGrand argues that to understand mission in the New Testament one must attend to the 'eschatological, centripetal universalism' in the Old Testament that is 'brought to complete expression in the New Testament.'<sup>126</sup> Put another way Luke is part of a much bigger story that involves the mission of God and the mission of Israel. The mission of Jesus and the mission of the church cannot be understood apart of the Old Testament story of the mission of God and the mission of Israel.<sup>127</sup>

Precisely the gospel of Luke makes this connection between Israel's mission, Jesus' mission, and the church's mission as part of one story of God's mission. Joel Green helps us see this when he highlights the important theme of the purpose of God in Luke's gospel.<sup>128</sup> According to Green Luke uses a whole host of expressive terms to indicate that the story of Jesus must be read in the light of the overarching purpose of God as it has been narrated in the Old Testament, terms such as *boule* (purpose), *boulomai* (to want), *dei* (it is necessary), *thelema* (will), *thelo* (to will), *horizo* (to determine), *pleroo* (to fulfill), *prophetes* (prophet). Jesus' mission must be seen in the context of the whole biblical story as he serves the missional purpose of God. Speaking of both Jesus and John, Green says, 'The Scriptures supply the salvation-historical framework for understanding their respective missions and so root their activity in the ongoing story of God's redemptive work.'<sup>129</sup> The salvation-framework or missional purpose of God includes the mission of Israel, the mission of Jesus, and the mission of the church as part of one story. Jesus' story is the 'next step' in the God-Israel relationship. There is a 'oneness of God's aim' wherein God's purpose is served first by Israel, then by Jesus, and finally by those who follow Jesus.<sup>130</sup> He says,

The struggle to achieve the divine aim Luke recounts did not reach its resolution in the Third Gospel, but spilled over into the activity of the Jesus-movement in Acts. In an important sense, then, Acts is grounded in God's purpose as related in the Gospel of Luke, just as the Gospel is grounded in God's purpose as related in Israel's Scriptures.<sup>131</sup>

An example of this is the use that Luke makes of the servant songs of Isaiah. T. S. Moore argues that Luke depicts Jesus as the one who comes to fulfill the calling of the servant in Isaiah.<sup>132</sup> He argues further that Luke also formulates his version of the concluding commission with the servant of Isaiah in mind.<sup>133</sup> In this way the mission of Jesus is connected to the mission of the church: both discharge the ministry of the Isaianic servant. Thus Luke 'used the Servant concept not only for his Christology, but also for his missiology.' Consequently as 'followers of

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<sup>125</sup> Köstenberger, *The Place of Mission*, 359.

<sup>126</sup> LeGrand, *Unity and Plurality*, 3. See also the importance of the Old Testament for mission in Richard Bauckham's insightful book *The Bible and Mission*.

<sup>127</sup> For the importance of making the connection between the Biblical narrative, God's mission, Israel's mission, Jesus' mission, and the Church's mission for a missional hermeneutic see Wright, *Mission as Matrix*.

<sup>128</sup> Green, *The Theology of Luke*, 22-49.

<sup>129</sup> Green, *The Theology of Luke*, 25.

<sup>130</sup> Green, *The Theology of Luke*, 26.

<sup>131</sup> Green, *The Theology of Luke*, 22.

<sup>132</sup> Moore, *The Lucan Great Commission*, 47-51.

<sup>133</sup> Moore, *The Lucan Great Commission*, 51-58.

Christ, believers today are privileged to be commissioned by Him to take up the mission of the Servant.<sup>134</sup>

But the connection can be made not only forward from Jesus' mission to the church's mission, but also back from Jesus' mission to Israel's mission. Not only does the church continue Jesus' mission, Jesus fulfills Israel's mission. The servant songs of Isaiah must be put in the broader Old Testament story of a people called to incarnate as a community the redemptive purposes of God in the midst of the world for the sake of the nations.<sup>135</sup> Isaiah's promise comes in the midst of Israel's failure to be the faithful servant and looks forward to one who will arise out of Israel to fulfill her mission to be a light to the nations. Jesus comes as 'one who fulfills Israel's destiny.' When 'Israel's role of world mission . . . was forfeited through disobedience' that role pictured in the servant is 'transferred in the Gospels to Jesus.'<sup>136</sup> The Servant will also gather a renewed Israel who will continue the Servant's mission. Thus we see a missional connection between the roles of Israel, Jesus, and the church as each participates in the missional purpose of God.<sup>137</sup>

It is this overarching missional purpose of God that must be grasped for a consistent missional hermeneutic. Wright puts it strongly,

To read the whole Bible in the light of this overarching perspective of the mission of God, then, is to read 'with the grain' of this whole collection of texts that constitute our canon of Scripture. In my view this is the key assumption of a missional hermeneutic of the Bible. It is nothing more than to accept that the biblical worldview locates us in the midst of a narrative of the universe behind which stands the mission of the living God.<sup>138</sup>

Bosch believes that a biblical foundations of mission needs to take seriously the missional thrust of the biblical story as a whole. Our missional reading of Luke needs to be pushed in this direction in a more consistent way than that which Bosch provides.

### *A Narrative Missional Reading of Luke*

The second question is: Does Bosch enable us to understand the missionary thrust of Luke as a whole? If Luke narrates the story of Jesus who serves the missional purposes of God, then the *whole* of Luke is written to form a missional community. There are not just some important texts and themes in Luke that can give direction to the Christian mission; rather the whole of Luke narrates the mission of Jesus, which becomes the basis for the mission of those who follow him. A missional hermeneutic will ask what is Luke's view on mission when Luke is read as a narrative whole. In other words, a missional hermeneutic is not only interested in the *whole* Scriptural story, it is also interested in the *whole* of the author's work, which in this case

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<sup>134</sup> Moore, *The Lucan Great Commission*, 60.

<sup>135</sup> Genesis 12:1-3, Exodus 19:3-6. Cf. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 66, 80, 90.

<sup>136</sup> Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 49-50. The role is not only transferred in the gospels but already in Isaiah. Commenting on Isaiah 49:1-6 Brevard Childs speaks of a servant that arises within Israel 'as a faithful embodiment of the nation Israel who has not performed its chosen role (48:1-2)' (*Isaiah*, 385).

<sup>137</sup> Links between the Israel's, Jesus', and the church's missional calling would greatly strengthen Bosch's concern for the communal dimension of mission.

<sup>138</sup> Wright, *Mission as Matrix*, 134-135.

includes Acts. It is questionable whether this comes through in Bosch; one could read Bosch—even contrary to what Bosch himself says—as providing a selection of important themes from Luke for mission.

A number of observations alert us to the problem. In the first place, important Lukan themes that need to be seen in their relation to mission are either absent or treated inadequately. For example, Bosch mentions prayer as a list of themes to which Luke returns again and again.<sup>139</sup> Surprisingly Bosch does not return to treat the importance of prayer for Luke. Clearly prayer is a significant topic in Luke's gospel<sup>140</sup> and central for the missional life of the church. Similarly the important themes of witness, suffering,<sup>141</sup> table fellowship,<sup>142</sup> and the Spirit find no or meagre treatment!<sup>143</sup>

Closely related, in the second place, is the fact that important sections of Luke are either absent or treated inadequately. The large travel section in Luke and the important section dealing with the controversy between Jesus and the Jewish leaders are both loaded with missional significance yet this is not mentioned.<sup>144</sup> Perhaps more importantly is the scant treatment of Luke 24:46-49. Bosch himself says of this text that 'Luke's entire understanding of the Christian mission' can be found here in a nutshell. The various elements found in this text constitute the 'fibers of Luke's mission theology running through both the gospel and Acts, binding this two-volume work together.'<sup>145</sup> Yet this is treated in a short section under the broader issue of Jew, Samaritan, and Gentile.<sup>146</sup>

Third, there are Lukan themes that are treated well in a preliminary way when Bosch discusses the one paradigm of the early church. But when Bosch deals with Luke these themes are not integrated to the discussion on the Lukan sub-paradigm of mission. We do not see Luke's unique approach to these subject nor their relationship to other of Luke's themes. Examples are the kingdom of God, the significance of the already-not yet period of redemptive history, and the gathering of disciples to participate in Jesus' mission.

Finally, there is the problematic structure of Bosch's chapter. The chapter is divided into two primary sections. After general comments about the significance of Luke for mission, the first section treats four missionary motifs—Gentile mission, gospel for poor and rich, salvation, and peacemaking. In Bosch's analysis, all these motifs except for salvation explicitly arise out of Luke 4. In a much shorter second section entitled 'The Lukan Missionary Paradigm', he gathers in summary form eight major ingredients of Luke's paradigm—Spirit, correlation of Jewish and Gentile mission, witness, 'repentance, forgiveness and salvation', rich and poor, peace-making, ecclesiology, and suffering—some of which do not arise out of Luke 4 or the earlier discussion.

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<sup>139</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 86.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Harris, *Prayer in Luke-Acts*; Smalley, *Spirit, Kingdom, and Prayer*; Cf. the chapter in this volume by Bartholomew and Holt.

<sup>141</sup> 'The closeness of our missionary thinking to the New Testament may perhaps be in part judged by the place which we accord to suffering in our understanding of the calling of the Church' (Newbigin, *Trinitarian Faith*, 42)

<sup>142</sup> Luke mentions nineteen meals and thirteen references are unique to Luke. In Luke Jesus' life seems to revolve around meals (Karris, *Luke*, 47-48).

<sup>143</sup> Bosch includes brief summaries of Luke's pneumatology (*Transforming Mission*, 113-115), witness (116), and suffering (121-122) in a section he calls 'major ingredients of the Lukan paradigm' (113). Yet they are treated very briefly.

<sup>144</sup> On the importance of the travel section see Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 396-398.

<sup>145</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 91.

<sup>146</sup> By comparison see the rich chapter by Senior and Stuhlmüller who examine the missional message of Luke from the standpoint of Luke 24:46-49.

Questions arise: How do these two major sections fit together? Why does he choose and highlight the themes he does?<sup>147</sup> Why do some themes arise in the second section and not the first? Are the various motifs of Luke's understanding of mission sufficiently integrated and related to each other with this structure?

These four things highlight problems with the compositional critical approach Bosch has adopted. Luke gives us an interpretation of Jesus' mission that is foundational for the church's mission in the form of a narrative. Recent Lukan studies have turned to a more narrative approach in studying the gospels since it takes seriously the form in which the gospel has come to us. A more narrative approach to Luke that starts with the fundamental insight that Luke is seeking to form the community to which he writes in a missional way would avoid many of the problems we have articulated with Bosch's approach. Put another way, a more narrative approach would accomplish even more fully what Bosch wants to do—take seriously the missional thrust of Luke as a literary whole, a missional thrust which is concerned to form his intended audience in a more faithful missionary community.

### *Final Questions*

Joel Green asks: 'What would happen if biblical studies took the Christian mission seriously?' and 'What would happen if the Christian mission took the (full) biblical witness seriously?'<sup>148</sup> The contention of this paper is that the answer to the first question is we would be able to hear more faithfully what God is saying in Luke. The answer to the second is that our mission would be much more faithful to what God intends for his people. It is this concern that lead the Scripture and Hermeneutics Project to include a paper on missional hermeneutics when it kicked off with the theme 'renewing biblical interpretation.' Dan Beeby made a plea to consider a missional hermeneutic as one way toward that renewal.<sup>149</sup> This paper has presented a missional reading of Luke by one of the leading missiologists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as an illustration of that approach. Hopefully a missional hermeneutic will become increasingly common, and committed participation in the missional purposes of God will grow.

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<sup>147</sup> Du Plessis speaks of Bosch's exposition as 'burning with reasons of the heart', which are 'the hopes and fears of the poor, the lost and the powerless' (Du Plessis, *For Reasons of the Heart*, 83). Does this help us to see why he chooses themes of peace-making, and the poor and marginalized, for example, over prayer?

<sup>148</sup> Green, *Proclaiming Repentance*, 14.

<sup>149</sup> Beeby, *A Missional Approach to Renewed Interpretation*.

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