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“Missional leadership –entering the trialogue”

“Missionale leierskap –in trialoog”

SUMMARY: Studies in missional ecclesiology emerged as one of the significant trends in mission studies in recent years. The role of leadership in missional ecclesiology is investigated from the perspective of an organic leadership paradigm (Avery). A novel understanding of leadership as *the Spirit-led transformation of people and institutions by means of meaningful relations to participate in God's mission* is seen as best suited to the adaptive leadership challenges that face the missional church, and it allows the church to stop fretting over the church by entering into the trialogue. The trialogue is the discerning interaction between church, culture and biblical narrative – to seek, discover, understand and share in what the Holy Spirit is up to in the close-to-the-ground particulars of the church's engagement in, with, against and for the world. The trialogue, shaped by a hermeneutic of love, can be informed by the twin movements of dwelling in the Word and

dwelling in the world. It is a kind of orthoparadoxy – the dialectic between theory and praxis, text and context, dwelling in the Word and dwelling in the world. Entering the triologue raises the leadership challenge of creating new social imaginaries (Taylor) through biblical imagination and storytelling, simultaneously cultivating a culture of transformation.

OPSOMMING: Daar is 'n ontploffing in navorsing oor missionale ekklesiologie. Die plek van missionale leierskap word vanuit 'n organiese leierskapsparadigma (Avery) ondersoek. Dit lei tot 'n innoverende omskrywing van missionale leierskap as die Geesgedrewe veranderings van mense en instellings deur betekenisvolle verhoudings sodat hulle deel kan word van God se sending in die wêreld. Hierdie benadering word voorgestel as die mees gepaste reaksie op die aanpasbare uitdagings wat missionale kerke moet hanteer, veral omdat dit missionale kerke in staat stel om weg te beweeg van 'n eensydige fokus op die kerk alleen deur 'n trioloog te voer. 'n Trioloog is 'n onderskeidende gesprek tussen die kerk, kultuur en die Bybelse narratiewe wat soek na en probeer onderskei wat die Heilige Gees aan die doen is in, saam met en ook teenoor die wêreld. Hierdie trioloog word gedra deur 'n hermeneutiek van liefde. Die aard daarvan kry inhoud in die tweeledige proses van wandel in die Woord en wandel in die wêreld. Dit is 'n ortoparadoksie – 'n dialektiek tussen teorie en praktyk, teks en konteks, wandel in die Woord en wêreld. Die trioloog kan help om 'n nuwe sosiale beeld (Taylor) te skep waar Bybelse verbeelding en die oorvertel van stories 'n kultuur van transformasie kweek.

Background: missional ecclesiology as a significant trend in mission studies

Studies in missional ecclesiology has emerged as one of the significant trends in mission studies in recent years. Ecclesiology is a theological discipline that seeks to understand and define the church. It is a study of the doctrine of the church (Kärkkäinen, 2002:loc 31). Missional ecclesiology does this from a missional point of view, where the church is understood as a community of witness, called into being and equipped by God, and sent into the world to testify to and participate in Christ's work. It entails discussion of what the church is called to be and to do — its nature, its purpose, its hopes, its structure and practices.

I argue that this surge in academic research is the result of a number of factors.

(1) Recent developments in the area of missional theology, especially under the influence of the Gospel in our Culture Network (GOCN) and a missional Renaissance (McNeal 2009). The term 'missional church' gained prominence in the work of the GOCN and in books such as *Missional church: A vision for the sending of the church in North America* edited by Guder (1998) and *ChurchNext* by Gibbs (2000). The works of Lesslie Newbigin and the influential *Transforming Mission* by David Bosch (1991) played an important role in laying the groundwork for this new interest in mission.

(2) The burgeoning ecclesiology of the Emerging Church Movement — these churches are a response to changing culture in especially the traditional northern Christian countries and Christians becoming differently religious (Jones 2008:2; 2011:125), as well as the multitude of responses to emerging churches. (See Anderson 2007; Gibbs & Bolger 2005; Jones 2008, 2011; McLaren 2000, 2001.)

(3) Mainline churches in decline are challenged to re-imagine old ecclesiologies (Van Gelder 2007:16).

(4) Add to this the explosion of new churches in the global Christian world. This changing face of Christianity and the fact that Christianity is experiencing a profound shift in its ethnic and linguistic composition (Johnson and Ross 2009:8) raise pertinent issues of ecclesiology.

(5) Major ecumenical events have generated an interest in missional ecclesiology. Kärkkäinen (2002:loc 34) says that the growing ecumenical movement is the main catalyst for the growth of interest in ecclesiology. 2010, especially, was a year of great ecumenical significance. At least three important ecumenical events define 2010, and all paid considerable attention to matters ecclesiological:

- The Centennial World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh celebrating Edinburgh 1910, from 2-6 June 2010;
- The Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) in Grand Rapids, from 18-26 June 2010;
- The Third Lausanne Congress (Lausanne III) on World Evangelization in Cape Town, from 16-25 October 2010.

Ecclesiology, mission and leadership

My interest in *missional leadership* flows from an approach that recognises the important influence of ecclesiology on the missional praxis and organisation of the church. The *church does what it is and then organises what it does* (Van Gelder 2007:18). In organising what it *does*, leadership plays an important, if not the most important, role. Or, to put it differently – we should ask what ecclesiology lies behind many of the current impasses in the church. What kind of ecclesiology (what the church is) might assist the church in these times of intense changing of contexts and of liminality, so that what the church does (and how leadership functions) looks different?

If the church does what it is and then organises what it does, this is clearly a challenge of design. This address will investigate emerging contours (or design) of missional leadership appropriate for a missional church in changing contexts.

Googlechurch

Perhaps the much needed new design for the church can be described using yet another metaphor from our connected, digitalised world – this is an appeal for a Googlechurch. Leonard Sweet (2011) used this idea of church as a Googlechurch in his book, *Real church in a social-network world*, making a case for a church that functions more like Google than Gutenberg. Google is one of the world's most successful internet companies. The Google website works on the principle that it sends visitors away from its search page! You start with the Google search page, but end up elsewhere in the digital world. That is only possible if you share Google's deep-seated values of empowering people and allowing them to create their own experiences. By relinquishing control and empowering others, by letting go and letting users control their own experiences, Google has become one of the greatest success stories in the history of business (Sweet 2011:loc.663-665).

A Googlechurch sends its people into the world. It exists for the sake of God's movement to the world. Perhaps this description of the church reminds us of the original design of the church – to exist for the sake of the world and to participate in God's mission in this world. The church is focused on the world and on a mission in this world. No church without mission, no mission without the church, as Kärkkäinen (2002:loc 1786) aptly summarises the ecclesiology of the influential theologian Lesslie Newbigin. That is why the Google-metaphor is so appropriate in changing contexts – a missional church is a church sent to bring the Gospel everywhere and in everyday life. A missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God's mission, which is to set things right in a broken,

sinful world, to redeem it, restore it to what God has always intended for the world. Missional churches see themselves not so much as sending churches, as being sent (Barrett, 2004:x).

A missional church is the opposite of the kind of musical chairs played in so many places in the Western church. In the game of musical chairs children sit in a circle – all except one of them on a chair. As soon as the music starts playing, the children dance around the chairs. When the music stops, each player must find a chair and the loser left standing falls out of the game. Another chair is removed, and the game starts all over again and is played until only one player is left. The problem with musical chairs is that nearly everybody loses, and it does not even seem to be such a great idea to end up alone in the middle of the circle. A consumer culture (and many other factors) have created a game of musical chairs, where churches dispense religious goods and people dance and hop from church to church. Meanwhile, everyone is losing out on something much more significant. A missional church participates in a different kind of dance – not musical chairs, but the dance of the Trinity, described by the Eastern church fathers as the *perichoresis*, the dance of the Triune God that invites the whole of creation to join in with the Spirit. The church is seen as the image of the Trinity (Kärkkäinen, 2002:loc 175) and finds the essence of its identity and agency in the Trinity (Branson, 2007:125). In the words of Jürgen Moltmann (2010:26), the community of the church is, like the Christian faith itself, a Trinitarian experience of God. The reciprocal interpenetration of the ways of activity and the living spaces of the three divine persons constitutes the church's unity in its fullness.

Missionale kerk is 'n paradigmaskuif

Hierdie verstaan en beskrywing van die kerk as 'n missionale kerk verteenwoordig 'n paradigmaskuif. Thomas Kuhn het die gedagte aan 'n paradigmaskuif bekend gestel in sy nadenke oor hoe groot veranderinge in die wetenskap en wêreld werk. David Bosch (1991:181-182) het dit op 'n treffende wyse toegepas op die kerk en in sy belangrike boek, *Transforming Mission*, aangedui dat die kerk in die geskiedenis ook paradigmaskuif beleef het. Bosch het tevens 'n geweldige belangrike rol gespeel in die nuwe waardering vir missionale kerk en beskryf dan ook die elemente van 'n ontluikende missionale paradigma. 'n Paradigmaskuif is wanneer 'n nuwe storie so inslag vind dat dit die identiteit, etos en praktyke van 'n kerk verander. Dit is die storie oor hoe die sisteem werk,

of kan ook beskryf word as die DNA van die organisasie. Wanneer daar 'n paradigmaskuif kom, verander die onderliggende 'manier van verstaan' en onuitgesproke aannames, die insig in en oor die kerk (Hirsch & Ferguson, 2011:loc.781). Dit is 'n nuwe spel met nuwe spelreëls. Die 6 groot fases van die Christelike kerk word deur Bosch (1991:181-182) beskryf as: Die apokaliptiese paradigma van die vroeë Christelike kerk, die Hellenistiese paradigma van die vroeë kerkvaders, die middeleeuse Rooms-Katolieke paradigma, die protestantse (gereformeerde) paradigma, die moderne verligtingsparadigma en die ontluikende ekumeniese paradigma. Die nadenke oor missionale ekklesiologie vind plaas binne laasgenoemde ontluikende ekumeniese paradigma.

Paradigm shifts in leadership

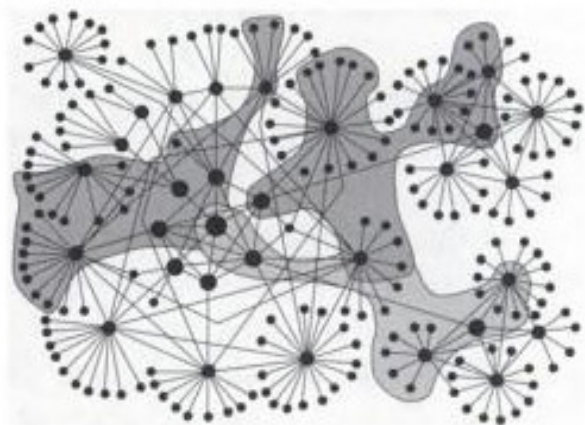
Before we can draw the contours of an appropriate leadership for a missional church, the discussion on leadership must also be placed within the changing context of paradigm shifts, not only an emerging missionary paradigm (Bosch 1991:368), but also in the paradigms used in describing leadership. I propose Gayle Avery's (2004:18) four paradigms of leadership as being useful for this purpose. He describes the four paradigms as: Classical, Transactional, Visionary and Organic.

The *classical* approach dominated from antiquity up until late in the 20th century. It centred on a hierarchical execution of power, where the leader dominated through respect for the leader's power to command and control. The source of follower commitment is fear or respect for the leader, who can reward or punish. This paradigm functions effectively in stable societies, where command and control are easily accepted. The problem is that the followers are by and large passive and leave all responsibility to the leader responsibility to the leader. This model does not operate effectively in times of complex transformation.

In *transactional* leadership the basis of leadership is interpersonal influence over and consideration of followers. Rewards are negotiated and the leader must create appropriate management environments. Negotiation, consensus and consultation are among the skills needed. This kind of leadership focuses on short-term success and is more successful in situations that require technical rather than adaptive change.

Visionary leadership exploded in the 1980s. It played and is still playing an important role in many churches, and vision statements can be seen in the leadership declarations of many, many churches. Emotional expressiveness and the ability to inspire followers are central in the leader's repertoire and the source of follower commitment is 'sharing the

vision'. Church leaders such as Bill Hybels and Rick Warren made the point that vision is central. Followers may contribute to a leader's vision. This paradigm functions well in a changing environment and in times of turmoil. There is more emphasis on the followers and the emotional commitment of followers. Those who do not share the vision are mostly marginalised. Visionary leadership does have its limitations: the unrealistic expectations of leaders, followers becoming dependent on the leader, and there is inhibition of innovation. *Organic* leadership does not revolve around a single leader. The basis of leadership is mutual sense-making within the group, where leaders emerge rather than being appointed. Followers buy into the group's shared values and processes. The paradigm recognises that multiple perspectives and talents are needed to solve the challenges the organisation faces.



The networks in organic leadership bypass the central management and can be described as a series of dynamic hubs and nodes rather than static boxes. No single person is likely to dominate, influence or even unite networked organisational members. Communication is extremely important in this paradigm.

Avery's paradigms are helpful to plot developments in church leadership and to establish a background for the discussion on missional leadership. It is also appropriate to introduce Otto Scharmer's (2009:loc.356) definition of leadership at this point – he describes leaders as 'all people who engage in creating change or shaping their future, regardless of their formal positions in institutional structures'.

Missionale leierskap

In die wydste sin kan leierskap beskryf word as 'n verhouding waardeur 'n persoon die gedagtes, houdings, oortuigings en waardes van ander mense beïnvloed (Gibbs, 2005:27). Leierskap gaan oor prosesse en invloed. Leierskap gee rigting en samehang aan 'n groep of organisasie (Noort e.a. 2008:285). Missionale leierskap isom mense in te nooi om aan te sluit by God se sending en deel te word van God se beweging. Beweging beteken ook dat mense beweeg van 'n bestaande plek na 'n nuwe plek. Leierskap is om mense tot beweging te bring om op 'n ander plek uit te kom – die plek waar God alreeds aan die werk is. Gibbs (2005:69) sê kort en kragtig: missionale leiers is leiers wat 'n passie het vir die Groot Opdrag van Jesus Christus. Missionale leierskap is om die hele geloofsgemeenskap toe te rus om in alle fasette van die lewe met die evangelie van Jesus Christus uit te reik na mekaar en na die hele wêreld. Dit is 'n deelnemende soort leierskap wat wegbeweeg van beheer na kreatiewe vryheid en inklusiewe konsensus. Leierskap, met die inherente klem op vertrouwe en liefde, is eintlik gefokus op twee kernbegrippe, naamlik *verhoudings* en *transformasie*. Missionale leierskap is veral gerig op verhoudings en transformasie – die verandering van mense en instellings deur betekenisvolle verhoudings om, onder die leiding van die Heilige Gees, aan te sluit by God se sending in die wêreld. Transformasie beteken doodgewoon dat mense beweeg word om op 'n nuwe plek uit te kom waar God hulle van binne af verander om nuut te lewe en in nuwe verhoudings te leef.

My voorstel is dus om missionale leierskap as volg te omskryf: *Missionale leierskap gaan oor die verandering van mense en instellings, onder die leiding van die Heilige Gees, om deur betekenisvolle verhoudings deel te word van God se sending in die wêreld.*

Leierskap gaan oor VERHOUDING en TRANSFORMASIE deur die HEILIGE GEES

Leierskap gaan oor die VERANDERING (TRANSFORMASIE) van mense en instellings, onder die leiding van die HEILIGE GEES, om deur betekenisvolle VERHOUDINGS deel te word van God se sending in die wêreld.

Missional leadership and discernment

Mission involves joining in with the Spirit or, in the words of Archbishop Rowan Williams, 'finding out where the Holy Spirit is at work and joining in' (Kim 2009:1). Missional ecclesiology builds on the *missio Dei*, the active presence of the Triune God in his creation and the life-changing invitation to participate in this mission of God. A missional church is a community of followers called by the Spirit on a journey of discernment. The church is the pilgrim people of God (Newbigin,1978:1). Missional leadership is a turn towards discernment by God's pilgrim people. As Jurgens Hendriks (2004:30) puts it:'The solution to faith communities' questions about how to participate in God's missional praxis is a critical, constructive dialogue or correlation between their interpretations of the realities of the global and local context and the faith resources at their disposal.' Discernment is the first and most decisive step on this missional journey. It is the most prominent contour of missional leadership and a core practice of Christian leadership. Discernment is the art of reading the times and signs. Our very life depends on reading the signs. Discernment is the biggest single challenge facing spiritual leaders in this world of changing contexts (see also Sweet, 2004:59). The skill of discerning is the door to transformation, to renewal of our personal lives, the beginning of the renewal of faith communities and the world.

The nature of the missional church, the liminality experienced by the church and the adaptive challenge posed by leadership in a chaotic and changing world, all of this and much more challenge the church to stop fretting over the church and to enter into the trialogue. The trialogue is the discerning interaction between church, culture and biblical narrative. The Gospel in our Culture Network (GOCN) developed this concept and stressed the importance of a trialogue between church, culture and the Gospel (Roxburgh 2011:51). Alan Roxburgh proposed the idea of a trialogue as an escape from the exclusive focus on the church of pre- and post-Eurocentric Reformation (Roxburgh 2011:51), because the 'ecclesial element, the conversation about missional *church*, has subsumed the other two with its agenda, so we see gospel and culture through the lens of *church*' (Roxburgh 2011:54). The trialogue is to discern together – to seek, discover, understand and share in what the Holy Spirit is up to in the close-to-the-ground particulars of the church's engagement in, with, against and for the world. Furthermore, this missional turn to discernment will be decidedly ecclesial, churchly, and in this way will not be dominated by the clergy, colonised by individualists or determined by win-or-lose majority votes. To discern what God is up to is to be aware that the Holy Spirit may work in

strange and unexpected places. God's Spirit is at work in actual cultures, organisations and persons.

Alan Roxburgh described the need for such a dialogue with a moving metaphor.

[Retelling of Roxburgh's story.]

Entering into the dialogue is thus a (re)discovery of a missional spirituality, a spirituality of the road (Bosch), where church, culture and biblical narrative constantly interact and the missional church dwells in the Word and in the culture (world). It is a movement in the power of the Spirit, where listening to the biblical narratives leads the listener closer to God and where the deepening relation with the Triune God leads to a deeper involvement with culture. Roxburgh (2011:55) states that this means we have to stop talking about and asking 'church questions' for quite a while: 'Only by doing this, as strange as it sounds, do we have a chance of discovering a church that can engage our time.'

Entering the dialogue means asking two defining questions:

- **What is God up to?** What is the Spirit doing in this world? What is God up to in our neighbourhoods and communities?
- **What does God want to do?** What is God's dream? How does it look when things are set right in a broken, sinful world, when it is redeemed and restored to what God has always intended for the world? One is reminded of Newbigin's (1978:64) focus on the eschatological nature of the church – the hope that God's preferred future invites all creation to participate in God's new creation.

When we have entered into the dialogue, truly seeking to know what it means to be God's people in this time and place, we will want to know what God is up to in our world and communities, and what it means for the gospel to be lived out and proclaimed in this context.

Onderskeiding is diep ingebed in die *missio Dei* en die oortuiging dat God se kerk aansluit by God se sending in die wêreld. Die wese en identiteit van die kerk is dat dit die gemeenskap van volgelinge is wat deur die Gees geroep is op 'n reis van geloofsonderskeiding. Die bekende teoloog, Lesslie Newbigin, het die kerk beskryf as God se kinders wat op 'n pelgrimstog is. Die kerk is altyd aan die beweeg (Sien Kärkkäinen, 2002:152). Dit is slegs deur geloofsonderskeiding dat ons ons plek – as gelowige volgelinge en as gemeentes – op hierdie reis saam met die lewende, Drie-enige

God kan verstaan. Daarom word die geestelike ingesteldheid van missionale gemeentes beskryf as die spiritualiteit van pelgrims op reis (Van Wyk, 2007:12). Dit is opvallend hoe belangrik die tema van mense op reis in die Nuwe Testament is. Die skrywer van Lukas en Handeling beskryf Jesus se geskiedenis in die vorm van 'n reis na Jerusalem, en die geskiedenis van die eerste kerk in die vorm van 'n reis na die uithoeke van die wêreld. Die vroeë Christene is tereg mense van 'Die Weg' genoem. Jesus beskryf Homself as die weg, die waarheid en die lewe. Dink ook aan al Paulus se reise. Die koninkryk van God gebeur op weg. Stephan Joubert (2012) stel dit duidelike – indien ons missionaliteit nie 'n missionaliteit van mense 'op weg' is nie, is dit nie 'n Bybelse missionaliteit nie.

Dit is juis die nuwe verstaan van die kerk as deelnemers aan God se sending wat ons kerkbegrip wegstuur van die fokus op die gebou as die plek waar kerk gebeur na die bewussyn van 'n God wat grense na die wêreld en sy mense toe oorsteek en hulle – soos pelgrims – uitnooi om saam te reis. Die kerk is pelgrims op reis (Newbigin, 1978:1; Nazir Ali, 2001:94-95). Hedendaagse mense het nogal goeie begrip vir die gedagte dat die lewe 'n reis is. Daar is oral'n oplewing in mense wat op een of ander soort pelgrimstog gaan. Derduisende mense uit postmoderne Europa stap byvoorbeeld die Camino de Santiago de Compostela, ook bekend as die pelgrimstog van St James. Dit is 'n netwerk van pelgrimsroetes dwarsoor Europa wat almal eindig in die dorpie Santiago de Compostela in die noordweste van Spanje. Dit is al vir meer as 'n 1000 jaar 'n bekende pelgrimsroete!

A hermeneutic of love

Elaine Heath (2008) writes in *The mystic way of Evangelism* that the church will have to learn to look differently at the world. We need to look with a hermeneutic of love. I will describe this as entering into the triologue with a hermeneutic of love. When we dwell in culture and the world as part of the triologue, a hermeneutic of love changes the approach. Heath asks: 'What if we looked at our world... "with pity and not with blame"? What if we heard God's call to evangelize out of love instead of fear, hope instead of judgment? What if we saw sin for the complex mixture it is, grounded in wounds and unmet needs? What if we automatically tried to see the "total fact" of others? In short, what would it mean to read our world with a hermeneutic of love?' (Heath 2008:119). Hendriks (2010) addresses the very same issue – albeit from a different point of view: 'What I am saying is that if we study missional congregations and our attitude is one of humility and an openness to listen to

countless Marys, Elizabeths and Zecharais in Africa, we might be taken on a journey where we can learn something about responsive training, about how seminaries (if we chose to continue to use the word) can train leaders that will be able to upload and form social movements called congregations where project identity formation envisaging the Kingdom takes place. We have a new world, we need a new church.'

Dwelling in the Word and the world

The triologue, informed by a hermeneutic of love, can be entered by utilising the twin movements of dwelling in the Word and dwelling in the world. It is a kind of orthoparadoxy – the dialectic between theory and praxis, text and context, dwelling in the Word and dwelling in the world. It is a creative integration where the church discerns together and where dwelling in the Word and world becomes a dance on this lifelong journey, constantly asking '*Lord, whereto are you inviting me now?*'

Dwelling in the Word is a kind of communal dwelling in the biblical narrative, focused on formation rather than information and done in such a way that the participants are invited to come into the text and to be read by the text. It is listening to the Bible and trying to hear what it is saying to those with whom the readers have been interacting, but not in the intellectual and exegetical way of the experts, trying to analyse the word. As Kangas (2007) says, orthoparadoxy is more about a synthesis of theory and praxis rather than a real third idea. 'Holding them both together in tension letting them dance around somehow in your life being both a contrasting in definition, and natural outgrowth of one another'. Keifert (2006:69) called it the most significant innovation for building the missional capacities of a local church. Dwelling in the Word stimulates the ability of congregants to imagine their everyday lives within the narrative of Scripture. If groups start doing this together, it shapes a communal capacity for spiritual discernment.

Die tweede belangrike deel van die reis van geloofsonderskeiding (en daarom die Afrikaanse woord 'om te wandel'), is om in die wêreld te wandel. Daar is al verwys na die belangrike insigte van teoloë soos Lesslie Newbigin en David Bosch. Voeg daarby Jürgen Moltmann, wat vanuit sy verstaan van die werk van die Heilige Gees, die lewenservaring van mense baie ernstig opneem. Hulle het ons help verstaan dat God besig is met sy wêreld. Die kerk is sensitief vir die wêreld, want God het sigself oopgemaak vir die wêreld (Noort e.a., 2008:317). Wandel in die wêreld verreken die inkarnasie. Dit is 'n reis waar

die koninkryk 'op pad' gebeur, in die alledaagse van gesprekke en maaltye wat gedeel word, in die doodgewone dinge wat so deel van ons lewensreis is. Vanuit hierdie verstaan word missionale leiers beskryf as eksegete van die alledaagse kultuur. Dit is leiers wat die fyn kuns verstaan om die tye reg te lees. Hulle lewe en geloofsonderskeiding word gevorm deur 'n diep begrip van die konteks waarbinne hulle hulself bevind. Indien die onderliggende teologie van die *missio Dei* ernstig opgeneem word en die kerk verstaan word as God se mense wat aan God se sending deelneem, is die belang van kulturele en kontekstuele eksegete eintlik maklik om in te sien. Dan word teologie die oefening om God se aktiwiteite in hierdie wêreld te vertaal.

Wat nodig is, is leiers wat die kerk kan help om haar weg terug na die wêreld te vind met die Woord as kompas. Ek hou baie van die Hollandse teoloog, Dingemans (2005:241), se verduideliking. Hy sê dat mens moet dink aan 'n rivier met twee walle. Aan die een kant (wal) is daar die Bybel en al die tradisies wat die Bybel deur die eeue geïnterpreteer het. Dit sluit dinge soos die kerk se belydenisse in. Aan die ander kant, die ander wal, is die wêreld en al die gebeure in die wêreld – wat ook die kultuur van ons dag insluit. Die kerk is soos 'n brug wat die twee wêrelde verbind en mense dan uiteindelik help om te onderskei. Een van die kragtige aspekte van Dingemans se metafoor is die beeld dat 'n brug nuwe wêrelde oopmaak. Missionale leiers is brugbouers wat nuwe wêrelde en nuwe geleenthede vir hulle gemeentes oopmaak. Hulle kry dit reg om gemeentes te help om grense te oorskrei en nader te kom aan die wêreld waarbinne die hele gemeente leef. So help hulle die proses van inkarnasie - hulle maak die evangelie leefbaar in alledaagse terme en taal.

Natuurlik moet mens dadelik erken dat hierdie wandel in die wêreld - hierdie brugbouery - 'n baie komplekse saak is. Die verhouding tussen die Evangelie en die alledaagse kultuur is en bly ingewikkeld. Daar gaan dinge wees wat met oortuiging omhels kan word as uitdrukkings van God se betrokkenheid en genade. Daar is ander aspekte van die kultuur wat eers verander moet word deur die krag van die Evangelie. Daar is natuurlik ook destruktiewe elemente in elke kultuur, en dit moet uitgewys word as presies daardie dinge waarvan ons verlos moet word.

Die proses van wandel in die wêreld is ook dan 'n ontwaking en ontnugtering. Mens word bewus van die aard van verandering wat in die wêreld afspeel, van die seerkry in die wêreld, van die feit dat die wêreld, in Paulus se woorde, ook kreun en steun onder die krisis en pyn wat deel van die alledaagse werklikheid is. Dit is juis hoekom die

hermeneutiek van liefde so belangrik is. Hierdie houding en ingesteldheid van liefde en deernis teenoor die konteks, help juis om die konteks te omhels.

Missional leadership and Biblical imagination

I have stated that missional leadership is all about transformation – the transformation of people and institutions by means of meaningful relations to participate in God’s mission. It is about change, new possibilities and new dreams, and helping people to realise those possibilities and dreams. Leaders stimulate the imagination. Mission demands a transformative spirituality, a pneumatological approach to mission that exceeds and subverts our theological and ecclesiological boundaries and moves us into a new posture and practice of mission (World Council of Churches = WCC: para.11). This is only possible if missional leadership is enriched by a biblical imagination. The discernment associated with the trialogue is an imagination of communion that participates in the movement of the Spirit in the world (Swart 2008:1). The imagination of communion is closely associated with *poiesis* – imaginative creation and beauty (Bosch 1991:431). We must appreciate the role of aesthetics and develop ways of factoring artistic and emotional beauty into the understanding of church. This imagination of communion means to live, understand and describe God’s preferred future. It is the kind of imagination that enables a leader to tell an alternative story about the new possibilities already present where the Spirit is working. The church lives in a dialectical tension – at once remembering the past (crucifixion) and proclaiming the future (resurrection).¹ Just as Jesus Christ embodied this dialectical, eschatological reality, so the church embodies the same reality (Jones 2011:132). Communal discerning generates a new appreciation of the work of the Spirit. It is the Spirit that brings life, creativity and inspirational courage to his people, while at the same time requiring intuition, risk, responsiveness and flexibility from us (Hirsch & Ferguson, 2011:loc.1377-1380). Creative leadership, orientated in terms of God’s future, is an innovative way to participate in God’s continuing creation and recreation, and a profound way to recognise the fact that being human is being *imago Dei* – an imaginative expression of God. Missional imagination understands that the Spirit is already creatively

¹This shows a remarkable correspondence with Scharmer (2009:loc.389-391): “Having spent the last ten years of my professional career in the field of organizational learning, my most important insight has been that there are two different sources of learning: learning from the experiences of the past and learning from the future as it emerges.”

at work and joins in with the Spirit. It is because of this that reframing the central paradigm of church is one of the keys to change and much-needed innovation. This calls for the reactivation of our underutilised imaginations. Imagination enables us to see differently. The imagination enables us to see alternatives and possibilities – a much-needed skill in the the new globalised ‘flat’ world (Friedman, 2006) – a world where a new age of creativity has dawned. The chaos of cultural change is a God-given space for creative innovation, acknowledging that the church is summoned by God to discern a pattern for living the gospel that is appropriate for our creative age. This new age of creativity does not necessarily demand detailed analysis but rather big-picture thinking, systemic approaches, nonlinear dynamics and synthesis. It involves the ability to put together seemingly disparate pieces of information, to see relationships between seemingly unrelated fields, to detect broad patterns rather than producespecific answers, and to invent something new by combining elements no one else has thought to pair (Hirsch & Ferguson, 2011:loc.1349-1353). It is nothing less than a rediscovery of intuition. Imaginative leaders trust their intuition. Hirsch and Ferguson (2011:loc.888) describe intuition as the ability to visualise possibilities, to form images and ideas in the mind (especially of things never seen or never experienced directly), and to resolve problems while being guided largely by the nonlinear logic of intuition and insight. Intuition is both a gift and a skill, improving over time if used and honed. It combines all the senses and different modes of perception in one movement: the rationality of breaking things down and analysing component parts; the imagination of putting the whole back together again; the semiotics of pattern recognition and assumption making; the discernment of the “greater thans” in the sum of the parts of the whole (Sweet 2004:145).

Stories en taalhuise

Die trialoog floreer waar stories ‘n kultuur van transformasie kweek. Missionale luister hoor die groot storie en sien die groot prentjie raak. Missionale leiers is baie fyn ingestel om goed en reg te hoor. En as hulle goed en diep luister, sal hulle storievangers word.

Leiers is storievertellers. Hulle kan ook stories verbind. Stories is geweldig belangrik. Verhale maak die lewe moontlik. Dit vorm en gee inhoud aan die werklikheid. Ons leef elkeen in ‘n besondere storie wat verduidelik hoe die lewe werk en hoe ons dink ons behoort te lewe. Mense is diere wat stories kan vertel! Ons kan nie onself en ons

menslikheid sonder stories verstaan nie. Dit juis ons verhale is wat ons vorm en ons identiteit bepaal. Mense is inherent lief vir stories – om daarna te luister en dit self te vertel.

Die bekende Kanadese filosoof, Charels Taylor, sê dat daar allerhande stories in ons lewe is wat *sosiale verbeelding* ('social imaginary) skep. Hierdie sosiale verbeelding gaan oor hoe mense hulle bestaan saam met ander mense sien. Hoe pas mense bymekaar en hoe word die onderlinge vloei van verhoudings en verwagtings gereël? Wat is die dieperliggende norme wat hierdie verwagtings bepaal? Sosiale verbeelding wys hoe mense sin maak van die lewe. Hierdie sosiale verbeelding word deur taal en veral deur stories oorgedra. Die bekende organisasiekenner, Peter Senge (1994:235,237),praat van denkmodelle – die beelde, veronderstellings en stories wat ons in ons gedagtewêreld het van onself, van ander mense, instellings en elke ander aspek van die werklikheid. Die Ou-Testament teoloog, Walter Brueggemann, verduidelik dat ons taal en stories gebruik om 'huis van taal' te bou. Ons almal leef in hierdie komplekse taalhuise. Dit is deur taal wat die wêreld oopgaan en verstaanbaar word. Dit is deur taal wat ons aan ons werklikheid – ons 'taalhuis' bou (Branson, 2007:95) Die 'taalhuis' bestaan uit 'n groot klomp stories. Van hierdie stories verskil baie, en party veg teen mekaar om die groot storie van ons lewe te word. Hierdie stories gee inhoud aan ons soektog oor wat menswees beteken en om uit te maak wie en wat ons werklik is (Roxburgh 2011:61).

Missionale leiers gee juis leiding deur die denkmodelle waardeur mense sin van die werklikheid maak, of die taalhuise, te help oorbou. Stories maak die lewe self moontlik en speel 'n onontbeerlik rol in die transformasie van mense en instellings (Wheatly, 2005:27-31). Gedagtig aan die omskrywing van missionale leierskap as die veranderings van mense en instellings, onder die leiding van die Heilige Gees, om deur betekenisvolle verhoudings deel te word van God se sending in die wêreld, is dit duidelik byna onmoontlik om te praat oor die 'verandering van mense en instellings' sonder om te praat van die belangrike rol wat verhale in daardie verandering speel. Hirsch en Ferguson (2011:loc.725) is van mening dat die kerk net na 'n nuwe missionale manier van doen gaan groei as 'n nuwe alternatiewe storie oor die moontlikhede van deelname aan God se sending vertel word.Daardie alternatiewe stories word juis in die Bybelse narratiewe gevind.Green en Robinson (2008:109-110) beskryf die Bybel as tekste wat nuwe wêrelde skep en wat 'n magdom nuwe verbeeldingsryke moontlikhede om nuwe taalhuise te bou oopmaak. Hulle stel dit op 'n betekenisvolle wyse as volg; 'We are invited into the story not

because the drama depends on us but because God chose to celebrate the story of his triune life with us and amongst us” (Green & Robinson 2008:111).

Conclusion

I agree with the words of the World Council of Churches Commission on Mission and Evangelism: ‘Mission provokes in us a renewed awareness that the Holy Spirit meets us and challenges us at all levels of life, and brings newness and change to the places and times of our personal and collective journeys’ (WCC, 2012:para 39). It brings newness to our understanding of leadership, and helps us to enter into the dialogue, where the Holy Spirit leads the church into the narratives of God and invites us to participate in the Trinity, understood as *perichoresis*, so that the church can dwell together in a flow of love, mutuality, intimacy and submission to and in the culture.

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