

**PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION:  
A critical historical evaluation of the relationship between ‘older’ and ‘younger’  
churches with special reference to the World Mission Council policy of the Church  
of Scotland**

**by**

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## SUMMARY

The writing of contemporary history has implications regarding objectivity, subjectivity, the idea of progress, ecumenical history and its relationship to world history. Riane Eisler's dominator and partnership models in her cultural transformation theory provide an appropriate hermeneutical basis for a historical consideration of the concept of partnership in mission (PIM) along with traditional biblical concepts which have guided mission theology for centuries.

Partnership in mission is a laudable concept in the furtherance of participation in God's mission. It has a distinguished history despite the difficulties experienced in making it a functioning reality. It has had the potential to enable sending and receiving churches to experience fellowship, humility and dignity in relationships. However, the issue of power in the 'older' sending churches has been an intrusive factor in preventing the theory from becoming a reality. In the case of the Church of Scotland, which stands in the grand ecumenical tradition of the twentieth century, despite great strides being made over the years to develop mutually enriching relations, increasing problems presented the opportunity for partner relationships to become authentically interdependent. Unfortunately, vulnerability on the part of the Church of Scotland World Mission Council has led to a return to a colonial/dominator approach to partnership.

Recent developments in the Church of Scotland indicate that partnership in mission, while still the official model on which mission policy is based, has been challenged in its essence. Attempts to reform the work of the World Mission Council by means of a business consultancy have added no apparent value to the work of the Council or to its worldwide relationships. A lack of flexibility characterises recent developments along with a refusal to examine any other possible models which will enable the maintenance of existing partner church relationships. This has resulted in policy decisions, which affect them deeply, being made without any reference to partner churches. Nor has the Church's constituency in Scotland been adequately consulted. For the first time in recent history policy decisions of WMC have been the cause of much discussion and deep division within the Church of Scotland. Further, they have ruptured valuable long term relationships and have through differential approaches to partners posed a potential threat to relationships between younger churches and possibly to a diminution of the standing of the Church of Scotland in the ecumenical movement.

Opportunities for repentance, self sacrifice and the growth of fellowship in relationships have been spurned to the eventual cost of the Church of Scotland.

Authentic partnership in mission is a distinct possibility through the development of relations based on mutuality, where resources must be subject to the norms of accountability, horizontal relations and management of the gifts of God for the people of God.

**Keywords:** *androcracy* (dominator model), Board of World Mission, Church of Scotland, cultural transformation theory, Eisler, *gylany* (partnership model), *kenosis*, *koinonia*, *metanoia*, mission, partnership in mission, World Mission Council, unity,

## ABBREVIATIONS

AACC	- All Africa Conference of Churches.
AU	- African Union
BWM	- Board of World Mission
BWMU	- Board of World Mission and Unity
CANACOM	- Caribbean and North America Council for Mission
CCPD	- Commission on the churches' Participation in Development
CCT	- Council of Churches in Thailand
CEVAA	- Communauté Evangelique d'Action Apostolique
CoS	- Church of Scotland
CSI	- Church of South India
CSP	- Centrally Supported Partnership
CWM	- Council for World Mission
CWME	- Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
FMC	- Foreign Mission Committee
GA	- General Assembly, Church of Scotland
IMC	- International Missionary Council
IRM	- International Review of Mission
LSP	- Locally Supported Partnership
ME	- Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation
MENA	- Middle East and North Africa Committee
MPSF	- Mission Programme Support Fund
NCCI	- National Council of Churches in India
NEPAD	- New Economic Partnership for African Development
OC	- Overseas Council
PIM	- Partnership in Mission
RPCSA	- Reformed Presbyterian Church in southern Africa
SADC	- Southern African Development Community
UPCSA	- Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
WARC	- World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	- World Council of Churches
WMC	- World Mission Council
UCZ	- United Church of Zambia
URC	- Uniting Reformed Church



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I declare that the thesis, *Partnership in Mission: A critical historical evaluation of the relationship between 'older' and 'younger' churches with special reference to the World Mission Council policy of the Church of Scotland*, which I hereby submit for the degree Philosophiae Doctor at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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April 2007

A HYMN FOR THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

HONG KONG 1987

(Theme: “God’s future today”)

We pause to give thanks  
and focus our thought  
on how far our God  
his people has brought.  
We pause for affirming  
our “yes” to his call, pursuing his future:  
life’s fullness for all.

The future is here  
as Christ sets us free;  
we reach out in hope  
for all that will be.  
We go where he leads us,  
to time’s furthest ends,  
to share in his mission  
as partners and friends.

We rise and we risk  
the course he has set,  
to care for our world,  
a world of “not yet”;  
at one with the Spirit,  
we follow Christ’s way  
and put into practice  
God’s future today.

Creator of worlds,  
our future and source,  
all that we are now,  
or will be, is yours.  
enlarge our devotion,  
as humbly we vow  
to bring your tomorrow  
to bear on our *now*!

FRED KAAN

Dedicated to Jurgen Moltmann

(Suggested tune: “Hanover”)  
(*IRM*, 76 (1987, no.304, October:488))

Dedicated to Prof Willem A Saayman, Emeritus Professor of Missiology,  
University of South Africa,  
scholar, mentor, colleague and friend

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the concept of Partnership in Mission (PIM) from a historical perspective and evaluate its appropriateness as a current model for mission. The study will investigate the origin and definition of the term, the historical development of PIM globally and will focus on the growth and development of PIM in the World Mission Council (WMC) of the Church of Scotland (CoS) and its predecessors. The period under review can be said to begin with the twentieth century missionary movement and the Edinburgh conference, which led to the formation of the International Missionary Council [IMC] (1910), until the present time, although the main focus will be on the period 1997-2006.

The principle of PIM was laudable in its inception yet so difficult to fulfil in a way that enabled younger churches to feel they are indeed partners with anything significant to offer to a partnership relationship. It certainly facilitated the domination of younger churches by older sending churches, through control of much needed personnel and finance, and legitimised this process. Whether this was intended or was just a by-product of two centuries of entrenched colonial mission is a moot point.

Over the years, within all churches and particularly the Church of Scotland, considerable time and energy has been devoted to making PIM work, through regular visits to and from partner churches, a bursar scheme to assist partner churches to develop skills in order to make local appointments and develop a degree of independence, faithshare opportunities and particularly through occasional consultations with partner churches and this led to a deepening of relationships for the main part.

The much debated and ill-fated concept of moratorium during the 1970s will be discussed as one innovative approach to partner church relations.

Alternative models will be considered including the recently adopted approach of the Council for World Mission [CWM] which aims at interdependence rather than dependence. This was adopted as one of three possible models, two of which, the donor agency model and the resource sharing model, were found to be defective.

In 1997, the CWM member churches (were) requested to develop mission programmes that would run from three to five years. The longer time period relieves churches of the pressure to produce results quickly.... It also allows more space for churches to audit their needs effectively, to reflect on their priorities and to plan thoroughly. ...The initiative (here) has shifted from the central decision-making body to the (local) church.

## **1.2. Reason for the Study**

Recent developments in the Church of Scotland indicate that PIM, while still the official model on which mission policy is based, has been challenged in its essence. A lack of flexibility seems to characterise recent developments along with a refusal to examine any other possible models which will enable the maintenance of existing partner church relationships. This has resulted in policy decisions being made without any reference to partner churches yet which affect them deeply. For the first time in recent history policy decisions of WMC have been the cause of much discussion and deep division within the Church of Scotland. Various reasons/causes for this change will be investigated.

The statement of the problem will centre on the question: How is it possible to justify the continued adherence to the concept of Partnership in Mission in the light of the history of the concept and in view of changes in Church of Scotland mission policy and the consequent threat to partner church relationships?

To date, no research has been done on Church of Scotland mission policy during this period.

### **1.3 Hypothesis**

Partnership in mission is a laudable concept in the furtherance of God's mission. It has a distinguished history despite the difficulties experienced in making it a functioning reality. It has had the potential to enable sending and receiving churches to experience fellowship, humility and dignity in relationships. However, the issue of power in the 'older' sending churches has been an intrusive factor in preventing the theory from becoming a reality. In the case of the Church of Scotland, despite great strides being made over the years to develop mutual relations, increasing problems presented the opportunity for partner relationships to become authentically interdependent. Unfortunately, vulnerability on the part of the Church of Scotland World Mission Council has led to a return to a colonial/dominator approach to partnership.

PIM remains the official model for mission in the absence of any other appropriate or acceptable model to explain and accommodate recent changes in mission policy in the Church of Scotland which disadvantage partner churches.

### **1.4 Personal Statement**

The writer approaches the study as a committed 'insider'. He was a mission partner of the Church of Scotland for almost twenty years, served as a member of the Board of World Mission and a number of its sub-committees, and is currently working as a minister in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA), a historic and long standing partner church of the Church of Scotland since the inception of the mission to South Africa in 1824. He is himself directly affected by policy changes being implemented. While this might be considered to disqualify him from writing on this topic, on the grounds that he is unable to write with a degree of 'objectivity', he writes from a perspective of commitment and personal knowledge which is permitted by the canons of a 'new type of historiography – self-reflective and conversational – [which] has

come into being, and with it an exploration of what has for too long been left unsaid’ (Rubin 2002:81; cf. Evans 2001:xxx):

The subjectivity of the historian does not mean that he sees wrongly, but that he has chosen a special viewpoint, that his research starts with a special question. And we must remember that it is impossible to trace out a historical picture without any question, and that it is possible to perceive a historical phenomenon only from a special point of view. To this extent the subjectivity of the historian is a necessary factor of objective historical knowledge (Bultmann 1957:118-119). Referring to recent developments in historiography in the USA, Popkin (1999:730) comments ‘it is increasingly common for scholars to make at least some brief reference on their relationship to the subject of their research’. This is supported by Hastings (2005:x): ‘All good history must rise above the neutrality of unweighed objectivity in having behind it the largely unformulated standard of values of a particular historian’.

Polanyi (1998:324) develops this argument further by denying the subjective interpretation and distinguishes it from commitment as to what is intensely personal in the historian’s experience and is simultaneously of universal application and also a matter of faith:

Commitment offers to those who accept it legitimate grounds for the affirmation of personal convictions with universal intent. Standing on these grounds, we claim that our participation is personal, not subjective, except in so far as it is compulsive. While it then lies beyond our responsibility, it is yet transformed by our sense of responsibility into part of our calling. Our subjective condition may be taken up to include the historical setting in which we have grown up. We accept these as the assignment of our particular problem. Our personhood is assured by our simultaneous contact with the universal aspirations which place us in a transcendent perspective.

Elsewhere, the author has stated that in relation to contextualisation that ‘it is in the very particularity of its interpretation in specific situations that the gospel achieves a universal application’ (Duncan 1997:7).

Particularly relevant to this study is Raiser’s (2004:xiv) comment from an ecumenical perspective:

... it has become clear that the writing of contemporary history is a risky enterprise, even more so if the authors have been actors who were directly involved in shaping the events and developments under review. Perceptions, evaluations and emphases



are bound to change with greater distance. Yet, the account of contemporaries becomes an important source for historical research. Several points of significance emerge here. First, the risk involved in undertaking such a project makes the writing of this type of history provisional; however, in a sense, all historical writing is provisional as we anticipate the discovery of new sources. It may also, in the course of time take on a longer term value. Second, contemporary history has not only a value for future historical writing. Third, it is possible that in writing contemporary history, the historian will have more sources at his disposal possibly than historians writing at a later date.

### **1.5 Historiographical Approach**

The concept of PIM is of relatively recent origin. Therefore, it falls within the ambit of contemporary Church History. The nature of general contemporary history will be investigated to provide a basis for consideration of the nature of history, objectivity, subjectivity, progress, the goal of history and what may be considered to constitute contemporary history. Problems of definition will be considered particularly with regard to objectivity and subjectivity. The nature of contemporary history will be examined as itself a historical concept which has provided society with some of its most important historical source material, eg the work of historians Thucydides, Herodotus and Eusebius. The purpose of history will be examined as giving meaning to the past and present and to forming the future. Bultmann (1957) and others offer a religious aspect in terms of projecting a vision into the future. This general approach to contemporary history is particularly relevant with regard to the Church of Scotland since some very recent developments in mission policy will be investigated.

The paradigm of ecumenical history will be outlined inasmuch as this is necessary in any topic which focuses on Christian mission history. This will be studied in order to demonstrate the essential integration of mission and unity and broaden the perspective of Christian history. This is appropriate in a study of the Church of Scotland which has a proud record of ecumenical activity and involvement.

Christian history does not proceed towards an undetermined goal; its destination is the predetermined commonwealth (kingdom) of God. Yet, it cannot be separated from secular history since its essence and sources are to a large extent the same despite the contextual nature of each situation, eg. the Incarnation occurred in a specific context.

Eisler's (1987) work on cultural transformation theory has produced two models of human history. Contemporary history is represented by the dominator model founded on conflict and domination. Yet, her work seeks to reintroduce the partnership model which existed in pre-historic times, and at later periods, and was based on equality and co-operation. Eisler's use of 'phase changes' reflects the concept of paradigm shifts as elucidated by Kuhn (1970), Kung (1994) and Bosch (1991). Her approach is inclusive and multi-disciplinary. It is not exclusive as can be seen from Soelle's (1984) work. Eisler's desire to establish a model based on harmony in society is consistent with a Christian approach to history. This may help to understand recent developments in mission policy and offer a way forward that may integrate younger churches into a truly viable and creative relationship of partnership.

This approach is further developed from a feminist theological perspective using the work of Letty Russell (1993) who adopts the inclusive model of *koinonia* as partnership with the aim of elevating and empowering the marginalised which transcends gender difference to promote the values of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

## **1.6 Source Review**

In the area of contemporary history particular reference will be made to the work of Barraclough (1964), Bloch (1953), Hobsbawm (1995, 1997, 2000), Cannadine (ed. 2002), Carr (2001 [1961]), Collingwood (1999) and Gaddis (1995).

The nature of Christian history and ecumenical Church history will be based in the work of Latourette (1953), Bultmann (1975), Butterfield (1949), Kalu (2005), Bradley & Muller (1995), Bebbington (1979) and Wells (1989).

The Dominator and Partnership models of history will be studied using the cultural transformation theory of Eisler (1987, 1987a, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2005) and a feminist theological perspective is offered in Russell's work (1993).

For an understanding of the concept of PIM primary sources (listed below) and secondary sources in Missiology and Mission History will be used. There are considerable resources available in the form of journal articles and books.

Both primary secondary sources will be drawn upon for the global development of PIM Primary sources will include reports if the International Missionary Council (IMC) and World Council of Churches (WCC) and other relevant international bodies.

Regarding developments in the WMC and its predecessors, archival sources will be studied, including reports and Minutes of the WMC of the CoS, publications, correspondence and General Assembly reports:

Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (1929-1964).

Overseas Council (OC) Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (1964-1984).

Board of World Mission and Unity (BWMU) Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (1984-1994).

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Church of Scotland Board of World Mission.

Board of World Mission 2001-2006. *Prayerlink*. Edinburgh:Church of Scotland  
Board of World Mission.

Board of World Mission 2001-2006. *Insight*. Edinburgh:Church of Scotland  
Board of World Mission.

While two references have been found to the paper *The Myth of the Younger Churches* delivered by bishop Stephen Neill at the Whitby conference in 1947, it has been impossible to trace the actual text of the paper despite various searches including WorldCat.

A problem of some significance arises with an attempt to encourage younger churches to respond freely to enquiries regarding eg. the 2005 partner church consultation. There is considerably reticence to criticize the World Mission Council freely when that body has acted precipitately and without consultation, and when a fear or threat of intimidation and suspension of funding is a possible consequence of speaking out. This has made securing comments from partner churches, other than the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, virtually impossible.

Note has to be taken of the changing names of the Church of Scotland department dealing with world mission. From the time of the union which brought the Church of Scotland into being in 1929, world mission was the responsibility of the Foreign Mission Committee. It was replaced in 1964 by the Overseas Council and in 1984 by the Board of World Mission and Unity. In 1994, the Board of World Mission came into being to be replaced in 2005 by the World Mission Council.

## **1.7 Terminology**

Maluleke (1994:100 n.1) highlights a significant issue which is relevant for our purposes when referring to the traditional view of the subjects and objects of mission:

The terminology of “older and younger” churches is not without its problems. Several alternatives such as “mother and daughter”, “sending” and “becoming”, and even “church” and “mission”, have been suggested. However, all these terms are problematic – some even more problematic than the terms “older” and “younger” churches.

To these suggestions, we might add “First World” and “Third World”, “North” and “South”, “sending” and “receiving”, “sending” and “growing”.

While describing churches as ‘mother’ and daughter’, alludes to a filial relationship, it also suggests permanent dependency and allegiance. ‘Sending’ and ‘becoming’ are also fraught with difficulties as all ought to be involved in mission and in the process of becoming what God would have us be. No church has yet reached its ultimate destination. Buhlmann (in Saayman & Bosch 1978:121-122) favours ‘First Church’ (Eastern church), ‘Second Church’ (Western church and USA) and ‘Third Church’ (Third World churches). This suggests a certain ranking of churches in terms of nearness or distance from antiquity and raises the question that can be posed of all the alternatives, ‘Who decides who is first, second or third Church?’

The author concurs with Bosch and Saayman (1978:119) for the purposes of this study: Despite objections we prefer the terms “older” and “younger” churches to others which have been proposed in this connection. By “younger” churches we mean mainly those in the so-called Third world. Historically the relationship has passed through three phases: 1. the pioneering phase, in which the young church is simply an object; 2. the founding of the younger church and the taking over of certain responsibilities; and 3. the period in which the initiative is with the younger churches.

Ultimately, there are only churches and theologians that is the only basis on which to proceed. However, for the purposes of distinction, these terms are chosen largely, but not exclusively, to describe historic and geographic communities of faith which are centred furth of Europe and America.

## **1.8 Confidentiality**

Since this thesis deals with very recent events, and since it considers matters of significant sensitivity, it has been decided, after consultation with source persons, to use

only abbreviations for the most part when referring to correspondents and sources. On occasion, permission has been given to use full names and this has been done. Where officers of the World Mission Council are named these persons are named because the sources consulted are documents which exist and are available in the public domain.

## **1.9 Chapter Outline**

Chapter 2 will survey the historiographical approach to be adopted in the thesis. It will focus on general historiographical principles, consider relevant aspects of cultural transformation theory and feminist theology and apply these to a Christian view of history.

Chapter 3 will review the origin and development of the concepts of mission, partnership and partnership in mission from a historical, theological and practical perspective.

Chapter 4 will examine the growth of the PIM concept in global history from the perspective of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches. The Church of Scotland has been actively involved in these bodies throughout the twentieth and into the twenty first century.

Chapter 5 will consider the Church of Scotland's historic approach to PIM in tandem with its relationship to the international bodies studied in chapter 4.

Chapter 6 will consider recent developments in Church of Scotland policy, arising out of a situation of membership and financial decline, and their effect on partner relationships with receiving churches.

Chapter 7 will explore possible alternative models, summarise the thesis and offer conclusions on the prognosis for PIM as a missionary strategy for the future.

## CHAPTER 2 Historiographical Considerations

We begin with Bloch's (1954:27) definition of history as 'the science of men [sic] in time' which extends into the past and future and is eternally changing and is inescapable:

There is no getting away from the past, ie. from those who record, interpret, argue about and construct it. Our everyday lives, the states we live in, the governments we live under, are surrounded by, drenched in, the products of my profession. What goes into school textbooks and politicians' speeches about the past, the material for writers of fiction, makers of TV programmes and videos, comes ultimately from historians. What is more, most historians ... know that investigating the past, even the remote past, they are also thinking and expressing opinions in terms of and about the present and its concerns (Hobsbawm 2002:282).

The matter of what constitutes contemporary history is a valid concern of this study.

### 2.1 Contemporary History

A central concern of this thesis is what constitutes contemporary history in a topic which is very recent and which is still being worked out in reality? This brings into play our notion of time with its relative understandings of past, present and future. Time might be considered as an extension of past and future where the present is a fleeting interstice between the two and the distinction between them is contrived (Gaddis 1995:11): it 'has no more than a notional existence as an imaginary dividing line between the past and the future' (Carr 2001:102). 'Of course, past, present and future are part of one continuum' (Hobsbawm 1998:128). In a sense the present does not exist because as soon as we become aware of it, it has gone: 'everything that happened in the past is history; everything that happens now is history' (Hobsbawm 1998:78). The historical past is constituted by activated memory and the future is constitutive of hope. Bloch's (1953) concept of 'universal history' was an attempt to remove the distinction between past and present in the sense that it was difficult to understand either without the other. History is 'the central organising principle in our minds, for without memory our lives would be a series of meaningless and therefore terrifying impressions, rather like those of severely afflicted amnesiacs' (Gaddis 1995:5). Bloch (1954:44) extended this idea in order to

express the relationship between past and present where the present serves as a hermeneutic for understanding the past:

Did I truly know, in the full sense, of that word, did I know from within, before I myself had suffered the terrible, sickening reality, what it meant for an army to be encircled, what it meant for a people to meet defeat? Before I myself had breathed the joy of victory in the summer of 1918 ... did I truly know all that was inherent in that beautiful word?

It certainly allows us to proceed from is known best to what is known least. But what is clear from this is that:

[h]istorians do not and cannot stand outside their subject as objective observers *sub specie aeternitatis*. All of us are plunged into the assumptions of our times and places, even when we practise something as far removed from today's public passions as the editing of old texts (Hobsbawm 1998:364).

From this we become clear that there is no such thing as clinically detached history from whatever time or context we write it.

Gaddis (1995:1) has pointed out the oxymoronic nature of contemporary history as a term but this simply emphasises the transient relationship between present and past. While contemporary history may well be susceptible to a lack of the objectivity, prejudices and biases of the contemporary historian, this might equally be true of historians and contemporary historians (eg. Thucydides, Herodotus) of earlier periods. Also, there is the concern about not knowing the outcome of a recent event or process when as in the United Kingdom there is an embargo of thirty years on government papers, for example. But even beyond this 'even the recent past is beyond our reach' (Bebbington 1979:11), certainly in an absolute sense. However, this might be true of events which took place a long time ago whose effects are still being experienced. Studying long term trends can give a sense of how they affect the present and future. For instance, it might be argued that the effects of colonial missionary expansion are still being experienced in the minds of those personally affected by it in one way or another (cf. Duncan 2003). What is perhaps more important is its effects for understanding the future in 'rendering a service of genuine importance in running the risks involved in evaluating developments so close to their happening. The last two decades have been rich in important events and ... full of promise .... This is sufficient justification' (D'Espine: xv in Fey [ed.] 2004). What is



considered an ancient work of history, but was in its own time contemporary history, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* expresses this well:

It will be enough for me ... if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is), will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future (1972:48; cf. Marwick 2001:54).

The same is true of Herodotus (Koch 2005:212-214). Within the realm of Church History, we may quote Eusebius (Lawlor & Oulton 1927:I:255):

Having concluded the succession from the apostles in seven entire books, in this eighth treatise we regard it as one of our most urgent duties to hand down, for the knowledge of those that come after us, the events of our own day, which are worthy of no casual record ...

What gives history its *raison d'être* is its contribution to the formation of the future. At issue here is the questionable distinction between 'facts' and 'memories' or interpretations in the struggle for objectivity or neutrality, especially taking account of the deficient nature of memory.

The actual definition of contemporary history is problematic in terms of periodisation. 'For most historians contemporary history does not constitute a separate period with distinctive characteristics of its own; they regard it rather as the most recent phase of a continuous process ...' (Barracough 1964:11). Collingwood (1999:242) defines it as 'history of the recent past in a society which the historian regards as his own society', that is of which he has personal experience ie. as a 'participant observer' (Hobsbawm 2002:xiii cf. Hobsbawm 1995:ix-x; 1997:304-305;) while Barracough (1964:20) himself offers a helpful consideration: '*Contemporary history begins when the problems which are actual in the world today first take visible shape*'<sup>1</sup>. He somewhat predates Kuhn's (1970:175 cf. Kung 1995:60; Bosch 1991:183-189) theory of paradigm shifts where 'there was a long period of transition before the *ethos* of one period was superseded by the *ethos* of the other' (Barracough 1964:20; cf.:26). This is related to the 'idea of progress, as seen in the dissolution of one and the rise of another epoch of universal history, [which] consisted in what was latent becoming spiritually active' (Harland 2003:84). From a Christian perspective, Latourette (1953:xxi) also developed a similar helpful insight:

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<sup>1</sup> Emphasis in original.

One age has a way of running over into its successor or of being foreshadowed before it is born. The eras are realities, but there are no sharp breaks between them which can be identified by particular years. Advance and retreat often begin at different times in the several areas in which Christians are found and the first indications of revival are frequently seen before decline has been halted.

Clearly we may operate with different definitions of what constitutes contemporary history. It is a fluid term which denotes 'ever-changing boundaries and an ever-changing content, with a subject matter that is in constant flux' (Barraclough 1964:14). Again the present is only an infinitesimal moment which separates one era from another. One approach is to consider contemporary events as the source of our reflection on the past in order to shed light on the present (Gaddis 1995:18); hence 'history enlarges experience' (:19); it is also subject to revision in the light of new discoveries. This problem is resolved by Croce (1941:19 in Carr 2001:15):

The practical requirements which underlie every historical judgment give to all history the character of "contemporary history", because, however remote in time events thus recounted may seem to be, the history in reality refers to present needs and present situations wherein those events vibrate.

Collingwood's views are summarised by Carr (2001:16): 'The past which an historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present'. From a somewhat different perspective Fernandez-Armesto (2002:151) claims that '[E]verything that we do or think, everything that we imagine about the future passes instantly into the past and becomes a proper subject for historical enquiry'.

The advent of a contemporary/post-modern approach arising out of 'the deep-seated connections between history and postmodernism' (Walia 2001:10) has contributed to a revision of the concept of history which goes considerably beyond Carr's reliance on grand narratives. The rapidly changing nature of the post-war world (ie. post-1945) we inhabit has necessitated this. Further, the idea that history has a single purpose or end has been seriously challenged, though this might be considered problematic from a Christian perspective. This movement facilitated a novel approach to history whereby the

vanquished rather than the victors became the subject of study. The day of cultural history in which:

[t]he belief that historical writing can enhance our appreciation of the human condition by bringing to life and explaining beliefs and cultures that are very different from our own, and perhaps adding to the richness of human experience and understanding, and fostering tolerance of different cultures and belief systems in our own time (Evans 2002:9)

had arrived. The value of culture lies in its ability to locate and discern relations of power, a vital aspect of any historical project. It also enables us to extend our field of study, particularly into the social sciences and humanities for history is a ‘field encompassing field’ (Harvey 1966:55) though not all other fields yield the same rich resources, eg. ‘a history fertilised by the social sciences’ (Hobsbawm 2002:288) is a particularly rich combination. It also helps to achieve greater depth of analysis. Another significant feature of our contemporary period is its inclusivity, the way in which ‘the world was integrated in a way it never had been before; and this meant that no people, however small and remote could “contract out”’ (Barraclough 1964:42).

However, Hastings (2005:xiv) points to a limitation in contemporary history: ‘... it is not possible to write the history of the immediate past with a durability comparable to that attainable for developments of even thirty years ago’ (cf. Raiser 2004:xiv). We have to take this comment seriously, but nonetheless even recently written history of the contemporary period has a relevance even though it is subject to constant revision. And this is no less true of ancient history. This leads to a necessary discussion of objectivity and subjectivity in historical research.

## 2.2 Objectivity

‘There is no “objective” historical truth’ (Clark in Carr 2001:2; cf. Evans 2001:xi, Latourette 1953:xx). Yet, Carr could affirm:

To assert that fallible human beings are too much entangled in circumstances of time and place to attain the absolute truth is not the same thing as to deny the existence of truth; such a denial destroys any possible criterion of judgment, and makes any approach to history as true or as false as any other .... [he consequently opted for a view] where it is possible to maintain that objective truth exists, but that

no historian by himself or no school of historian [sic] by itself can hope to achieve more than a faint and partial approximation to it ('Truth in History', Times Literary Supplement [TLS], 1 September 1950 in Evans 2002:xii).

So truth is relative and it may be determined by the coherence theory: 'A statement is true if it coheres with reality' (Bebbington 1990:148), that is if it makes coherent sense when it makes sense with the totality of experience. And if that experience is the result of faith then the 'insight that is born of faith can bring illumination' (Latourette 1953:xx). Where does this leave the issue of fact? Are these not objective realities? For the Christian, this is perhaps less of an issue for the Truth is the Word of God, who is Jesus Christ (John 14:6) and all other truth is measured against his standard. However, for Carr, these facts are

'determined by the – perhaps unconscious – beliefs and presuppositions which guide the search. The very conviction that "facts" are neutral, and that progress consists in discovering the facts and learning lessons from them is the product of a rational-liberal outlook on the world which cannot be so easily taken for granted today as it was by our more fortunately placed nineteenth century ancestors' (in Evans 2001:xii).

It is interesting that even Carr admits the validity of 'beliefs', though perhaps not in the traditional sense which implies commitment. From a Christian perspective, 'That we fail to understand history is due to our lack of such a commitment. That we understand it partly but imperfectly arises from a commitment which is real but incomplete' (Latourette 1953:xx). The issue for Carr (2001:114) was that objectivity is elusive because it is the historian who selects which facts are to be considered and interpreted and here we are at the historian's mercy as to which facts are viewed as significant and so, 'Objectivity ... cannot be an objectivity of fact', for 'facts no longer speak for themselves' (Walia 2001:12), but only of relation, of the relation between fact and interpretation, between past, present and future'. This is where the mind of the historian takes on a validity alongside the facts and this disposition needs to be guided by fairness and justice in judgment. Then, '[f]acts take place once for all and cannot be recovered afterwards in their full integrity' (Bebbington 1990:11). Carr has a similar view of the relativity of truth. In determining what is significant, there must be a distinction between significant and accidental facts. And further, it must be recognised that values (interpretation) are embedded within facts and these exist in a co-relationship. Hence, he

is able to maintain his integrity. Here we have to acknowledge the relativity of the definite in its relation to probability.

This is related to the relationship between past and present:

The present day philosopher of history, balancing uneasily on the razor edge between the hazards of objective determinism and the bottomless pit of subjective relativity, conscious that thought and action are inextricably intertwined, and that the nature of causation, in history no less than in science, seems the further to elude his grasp the more firmly he tries to grapple with it, is engaged in asking questions rather than in answering them (Carr in *Victorian History*, *TLS*, 19 June 1953 in Evans 2001:xiii).

For Berlin (1954), objectivity lay not in the method but in the interpretation, that is by multiple verification, logical consistency and general acceptance based on the historian's reputation for empirical research. This is related to the process by which historians 'select' what they interpret, revealing their subjectivity of choice. This selectivity of both fact and cause and effect relates to what is considered to be significant and can be accommodated in a pattern of logical interpretation. It is fundamental to the historiographical process. Further, this selectivity when linked to interpretation or judgment hampers the achievement of absolute objectivity. In addition, objectivity is elusive as a result of history constantly being rewritten and new sources emerging.

Does objectivity imply an acknowledged commitment? 'Certainly historians will write better history if they are self-conscious about their political and intellectual starting point' (Evans 2001:xxx), ie. their own prejudices. Carr believed that historians should attempt to distance themselves from their own biases and also that the sources placed limitations on historians' conclusions. However, he gives no guidance on how this is to be effected. He simply assumes that it is possible as well as desirable.

An objective historian has a 'capacity to project his vision into the future in such a way as to give him a more profound and more lasting insight into the past' (Carr in Davies 2001:lx):

'History requires the selection and ordering of facts about the past in the light of some principle or norm of objectivity accepted by the historian, which necessarily includes elements of interpretation. Without this, the

past dissolves into a jumble of innumerable isolated and insignificant incidents and history cannot be written at all' (Carr in Davies 2001:lxix). This is supported by Gonzales (1970:23) although he contends that any degree of selectivity is necessarily subjective. The highest degree of objectivity is derived from the past illuminating our understanding of the future and vice versa. However, this very process distances the historian from his avowed aim of objectivity. Here we are constrained by the available facts in the sources which only reveal part of the past (cf. Butterfield 1954:94) and these are often the result of the selector's own subjectivity. Further, objectivity might be blurred by the variety of perspectives brought to bear on an incident: 'everyone is free to make his own assessment of their significance .... All require study and analysis in depth; they are part of a process which can never be fully intelligible if it is taken out of its historical context' (Barracough 1964:17). Purvis claiming to introduce a particular feminist insight (1995:9 citing Nagel 1986) contends 'that all knowledge is perspectival'. There is no vantage point from which to view all aspects of human experience. Put another way, there is no neutral observation point, no 'view from nowhere'. However this is a universal truth and not a particular insight of feminism. This is affected by the socially and culturally constructed medium of memory for 'the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present' (Halbwachs 1992:155 in Fernando-Armesto 2002:155). In oral cultures memory is recreated in the repeated retelling process, and even here embellishments may occur in the repeated process of retelling the story of an event or process. However, there is no guarantee that the future will occur as foretold by the historian.

The more conventional definition of objective research was judgment based on evidence that goes beyond the historian's preconceptions. Carr goes beyond this view however, for every historian is situated in a social, cultural and historical environment and context that is unique, therefore denying true objectivity or absolute detachment. Objectivity has its source in rising above and beyond an individual's limited context (cultural, political, social, religious and economic) and extending a vision into the future with a view to gaining deeper insight regarding the past. Part of this context, as mentioned above, is related to values which differentiate facts from truth. This process takes place in a dynamic context where history is characterised by progress in which 'Past, present and

future are linked together in an endless chain of history’ (Carr 2001:129). Seton-Watson (1929:4) (in Barraclough 1964:15) demonstrated that from the time of Thucydides ‘much of the greatest history has been contemporary history’.

### 2.3 Subjectivity

It is impossible as we have seen above for a historian to approach his subject with absolute objectivity because ‘we ourselves are a product of that past. There is thus a complex, ambiguous boundary between past event, our present circumstance resulting on part as a product of the past, and our interpretation of the event’ (Bradley & Muller 1995:33). Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the subjectivity or bias of the historian and how this affects his view of history. Marwick seems to prefer the term ‘fallibility’ (2001:48). This will, to an extent be determined by his attitude towards his own particular context, his vision of its future and the values he brings to the exercise. This may be clearly demonstrated in how our political commitment affects our historical writing. For instance, Carr writes as a committed socialist and his interpretation of history will be considerably at odds with a totalitarian approach to history. This points us to the issue of commitment:

The personal participation of the knower in the knowledge he believes himself to possess takes place within a flow of passion. We recognise intellectual beauty as a guide to discovery and as a mark of truth (Polanyi 1962:300).

This passion or drivenness distinguishes the serious scholar and provides the staying power necessary to sustain research. Further, each historian is required to exercise judgment and to do this uses certain criteria which are formulated in interaction with his social, cultural, political and religious commitments: ‘Value neutrality is impossible’ (Bebbington 1990:6). This is the source of differing perspectives on any subject of historical enquiry; each historian brings his own history and vision to the investigation. A further limitation placed on the historian is his personal ability and wisdom, and intuition and empathy which are deeply subjective but without which much academic research in all fields of study could not progress.

While it is possible to objectively state that certain facts occurred at a certain place and time, this objectivity is limited by their dependence on cause and effect to establish them as significant events and part of a historical process: ‘And is it not the case that judgment of importance depends on the subjective point of view of the historian?’ (Bultmann 1957:117). Biases cannot be completely eradicated and it is now acknowledged that the process of interpretation begins as soon as we start to think about the past. Kalu (2005:11) views this approach as ‘more realistic .... [for] [E]xposed biases can be accepted and critically tested by moral standards’. This is much to be preferred to:

a bland, uninvolved distancing of the self from the materials that must, ultimately, remove the importance from history .... The goal of the student is to pursue balance and objectivity without abdicating one’s personality or losing entirely one’s sense of involvement in and with the events of history .... Historical objectivity results from a methodological control of the evidence, of the various levels of interpretation both inherent in and related to the evidence and of one’s own biases and opinions concerning the evidence and the various known interpretations (Bradley & Muller 1995:49).

But it has to be noted that bias or prejudice is not the preserve of the historian but the sources may also be redolent with their own biases for those who provide us with primary sources have their own predisposition towards the truth of their context eg. political and/or theological commitment.

For Bultmann (1957:117), there is a difference in approach between objectivity in the natural sciences and historical science. That approach is characterised by ‘the perspective or viewpoint of the historian ... [and] the existential encounter with history’ (:117). The former is based in the political and social nature of human beings who exist in ‘personal relationship’ (Bultmann 1957:118). The particular interests of the historian do not constitute a problem so long as they are not absolutised ie. that it is recognised that other viewpoints exist. Therefore:

Truth becomes manifest objectively to each viewpoint. The subjectivity of the historian does not mean that he sees wrongly, but that he has chosen a special viewpoint, that his research starts with a special question. And we must remember that it is impossible to trace out a historical picture without any question, and that it is possible to perceive a historical phenomenon only from a special point of view. To this extent the subjectivity of the historian is a necessary factor of objective historical knowledge (Bultmann 1957:118-119).



Further to this, Bultmann (1957:119) suggests that the historian's existential encounter with history is a vital factor as he stands within and participates in history. For Bultmann (1957:122): '... the most subjective interpretation of history is at the same time the most objective. Only the historian who is excited by his own historical existence will be able to hear the claim of history'. Eakin (1992:145 in Popkin 1999:739-740) takes up this idea through an understanding of 'what it means to be living in history'. Freeman (1993:186 in Popkin 1999:740) asks if historians make a special contribution through autobiography: 'Don't some people manage somehow to acquire a consciousness *of* history? Don't they become aware – more aware than others, at any rate – of the ways in which they have been determined' (cf. Hobsbawm 2002:xiii-xiv).

## 2.4 Progress

For our purposes, we will transcend the normal discussion of what constitutes progress in the historical process. Up until the beginning of the twentieth century, the concept of linear progress was popular in certain Christian historical circles with its confident approach to the future, its enormous expectations and its immutable criteria. The events of the last century devastated these elements of progress as war, famine, poverty, increased militarization and disease (notably the HIV/AIDS pandemic) destroyed human confidence in the future.

Progress is not only defined by its more comfortable relationship to the social sciences (Hobsbawm 1998:83f.), but also by a new approach to historiography:

... history has moved away from description and narrative to analysis and explanation; from concentrating on the unique and individual to establishing regularities and to generalisation. In a sense the traditional approach has been turned upside down.

A historian needs to be able to articulate the present and project a view of the future for 'an understanding of the past ... carries with it an enhanced insight into the future' (Carr in Davies 2001:lxxvii). Perhaps this is what Butterfield (1954:66) was referring to in his claim that:

...the purpose of life is not in the far future, nor, as we so often imagine, around the next corner, but the whole of it is here and now, as fully as it will ever be on this planet. It is always a “NOW” that is in direct relation to eternity – not a far future; always immediate experience of life that matters in the last resort.

Bultmann (1957:141) views the present as a constant opportunity for decision and in which ‘the yield of the past is gathered in and the meaning of the future is chosen’. He believes that being a historical being means living ‘from the future’ within history. This applies also to the Christian believer because since faith and freedom belong to the ‘eschatological event they can never become facts of past time but are reality only over and over again as event’ (Bultmann 1957:152). History can only be realised in the religious (ie. sacred worldly) experience of those who are ‘in Christ’. Thus can history’s meaning be discerned through responsible decision making (Bultmann 1957:155). These are critical actions which foster a new present which inevitably past (Bultmann 1957:4).

‘Carr equated progress with objectivity’ (Evans 2001:xxvii) ie. a historian who had ‘the capacity to project his vision into the future in such a way as to give him a more profound and more lasting insight into the past than can be attained by those historians whose outlook is entirely bounded by their own immediate situation’ (Carr 2001:117). For Carr, this was related to serving a political or social purpose. However, there is no guarantee that the future will occur as foretold by the historian. Fernandez-Armesto (2002:154) rather views all fields of study as having the dual purpose of enhancing life and preparing for death. Thus it might be said to have a moral purpose. From a more positive perspective Hobsbawm (1998:89) refers to the main question of history as ‘the transformation of humankind’. However, from a Christian perspective Butterfield (1954:67) asserts a more positive view of preparing for death:

We envisage our history in the proper light, therefore, if we say that each generation – indeed each individual – exists for the glory of God; but one of the most dangerous things in life is to subordinate human personality to production, to the state, even to civilisation itself, to anything but the glory of God’. But this is not a static glorification for this glorification is part of the dynamic ‘progressive character of the Kingdom of God’ (Paas 2000:13).

## 2.5 The Ecumenical Perspective

This perspective is important because it is difficult to talk about mission independently of unity (cf. Saayman 1984) and it was the modern missionary movement that provided the ecumenical impetus for the Church. For Kalu (Kalu et al 2005:21) the theological motivation and destination is ecumenism referring to God's lordship and reign in his Kingdom. Church History, therefore, is God's presence in human communities in the process and progress towards that goal. Consequently, a broader concept of the Church is necessary. For the unity of all God's people requires all to exercise responsible stewardship and mission. This approach to history is holistic and universalistic, and denies any group the right to dominate another. A further responsibility is to view the world from the perspective of those who stand with Christ outside the gate (Heb 13:12 cf. Costas 1993:188ff.) – the poor, oppressed and dispossessed:

The ecumenical perspective in church history, therefore, reconstructs, from the grass roots, the experiences of men and women in a community and the meaning of Christ in their midst. It assumes that as the Spirit of God broods over the whole inhabited earth; men [sic] increasingly recognise the divine presence and their lives are changed in the encounter.

Dialogue becomes a vital part of the process which requires transparency and accountability. In sum, the ecumenical approach in church history becomes a liberating experience for individuals and communities.

## 2.6 The Destination of History

Since Christianity is a historical materialistic faith it must move towards a certain specific goal. For our purposes this must be the complete fulfilment of the Kingdom of God which lies in the future beyond our concepts of space and time. Carr might agree with this grand narrative conclusion though he would deny its specific goal. Carr (2001:102) quotes Huizinga's (in Stem 1957:293) affirmation that: 'Historical thinking is always teleological' (cf. Butterfield 1954:67). God is recognised by humans as Lord of History who guides the process to its designated goal. Christians are a pilgrim people of the Way, journeying onwards towards the future in which 'each present hour is questioned

and challenged by its future' (Bultmann 1957:140). In this sense each moment is an eschatological opportunity and history and eschatology are identified.

Christian history is often considered to be linear in opposition to a cyclical approach to history, as it proceeds towards its destination. However, this distinction is rather facile, for within it the progress towards the Kingdom is a cyclical process where God annually intervenes in nature in the course of the progress of the seasons, culminating in the Feast of Tabernacles or the Great Autumnal festival alluded to in the Enthronement Psalms (eg. 47, 93, 96-99). However, it must be admitted that this process is secondary to the great interventions of God in the history of his people. But even in this cyclical process, history is moving on towards a goal which is beyond itself – a new cosmic order. This order was inaugurated in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth which marked the onset of the *eschaton* – the beginning of the end time - 'the kingdom of God is upon you' (Mark 1:15) which was marked by 'Christ reconciling the world to himself' (2Cor 5:19). This era was distinguished by the eschatological happenings of Jesus' ministry which will culminate in his delivering 'up the kingdom to God the Father, after deposing every sovereignty, authority, and power' (1Cor 15:24). Consequently, 'the full course of the Gospel is not and cannot be contained within history, that God had made Christ lord not only in this age but also in that which is to come' (Latourette 1953:1474).

## **2.7 The 'End of History'?**

This is not to be confused with the goal of history. This question arose as the result of the publication of Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) whose prime thesis was that history as we know it has come to an end with the triumph of liberal democracy, aligned with liberal capitalism, over communism. An immediate question that arises here is that is there nothing beyond liberal democracy? Is this the high point and goal of history? Is this the best we can expect? This is a critical interstice when the practical premise of this theory is the suppression of political creativity of the new powers. What is perhaps a more accurate definition of Fukuyama's theory is that it refers

to the end of a particular concept of history – the ‘end point of mankind’s [sic] ideological evolution’ (Fukuyama 1989:3-18):

A remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy as a system of government had emerged throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism (Fukuyama 1992:xi).

Ideology is a tool of the enemy whereas the liberal democrat stands for freedom, peace and plenty. Fukuyama’s *telos* has been achieved: ‘there would be no further progress in the development of underlying principles and institutions, because all the really big questions had been settled’ (Fukuyama 1992:xii). This constitutes an ideal which ‘could not be improved upon’ for ‘the logic of modern natural science would seem to dictate a universal evolution in the direction of capitalism (:xv). However, this might seem to be too good to be true:

The life of the last man is one of physical security and material plenty ... is the danger that we will be happy on one level, but still dissatisfied with ourselves on another, and hence ready to drag the world back into history with all its wars, injustice and revolution (:312).

This resonates with Eisler’s (see below chapter 2.10) dominator model of societal organisation.

Fukuyama’s views are mirrored by such post-modern thinkers as Jean Baudrillard and Jean-Francois Lyotard whose discussion of what they call ‘endism’ was stimulated by the arrival of a new millennium and the threat to the environment as we know it. Lyotard claims that: ‘[w]e no longer have recourse to the grand narratives – we can resort neither to the dialectic of the Spirit nor even to the emancipation of humanity as a validation for post-modern scientific discourse (1984:60). Baudrillard asserts that history is its own worst enemy: ‘It is precisely in history that we are alienated, and if we leave history we also leave alienation (not without nostalgia, it must be said, for that good old drama of subject and object’ (1986:23). The falsity of this approach may be noted in realising that the end of history indicates also the end of the possibility of any political, and other, change, and much more significantly of hope for the poor of the world. But perhaps not just for the poor since all, certainly including the rich suffer from a loss of hope associated with increasing meaninglessness in life. Derrida (1994:85) points to a moral issue in this regard:

For it must be cried out, at a time when some have the audacity to neo-evangelise in the name of the ideal of a liberal democracy that has finally realised itself as the ideal of human history: never have violence, inequality, exclusion, famine, and thus economic oppression affected as many human beings in the history of the earth and of humanity.

Yet, ideology is not just a tool of the enemy but even of the supporters of the ‘endist’ concept of history which is based in a spirit of triumphalism and even intolerance towards those who choose a way of life other than that of capitalism with its ‘unlimited power and authority to exploit and control the lives of defenceless individuals – especially individuals with no alternative whatsoever to turn to in the political lives of their own countries (Sim 1999:59). The danger of ideology lies in its ability to demonise all alternatives to itself. This has been a timeless problem of both Christian and world history. This view of history is incompatible with a Christian perspective since the dominance of liberal capitalism would be equated with the dawn of the kingdom of God.

## **2.8 The Role of Ideology**

Costas (1982:121) derives his definition of ideology from the conviction that Christianity cannot exist independently of political involvement. For him, political ideology involves a ‘vision of the future, a coherent interpretation of reality, and a programmatic line of action conducive to the reorganisation of society’. Ideology can perform a positive function because it offers faith a ‘historical rationality’ (:122) that requires flexibility in thought and action. This understanding of history has both negative and positive aspects and so a critical consciousness is vital in order to avoid support of the civil order becoming idolatry. Costas (:76) quotes Jenson in this regard: ‘evangelical religion becomes in truth the comfort of the oppressors and the opiate of the oppressed’, though we also have to take seriously Bredekamp and Ross’ (1995:2) view that from the 1830s in South Africa ‘Christianity has provided many of its adherents with the strength to confront the many injustices they have suffered’. Such a growing awareness empowers the church to call the social order into question rather than support it uncritically.

Cochrane (1987:168ff.) draws on Fierro’s (1977) three broad uses of the term ‘ideology’ in order to highlight the exact nature of the church’s responses to political-economic developments. Fierro’s first level in which ideology is a consciously held ‘system of

representation’ involves adopting a ‘critical distance’ from the dominant ideology which prevails. The second level is unconscious and is conditioned by the material, socio-economic base of society (Fierro 1977:244). Bourdieu’s (1977:94 in Comaroff 1985:5) comment is apposite here: ‘Ideology is most effective when it is interred in habit and is “beyond the grasp of consciousness”’. The third level involves a conscious attempt to legitimate a specific dominant class and is not amenable to critical change. In this context early twentieth century South African ‘church views were most commonly shaped by a position of dominance or at least dependency on the dominant’ ie. a bourgeois capitalist society. Comaroff (1985:10) agrees ‘for the ideological forms of nineteenth century Protestantism were derivative of British industrial capitalism, projecting its values of individualism, spiritual democracy, and rational self improvement through labour’. Despite a positive definition of ideology having been offered (cf. Saayman 1991:8-9), the church operated predominantly at levels two and three of Fierro’s broad uses of the term. By and large, it became and remained captivated by the ideology of its sending bodies and cultures, ie. western European. There is a deep issue of faith here which is ideologically based and is related to the reality of the context. We may conclude that a critique of ideology involves theological commitment, a constant socio-political analysis of society and an element of self critique which will develop a theology of liberation, renewal and transformation which will produce such an eschatological vision of the Kingdom of God that will challenge acceptance of the contemporary political status quo. This brings us to the interface between ecclesiastical and secular history.

## **2.9 The Relation of Church History to World History**

This is not a contemporary issue for Eusebius (Lawlor & Oulton 1927), and others before him (Bultmann 1957:57), wrote his *Chronicle* beginning with Abraham and placing it in the wider context of empire: ‘With this, world-history in a strict sense comes into being’ (Bultmann 1957:57). The decisive incarnation of Christ gives a new meaning to history for ‘a precondition of the coming of Christ and the propagation of the Gospel was the

empire of Augustus and the “Pax Romana” (:58). Following this theme, Dodd (1938:166) cogently writes:

The material of history is the whole succession of events in time, in which the spontaneity of the human spirit interacts with outward occurrences. ... The biblical record is a source of evidence for secular history dovetailing into the records of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome. But the events are presented in the Bible as a history of the dealings of God with men, interpreted by the eschatological event of the coming of Christ, His death and resurrection .... It is important to bear in mind that the same events enter into sacred and secular history; the events are the same, but they form two distinguishable series .... Since God is the Maker and Ruler of all mankind, who created all things for Himself, and redeemed the world to himself. That is to say, the whole of history is in the last resort sacred history, or *Heilsgeschichte*. This reflects a similar view from a vastly different perspective: ‘Christianity is historical in another and, perhaps, even deeper sense .... It is in time and, therefore, in history that the great drama of Sin and Redemption, the central axis of all Christian thought, is unfolded’ (Bloch 1954:4-5). Hence, a teleological view of history was introduced.

It is impossible to write the history of the Christian Church independent of world history because the Christian faith is contextual:

One reason ... for our interest in politics, though it must not be regarded as standing by itself, is that we cannot obtain a hearing for the Gospel if it has nothing to say about the struggles and fears, ambitions and evils of which men are most conscious in Africa today – and this applies to the white African as well as the black or brown African. And are they to blame if they turn away from a Gospel which has nothing to say to them in their present historical situation? The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the God of all history, ancient and modern (Dougall 1963:92 in Ross 2006:4). Further, the Incarnation occurred in a specific context and that context impinged upon and to an extent determined the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Further, it is problematic to separate the two in the light of Jesus’ exchange with Pharisees (Mark 12:13-17) concerning the payment of tribute to Caesar. Here Jesus makes it clear that God’s authority is not limited but all-embracing and that all history lies within the divine order. A contextual approach to history does, have a certain universality:

Contextualisation places more emphasis on the *specific* contexts of people than on the *universal*. The supposition behind this is the conviction that is in being true to one’s *particular* locality (the total context), that one can also be fully true to the *universality* of the Christian community (Saayman 1995:191).



Kalu (2005:12) points out several problems relating to the definition of church. First, there are the many images of the Church which appear in scripture; then there is the vast number of different denominations; finally there are the unique claims which Christianity makes of all history proceeding to a God ordained goal. These issues are dealt with in large part by abandoning the term Church, a comparatively recent phenomenon, in favour of Christian (McIntyre 1974) when referring to a specific relationship to history.

Referring to McIntyre, Kalu (2005:13) affirms that:

The legacy and contributions of Christian historiography are within the central concepts of historical time; periodisation; history as a process; historical universality; historical contextuality; human-beings as the makers and creators of history; and the coherence and meaningfulness of historical reality.

Kalu (2005:14f) critiques various approaches to Christian historiography. He charges that the institutional model is bound to the development of institutions of faith which strengthen the view of church history as an extension of salvation history and tends towards exclusivism, is susceptible to co-option by the state, promotes denominationalism and becomes divorced from the people. This departs from the biblical notions of church which are relational and even anti- institutional. The church is constituted by the entire people of God – powerful and poor, male and female, powerful and weak.

Both Christian history and world history provide the context for a consideration of cultural transformation theory.

## **2.10 Cultural Transformation Theory**

History is replete with examples of human inability to transcend its predilection to war and strife in favour of a world characterised by justice, peace and the integrity of creation. The evidence points to the conclusion that for many centuries human society has not been capable of transforming its *modus vivendi* or its *modus operandi*. Riane Eisler's (1998:xv) cultural transformation theory reminds us however, of a time when this was not the case. For example, she cites the harmonious state of existence in the mythical Garden of Eden prior to the Fall of humanity (Gen 2:1-25). This was a time when man and

woman lived in a partnership relationship with one another and with their environment marked by equality and interdependence. Eisler supports this view with a broad scale systems analysis of thousands of studies where archaeological, anthropological and historical evidence drawn from ancient societies over a period of 25,000 years where the dominant image of the deity is female. In her cultural transformation cognitive map (theory), she challenges the linear, cyclical and random approaches to history (Eisler 2002:160) and asserts that history emerges from the interaction of two kinds of evolutionary movements:

The first is the tendency of social systems to move from less to more complex forms of organisation largely due to technological breakthroughs or *phase changes*. The second is the movement of *cultural shifts* between two basic models<sup>2</sup> or ‘attractors’ for social and ideological organisation which I have called the *dominator* and *partnership* models - or more specifically, *androcracy* and *gylany* (Eisler 2002:160).

Hence, evolution refers both to the biological and cultural history of living groups and to progress from lower to higher levels of existence, but this progress has been interrupted periodically by substantial regressions. However, this does not seem to have conquered the indomitable spirit of humanity which pushes onwards towards the higher goals of truth, beauty and ultimately, justice and harmony.

Cultural transformation theory posits the view that the earliest models of societal organisation were established on the partnership model, and that following a period of turmoil during the pre-history of western civilisation a new model emerged characterised by ‘the power to take rather than give life that is the ultimate power to establish and enforce domination’ (Eisler 1998:xvii). This has recently been supplanted by a renewed societal disequilibrium whose main impulse is towards partnership. This approach to history is necessarily multi-disciplinary, draws from the entire period of history including the pre-historic period and is inclusive in terms of gender.

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<sup>2</sup> We are cautioned concerning the use of the term ‘model’ for it refers to an abstraction: ‘Models are not a real, literal, or complete depiction of the world. It [sic] is a theoretical construct, a conceptual tool for ordering experiences and interpreting the world. As such they do not provide the researcher with information that can lead to “historical certainties”. They do, however, create scenarios that help the scientist to draw informed conclusions on a linear scale of ascending probability, or increased plausibility. The use of models has indeed become indispensable .... Our choice ... lies in deciding whether to use them consciously or unconsciously’ (Reinstorf 2005:398 cf Eisler 1995:33).

Eisler's research led her to the conclusion that basic to the enormous cultural diversity of human societies are two fundamental models of structuring societal relationships – the dominator model and the partnership model.

### **2.10.1 The Dominator (Androcratic) Model**

This model has three main characteristics revealing the rigid ranking of one segment of either patriarchal or matriarchal society over another, male (ie. hierarchical and authoritarian) dominance and gender inequality, and a high degree of violence required to maintain the society through control and suppression. Based on tension, fear and force, or the threat of force, it is morally insensitive. It might be termed the 'fight or flight' approach (Eisler & Levine 2002). Eisler (1998:xix) draws clear correspondences between such societies both in terms of time and space; they are not peculiar to any specific period or location. Despite differences in certain fundamentals the Samurai of medieval Japan, the Masai of nineteenth century East Africa, Hitler's totalitarian Germany and Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran have all been predicated on a rigid approach to male dominance and institutionalised social violence (Eisler 2002:161-162). In this they resemble ancient Babylon, Judaea and Indo-European tribes with their characteristically hierarchical and authoritarian forms of organisation. These very qualities are elevated to give them significance as norms of social governance. While violence is normal in all societies, it is its idealisation and institutionalisation that serves to maintain fixed rankings of domination. Gentler qualities of caring and compassion are accorded lip service while they are, in fact, denigrated. This is demonstrated in Soelle's (1984:51) existentialist view of manhood characterised as follows:

He functions well at work but only at work ...  
He simply *has* a body that he uses like a tool or a machine ...  
He does not live in and with his body ...

This is confirmed by Keillor:

In advanced industrial societies men are in trouble: whereas years ago 'manhood was an opportunity for achievement.' Now it is just 'a problem to overcome' (Keillor 1994). The 'guy trouble' stems from the decline of patriarchy – not 'of sexism, or misogyny, or even male domination ...' (in Volf 1996:185).

The issue here is that this man becomes a victim of the oppression he metes out to others and sacrifices his ability to demonstrate feelings (:52). Soelle describes this as ‘technocratic machismo .... Denoting the culture of the hypermasculine man whose relationships with women are based on feelings of male superiority, on domination and submission’ (:53). Man in this context is devoid of the ability to express himself through intimacy.

### 2.10.2 The Partnership (Gylanic) Model

This model is characterised by partnership relations and reveals linking diverse elements in society with no predisposition to either superiority or inferiority, equality of gender and race and leadership through ‘hierarchies of actualisation’ of human potentials which nurture and empower. It might be termed the ‘tend and befriend’ approach (Eisler & Levine 2002). Diversity in no way implies any sense of superiority or inferiority. In this model there is a high correlation with peace and harmony in society. It is morally sensitive: ‘a partnership model is the *sine qua non* of an equitable, peaceful society’ (Eisler 2005:12) where relationships are founded on ‘mutual benefit, mutual accountability, mutual empathy and caring’ (Eisler 2005:15). This is a holistic inclusive model where women adopted the roles of priestess and craftsperson. Strong correspondence is also attested within societies which adhere to the partnership model (eg. BaMbuti, !Kung, contemporary Scandinavia, [Eisler 1998:xix], and the Masai<sup>3</sup>). Clearly ‘these models transcend such important differences as time, place, religion, ethnicity and technological development’ (Eisler 1994:33) and age. Eisler & Levine (2002:25) have noted how in societies, citing the Papago Indians of Arizona, USA, where both parents have loving relationships with their children and where there is an absence of physical punishment the children develop into caring children. Two key factors are the extent to which the socially prescribed childrearing relies on empathy and

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<sup>3</sup> ‘In the Masai [mythical] story the present unhappy state of affairs, with animals and women subject to men, is contrasted with the good old days when those animals belonged to the women who were thus independently wealthy. All over the world we find these stories of the fall of woman, because the subjection of women is very widely thought to be strange and anomalous, so that it needs some explanation and/or justification. Women’s present state is contrasted with her original equality or even, in some cases, superiority’ (Cupitt 1980:152).

non-violence and the socially determined roles and relationship of women and men (Eisler & Levine 2002:41). Recent archaeological discoveries coupled with linguistic and mythological studies have revealed that these societies embraced a partnership model of society which were characterised by peace and harmony eg. Hesiod's poetry which refers to 'a golden race' which existed prior to a 'lesser race' whose god was Ares, god of war (Eisler 2002:163). It is important not to give too much weight to such evidence; yet it offers clues to the age and structure of pre-historic society. Eisler has demonstrated that in Minoan Crete the influence of the feminine in archaeological discoveries in art and a nature based spirituality giving evidence of 'a scale and ideological organisation oriented primarily to a partnership model' (Eisler 2002:164). Archaeologists Mellaart (1967) and Gimbutas (1989, 1989a) indicate that Neolithic European societies were not male dominated, that women played equal and significant roles and were particularly creative. This is reinforced in Gnostic writings of the Common Era where:

Several gnostic groups describe the divine Mother as part of an original couple. Valentinus, the teacher and poet, begins with the premise that God is essentially indescribable. But he suggests that the divine can be imagined as a dyad: consisting, in one part, of the Ineffable, the Depth, the Primal Father; and, in the other, of Grace, Silence, the Womb, and 'Mother of the All' (Pagels 1982:72-73). Despite the Gnostics' frequent ambivalence to women, they tended to support the spiritual equality of women. Also, they tended to honour those feminine qualities. Picknett (2003:80) refers to Jung's assessment of the Gnostics that 'they expressed the "other side of the mind", celebrating and encouraging the more spontaneous and emotional reactions to life that conventional Christianity sought to suppress'.

However, prior to this, contrary to what we might expect in the Old Testament, images of partnership emerge in the Hebrew concept of *ezer* ('helper' or 'help') which emphasises a relationship of mutuality and complementarity rather than patriarchal domination (Oden 1983:42). This is further exemplified in 1 Corinthians 11:7-9 where women and men

are equally necessary to each other, and God is equally necessary to both. If, in the case of one man, woman was made out of man, it should also be remembered, notes Paul, that all other men radically depend upon woman for their being, their very coming to be (:42).

Then, the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth promoted a gylanic model of human relations; he represented 'a startling, and unifying theme: a vision of the liberation of *all* humanity

through the replacement of androcratic with gylanic values' (Eisler 1998:121), of spiritual equality, mutual responsibility, compassion, gentleness, and love. In essence this was 'the gospel of a partnership society' (Eisler 1998:121cf. John4:7-27; Luke 10:38-42). He certainly 'would oppose the cult of the masculine' (Soelle 1984:56).

Patai (1990:25) suggests that '[i]n view of the general human psychologically determined predisposition to believe in and worship goddesses, it would be strange if the Hebrew-Jewish religion, which flourished for centuries in a region of intensive goddess cults, had remained immune to them'. This would appear to have been the case in ancient Israel where even in Solomon's Temple an array of shrines to male and female goddesses had been erected:

Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as his ancestor David had done. He expelled from the land the male prostitutes ... and removed all the idols. ... and burned it in the wadi Kidron; ... the shrines were allowed to remain ... (1Kings 15:11-14).

It has even been suggested that Asherah was Yahweh's female counterpart:

Recent archaeological discoveries provide both texts and pictorial representations that for the first time clearly identify 'Asherah' as the consort of Yahweh, at least in some circles in ancient Israel ... We cannot avoid the conclusion that in Israel Yahweh could be closely identified with the cult of Asherah, and in some circles the goddess was actually personified as his consort (Denver 1984:21-27).

This may account for the antipathy towards women as priests in ancient Israel in contradistinction to New Testament practise where women occupied leadership roles in the nascent church (Russell 1993:60 ff).

While Eisler operates from a feminist approach, she eschews any suggestion that feminism is related to matriarchy; this she considers another expression of domination from a feminine perspective. Eisler (2005:15) cautions that we should not confuse partnership with collaboration because evil forces can collaborate, even within a Christian context eg. the Inquisition, Crusades, burning heretics at the stake at many periods including the Reformation. Further, it has to be noted that no society is devoid of violence. However, we need to adopt a more inclusive definition of violence which is more pervasive than the crude use of physical force:

Violence includes all actions and everything that restrict, damage or destroy the integrity of things, living beings or people, or of cultural and social entities through superior power (Haring 1997:266) – the ‘violation of personhood’ (Brown, quoted in Desjardins 1997:99)’ (in Punt 1999:263 n.2).

Violence is not understood here as an abstract concept, but in practical terms: to damage, humiliate, torture, kill and destroy with intent ... (Punt 1999:265 n.7). Neill (1976:93), in general agrees:

Violence involves the exercise of restraint upon a human person to ensure that he does what of his own volition he does not wish to do, that he accepts a situation in which he does not wish to be, or that he endures loss or suffering to which he has not himself consented.

Historically, much violence done to women by men has been psychological as well as physical. The issue at stake is the idealisation and institutionalisation of violence as a norm of society, common to the dominator model of society (Eisler 2002:162).

Within Scripture, there is an argument for the required association of violent (sacred?) sacrifice with God’s intervention (Glaser 1998:39). However, ‘*Christian feminists have revealed that the Bible provides basis enough to question the “sacred” nature of violence*’ (Glaser 1998:39, n.1). This might imply that in, eg. animal sacrifice, ‘God was there between the severed pieces of the broken animal *trying to bring those pieces back together*’ (Glaser 1998:39) as God would also be in the divisions amongst his people caused by conflict and the negative use of power. God’s preference is clearly for justice and mercy (Hos 6:6; Micah 6:8). Glaser (1998:47) challenges many of our scriptural assumptions about God: ‘whose unitive presence threatens our categories, our assumptions, our sense of differentiation and of power’ for violence – even ritualised- does not attract real intimacy with anyone, let alone a non-violent God (:48).

This relates directly to the issue of spiritual violence which is exercised by the church in a sub-liminal sense:

Spiritual abuse is the wounding, shaming, and degrading of someone’s spiritual worth by a perpetrator intent on taking control. Spiritual abuse is any attack (subtle or blatant, unintended or intentional) on our belovedness and sacred worth as children of God (Glaser 1998:31).

This type of violence is felt sharply by those on the margins of life and society, by minorities or those with little power. It is particularly insidious because God may be invoked as its source. In a very real sense all violence is a form of spiritual abuse<sup>4</sup>.

We now consider the different historical periods in which the models predominated.

### 2.10.3 Technological Phase Changes and Cultural Shifts

These changes did not take place accidentally. They were the result of ‘*cultural shifts* and *technological phase changes*’ (Eisler 2002:164). This is clearly reminiscent of Kuhn’s (1970) paradigm theory given expression in religion and theology by Bosch (1991) and Kung (1994) where:

[a] few individuals begin to perceive reality in ways *qualitatively* different from their predecessors and contemporaries .... The small group of pioneers senses that the existing scientific model is riddled with anomalies and is unable to solve emerging problems. Then they begin to search for a new model or theoretical structure, or ... paradigm ... ready to replace the old .... As the existing paradigm increasingly blurs, the new one begins to attract more and more scholars, until eventually the original, problem ridden paradigm is abandoned (Bosch 1991:184 cf. Kruger 2006:890).

Much earlier in the twentieth century, Dodd (1938:24) put it rather more crudely, ‘History consists of cycles of growth and decay’. This is reflected by Eisler (2002:165) as ‘rather than consisting of a series of abrupt and discrete developments, each phase change is itself a gradual process where at first isolated new nucleations eventually culminate in a qualitative system change’. There may well be a considerable period of overlap before the new paradigm is firmly established and the former completely disappears as we shall see in a summary of technological phase changes in the course of history.

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Being neither a vegetarian nor a pacifist, I can hardly assert such a belief uncritically (though killing plant life is also a form of violence). There is a Native American ritual of thanking the spirit of a tree or of an animal for giving up its life for the building of a canoe or the feeding of the tribe, and such a practice seems to demonstrate spiritual respect rather than abuse. But we might find little genuine spiritual respect in the ancient Hebrew practice of devoting their enemies as a sacrifice to God, or the Christian Inquisition burning witches and heretics at the stake purportedly for the salvation of their souls’ (Glaser 1998:32, n5).



### **2.10.3.1 The Pre-Historic Age**

Eisler's model defines several paradigms beginning with an initial hominid Paleolithic period distinguished by the production of the first tools and artifacts produced by humans, along with the development of language. This was an age of human co-evolution where woman emerges as the food gatherer in a largely vegetarian culture. She also emerges as the source of the powers that determine life and death. Eisler (2002:165) cites Zihlman (1978) and Tanner's (1981) research to demonstrate that the earliest technologies were developed in the form of containers to gather and store food, and to soften or mash it in the early form of the mortar and pestle. Hence we may note the development of a smaller jaw and teeth and a larger cranium for a larger brain and larynx for a larger voice box necessitated by the facilitation of language. In religious terms, there was no trace of a father figure in any of the Paleolithic periods. The major deity was the 'Great Goddess whose core functions were 'life-giving, death-wielding, regeneration and renewal' (Gimbutas 1989:316). Further, that '[t]he persistence of the Goddess worship for more than 20,000 years from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic [ages] and beyond, is shown by the continuity of a variety of a series of conventionalized images' (Gimbutas 1989a: Preface).

### **2.10.3.2 The Agrarian Age**

This was followed by a Neolithic or initial intensive agrarian age which emerged around 10,000 BCE where there is evidence of developed religious, political and artistic imagery focused on feminine anthropomorphic characteristics as well as providing a link between the Palaeolithic (25,000 year old) and early Neolithic ages with their transformation of motherly pregnant goddess images into a Great Goddess whose womb is the source and destination of all life. Life was holistically discerned and 'pre-industrial agricultural rites show a very definite mystical connection between the fertility of the soil and the creative force of woman' (Gimbutas 1989:141). The concept of the 'fruitful womb' developed '[b]ecause the Neolithic Goddess had the ability to bring forth all life from her own body, she must have been also endowed with the power to nurture the seeds of the

earth' (Gimbutas 1989:141). These were not matriarchal cultures but peaceful, creative, co-operative and life-enhancing ventures between men and women working in partnership. This was a period marked by the further cultivation of agricultural stability with the husbandry of domestic animals rather than hunting, the development of trade and communications and complex religious and democratic governmental organizations. The Turkish settlements at Hacilar and at Catal Hayuk offer evidence that male dominance was not the norm; rather men and women worked together to further the common good. However, 'the one thing which is clearly indicated in the religion of Hacilar is the predominance of woman' with 'the ability to procreate life, sustain and nourish it' (Mellaart 1970:170). In religion, the feminine represents 'two aspects of the deity, that of a nubile girl and that of the mother'. Statuettes discovered in archeological excavations reveal and represent aspects of the life of the goddess: 'the maiden, the mature matron, the pregnant mother, the mother with her child, and the Mistress of Animals, the goddess of nature and wild life (Mellaart 1970:170).

This approach was not sustainable in less fertile areas where nomadic pastoralism became the norm. The resulting mass migrations of the marginalized caused by drought and desertification produced a significant change in cultural and technological evolutionary patterns. A Cretan civilisation developed from around 6,000BCE as the result of a migration from the area of modern Turkey. This early period of Cretan civilization was distinguished by a Goddess religion and an agrarian technology. During the next 4,000 years a distinctive civilisation grew in technology, arts and trade. Another significant feature of this period was the equality that existed amongst the population. There is no evidence of a poor sector of society: 'the standard of living – even of the peasants – seems to have been high. None of the homes found so far have suggested very poor living conditions. No doubt the long period of "peaceful co-existence" benefited the country' (Platon 1968:178). There was a unity of spirit and sensitivity towards the environment and others that contributed to ecological survival, and power was exercised in terms of the responsibility of motherhood and social trusteeship. By this Bronze Age or middle Minoan period, the Goddess was being supplanted by aggressive male deities

except in Crete where it survived into the Mycenaean period in the fourteenth century BCE:

[T]he Minoan deities seem to have been confined to a few figures personifying the creative and ruling forces in nature .... There probably were two chief creative figures, the powerful male god and the fertile mother ... who personified the cycle of death and rebirth in nature .... Goddesses as the productive deities, were considered the most important (Mellaart 1970:182; cf. Gimbutas 1989:152).

In the Kurgan or Indo-European context (4,000-2,500 BCE), these were aggressive and male-dominated cultures based on the power to dominate and destroy. This culture was patriarchal, stratified, mobile, and war oriented and came to be superimposed on all Europe with the exception of the southern and western extremities. The female deity (Goddess Creatrix) was replaced with male divinities. During the Bronze Age, the partnership model was co-opted into the new cultural system and thereby exploited. It acted as a 'periodic attractor' (Eisler 2002:167)<sup>5</sup>. The appearance of bronze weaponry, no longer used primarily for tools, religious and ornamental purposes, but for destructive purposes marked a significant transition from a partnership mode of existence to a dominator mode (Eisler 1998:47). This coincided with the violent incursions of the barbarian Kurgans<sup>6</sup> from around 4,300 -2,800 BCE. The role of women underwent a fundamental and virtually permanent transformation. The situation may be summarized as follows:

While the attractor of the partnership model becomes even stronger, the scale of violence of androcratic regressions also vastly increases – largely due to bigger populations and more 'advanced' technics of destruction (Eisler 2002:167).

### **2.10.3.3 The Industrial Age**

An industrial age followed, from the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century CE, and the emergent advances in technology and machinery served to bolster the dominator

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<sup>5</sup> eg. the growth of early Christianity based on the partnership teachings of Jesus gave way to the rigid male-dominated authoritarian and violent androcratic model characterized by the Inquisition and witch-hunting. In another context '(inferior) Maori cultural transformation implies transformation of the dominant Pakeha societal context as well (Fitzsimons & Smith 2000:26).

<sup>6</sup> These were steppe pastoralists who swept across prehistoric Europe. They were not the original Europeans; they were an Indo-European or Aryan people. They followed a patriarchal form of culture exemplified in heroic warrior gods.

paradigm through weapons of destruction. Eisler (2002:167) cites the studies of cultural historian Theodore Roszak (1969) and social psychologist David McClelland (1975) to suggest that during this era there was a renewed emphasis on violence and domination, particularly with regard to men over women foreshadowing a time of war and aggression. This was accompanied with developments in technology which would support or advance such warlike motives. Thus linked to the dominator model of social organization its intrinsic injustice is viewed as both natural and moral. The origins of this model can be traced back to the Babylonian myth *Enuma Elish* in which the male god Marduk creates the universe by dismembering the body of the female goddess Tiamat. This model is characterized by colonialism and racism. This is related to considerations of power in relation to knowledge, for:

Knowledge can be applied in order to achieve power, or power may be used to prevent the acquisition of knowledge, or knowledge might liberate us from the effects of power, but power cannot contribute constructively to the achievement of knowledge. This view rests on three features ascribed to the notion of power: that it is possessed and exercised by specific agents; that it operates on our representations but not on the world represented; and that it is primarily repressive (Fitzsimons & Smith 2000:29).

Here, we must note first that, in essence, power is neutral. In this instance, the authors are referring to a negative use of power by the strong over the weak, and particularly by men over women. The with-holding of education from women for centuries was premised on the male assumption that they did not need to be educated to fulfill the limited roles assigned to them by men in a male dominated world. The beginning of the liberation of women and poor people was the result of education being made available.

However, it was during this period ie. from the Enlightenment, when the same technological advances were also beginning to destabilize entrenched patterns and structures. A succession of social movements began to challenge these stereotyped patterns of domination including social and economic injustice, colonialism and the assertion by women of their full humanity.

#### **2.10.3.4 The Nuclear/Electronic/Biochemical Age**

The nuclear/electronic/biochemical age began in the mid-twentieth century. This is a highly technological era which equals and may even surpass the power of natural forces. Its ability to subdue the environment and destroy any opposing forces is frightening and has led to renewed efforts to reintroduce a partnership paradigm. The emerging new paradigm has challenged colonialism, racism, totalitarian and communist ideologies and threats to the environment and is marked by a new scientific model which emphasizes the linking of all forms of life on earth. It also rejects institutionalized intimate violence such as family murder, rape, wife beating and child abuse. This has put tremendous pressure on the ubiquitous dominator model which is responding through the escalation of violence at intra- and international levels. There is a concentration of economic and political power in the hands of right wing male elites and a resurgence of right wing theologies which bolster and justify crude demonstrations of power. The rise of so-called fundamentalism is a classic expression of the dominator model.

#### **2.10.3.5 The Human Actualisation or Extinction Phase**

The human race at the present time stands at a critical juncture of history:

Today, we are at a level of technological development that guided by a partnership cognitive cultural map could lead to an era when the culminating use of human creativity and technology could be the realization of our unique human potentials. But there is another possibility: that a dominator cognitive cultural map will at our level of technological development lead to the human extinction phase, the end of our adventure on this earth (Eisler 2002:170).

People are using ... new opportunities to make their own global connections and are no longer satisfied with second-hand experience of the wider world. This is accompanied in Western culture by disenchantment with large, formal institutions and a lifestyle which finds social expression in informal and transitory networking. Concomitant to this is suspicion and fear of long-term commitments and a clear preference for direct experience and immediately demonstrable results (Strategic Commitments 2001-2010, Ross to all overseas staff, 6 July 2001, DPP).

That is, as history has revealed, dominator systems have limits of tenure before they disintegrate. While it is impossible to determine what the outcome can be at such a

juncture of ‘intense systems disequilibrium’ (Eisler 2002:170), it is possible to predict which factors might produce desired outcomes and which may arrest the movement towards global destruction. Eisler’s theory depends on the rectification of unequal gender relations (it is genderholistic cf. Eisler 1995:33), but more factors than these will have to be taken into account. For instance the current move towards including more women in senior government, administrative and judicial positions is only part of addressing the problem of forging a new society as can be seen in South Africa. Speaking at the World Social Forum 2007 in Nairobi, ‘The Archbishop [Tutu] said if women were to take over and let their feminine characteristics take over, the world would see the peace it wanted’ (AACC 2007:2). Racism and colonialism were the result of more than male domination of females. There are certain institutionalised systemic problems that will have to be addressed if unequal relations are to be dealt with in their entirety. An important contributor to the possibility of transformation is the development of systems stability and systems change. However, Eisler sees hope for:

all through recorded history, and particularly during periods of social instability, the gylanic model has continued to act as a much weaker but persistent ‘periodic’ attractor’ (1998:137).

An example of a contemporary experiment which seems to accord with the partnership model can be seen in modern Scandinavian countries such as Norway, Finland and Sweden which have attempted to evolve a more just economic system, the creation of the first peace academies through a conviction in the value of non-violent conflict resolution, and a more gender-balanced society. The partnership model is exemplified in the Norwegian Industrial Democracy project (Eisler 1994:34, cf. Eisler 1987a). Again, there are men’s groups in the USA which have modeled themselves on the consciousness-raising approach of the women’s movement where men are analyzing their personal lifestyles and experiences and histories in a political context and are developing alternative lifestyles which challenge the traditional roles assigned to both men and women (Soelle 1984:57). These groups are all premised in the formation of community around a common commitment, purpose, mission and vision.

Here, we can note that there is a greater likelihood of justice prevailing where a sense of community exists:

When the ‘integrative systems’, ... are visible and strong. People then feel bonds of fellowship and empathy with others, and the poverty of the poor is seen as a disgrace by the rich [cf. chapter 2.10.3.2 above]. ... War, whether international or internal, tends to destroy these preconditions of the dynamics of increasing justice. It creates enemies and enmities, it destroys the larger sense of community, it destroys the sense of common humanity. In order to justify our own violence we have to deny humanity to its victims. There is a fair amount of evidence that the most just societies that we see around the world, that are accepted by their citizens as reasonably just without strong dissent, are those that have been created by the slow growth of the sense of community, that on the whole have abjured violence ... (Boulding 1986:526-527).

This demonstrates the basic difference between partnership ‘integrative systems’ and dominator or disintegrative systems.

If a new style of community can be achieved by producing new cognitive maps of past, present and future which takes account of all members of humanity and every aspect of our lives, political, economic and personal, then we will have a greater understanding of a systems approach to the study of cultural evolution with less emphasis on violence and exploitation and more on fulfilling harmonious relations which will the liberation of human potential.

### **2.10.3.6 Evaluation of Eisler’s Cultural Transformation Theory**

The differentiation of the dominator and partnership models may be too neat in the context of reality. As we have seen, there may be differences in time sequence and geographical location with regard to phase changes. For instance the Industrial Age may have occurred in Europe and North America during the eighteenth centuries, but did it have the same impact globally, especially in African nations? Recent work (Duncan 2003; Scott; Comaroff & Comaroff 1991, 1997) has demonstrated that even when a particular model is in the ascendant, there may well be pockets of resistance which defy simplistic interpretations and transformations. These resisters may indicate the beginning of a phase change or they may just constitute one response within a phase to a particular

occurrence or development. Further, the issue of the exercise of power is not the preserve of those who adhere or conform to the dominator model. Power can be exercised effectively within the partnership model though, in this case, it is negotiated through relationships, rather than imposed. This form of power does not depend on crude force but is more subtle in that it may be exercised imperceptibly through being distributed (shared out) among all the role players in a particular context giving each an investment in a positive outcome. This may result from the actions of persons acting in freedom.

However, there is a lacuna in Eisler's thinking here for while the gylanic model can act as a periodic attractor for societal change, she does not sufficiently emphasise the conditions which provide for a resurgence of the dominator model. This can occur when a society based in the partnership paradigm becomes susceptible to corruption, weakness, vulnerability and insecurity; history yields many examples of such, including Kings David and Saul and much more recently, President Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

If a partnership based society can be achieved by producing new cognitive maps of past, present and future which takes account of all members of humanity and every aspect of our lives, political, economic and personal, then we will have a greater understanding of a systems approach to the study of cultural evolution with less emphasis on violence and exploitation and more on fulfilling harmonious relations which will encourage the liberation of human potential. Eisler has adopted a feminist approach in her work to demonstrate the inclusive nature of human societal existence. This resonates with a feminist theological approach which also offers opportunities for inclusivity.

Eisler's model offers useful insights into an interpretation of history. While we might wish to challenge some of her generalizations, there are a number of interesting features in her approach. It may be difficult to apply her macro-paradigmatic theory to all historical periods of shorter duration although we may not discount the appearance of periodic attractor micro-phase changes within macro-phase changes; yet, there are possibilities of applying it as a hermeneutical tool nonetheless. Her model basically focuses on how power is used – over or with others. It is gender-holistic, thus making it



more inclusive. It is consistent with other work in the field eg, paradigm changes. Perhaps, more importantly, it offers insight into how destructive our patterns of behaviour can be in a time of potential self-annihilation, especially if we note how quickly periodic attractors arise as a society becomes more technologically sophisticated. It is easier to discern the characteristics of models often than to discern total phase changes, particularly within brief historical time spans.

In terms of mission history, it is difficult to know how far Eisler's model may apply since her studies have covered millennia and, therefore cover the long view of history. However, we may make some preliminary remarks. Modern mission history has a history of little more than 200 years so the time scale involved is minimal. It falls within Eisler's Industrial, Nuclear/Electronic/ Biochemical and Human Actualisation or Extinction Phases. During this period, the *androcratic* model has predominated; however, the *gylanic* model has acted as a 'periodic attractor' and persists as such. Consequently, it is not possible to discern long term trends or changes.

If we consider the modern missionary movement as having begun at the outset of the nineteenth century, we note that this was during the Industrial Age when the dominator model predominated. We can see this in the early approach to missions and indigenous peoples where traditional cultures were destroyed along with traditional societal leadership structures, western education and religious forms were imposed. We also note the imposition of western technological innovations.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, with the genesis of the ecumenical movement at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, 1910, we note attempts to replace this model of missionary operation with the concept of 'partnership'. This should not be seen to imply adoption of Eisler's partnership or *gylanic* model necessarily although there are significant and interesting similarities. Research will indicate that the commitment to partnership was more apparent than real in terms of achievements

throughout the twentieth century although there was particularly strong support from those committed to both the missionary and ecumenical movements.

Evidence shows that ‘younger’ churches were more committed to the partnership ideal than the ‘older’ churches which had more to lose especially in terms of power and control. This is clear in an in-depth examination of the Church of Scotland’s response and approach to mission work. However, in recent experience it emerges that the greater the degree of vulnerability and insecurity of this older church, in this case resulting from falling membership and reducing resources of finance ie. substantial regressions, the greater the tendency for the dominator model to act as a periodic attractor against the partnership model and to impose western solutions on partners throughout the world without consultation. This militates against and actively prevents the achievement of human actualization on the part of younger churches.

Eisler has adopted a feminist approach in her work to demonstrate the inclusive nature of human societal existence. This resonates with a feminist theological approach which also offers opportunities for inclusivity.

## **2.11 Feminist Theological Perspective**

Letty Russell (1993) has offered a feminist partnership model of the Church using the concept of *koinonia* as partnership. This Church is inclusive of those who enter into partnership with those who live on the margins of society on the basis of feminist advocacy of the full humanity of women with men (1993:34). This partnership was exemplified in 1 Cor 10:21-30 through the sharing of the cup (chalice cf. Eisler 1987) and bread, demonstrating Christ’s presence which we manifest through a partnership of service. This service includes male advocacy on behalf of women: ‘Feminists are not necessarily biologically female and do not exhibit any particular gender-stereotyped form of behaviour that we usually call “feminine”’ (Russell 1993:22). They are what Fiorenza (1984:xiv) has described as ‘self-identified women and women-identified men’. Men may also be involved in a struggle to free themselves from a patriarchal self-definition:

and to make their own “brother choice,” they too have the possibility of “sister choice,” of joining women in forging alternative ways of being embodied selves who are able to partner themselves and one another on the liberation journey (Russell 1993:186).

Adopting the view of Gatens, Volf (1996:175) affirms:

While it is possible, for instance, for a man to be ‘feminine’, she argues that “there must be qualitative difference between femininity ‘lived’ by women and that ‘lived’ by men” (Gatens 1996:9). It is the different bodies of a woman and a man, along with social valorization of male and female bodies, that makes that difference.

Scripture is helpful here. Citing 1 Corinthians 11:8-12, Volf (himself citing relevant authorities) emphasizes that the new life founded in Christ is predicated on the bodily creation of humans. Woman is derivative of man (begetting) and man comes into being through woman (birthing): ‘this difference grounds the interdependence of men and women’ (1996:186). Volf (1996:187) stresses the importance of ‘self-giving’ for all relationships, but particularly as it is based in the relationships within the Trinity where ‘distinct persons are internally constituted by the indwelling of other persons in them’.

Ephesians 5:25-26 further develops this idea as mutual affirmation as it:

means the opening of the self for the other, letting the other find space in the self – so much so that love for the other, who remains the other and is not transformed into an inessential extension of the self, can be experienced as love of the self (v.28). ... And it is through the power of self-giving that a new community of men and women will emerge, in which distinct but dynamic gender identities that are ‘not without’ the other will be fashioned and refashioned in peace (Volf 1996:189).

Consequently, it is important that, whatever role men may adopt, what is the most relevant role for men is the empowerment of women to be their own advocates in order that they can critique patriarchy in a creative attempt to construct a theology based in a paradigm of community or shared partnership, and vice versa. Christian tradition is too restrictive in this context where ‘worship of the Goddess or another form or spirituality is more liberating and freeing for them as women’ (Russell 1993:39). However, Russell points out that a feminist approach is committed to far more than a feminist goal for its view of the Church ‘is committed to justice for all marginalised persons and not just women, and liberation ecclesiology is not truly about liberation if it is not committed to liberation of all women together with men (:43). Therefore the feminist agenda is both holistic and traditional and embraces Eisler’s partnership model. This is necessitated by

the persistence of the traditional patriarchal hierarchical form of church organization. The Enlightenment provided an opportunity for a re-evaluation of the traditionally accepted static structures of society. Contemporary society faces a greater threat from its own historical power than by the natural forces of the universe, and is challenged to face up to issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

A key feature of this ministry is relationships, nurturing and partnership rather than functions which normally lead to hierarchies and domination through the exercise of power and authority. Feminist styles of leadership reflect friendship, community, mutuality, flexibility, intimacy and passion. They focus on advocacy of the full humanity of women together with men, standing together and exercising authority jointly. Power is distributed instead of accumulated; it empowers and is exemplified in the Girl Scout movement in the USA where there is:

a weblike structure in which ever-widening circles of staff and volunteers are woven together by multiple lines of communication, and decision making flows around and across and not up and down a ladder of authority .... The authority of this form of leadership comes from connection rather than from position at the top, and staff people work in teams rather than competing with each other (Russell 1993:57).

This resonates with Jesus' leadership style as *diakonia* which challenges patriarchal domination and privileges the vocation of women, and also with Eisler's partnership model. Paul also adopts this tradition based in the freedom of persons as a community which lives beyond traditional divisions:

Now, in Christ Jesus, all of you are sons and daughters of God through faith. All of you who were given to Christ through baptism, have put on Christ. Here there is no longer any difference between Jew or Greek, or between slave or freed, or between man or woman: but all of you are one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:26-28).

Baptism has now become the criterion for membership in the Christian movement.

Secular distinctions are no longer relevant for 'if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old had passed away; see, everything has become new!' (2Cor 5:17). Paul has gone beyond cultural-historical interpretations which have become outdated as a result of Jesus' expression of God's love (Oden 1983:43). These are Paul's 'grand narratives', not to be confused with the localized prohibitions on the role of women participating in the life of the Christian community at Corinth.

Citing her own work and that of theologian Phyllis Trible (1989:14-25, 34 in Russell 1993:67 ff.), Russell (:67-70) defines four 'clues' which emerge from the life of Miriam in Exodus 1,2 and 15 and Numbers 12 and 20:

*leaders are made for people and not people for leaders;  
where leadership is present, community happens;  
leadership makes new naming present;  
leadership in a patriarchal world is at best multicultural and at worst leads to martyrdom.*

This concept of partnership is demonstrative of communalism in action and is entirely consistent with Jesus' diaconic approach to ministry and the approach of the Early Church and Paul's teaching. It is also consistent with the comprehensive concept of *shalom* as salvation whose constituents are peace and harmony, personal and communal wholeness, justice and righteousness which is given expression in Psalm 85:1-10 where twin motifs of liberation and blessing (cf. Westermann 1979:32-34) are demonstrative of God's promised hope towards which partners join with God in the work of the New Creation. Justice is a relational concept which marks out a covenant people, and faithfulness to the covenant is required of them (Micah 6:8) in a positive sense as partakers in a renewed creation (John 17:14).

The theme of liberation refers to God's past action on behalf of his people and provides the agenda for those who opt to act in partnership with him in the task of the New Creation which is effected through blessing his entire creation (Rom 8:22-23). This is God's salvation as *shalom*, and participation in it is the responsibility of human beings who are God's covenant people and who are required by the terms of the covenant to aid the needy and oppressed for justice and righteousness are also constituents of the New Creation. This requires a transformation of the world as we know it into a society marked by the necessity of conversion marked by a critique and rejection of patriarchal understandings of reality; social transformation as a catalyst for effecting God's justice on earth; justice is a process towards freedom in Gods kingdom.

Kingdom metaphors reflect domestic images of the household of God as the New Creation: 'If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a

house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand' (Mark 3:24-25). This stands in marked contrast to Paul's assertion: 'So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old had passed away; see, everything has become new!' (2Cor 5:17). This is reaffirmed in Gal 3:27-28 where Paul rejects the old creation with its outmoded forms of domination. In Eucharistic terms, new meaning is given to the shedding of blood in the new partnership (community) where the predominant male imagery relating to blood sacrifice is contrasted with women's role in 'shedding blood to give life' (Russell 1993:143). This points to the difference in emphasis between regarding the eucharist in masculine imagery as a memorial of Christ's sacrificial death and in feminist imagery as a source of new resurrection life! When Paul talks about the sacrament (1Cor 1:11; 11:22), one interpretation (Wire in Russell 1993:145) is that Paul is addressing Chloe's people, women prophets, who view the sacrament as 'an eschatological feast of resurrection in which they are already free from the domination of their husbands to be partners in Christ to eat and drink together rather than at home .... They are ... already living their new life in Christ's Spirit' free for others.

To talk of sacramental fellowship is to refer to sacramental hospitality and this is not restricted to the actual celebration of the eucharist but is extended outwards towards any who engage in a guest-host relationship be they stranger or friend. Koenig (1985:10) describes hospitality a 'partnership with strangers' and the catalyst for creating partnerships in the gospel'. This is *philoxenia*, the opposite of *xenophobia* which refers to a detestation of strangers.

## **2.12 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the nature of general contemporary history and has provided a basis for a consideration of the nature of history, objectivity, subjectivity, progress, the goal of history and what may be considered to constitute contemporary history. The purpose of history gives meaning to the past and present and inaugurates the future. Bultmann (1957) and others offer a religious aspect in terms of projecting a vision into the future. The paradigm of ecumenical history has a relevance for our topic which

focuses on Christian mission history. This reveals the essential identity of the purpose of mission and unity and broadens the perspective of Christian history. This is significant for a study of the Church of Scotland which has a proud record of ecumenical and missionary activity and involvement.

Christian history proceeds towards a determined goal, the kingdom of God. It cannot be separated from secular history since its essence and sources are similar despite the contextual nature of each situation.

Eisler's (1987) work on cultural transformation theory has produced two models of human history. Contemporary history is represented by the dominator model founded on conflict and domination. Yet, her work seeks to reintroduce the partnership model which existed in pre-historic times and was based on equality and co-operation. This gylanic model is perceived as a threat by the dominator model which has to reassert its power. Eisler's approach is inclusive and multi-disciplinary. It is not exclusive as can be seen from Soelle's (1984) work. Eisler's desire to establish a model based on harmony in society is consistent with a Christian approach to history. This may help to understand recent developments in mission policy and offer a way forward that may integrate younger churches into a truly viable and creative relationship of partnership. This approach is further developed from a feminist theological perspective in the work of Letty Russell (1993) who adopts the inclusive model of *koinonia* as partnership with the aim of elevating and empowering the marginalised which transcends gender difference to promote the values of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

The ground is now prepared for the development of an understanding of partnership in mission.

## CHAPTER 3      The Concept of Partnership in Mission

In this chapter it is necessary to examine the terms which came to have general currency in missiological thinking and are relevant to our study. As with any expressions, the terms mission, partnership and partnership in mission were and still are susceptible to changes in meaning at different times and in different contexts as we shall see here and in chapter four.

### 3.1      Definition of Mission

Mission is God's work in reconciling the whole of the created order in love, justice and integrity (Eph 1:10) to Godself in which human beings are called and invited to participate by being sent through the love of Christ (Matt 5:43-45) that all might achieve life in all its fullness (John 10:10). It is globally oriented and involves a partnership between the triune God and humans who constitute the Church, of sharing of the Word that is love in a practical way and the resources of the universe which ultimately belong to God who created it:

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;  
for he founded it ... (Ps 24:1).

This view of mission has implications for mission practice for 'the truth that God-given resources must be used to realize God's purpose of reconciling all things through Jesus Christ' (CWM 1996:293). This raises interesting questions concerning the wealthy of the world since part of the responsibility of wealth is to account for how it was acquired, particularly if it came through exploitation of those nations who are now the subjects of mission and is now used to promote power in relationships.

Mission is an exercise in vulnerability as we share in God's reconciling purpose which was achieved by Godself becoming weak and helpless, particularly in the sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth. This displaces the values of precedence, superiority and domination with those of generosity, vulnerability and open and inclusive love (Green 1991:220). In Eisler's terminology, the dominator is replaced by the partner. Vulnerability has its proto-type in



Christ's ministry where he was stripped naked in order to demonstrate the God who comes to us divested of all cultural, ethnic and religious accoutrements. This equally applies to a missionary who:

is essentially a social martyr, cut off from his roots, his background, his culture. He is destined to walk forever a stranger in a strange land. He must be stripped as naked as a human being can be, down to the very texture of his being (O'Donovan 1978:193).

Mission is the place of identification with the marginalized (Luke 4:18-19). He stood alongside those who 'suffered outside the city gate .... Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. ... Never neglect to show kindness and to share what you have with others; for such are the sacrifices which God approves' (Heb 13:12-13,16). Because it is selfless, mission is authentic going beyond our human capabilities resulting from *koinonia* with God manifested in a community of caring which expresses the love of God through his Son, the Word enfleshed.

Mission is primarily an activity of the local church: 'No one else has the mandate and is capable to inculturate or contextualize the gospel' (Matthey 1999:107). That is why in the field of foreign missions, it is important that both mission and unity as well as older and younger churches must work in concert.

Despite all this:

Mission has often been understood and practiced as a current flowing only in a single direction: from north to south, from rich to poor, from the powerful to the powerless, from male to female, from white to black, from 'Christian' civilization to godless cultures. This reduces mission to something that some people do to others, rather than a common sharing in God's mission of love to the whole world (WARC 2004:7).

The concept of partnership aimed to remedy these Manichean dichotomies and relate to mission in Jesus' way. But, first we must consider the wider implications of mission in its relationship to ecumenism.

### **3.1.1 Mission in Unity**

The term 'mission in unity' refers to the process of witnessing together in unity and co-operation in order to fulfill the dominical desire for unity (John 17:21). It seeks to avoid denominational rivalry in the face of many current challenges and is a result of a growing

awareness of the need to participate in mission together in mutual accountability. This emphasis is derived from the diversity in unity which exists in the Trinity: ‘There is a dynamic among the three persons of the Trinity that at one and the same time respects the integrity of the work that each has to do while creating a community of belonging and interdependence’ (Green 1991:222). This idea is basic to an understanding of ecclesiological relationships for in essential being, God reaches out through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit towards human beings and the world: ‘where renewal is being experienced in ways that hold together evangelization, justice and holiness, there is almost invariably a renewal in Trinitarian faith’ (Green 1991:222). Mission in unity represents:

‘... the search for ways of witnessing together in unity and co-operation – despite differing ecclesiologies - within the context of the burning challenges facing churches today “so that the world may believe” (John 17:21) avoiding any form of confessional rivalry or competition (*Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today*, WCC 2005:64).

‘The mission of the church in the power of the Spirit is to call people into communion with God, with one another and with creation. In so doing, the church must honour the intrinsic and inseparable relationship between mission and unity. The church has the responsibility to live out the unity for which Jesus prayed for his people “that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe” (John 17:21) (WCC 2005:66).

Clearly, mission is an activity that we do *with* others, and not to or for them, in company with God and others. It is an activity which expresses solidarity beyond doctrine, liturgy and polity as the community faces particular challenges that would diminish God’s people through exploitation and oppression, with the ultimate aim of bringing people to acknowledge Christ as Lord of their lives. It is an exercise in ‘bold humility’ (Bosch in Saayman & Kritzinger 1996).

This necessarily raises the issue of power which may be used in various ways. We are indebted to Foucault (1980:89) for his insight that: ‘Power is neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised and ... only exists in action’. For Foucault, action is more significant than the nature or character of power. Power operates through relationships and institutions in society rather than as a system of domination of groups over others. Foucault’s particular interest was in the production of knowledge through the exercise of power. Knowledge is a vital prerequisite for power to operate. In mission, this concept of power destabilizes the traditional exercise of power through the domination of uni-directional outreach and constrains more innovative forms of missionary engagement including

reciprocity, mutuality and appropriate administrative structures and programmes. Misuse of power is inappropriate in a relationship of partnership.

## **3.2 Definition of Partnership**

Partnership is more than we presently know as networks of co-operation. It is a higher degree of mutual commitment. The word partnership invites us to think of issues such as: shareholders where there is shared responsibility and shared vision; mutual dependency based on quality performance, interdependency, cooperation and trust; mutual interest in success with commitment to each other, common cause and interest in mutual success; and quality marked by consistency, quality control, standards' (Sogard 1996:204). Lyon (1978:3) suggests it is 'giving and receiving within the one body of Christ' of what is held in common making partnership the core of mission for 'the biblical records challenge us to partnership and relationships' of interdependence (Sogard 1996:205, cf. Verkuyl 1978:312). This has been achieved in some quarters through co-operative giving and multi-lateral decision-making eg. The Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM), CEVAA and CWM (see below chapters 4.11.2, 4.12). This is both a creative and productive form of partnership.

### **3.2.1 Partner**

Inherent in the term 'partner' is a certain understanding of equality, although this need not necessarily be the case for "partnership" requires that there be genuinely autonomous and independent "partners" ((Pratt 1993:311) and that does not necessitate equality. Partners in law, business or medical practice may have different degrees of investment in the partnership eg 60/40%. However, there is a working relationship, normally marked by respect and trust. For our purpose, a partner in a younger church may be a recipient of personnel and funding as a result of the partner relationship. There is clearly a serious discrepancy in relationships between younger and older churches when it comes to material resources. Yet, with regard to spiritual and other resources the balance might be more equal although it may be tipped in

favour of the younger church. Bowers (1997:248-249) has suggested that the term ‘accompaniment’ might be more appropriate since it expresses more fully:

the nature of the relationship between churches of the north and those of the south. When people accompany one another, they walk together, supporting and encouraging one another, and sharing the same experience. The term implies care and mutual respect, but not necessarily equality.

Philip Potter preferred the term ‘companion’ for ‘the one who eats bread with me’ (Menzel & Muller 1997:340). However, the term had a secular origin.

### **3.2.2 The Origin of the Term in Political Discourse**

Bauerochse (2001:88ff.) ably demonstrates the emergence of the term ‘partnership’ in British colonial discourse to describe a process whereby a measure of autonomy was granted to colonies while retaining a significant degree of control over their affairs. As was to become the case in mission discourse, the concept that came to be designated as ‘partnership’ underwent several mutations and there was a degree of inter-relatedness in the use of the expression. With colonial policy, there was a level of planned organization in the change of status of the colonies. As the relationships altered, a series of terms came into and passed from use including ‘dominions’, ‘trusteeship’, ‘indirect rule’ ‘paramountcy’ and ‘dual policy’. ‘Partnership’ appears from 1942 as responsible self-government of the British colonies became a distinct probability. This is five years before the term is used at the Willingen meeting of the International Missionary Conference. As was often the case, the exact meaning of the expression was somewhat vague:

This woolly term has been interpreted in an astonishing number of different ways and every individual has been free to say that the word meant what he wished it to mean, and the interpretations have differed so widely that the term “partnership” has to some of us become practically meaningless. Also, sir, to the African it has become suspect as “vacant chaff well meant for grain” (JS Moffatt, Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia [Zambia], 29 July 1954, in Warren 1956:106).

Yet, partnership was meant to convey something of the idea of a reformation in relationships. Partnership was used to express ‘dual policy’ of slow integration through continued domination by whites, equal representation in power making bodies and ‘commonwealth’ equal power sharing in a ‘multiracial commonwealth of free and equal members’ (in Bauerochse 2001:92). This demonstrates similar emphases in both the secular and sacred

realms. So partnership is an invention of the colonial era, though as in the political sphere, it had its predecessors in the ecclesiastical context. Both uses of the term occurred in a global context and were used with the intention of producing some degree of autonomy in relationships though without full independence, yet with a significant degree of resistance from those who actually held power. Therefore, it had more to do with change within the existing dispensations than with forming qualitatively new relationships. This was because the term was employed by those who were the repositories of power in order to give the impression of relinquishing power while retaining rights and influence. JH Oldham co-opted the term into ecumenical usage, having participated in some of the reform impulses in colonial administration. At the Whitby meeting of the IMC in 1947, partnership came into its own as a theological term, descriptive of the relationships between the mission societies and the younger churches.

### **3.2.3 Partnership in Theological Perspective**

*First*, ... partnership is an idea congenial to the very nature of God.

*Second*, ...partnership speaks of God's relationship with man.

*Third*, ... partnership indicates the true relationship between man and his fellow-men (Warren 1956:35).

#### **3.2.3.1 Constituents of Partnership**

Warren (1956:12ff.) denoted three constituents of partnership. These are an acceptance of the need for involvement, responsibility and liability. Involvement requires a mutual commitment of trust and a readiness to listen. Responsibility is concerned with a preparedness to engage in the common purpose of the partnership which is concerned with giving and sacrifice; and there must be a willingness to accept liabilities which arise including the ability to forgive when faults occur. Theologically, this concept of partnership is consistent with the nature of God, who relates to humans in partnership and demonstrates that this is the authentic relationship between his created beings. God communicates himself through involvement, responsibility and liability, and has deliberately involved Godself in the human enterprise through self-committal in the Incarnation. Redemption provides us with evidence of God's responsibility

as it allows for mutuality in our relationship (cf. 2Cor 5:19-20; 6:1). In terms of liability, God's approach to human beings is *kenotic*, involving self-sacrifice through personal service. These factors allow for the conscious self-identity of each partner to be preserved through 'a relationship entered upon in freedom by free persons who remain free' (Warren 1956:13). While Warren acknowledges the neutral nature of power, he cautions against 'dominating power' (:15) which is the opposite of partnership: 'Partnership which is a triumph over separatedness increases power, power which in our interpretation is power for good' (:16). It is dynamic.

### **3.2.3.2 Nature of Partnership**

The concept of partnership is proleptic rather than realized (Warren 1956:11): it is a goal to be achieved:

Partnership between Churches in mission means an apostolic concern from one to the other to help one another to present the likeness of Christ more clearly; being in travail for one another until we are formed in the shape of Christ (JV Taylor in Ross 2000:3). This presupposes a joint confession and joint action towards a specific goal of mission in fulfillment of Christ's command. Partnership is about relationships and particularly, in this study, the freedom and integrity of indigenous churches. It is based in acceptance of inequality, respect and recognition of current dependence. Interdependence is achieved through mutual recognition of these conditions through acknowledgment of the higher status of the other (Phil 2:3; Rom 12:10) and bearing one another's burden. Historically, dependence can be the only consequence of a history of unequal relationships where the pride of the sending churches has resulted in the humiliation of the receiving bodies as the result of a colonial missiology born out of imperialistic designs (WARC 2004:7). This 'cultural imperialism' (Dunch 2002) has played a significant role in defining mission relations through 'a process of coercive imposition, usually through ties to political and economic power' (Dunch 2002:302) which disempowers, in our case, the younger churches who have tended to be recipients of policies forged by sending churches without consultation to which they have to conform to attract support (Verkuyl 1978:317). This has involved a process of 'colonisation of consciousness' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991) though this was not accepted uncritically (cf.

Duncan 2002:310-311). In terms of changing roles, Henderson (1968:41) offers an apposite comment about the changing role of mission partners:

The missionary was once the whole team, now he is the captain of the team; then he became a member of the team and now the question is what place is to be found in the team for him?

The prime need is for *metanoia* in order that both partners can begin to listen to one another in a relationship of equals. There is a great need to respect the independence, autonomy and separate identity of partners in context of interdependence: ‘Partnership requires mutual respect of each others decisions’ (PCUSA 2006:37). Beyond the question of sending mission partners, whatever their experience or qualifications, there has to be an acknowledgment that the best source of leadership is to be found locally. Partnership has to take account of the intellectual and spiritual quality of Christian leaders in younger churches and the desire on the part of these churches to express their selfhood despite the many positive effects of the missionary movement:

Our response to the search for selfhood in Third World churches must be that of partners. We are partners with them in their search, so that we and they together may be more truly ourselves, for the sake of mission and the Gospel (Lyon 1978:25). Consequently, partner churches must be empowered to set their own policy if a spirit of genuine independence is ever to grow. The key here is to note that this is an exercise in mutuality where both partners benefit or sacrifice together. It is *kenotic* (Phil 2) in its identification with Jesus and the marginalised in societies.

### **3.2.3.3 The *kenotic* Nature of Partnership**

This approach to partnership is based in the self-emptying (*kenosis*) of God in the Incarnation (Phil 2:7). It emphasizes the unity of the cosmos under the Lordship of Christ and seeks to reclaim the focus on the evangelical approach to mission which is a direct descendent of liberation theologies where ‘mission begins with powerlessness not power’ (Wickeri 2002:334); it necessitates a rejection of greed and this new understanding of power. It offers an opportunity to focus on the adoption of powerlessness by the older churches as a missionary strategy and philosophy in an attempt to empower the younger churches, rather than maintain the traditional powerlessness of the younger partners. This is vital in a *kenotic* missiology. ‘If you serve in mission, you are in dialogue with other people, and if the dialogue does not make

you different, then it is not dialogue and you are not involved in mission’ (Wickeri 2002:336). This is true for there can be no authentic partnership where authentic self-denying dialogue does not exist. Following the research of Lucien Richard, Wickeri (2002:340) considers the paradox which runs like a thread throughout Christian witness:

salvation and well-being are attained not by conquest, but by self-effacement and by self-giving love, a process that ultimately leads to self-realisation .... The coming reign of God is realized through self-actualisation of the Other, and authority and real power lie in compassionate, persuasive love, in choosing weakness rather than strength (cf. 2Cor 12:9).

This *kenotic* view of mission moves the centre of mission away from the older churches’ initiative to that of the younger churches. This takes place in a transfer or divestment of power, from power to empowerment and becomes an embodiment of fellowship as *koinonia*. All of this is dependent on Christ’s self-emptying, stooping down to human level in order to raise humans up to Godhead . This was an idea in evidence at the CWME meeting held in Mexico City, 1963: His divinity has become visible in his true humanity, as he emptied himself to be one of us so that men [sic] might fulfil the tasks to which they were ordained in creation (Orchard 1964:154 in Botha 2006:267).

### **3.2.3.4 Partnership as *koinonia***

The body of Christ image of the church in 1 Cor 12, ‘the *locus classicus* of partnership as a description of the Church’ (Warren 1956:80), demonstrates this dependence on the head, Christ, where all members are interdependent and where all members are ‘equal, indispensable, and useful’ (Verkuyl 1978:312). This is because:

[f]or better or worse we are connected to each other, we live with each other, and depend on each other. Some members may seem (or actually are) weaker than others, or some may seem less important than others, but behind all our differences is a God who composed the body of Christ in precisely such a way – making good use of weaknesses, apparent inequalities and “unpresentable parts” (Murre-van den Berg 2002:586).

Paul is well aware of the problems of division in the body (1Cor 12:25) and these are replicated in partnership in the world church. The Canberra meeting of the WCC held in 1991 noted this situation of disunity and linked its potential resolution to the operation of the Holy Spirit:



The Holy Spirit as promoter of *koinonia* (2 Cor 13:13) gives to those who are still divided the thirst and hunger for full communion. We remain restless until we grow together according to the wish and prayer of Christ that those who believe in him may be one (John 17:21). In the process of praying, working and struggling for unity, the Holy Spirit comforts us in pain, disturbs us when we are satisfied to remain in our division, leads us to repentance, and grants us joy when our communion flourishes (4.1, 75. The Unity of the Church as *Koinonia*: Gift and Calling).

This necessitates new approaches to mission. There is a consequent need to return to the Early Church principle with the ‘all things held in common’ (Acts 2:44) principle that churches would help each other. We live in a time of fresh opportunities to replace one-sided attitudes of paternalism and colonialism in an ecclesiastical sense. So how is New Testament interdependence to be expressed? This can be achieved through for multi- as well as bilateral relationships (Verkuyl 1978:314). Paternalism has been replaced by an ecumenical approach.

Therefore, partnership is *koinonia* or fellowship in community, the unity which comes from holding all things in common (cf. Acts 2:42ff.). It implies ‘having a share in’, being in association with, or ‘participation in’ (cf. Warren 1956:48). It is ‘a counter-cultural concept in an overtly individualistic culture’ (Peel 2006:45). It refers to ‘a close and intimate relationship into which people enter’ (Barclay 1964:173), but particularly refers to a person’s or peoples’ relationship with God marked by ‘intense, enduring relationships that emerge from the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit’ (Small 2006:161). Naturally, therefore, the highest form of participation is ‘in Christ’ who is the binding force in community and communion. Its core meaning concerns ‘the interrelatedness and interdependency of the *koinonia* among believers and their corporate fellowship with God’ (van der Merwe 2006:1058). 1 Peter 2:9-10 presents Christ as the fulfillment of God’s promise and the new community, or commonwealth (Warren 1956:52), the new Israel is his chosen instrument in this cause. This deep fellowship also extends among Christian communities as well as within them. *Koinonia* requires involvement through loyalty, common responsibility and mutual vicarious suffering. Therefore this is a costly business:

The picture that emerges from the Scripture of the church in mission is of a community of people bound together by a common loyalty to Jesus Christ whom they acknowledge to be the source of their lives. It is a community, the members of which share together in a relationship of communion with God, and who are called to communicate to society what they receive together within that communion (Lyon 1978:32).

It is interesting to note the role of communication in the formation of communion and community. Thus anything that detracts from this purpose constitutes a rejection of Christ and others. This would include policies designed to dominate receiving churches.

The focus of partnership became distorted when it concentrated on the sending by one party of personnel and money although this need not be the case since sharing money and resources was a factor on church relations virtually from Pentecost (Rom 15:25-27) where '[d]eep patterns of mutual responsibility and accountability find material expression in the generous sharing of resources' (Small 2006:164). Konrad Raiser (2005:115) has pointed out that within the ecumenical movement, any attempt to restructure the WCC that is based in 'the organizational and financial dilemmas faced by all partners in the ecumenical movement would be bound to lead to defensive conflicts of institutional interest and would block the search for more coherence'. The fear of domination is certainly manifest in current experience.

Yet, the churches of the Third World also have much to give partnership that cannot easily be calculated: a dynamic awareness of the presence of the living God, an expectancy of God's action to right wrongs, a conviction that the Church is a community of committed people possessing a distinctive identity and the value of differing lifestyles. And, in addition there is a theological benefit to be derived:

[T]he flood of mystical and Gnostic thinking which in the West is following in the wake of this secularization would have been less alarming if we with our non-Western Christian brothers had analysed these processes (Verkuyl 1978:332).

However, we have to be wary of what has been described as:

a kind of barter, where the human and financial resources of the north are 'exchanged' for spiritual resources from the south. The 'exchange' is in fact a myth: spiritual resources are not commodities that can be transferred from one context to another unchanged (van Hollander 2004:10).

We are well aware of the vitality and exuberance of, eg. African worship, but is it really what we want in our western context? Would this not actually be viewed as inauthentic and a form of entertainment? Also, how do we reconcile a spirituality that is formed in the context of an African traditional lifestyle with one that is influenced by New Age thinking?

Interesting nuances on the meaning of partnership as *koinonia* emerge when we consider African concepts of partnership. These tend to focus on an understanding of friendship, companionship and fellowship. For instance, the Swahili terms *undugu* and *urafiki* mean brotherliness or comradeship respectively. In Tanzania, the term *usiano* denotes friendship. In South Africa, the Sotho *kopano* implies meeting together in community, while the Zulu *hlangano* indicates meeting together in community, while *ubungane* indicates companionship. Interestingly, none of these terms make any reference to an economic motive which is common to European definitions of partnership, yet they all imply sharing.

This is important because *koinonia* does not denote a perfect relationship and even the biblical concept has different nuances:

1. If *koinonia* depended on first achieving at least some degree of material equality, one would have to deny the possibility and existence of *koinonia* between Christians in North and South at the present time and for a long time in the future. Tying *koinonia* to conditions would detract from its foundation in God's grace, not human achievements.
2. Almost all exegetes agree that Luke's [Acts of the Apostles] description of the communitarian congregation is an idealisation of historic reality. It is not history but the description of an eschatological fulfillment of something that has already begun. As Paul's letters show, there was in fact great inequality in the congregation, therefore the eschatological *caveat* must be remembered.
3. *Koinonia* is a Christian concept, ie. it relates to the churches, but inequality exists within the entirety of humankind, and tears apart the whole of God's creation, which is why mission concerns the world, not just the church (Funkschmidt 2002:571).

The concept of *koinonia* suggests that community does not only occur at the traditional centres of power and hegemony, but also at the margins of society and this is where new forms of community emerge: 'Let us then go to him [Christ] outside the camp, bearing the stigma that he bore' (Heb 13:13). The periphery of society is where new authentic forms of community develop. The edge of society is an appropriate place to evaluate and critique power. However, '... the margins can also be lonely places, and so new forms of solidarity among the marginalized are called for' (Wickeri 2002:345). Throughout the world the poor and oppressed have been marginalized so this is their natural location. This is true of individuals, churches and nations. But there is in a very different sense a marginalization of the same

groups among the wealthy as they have alienated themselves through their lack of solidarity with those whom they have participated in marginalising.

The main theme of this study (cf. chapter six) will be to demonstrate that the Church of Scotland World Mission Council has marginalized itself from its long term partners through policy changes which take no account of the nature of intimate relationships. Therefore suspicion and a lack of trust come to define relationships. Referring specifically to North American churches Wickeri (2002:345) comments: ‘... the historic middle-class Protestant churches are no longer mainline, but for the most part, they have not wanted to accept this fact’. The same is true of the churches of Europe. Intimacy in relationship with God is a product of powerlessness not power for God ‘has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly’ (Luke 1:24) and has linked self-emptying to the empowerment of the marginalised. This involves moving from a ‘praxis of accumulation’ to a ‘praxis of emptiness’ for ‘what is not given is ultimately lost. Self-abnegation and emptying is therefore a source of hope. This implies that the condition of possession is one of despair and not of hope’ (Wilfred in Wickeri 2002:349). However, there needs to be a degree of assertion to counter the negative effects of self-abnegation.

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This has deep significance for the concept of partnership in mission. Power becomes superfluous to a partnership relationship marked by solidarity and friendship. Jesus’ mission involved constant challenges to power. The *missio Dei* as participation does not allow for senior and junior partners – just partners. If one partner approaches the relationship with full hands while the other’s hands are empty that is a denial of *kenosis*. This implies structural changes in mission relationships. The statement issued at El Escorial on the sharing of resources stated:

God’s power is shown in love and justice: the self-emptying love of Christ (*kenosis*), who affirms the real power with the poor and oppressed can exert when they find the truth of God’s good news (van Beek [ed.] 1989:42).

A truly *kenotic* approach to mission will enable older churches to become less egocentric and more Christ-centred and consequently, relational which requires the facilitation of dialogue, resistance and hospitality.

A *kenotic* church, therefore, 'is always an apophatic (falling short of Christ's vision) church, always anti-establishment, always offering an alternative vision, always on the road to Jerusalem' (Richard in Wickeri 2002:346).

### **3.2.3.5 Motivations for Partnership**

Steffen (2000:727) has suggested three motives for engaging in mission. First, missionaries' fear from the threat of job insecurity as financial resources diminish and the number of missionaries from younger churches increases. The cost of initiating new work becomes prohibitive. This is linked to issues of control. Second, convenience results from the first reason as it is far less costly to work in collaboration with other agencies and share resources. This lesson is more easily learned among the older churches than with younger churches. Third, and more positively, theology. Complementary relationships are more in accord with good theology than competition. The recognition and utilization of diversity and the stewardship of God's resources create a more effective witness.

### **3.2.3.6 Partnership in Mission**

Partnership in mission gains its specific form through participation of churches together in the *missio Dei*. It moves beyond the ideas of converting heathen peoples and establishing churches. It derives from God's mission and the essential nature of the church to be in mission both at home and abroad. It implies reciprocal relationships based in mutuality of trust, openness and accountability.

The issue of the importation of denominational fragmentation led to calls for unity in action, particularly the action of the Lord's Supper (cf. Small 2006). Eucharistic hospitality is a core issue for the younger churches

Poverty continues to be a defining issue for the continuing disparity of wealth between younger and older churches and nations is an abomination that signals continuing domination and failure of love. It spills over into both the socio-political and

ecclesiological realms. Justice is the prime yardstick which determines the authenticity of partnership.

The legitimate status of mission as foundational to our Christian existence in the world is surely threatened by postmodern developments as well as by the worsening financial position of most older churches in the north and their guilty consciences about mission history in the colonial era, all of which translates into a primary concern with their own survival. ... The consensus seems to be that no single denomination or mission society has yet discovered the secret of a truly inclusive missionary ecclesiology (Saayman 2005:376).

While we agree with Saayman's assessment, we would argue that his conclusion applies equally to the post-colonial era. Older churches are facing what amounts to a crisis of identity as they are being challenged as never before by their younger partners as well as by their own domestic contexts which are problem ridden.

### **3.2.3.7 Practical Hindrances to Partnership in Mission**

The focus on money and personnel has had a detrimental effect on the growth of partner relations and has caused distrust despite the fact that many missionaries testify to the enrichment of their own ministries and others'. Fox (2006:137) has argued persuasively that 'dependence on foreign money is detrimental to indigenous non-Western Christianity'. Yet, the development of reciprocal relationships has not been a priority. Even into the third millennium when the Church of Scotland Board of World Mission had the opportunity to appoint a proven, well known, highly qualified and experienced Third World church leader, who had studied and ministered in Scotland, to an executive position, they opted, in comparative terms, for a non-experienced (with regard to the world church), much less well qualified local candidate. This is extraordinary in the light of Lyon's (1978:36) comment made as long ago as 1978:

That is inexcusable, but it would seem that it is only when men and women from abroad are seen at work, in a setting close to home, that their impact is recognised .... They have not been expected to work with us in mission in our lands, and have been given little opportunity to share insights into the Gospel with us here [!]

This demonstrates a tremendous unwillingness to receive. Yet, in ecumenical circles there was a great desire on the part of Third World churches to share their problems and seek advice.

The West, on the other hand, gives the impression that it has little or nothing to receive despite the costly sacrifices made by the poor in financial terms. However, in terms of personnel:

[t]he exchange of personnel must be completely voluntary on both sides, and each ought to retain the right to call a halt to it in certain situations. The native churches must clearly have the authority to decide how many and what kind of experts they want and where they want to use them (Verkuyl 1978:318).

There is also an issue regarding the duration of service with partner churches:

The young churches also need people whose friendship and partnership are of much longer duration and who are willing to stand with them amid the temptations, threats, challenges, and storms which swirl about their heads (:318) and not retreat to positions of safety and security as soon as trouble appears on the horizon.

Sending churches have at times sponsored Third World Christians serving with them but normally for specifically short term contracts, and there is a tendency for the short term 'tourist' missionary to be employed in diversified tasks rather than appointed to a specific area where s/he has expertise which is acceptable in certain circumstances but is not helpful in producing long term in-depth relationships. Third World churches expect those who come to be fully committed to entering into the life and witness of church, society and culture. This is part of the apostolic tradition which takes place in the context of increasing impoverishment, disease and ignorance, where the wealth of the West is obscene. Philip Potter, then General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, asserted:

There is something demonic about a powerful, rich sending agency negotiating with poor people and poor agencies. How can there be 'real' partnership between poor and rich. Partner was a nice word which we fell into the habit of using, but now we have become afraid of using it because we know what it all came down to in practice (Verkuyl 1978:320).

Nacpil (1971:359) has expressed the inevitable outcome:

Under this kind of partnership, the missionary becomes the apostle of affluence, not sacrifice; cultural superiority not Christian humility, technological efficiency, not human identification; white supremacy, not human liberation and community. Financial aid has too often has been linked to the sending body having power *over* the receiver and this power has sometimes been exercised by mission partners whose remit has included checking on the use of the money. Disparities in allowances between foreign staff and locals arouses deep resentment.

By comparison, the giving of the churches of the west is minimal. Yet, this leads to the relationship becoming one of the humiliated and the domineering (Eisler's dominator model): 'Christian mission has degenerated into the display of the glory and richness of the "Christian West to the 'pagan' East"' (Song 1975:54). It is quickly forgotten that 'Money belongs absolutely only to God; we are merely stewards' (Lyon 1978:43 cf. Ps 24:1) and that the resources of the West were often accumulated at the expense of colonized nations whose poverty can often be traced to the extraction of valuable resources from their countries of origin. We are called to share to the maximum extent of our ability: 'we must keep the question of financial assistance to young churches on our agenda as long as world prosperity has not reached an acceptable level'. In the meantime, 'native churches have a complete right to appeal for help to churches in the rich countries to pay their full-time workers at least the pre-determined minimum. This is an undeniable implication of the biblical idea of interdependence of churches' (Verkuyl 1978:322) ie. partnership.

It is only when poverty assumes a human face that we are touched by the need to relate in a more authentic partnership that our obedience and self sufficiency and consequent alienation is challenged often as the result of our spiritual poverty, while the material poverty of the poor has thrust them into a relationship of absolute dependence on God out of which they are able to reflect God's love (cf. Luke 6:20-21, 24-25):

Only by rejecting poverty and by making itself poor in order to protest against it can the church preach something that is uniquely its own: 'spiritual poverty', that is, the openness of man [sic] and history to the future promised by God. Only in this way will the Church be able to fulfill authentically – and with any possibility of being listened to – its prophetic function of denouncing every injustice to man. And only in this way will it be able to preach the word which liberates, the word of genuine brotherhood ... For the Latin American Church especially, this witness is an inescapable and much-needed sign of the authenticity of its witness (Gutierrez 1974:301f).

The only way to avoid misunderstandings and problems is to consult in depth and with absolute honesty with all stakeholders. Concomitant with this is the need for transparency and accountability on both sides in a *kenotic* sense where ultimate dependence is on God alone and not on residual resources. This is the source of our joy and fulfillment (cf. 2Cor 6:3-13).

Weakness and vulnerability become the hallmarks of the approach to mission (2Cor 12:9f) whose methodology is characterized by conscientisation, contextualisation and communication which open the way to true dialogue which is 'Christian love at its deepest, for in dialogue we



give ourselves up to the other, in order that [t]he [partner] may receive not us but Christ' (Lyon 1978:68): 'Receptor orientation, or true love in communication (according to Charles Kraft) means that our primary concern is what is best for the other person irrespective of the cost to ourselves' (Sogard 1996:199) and that may involve sharing both threats and challenges to our common existence. Perhaps this is one area in which the declining churches of the West can learn much from their partners if they are prepared to be transparent and to learn from others' experience.

Partnership is costly and this is a lesson that has still to be experienced in depth by the churches of the north. Nowadays, many of them are running short of the resources they have used to maintain relations of dominance for many years. It can be painful to learn to relate in different ways: 'It means trying out, opening up, letting go' (van Hollander 2004:10). This is the same analogy of the parents who have to let go if their children are to mature and develop into interdependent beings, as they themselves had to do in their own time. Growth is painful, as is letting go but it results in maturity. Even the churches of the north need to grow so they can reach beyond their comfort zones to even greater maturity.

Maluleke (1994:98) has indicated a serious problem that older churches either do not fully understand or take seriously. This problem touches on the essential nature of the church. This occurs when a sending church operates with a partner church through a missions department and not in a direct church to church manner. Hence, the younger church feels that it is not taken seriously as a church. Department to department relations are not possible due to the disparity in resources in more ways than one:

A factor that does not help the situation is the notable decline in people's participation in church life in Switzerland whereas there is a vibrant church life in South Africa. If, on top of this situation, one still puts a department between partner churches, authentic partner relations conducive to joint witness and upliftment is made difficult, if not impossible.

The same situation is replicated throughout the world of mission eg. the Church of Scotland World Mission Council and the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

### 3.3 Conclusion

The practice of true partnership is a difficult and elusive ideal. To the degree that the ideal is reached, partnership expresses maturity of each partner as well as maturity of their relationship. Both are equally valued; each values what it has to give to the other as well as what it can receive from the other. Each is accountable to God for the way the mutual commitment is expressed. They engage in dialogue, respect one another's opinions, and learn from one another. The challenge of living out the ideals of partnership is one practical way in which God's grace is experienced and expressed. May God's mission on earth be enhanced by a growing, maturing expression of true partnership within the body of Christ (Bowers 1997:260).

To a large degree, the concept of partnership in mission has a great deal in common with Eisler's partnership model.

From here, we turn to a consideration of the development of the concept of partnership in mission in global mission perspective.

## CHAPTER 4 The Growth of Partnership in Mission in Global Mission History

Partnership - ‘... the ecumenical movement’s guiding principle of sharing of resources’ (Wisniewski 2006:7).

‘We need one another to be effective instruments of God in multi-lateral mission today’ (Nyomi 2006:14).

Verkuyl (1978:311) asserts that the origin of partnership lies in the rejection by indigenous churches of the status of children. Yet, Newbigin (1958:27) claimed that in mission ‘the homebase is everywhere’. This kind of thinking undermined paternalistic ‘dominator’ structures and attitudes which controlled missions for too long and promoted the concept of mutuality in mission. In this chapter, we shall consider the International Missionary Conferences, its successors and, where relevant, other related conferences and issues.

### 4.1 Edinburgh, 1910

Although there had been instances of missionary co-operation as in India from 1885 through the drawing of comity agreements in which ‘peaceful co-existence without mutual aggression and rivalry had come to be accepted as the norm’ (Neill 1976:4), the World Missionary Conference, 1910, marked the first occasion that missionary societies began to work together. It was the culmination of a century’s attempts to co-operate and signified the beginning of the ecumenical movement and the coalescence of mission and unity in “mission ecumenism” (Bauerochse 2001:4). It therefore represented a particular *kairos* (Bosch 1980:160). The main interest of the conference was the unity of the church in its relationship to the world. The conference prepared the way for the formation of the International Missionary Council and the WCC, and the Faith and Order Movement focussing on doctrinal matters (which Edinburgh deliberately eschewed), and the Life and Work Movement focussing on social, economic and political life. There were very few representatives from the churches which were derived from the modern missionary movement, but those who were present were clear that there needed to be changes in relationships between the ‘older’ and ‘younger’ churches. Two major tasks emerged from the conference; the need for mission societies to work in closer relationship and the

equal if not greater need for the development of relationships with local churches. VS Azariah, a delegate from India affirmed: You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We ask for love. Give us friends' (ie. relationships) (Brown 1997:210). This was written in the context of '[a] certain aloofness, a lack of mutual understanding and openness, a great lack of frank intercourse and friendliness ...' (in Bauerochse 2001:8). This is not at all surprising when nations were designated respectively as the 'more backward races of mankind' and the 'more advanced' (World Missionary Conference, 1910 in Botha 2005:132). Friendship might therefore be defined as 'working together as equals, living together at a considerate human level, celebrating together and learning from each other' (Bauerochse 2001:19).

In sum, S Neill (GA 1960:442) commented:

It was indeed the beginning of an epoch – the epoch of reflection and of ecumenical co-operation; and at the same time it was the end of an epoch – the epoch of glad and confident expansion of the Christian missionary enterprise, under the inspiration of a rediscovery of the Gospel'.  
The Edinburgh meeting 'anticipated, though it did not fully realize, the concept of "partnership in obedience" of churches in all six continents in continuing and completing the unfinished task' (Scherer 1987:19).

## **4.2 Lake Mohonk, IMC, 1921**

It was at this venue in New York that the IMC was formed. Here, questions were raised concerning the relationship of missionaries to indigenous workers, their respective roles in decision-making, consultation regarding missionary appointments, the relation of donor funds to self-support and their control and mutual co-operation in the training of missionaries and local workers.

However, a new epoch was dawning on the world scene as the rise of nationalism became a turning point in world history. This was attested in two papers presented and the Faith and Order conference held in Lausanne in 1927 (Bate ed.). Significant here were early calls for the unity of the church. Disunity caused many problems for young churches and fuelled the nationalist call as for example in India:

The rising tide of nationalism cannot be ignored. The new national spirit calls for national unity. The young Indian Christian cannot help being influenced by this new spirit. His patriotism moves him to do what he can to advance the interests of his own country, while his loyalty to Christ makes him long for his country to come into the full inheritance of eternal life in Jesus Christ. This national and Christian consciousness in consequence unites him with his fellow Christians of all Churches in the common task of the material and spiritual regeneration of his country in and through Christ (Dornakal 1927:493).

This same sense was evident also in China: ‘There is rising in China the all-powerful nationalism which challenges Christianity’ (Lew 1927:497). These challenges arose, in part from the disunity of the Christian faith: ‘Christianity is being looked upon with grave suspicion at this moment in China because, while it professes to teach love and unity, it is divided against itself’ (:ibid).

It became clear that there was considerable dissatisfaction with the dissonance between expressions of unity and the continuing disunity of the body of Christ worldwide.

Disunity was a source of the church’s weakness and there was resistance to perpetuating this:

force of habit, financial dependence, denominational training and, above all, loyalty to their spiritual fathers, now keep them in denominational connections. But these circumstances cannot keep them apart forever’ (Dornakal in Bate 1927:493)

Yet, the nationalist agenda influenced the conceptualization of this united church:

We want a Church of India, a Church which can be our spiritual home, a Church where the Indian religious genius can find natural expression, a living branch of the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, a Church which, being a visible symbol of unity in that divided land, will draw all men to our blessed Lord. ... The young churches are waiting for a lead (Dornakal 1927:495).

So there was a desire to replace denominationalism with nationalism as a defining factor though it would become apparent that ridding itself of the denominational aspect was less simple than was assumed.

### **4.3 Jerusalem, IMC, 1928**

This meeting of the IMC was significant for the relationship between older and younger churches. Much had changed since Edinburgh 1910, not least the political, cultural, religious,

social and racial shape of the post- World War I world. However, it began on a sour note as the Nordic Missionary Council had objected to the invitation of ‘additional’ representatives with full voting rights. It may be significant that these representatives were all from younger churches and had the potential to outvote the existing members. It was agreed with JH Oldham (conference secretary) that it was more important to secure the co-operation of the new members than to enforce constitutional regulations. This was the price of the now obvious visibility of the younger churches.

The conference was far smaller in terms of numbers, yet, the representation of the younger churches was one third of the total, much larger and more significant than on 1910. At Jerusalem, John Mott (IMC conference chair) called for ending the distinction between sending and receiving churches (Bosch 1991:465) and their admission as churches with ‘full parity’ because it was recognized that they:

had achieved a degree of Christian maturity self-authoritative in its unsponsored claim for equality. Their representatives proved beyond all question that in insight, initiative, and ability to assume responsibility through comprehensive planning, they has come into their own (in Bauerochse 2001:12).

This, of course, produced a degree of tension, but at least now the questions were tabled frankly, even if they were not addressed in any depth at this juncture. Among other issues that caused tension was that of financial independence when it came to defining what constituted an indigenous church. The three self formula was found to be wanting. Even the early Church in Jerusalem was not financially independent. And, further, within the Reforming tradition, financial independence does not constitute a mark of the church. For Mott, the critical issue was: ‘If a church is truly indigenous, the church edifice is planted right in the heart of the people, wherever they are’ (in Bauerochse 2001:14). While some western delegates were suspicious of progressing too quickly, they raised issues of the fear of syncretism and the need to avoid the violation of missionaries’ consciences through too speedy indigenization.

However, the demand from a shift in thinking and action was strong:

The hour has come for passing from paternalism to partnership. It is something more than even cooperation; it is partnership that is required. We want the fullest spiritual fellowship with what we call the younger churches .... We must go on in a fellowship in which there is confidence. ... We have been thinking of ourselves as benefactors. Now we think of ourselves as brethren. Soon we shall be thinking of ourselves as beneficiaries. We speak about sending deputations to the field; let us invite the young

churches to come and tell us at home about their spiritual life (Dr JH Franklin, American Baptist Mission, in Bauerochse 2001:15, 16). These were prophetic words indeed and we still struggle with such impulses as did many delegates at Jerusalem! Notable here was the conceptual shift from paternalism to fraternalism.

The conference produced a document on the relation between older and younger churches which focused on partnership and noted that the call to mission was the responsibility of all Christians, yet that each church needed to form expressions of its faith within its own particular context in terms of proclamation, liturgy, rituals, art and building design, and maintain the living heritage of the Church universal while engaging in mission. This will be done in concert with the 'older' churches. Mission became the task of indigenous churches rather than mission societies. It is into this context that resources of personnel and finance will be utilized through consultation. And so '[t]he younger churches can serve the older at their home base by giving them a fresh inspiration and new interpretation of the Christian message through deputations' (Bauerochse 2001:17). Such relationships could only develop if the mutual understanding and trust that were implicit were to become determining principles for the relationships. However, a surprising and proleptic proposal was suggested by an Indian church leader, P Oomman Philip:

I sometimes think it would be a good thing for the growth of the indigenous churches in India if by some cataclysm, such as happened in China, this flow of men and money from churches of the West may be arrested, even for a short time (Silcock 1928:178-179).

The significance of this proposal was that it anticipated the discussion on moratorium which would erupt at Bangkok 45 years later. Yet, it becomes clear that the younger churches were not only in relationships for what they could derive from them. This kind of thinking constituted a serious threat to the older churches for if it were to be enforced and they were precluded from engaging in missionary activity, their whole *raison d'être* for existing would be undermined since the conference affirmed the central locus of the indigenous church (Jerusalem Meeting Report 1928:33). A further critique of the existing missionary enterprise was the acknowledgment that one of the factors which hampered the progress of God's mission was the disunity which the older churches brought to the exercise. This was:

[t]he desire that is being expressed with increasing emphasis among the younger churches to eliminate the complexity of the missionary enterprise and to remove the discredit to the Christian name, due to the great numbers of denominations and the diversity and even competition of the missionary agencies now at work in some countries (Jerusalem Meeting Report 1928:37).

This problem was seen to be a western self-imposed restriction on the missionary enterprise and the imposition of norms that did not accord with the Christian message.

This period, 1910-1938, focused on discovering institutionalized means of co-ordinating work and sharing information, first between older churches and then including ‘emerging church structures in other continents’ (Matthey 1999:105).

#### **4.4 Tambaram, IMC, 1938**

As the century progressed, the optimistic spirit of missions had deteriorated somewhat; earlier confidence in the success of the task had evaporated. The conference, which met for the first time in a mission area and had more delegates from younger than older churches, pursued the topics which had engaged its mind at Jerusalem ten years earlier in particular the consolidating of the younger churches for mission. Yet, in terms of partnership its thinking did not progress beyond what was achieved at Jerusalem although the younger churches were now considered to be learners. A significant theme of the conference was the worldwide unity of the body of Christ (cf. IMC 1939:155):

young churches and old churches work together in a unity flowing out of a common urge to proclaim the gospel .... Within such a perspective, receiving help, whether in the form of money or of personnel, is not something to be ashamed of. Nor is there room for resentment when the churches who receive it claim the right to decide how to use such assistance to best advantage. The important thing is the proper functioning, not the fortifying of the rights of the donor or the recipient. Such a spirit can only lead to an alliance and a partnership with more mutual understanding and a marshalling of Christian forces on the battle front where the need for militant evangelizing is the most acute (Paul Devanandan, 1939, *The Guardian*, in Verkuyl 1978:310).

These sentiments were to be reaffirmed at Mexico City in 1963 in its theme of mission in six continents. However, in the conference report section on ‘Cooperation and unity’ (IMC 1939:151-156), there was an expression of frustration as ‘eagerness to cooperate among the younger churches is thwarted by a too rigid control from abroad, and we cannot too strongly urge that such rigidity of control must be relaxed if the younger churches are to grow into



fullness of Christian life and experience and service’ (:153). The antidote was clear: ‘a pooling of all resources and ... cooperation of all Christians’ (IMC 1939:37). A two street of mission was required as the population of Europe was moving inexorably towards secularism: ‘there is in Europe a concerted, organized attempt to secularise the minds of millions of Christian people’ (IMC 1939:34). This issued in an ‘appeal to the younger churches to help the older churches by sending to them missionaries of witness and fellowship’ (IMC 1939:41). This was an early example of mission on reverse for:

The work to be done is so vast, so urgent and so important, that it calls for all the resources of all Christians in all parts of the world. The task in this new day must be undertaken by a partnership between the older and younger churches, by a pooling of all resources and by co-operation of all Christians (IMC 1939:37).

Bauerochse has described this as ‘*a partnership of convenience in order to complete a task*’ (2001:23). However, any pooling of resources remained a pipe dream. This kind of thinking is an advance on that of Jerusalem because here mission is located in the local church. While financial assistance continued to be required it was not to be allocated for specific purposes to the church budget. While Jerusalem focused on partnership as a relationship of trust and fellowship, at Tambaram it becomes an active term – effective co-operation in the ‘unfinished task of evangelism’ as the responsibility of the entire church (Matthey 1999:105).

#### **4.5 Whitby, IMC, 1947**

‘This was the first world missionary conference at which the representatives of world Christianity faced each other as partners’ (Menzel & Muller 1997:339). It was also the first international meeting following the Second World War. While Whitby echoed many of the emphases of the Jerusalem conference, the term ‘Partnership in Obedience’ gained general currency and was conceived as solidarity in common need through *koinonia*, common service rather than domination. Yet;

It is to be noted that Whitby spoke, not of Partnership, but of Partnership in Obedience; it was not in the least interested in human arrangements, which might be dissoluble at will, but only in a common submission to the will of God such as can result only in a divine and permanent fellowship among men (Ransom 1948:175).

However, partnership was largely experienced by younger churches as empty and meaningless (Verkuyl 1978:309). ‘An Indonesian pastor once trenchantly remarked to a Dutch professor

“Yes, *partnership* for you, but *obedience for us*” (Jansen Schoonhoven 1977:48 in Bosch 1991:466). Walter Freytag (in Bauerochse 2001:27) commented on the attitude of ‘the young churches, whose young members thought little of commitment to tradition and pressed forward unimpressed by the deliberation taught by years of experience’. This brashness can be quite disconcerting for seasoned missionaries, but it can also be quite refreshing to those with an open honest approach to the missionary task. ‘The [partnership] concept would come under scrutiny in years to come and in some circles it would be criticized as just as hollow and meaningless as other slogans and phrases at giving credence to the relationship between churches in mission’ (Botha 2005:143). Part of the reason for the ambivalence towards partnership in mission was its appearance as another brand of colonial domination at a time when younger church nations were struggling towards political independence. They found it both difficult and contradictory to continue to accept western domination in this new emerging context. Further, the distinction between older and younger churches was fast disappearing in face of the common tasks that were faced which required a common witness.

Verkuyl (1978:323, see Scherer 1987:95) lays a great emphasis on partnership in training and use of personnel, finance, and policy formation (administration). Self support and self sufficiency were considered urgent priorities. Behind this lay a concern to develop global partnership in evangelism by strengthening the spiritual life, ecumenical awareness, missionary commitment, lay involvement and stewardship: ‘the grace of receiving and the grace of giving were alike necessary’ (Scherer 1987:95). Part, at least, of the motivation for this was the sending churches’ growing awareness that they could not achieve this mammoth task alone, especially in the face of growing independence movements throughout the mission field. However, in relation to finance there were enormous discrepancies between the stipends paid to missionaries and local workers and this was not considered serious enough to warrant radical action to avoid friction and weaken the relationships. The significance of the evangelical task was the single unifying factor in mission, yet, only parts of it were implemented and there were serious lacunae when it came to looking at remuneration from a Christian point of view.

This also affected the process of reaching decisions. Scherer (1987:94-5) commented on this in the light of Christ's missionary command which 'cannot be fulfilled unless all the forces of all the churches, older and younger alike, are gathered in a common loyalty, inspired by a common task and mobilized in a common service'. The differences between the younger and older churches were disappearing in a sense. This was the essence of authentic partnership.

The conference issued a declaration at its close which defines partnership as the result of expediency. Apart from the impetus of the Spirit of God driving people towards unity, there was also a significant external threat arising out of the disintegration of the colonial empires and the growing secularization in the West which made partnership necessary. Yet, there were great opportunities for mission too. While the years following the war would be crucial for the future both of the world and mission, there was great potential for the development of the young churches which were emerging from the missionary agencies from the West.

Arising out of the Whitby conference, Stephen Neill offered on a study of the concept of partnership in *'The Myth of the Younger Churches'* (papers from the Whitby Conference). For him, positive developments such as numerical growth and trained ministers and locally developed theology, had to be tempered by a realistic evaluation of their difficulties. It is true that they faced a great task and could not do it alone but that did not prevent them from being the church in their respective areas. We have already noted the need for interdependence. From this emerged the Whitby concept of partnership as having the pragmatic aim of bringing all possible agencies together to achieve the evangelization of the world. This reinforced the position of missionaries as vital links in the chain and gives a strong impression of securing vested interests.

At a later date Max Warren (1954) also wrote on the subject of partnership but from a theological and ecclesiological perspective. Partnership is 'Sharing with one another and others in action' (in Bauerochse 2001:35). So partnership is a dynamic activity based in involvement, responsibility and accountability. Warren also adds freedom as the key, for without freedom of will to choose the partnership cannot function. For Warren, partnership is the opposite of the "ethics of dominating power" (in Bauerochse 2001:35). Therefore, it

involves transformation, vulnerability and risk and is, consequently, a ‘new creation’ (Rev 21:5). Warren’s theology of partnership is of the essence of our relationship with God as, for example in human beings being appointed stewards of God’s creation (Gen 2:15): ‘... partnership is an idea congenial to the very nature of God. ..., that partnership speaks of God’s relationship with man. ..., that partnership indicates the true relationship between man and his fellow-men’ (in Bauerochse 2001:36). God’s relationship with human beings is marked by redemptive service and love which is encapsulated in *koinonia* and being ‘in Christ’ (2 Cor 5:17). This is the ground of Christian fellowship which ‘belongs to the nature of the church and its theologically grounded way of existence’ (Bauerochse 2001:37). Since God has entered into a partner relationship in the Trinity, and with human beings, it is vital that human beings relate to one another on similar manner.

In 1948, the World Council of Churches (WCC) was established and this brought to fruition a great desire of the younger churches for a global forum for inter-church relations. A basic impulse in this new creation was the recognition that all churches were engaged in common witness, and, ‘spoke of the acceptance of all self-governing Churches, in whatever part of the world they existed, as full and equal members of a consultative assembly (Kirk 1999:185). This precipitated discussions regarding the integration of the WCC and the IMC. This led to both mission and inter-church relations being worked out in an ecumenical spirit.

#### **4.6 Willingen, IMC, 1952**

This meeting of the IMC took place in an atmosphere of crisis for China had closed its borders to missionaries, the colonial period was fast approaching its demise and the expected post-World War II revival had failed to materialize in the face of a revival of eastern religions and the growth of secularisation. From this point mission is regarded as participation in the *missio Dei*; this is the work of the partnership in the Trinity in partnership in mission with churches. And, the natural progression ought to have been the integration of mission and church: ‘We should cease to speak of *missions* and *churches* and avoid this dichotomy not only in our thinking but also in our actions. We should now speak about the mission of the Church (IMC, Willingen 1952:40). However, there were obstacles to this on the grounds that the work of

‘foreign’ mission was not complete, the theological inappropriateness of independent indigenous churches being completely independent, and the continuing need for money and personnel in the younger churches. In referring to younger churches as free partners in relationship and the results of partnership becoming more manifest, Willingen was reinforcing the conclusions reached at Whitby. Yet, freedom implies the ability to reject relationship however theologically correct the concept might be in terms of pursuing unity. It was also a matter of concern that younger churches suffered the results of the ecclesiological and denominational fragmentation which the older churches imported into their contexts. The concept of solidarity emerges at Willingen, solidarity with the incarnate and crucified Christ and also with the world. It is also conceived as ‘another kind of solidarity, the tragic frustrating solidarity of a common need’ (Willingen Report 1952:33 in Botha 2005:147). This was a crucial matter for the older churches which might be accused of using a theological perspective to maintain dependence. After all, how would they rate themselves as dependent churches regarding their striving for wider and more effective unity? In this, the concept and practice of partnership had achieved nothing. Greater clarity was needed about the meaning of partnership and that was given expression in Ghana six years later.

#### **4.7 Evanston, WCC, 1954**

This was the second Assembly of the WCC. Representatives from the Third World were far more prominent than at the first assembly in 1948 (Amsterdam) and they took the opportunity to share their visions, talents and gifts in a way that challenged the presumptions of the older churches. They were impatient for change and concerned with the lack of stress on the identity of mission and unity and its negative effect on world evangelisation. However, western attitudes tended to dominate discussions and decisions:

The western world with its needs and preoccupations, is still regarded as the world which really matters. The rest provides a colourful geographical fringe. We have hardly begun to understand what it means to belong to a Church which is worldwide. We tend to think and plan and work within our narrow cultural boundaries. The work of the Church beyond these familiar frontiers is, for many Christians, an exotic growth, an interesting but alien affair (Ransom 1954:1133).

#### **4.8 Achimota, IMC, 1958**

This meeting took place in Africa and was a testimony to growing independence both in an ecclesiastical and political sense. Several new realities had to be acknowledged. First, new independent states had been established which created new political and cultural scenarios. This was accompanied by a great sensitivity arising out of developing self-identities and the demand for equal rights. Concurrently on the ecclesiastical scene there was a similar development among the locally initiated churches of Africa and Asia. Third, the ecumenical movement was beginning to yield fruit. All of this expressed the freedom of the younger churches from the domination of the older churches and from western colonialism and had serious implications for mission societies and limited their scope for and their monopoly over mission. This was not an easy conference for there emerged serious differences concerning the meaning of partnership. This is not surprising in the face of the older churches' loss of power and influence. This was the new fact and, indeed, requirement of mission. There could be no concept of 'realised' partnership while certain questions remained:

Can the younger church accept the older church with all its pride, its shortcomings, its heritage, its guilt by association? Can the older church accept the younger church in spite of its smallness, its weakness, its spirit of independence? By "accept" conformity is not implied, but mutual respect for selfhood (Matthews in Bauerochse 2001:49). Here we come face to face with the issue of vested interests in sending churches which was contradicted by the new concept of the *missio Dei* which stated clearly that mission was participation in the mission of God and was 'a mission that calls for the transformation of all human relationships and the establishment of justice' (Brown 1997:214) and this necessarily meant the transformation of missionary relationships too. This was a difficult meeting marked by conflicts but little resolution, but one thing was clear: 'mission in partnership means the end of every form of guardianship of one church over another' (Bosch 1991:370).

#### **4.9 New Delhi, WCC, 1961**

The Achimota conference had taken place in the context of preparations for the integration of the IMC (fellowship of missionary societies) and the WCC (global fellowship of Churches) thus expressing the essential nature of the church as mission. The IMC became the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the

WCC at its third assembly in New Delhi in 1961. This was a structural and theological attempt to express the truth that mission and unity are inseparable. It meant that the world's main instrument of ecumenism also had responsibility for the missionary task. A Joint Action for Mission programme was instituted which aimed to survey needs and opportunities in each area and rationalise resources accordingly. This would be no easy process for it would require considerable commitment and responsibility to repent of past errors and reconcile for future action together through consultation. The old era had passed where:

... the European enters the scene as what the Bible would call 'a rich man': somebody who is really somebody and who thinks he can prove it; draped around him he displays his impressive possessions (culture, technics, spending power). He has everything – except a contrite heart' (Hoekendijk 1964:179).

Yet, 'fully committed fellowship' was the sign of the common bond between unity, witness and service. This was the '*ecumenical form of partnership idea*' (Bauerochse 2001:53) and it took a distinctly social justice form.

#### **4.10 Mexico City, CWME, 1963**

This was the second meeting of the Commission (CWME) after its formation. It met in a less combative spirit. This was due to the general acceptance of the theological basis for mission in the *missio Dei* concept. It was also the result of the majority of delegates, once more, emanating from the West. The new focus was on giving practical effect to integration of mission and church in a holistic manner. Mission was the responsibility of all churches throughout the world, not just those in the North:

We affirm that all Christians are called to go forward in this task together. We believe that the time has now come when we must move onwards to common planning and joint action. The fact that Christ is not divided must be made unmistakably plain in the very structure of missionary work (Mexico City, 1963, 3.c in Bosch sa:8).

Hence the theme 'Mission in Six Continents', by which the younger churches challenged the distinction between them and older churches and the presumed existence of borders in mission. Bosch (1980:189) summarized the emphases defined:

It makes the church conscious of her missionary calling in her own environment; it stresses the global extent of the missionary dimension; it helps to combat antiquated paternalistic structures; it questions the traditional one-way traffic in mission as well as Western pride of possession; it makes room for reciprocity.

The adopted slogan was ‘the whole Church bringing the whole gospel to the whole world’ (Neill 1976:50). The methodological approach adopted was for all parties concerned to consider needs, opportunities and resources in each region, consult together with regard to allocation of resources, and then enact their agreements. This approach allowed for greater flexibility and contextualisation. This new focus helped to challenge out of date paternalistic mission structures; it questioned the traditional one-way approach to mission with its Western possessiveness; and it opened the way for a more reciprocal approach to mission. This was necessary for paganism was still paganism whether it was found in the West or in the Third World. A major obstacle to progress continued to be the low level of trust and integrity which existed between all the partners and the possessiveness of the donor agencies in terms of finance and information. The challenge was to demonstrate solidarity of responsibility for mission.

#### **4.11 Uppsala, WCC, 1968**

The *missio Dei* concept here, took on a new form of partnership:

Partnership in God’s mission is therefore entering into partnership with God in history, because our knowledge of God compels us to affirm that God is working out his purpose in the midst of the world and its historical purposes (Uppsala Report, ‘The Church for Others’ 1968:14 in Bosch 1975:96).

Here, it was noted that the worldwide disunity of churches hindered and militated against the church’s missionary advance. Questions were raised concerning how the church could be an instrument for unity in the world when she was so divided herself, despite some promising experiments which had been encouraged at the New Mexico meeting of the CWME in 1963? Under the heading of the Uppsala Report ‘Never Go it Alone’, a call was made to implement the decisions of Mexico 1963 in this regard: ‘We urge consultation with regional and national councils, mission boards and societies and churches, resolved to find ways and means for such joint planning and action’ (in McGavran [ed.] 1972:249-258). The churches need a new openness to the world in its aspirations, its achievements, its restlessness and its despair’ (Uppsala Report, ‘The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church’ in Slack 1968:74). The final report emphasized the benefits of change brought about through forgiveness:

... [t]his change is always embodied in some actual change of attitude and relationship. For there is no turning to God which does not at the same time bring man face to face



with his fellow men in a new way. The new life frees men for community, enabling them to break through racial, national, religious and other barriers that frustrate the unity of mankind (in Slack 1968:76).

A pertinent question might be who is going to forgive who in this context?

#### **4.12 Bangkok, CWME, 1972**

The issue of the relationship between mission and unity was confirmed at Bangkok (1972) where the poorer churches' anger and resentment was clearly expressed:

Now Bangkok 1972 celebrated partnership in mission as the new paradigm. But Bangkok also meant a 'farewell to innocence' about the dynamics of power in mission (van Hollander 2004:8).

It was saying 'in no uncertain terms that the European model of Christianity, was dead, and with it all Western claims to cultural dominance in the two-thirds world' (Scherer 1987:123). This was clearly expressed in Section III of its 'Letter to the Churches' on patterns of partner relations: 'It is very clear that we must find ways of responding together to our common calling to mission in the six continents of one divided world, so that everyone may take full responsibility and obtain full identity' (in Bosch sa:73). It was aware of the destructive effects of power abuse in terms of church relations as a hindrance to the development of 'a mature relationship between churches' founded on 'mutual commitment to participate in Christ's mission in the world' (Scherer 1987:123-4). The redressing of unequal relations was dependent on poorer churches moving to a place of lessening dependency while retaining their integrity and identity. The resources were held in the countries of the North which held and exercised control over the countries of the South (Third World). This was problematic but worse, the powerful sending churches conceived mission as a distant project forgetting that they had missionary commitments on their own doorsteps. Often this was due to the situation where mission agencies at home and abroad were separate entities which had little or no contact with one another as in the Church of Scotland departments of National Mission and Overseas Council. So long as this situation endured:

... both "partners" know who holds the purse strings and sets the agenda in the south. Meanwhile churches in the north remain unhealthily focused on 'mission faraway' and ignore the pressing missiological challenges at home. Unequal relations between north and south result in distorted mission identities in both north and south (den Hollander 204:8-9).

Issues of social justice continued to predominate and these were linked to partnership through mission which was involved with economic justice, human dignity and personal hope. These were relational matters and to ignore them was to deny salvation as fullness of life. Issues such as these would lead to conflict with evangelical groups in the future. As far as the donor mentality supported exploitative economic systems, it was challenged and moves towards ethical investment to assist the liberation of the poor and oppressed were promoted. The concept of partnership was challenged as empty of content and action as younger churches were subjected to power politics through continued dependence. This kind of thinking which led to the development of new international structural models produced two responses, the call for moratorium and CEVAA (Communaute Evangelique d'Action Apostolique: Evangelical Community for Apostolic Action). But, at this point the moratorium debate erupted.

#### **4.12.1 Moratorium**

The reduction in our grant was based on our own economic situation and priorities. It was made unilaterally. We had not engaged the leadership of this school in dialogue about long-range plans for self-reliance. When we were economically strong we unilaterally contributed large sums of money for capital development and operations. Now that we are in financial difficulties we withdraw in an equally unilateral way. Most Western agencies act in the same unilateral manner; the piper calls the tune. ... This matter of unilateral reductions by donors is a highly sensitive issue. The receiving church rarely has any option but to absorb the blow and suffer the consequences. The damage it is doing to relationships cannot be overstated. (Hopkins 1977:78).

It was situation such as this that brought a new perspective to interchurch relations. In 1971, Rev John Gatu, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, proposed the model of moratorium as one approach to redressing then imbalance which would necessitate a period of reflection on mission with the aim of transforming the unidirectional flow of resources to a multidirectional exchange where control and power would be internationalized:

Moratorium was discussed as a means of breaking unequal power relationships between mission boards and local churches; of providing space for local churches to reflect on their self-identity, their calling to mission, their need to develop their own, authentic response to the gospel in their particular patterns of dependency; at the same time a moratorium on the sending of funds and people would give the sending boards extra resources to put into the education of the members of their churches in mission, and to channel into ecumenical mission activities (Brown 1997:218-219).

This became a major issue when, in 1974, the churches which constituted the All Africa Conference of Churches made a similar plea for moratorium. This would be moratorium *for* mission with the aim of ‘remaining a respected part of the one Catholic Church.’ (AACC Lusaka, 8-21 May 1974 in Bosch 1991:325). The Philippine theologian, Emerito Nacpil reached the same conclusion based on the premise that in existing conditions any partnership could only exist between weaker and stronger partners; that is, a partnership of dependence and domination. Therefore, Nacpil concluded, the finest sacrifice the missionary could make was to withdraw and allow other forms of mission to materialise.

Gatu gave expression to younger churches dissatisfaction with the state of partner relations and took strong issue with Stephen Neill by challenging the western view of partnership which resulted in:

we must say to the white advocates speaking for the Africans: I believe that I can speak for myself and I believe I know my own needs, which of course must not necessarily correspond to those that you consider to be the right ones. ... the churches continue to live as appendices of the Western churches and remain dependent (in Bauerochse 2001:65).

For western Christians, mission was still a one-way movement. Gatu described it as the ‘Vasco da Gama mentality of those who set off to explore the world and to help the heathens and the poor’ (in Bauerochse 2001:65). Unity and community seemed a far cry from the state of contemporary relationships, especially where money played a vital role in the relationships.

Bangkok took up the issue with a view to developing new forms of relationships and that churches which wished to should go ahead and declare moratoria, work within their own limited means and thus develop their own independence and identity. This would also allow the older churches a period for reflection on their missionary methods and motives.

However, it did not receive general support although it did inspire some innovative discussions and moves. Emilio Castro, new head of the Department of World Mission and Evangelism, summed up the debate: ‘Never should it [a moratorium] constitute the abandonment of our missionary mandate. ... It must be a moratorium *for* mission, never a moratorium *of* mission’ (1973:140). However, this implied that the older churches trusted their younger partners to act with integrity and challenged themselves to do the same for the sake of the *missio Dei*.

In 1974, the Lausanne Covenant<sup>7</sup>, expressing an evangelical standpoint, expressed the hope that ‘a growing partnership of churches will develop and the universal character of Christ’s church will be more clearly exhibited’ (1974, Article 11 in Sogard 1996:199). Yet, it allowed for the possibility of moratorium: ‘the reduction of foreign missionaries and money in an evangelized country may sometimes be necessary to facilitate the national church’s growth and self-reliance and to release resources for unevangelised areas’ (Article no.9 in ME 6.6.38, WCC 2005:26). However, according to Bishop Festo Kivengere of Uganda, it became clear that this matter had never actually been raised at grass roots level and what was discussed was largely the views of a limited number of church leaders (Neill 1976:45). But this might be said of most of the deliberations in such situations.

Concurrent with these discussions, the entire issue of world development was assuming centre stage both in the secular realm and in the churches. This was exemplified in the Commission on the Churches’ Participation in Development (CCPD). A strategy paper prepared in 1973, focused on the main role players in development:

CCPD conceives development as a process by which people participate in their own liberation. In this way, development is the action people themselves take to change their situation, rather than the result of an increase of the goods and services available to them (in Bauerochse 2001:68).

This kind of thinking was threatening to the Western world in its search for increasing wealth. Philip Potter (in Bauerochse 2001:69), General Secretary of the WCC, encapsulated the problem tersely:

What we face here is an evangelical and pastoral problem (...): how can we speak through the document to the ordinary member of the church in Western countries, especially at a time when people in the West feel very insecure?

This provides the very conditions under which the periodic attractor of Eisler’s ‘dominator’ model thrives. While one response was to identify with the poor of the world in their quest for social justice and liberation, the predominant response was to consolidate vested interests and prevent these things from happening. This was both an ecclesiastical and secular response.

#### **4.12.2 CEVAA (*Communaute Evangelique d’Action Apostolique*)**

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<sup>7</sup> emanating from the International Congress for World Evangelisation, Lausanne, Switzerland, July 1974.

In some ways CEVAA provided a possible alternative to moratorium. It attempted to model its interchurch relationships on the principle of the communion of goods as in the earliest Jerusalem church (Acts 2:42ff, 4:32ff.) It was formed in 1971 having arisen out of reflection on the structures of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, and was largely promoted by African members of the network: ‘their specificity is the inclusion of the partnership and power-sharing principles into the structures of international church communities’ (Matthey 1999:106) and represent an attempt to implement the recommendations of the successive missionary conferences which aimed to create structures that facilitated rather than hindered relations between younger and older churches; and it prefigured the WCC Ecumenical Sharing of Resources programme. CEVAA’s concept of partnership was akin to that of *koinonia*. Its particular focus was on co-operation in evangelism and it contributed to the complete integration of church and mission. A novel departure was the approach adopted which allowed all the younger churches to talk directly to one another rather than ‘via the centre in Europe’ (Funkschmidt 2002:399) where the relationship was crudely described as resembling ‘a rape more than a courtship’ (Funkschmidt 2002:568). This situation which has endured involved mission agencies in the West communing regularly to discuss the needs of their common partners and the allocation of resources. While this might have some beneficial effects, it also confirms the exclusive nature of the sending agencies’ approach to mission. While they were talking amongst themselves, their partners were mere applicants for grants and assistance, mere subjects of distant beneficence. So policies to ensure equitable sharing of money and power were built into the system. This provided one motivation for the adoption of the block grant system in order that churches should be free to use funds allocated as they wished as “grown-up churches” (Funkschmidt 2002:401). Attempts to replace this system with project related funding led to charges of paternalism.

There was also a serious attempt to recruit missionaries on a wider basis between all member churches in response to Mexico City’s ‘Mission in Six Continents’ emphasis. The idea was that all member churches should be sending and receiving churches and that exchanges between younger churches should take priority.

#### **4.13 Formation of the Council for World Mission (CWM), 1977**

In many ways CWM operates on similar principles to CEVAA (Funkschmidt 2002:396ff.). In 1977, the Council for World Mission (successor to the London Missionary Society and the Congregational Council for World Mission) moved from being a mainly British organization to an international mission partnership. A process had begun in Singapore (1975) where, among other things it was recognised that as things were presently constituted ‘it perpetuates the relationship of donor and recipient and that it fails to give adequate place to the talents of every Church in the co-operative enterprise’ (in Evans 1987:458). CWM consists of 31 churches spread throughout six regions. The restructuring was a move to break with the donor-recipient model of relating. All its members are committed to the partnership according to its ability to contribute; each receives according to need and stewards the common material and non-material resources for the benefit of the mission to all. In principle, no church has power over another, but each is accountable to all:

All the churches are important parts of the Body of Christ; all are called to and given gifts for mission, which is of the very essence of the church. The powerful are opened to the critique of the powerless (Brown 1997:221).

This accountability is based on Gal 6:1-5 where partnership requires Christians to be active in critical solidarity as well as critical distance. This is fundamentally important for:

[c]an we speak in credible terms of partnership between the dominant and the dominated, the powerful and the powerless, the large and the small, the rich and the poor, the black and the white, the oppressor and the oppressed? It is a relevant question especially for CWM where indeed many of these polarities exist (Evans 1987:468).

This has produced an innovative equitable approach to mission which is deserving of the name of partnership:

Theologically, the new patterns of relating and holding in common are anticipatory signs of the eschatological community, where all live and work in true interdependence. Psychologically, the new power structure helps the churches to grow out of inherited identities and develop a more biblical understanding of who they are as missional churches. (van Hollander 2004:9).

Aware of the gospel partisanship in terms of power and its ab/use, it was agreed that power would be shared as equitably as possible and that the ‘concept of partnership, ... implied not only common sharing but also holding as much as was possible in common’ (Evans 1987:458). The aim was the empowerment of the traditionally powerless. A radical part of the agreement made was that “we do not cease to use the resources we

have for God's purpose, but we cease to regard them as our own" (in Evans 1987:459). This involves a degree of vulnerable stewardship, particularly for the former sending churches who have voluntarily given up much of the control they previously exercised. .

It allows for 'prophetic integrity and disturbing relevance' (Evans 1987:470). If all of the churches have been endowed with all the resources needed for mission then that means that the younger poorer churches share in this endowment and the ability to witness to their older colleagues. Thirty years of experience have proved the worth of this *praxis* model of mission. Thorne (1987:498) described CWM as a philosophy. This being the case it is an extremely practical philosophy.

However, even this new policy approach is not static for it underwent a substantial re-evaluation since 1996 when a property was sold in Hong Kong which provided a very substantial endowment for its work in mission. CWM established a Mission Programme Support Fund (MPSF) from which disbursements are made on the basis of members' discerned priorities. The emphasis has moved from funding development projects 'to God's saving work of saving people and saving creation' (Pierce 2003:26).

Ultimately, by discerning the anticipatory signs of the eschatological community new patterns of relating in authentic interdependence developed:

Partnership is costly. It means trying out, opening up, letting go. It is the Easter story all over again. As Robert Latham reminded the CWM board during the 1974 restructuring debate: "the pattern of death and resurrection is the norm for Christians and for their institutions" (den Hollander 2004:10).

Since its reorganisation in 1977, and as the result of subsequent developments, the example of the CWM offers some insights of value for partner church relations. Its Council is inclusive, containing representatives from different regions and includes women and youth members. In this way, and in its manner of operating, CWM has made a decisive shift towards a partnership in mission between and among its members. Each church contributes as it is able and power is shared in the allocation of funds; there is much mutual sharing of gifts and resources. It bases its understanding of the gospel and

mission in Acts 1:8 in the work of a community of witnesses. This is holistic and inclusive. Each partner is required to covenant with one another in respect of sharing resources multidirectionally, engage in multilateral decision making and participate in common mission activities. The Council is committed to ecumenism as the result of the coalescence in its thinking of mission and unity. It does this by acting as a facilitator. And it is an instrument of mission rather than an active participant itself where resources are pooled. What is lacking is full transparency in its members' activities through mutual theological accountability and prophetic witness. There is often the perception that it is the church alone which is God's partner in mission. However, God has also chosen to identify with the poor and the oppressed so the challenge is for churches to share in the struggles of the marginalised ie. to become partners with God's partners in 'going beyond ourselves' (CWM 1996:297). CWM conveys a positive self- image, but what of other agencies which have for a long time been involved in mission?

#### **4.14 Melbourne (CWME), 1980**

This conference of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism emphasised that the petition 'your Kingdom come', which was its theme, should be prayed in solidarity with the poor of the world. Liberation theology was prominent in the discussions as was the call for solidarity with the poor (cf. Luke 4:18-21). Not surprisingly, there was a clear rift between the evangelicals and those who were preoccupied with social justice matters. No allowance was given to those who would play material poverty off against spiritual poverty for in the world; it is the poor who are proclaiming the good news and are active in the amelioration of their peculiar circumstances. The older churches had much to learn from such as these. A German delegate, Gerhard Hoffmann (in Bauerochse 2001:72) commented:

They are no longer the people who need us. They are now (and were really always) people whom we need if we wish to be saved for the kingdom of God: as Christ is with them, we can only have him if we are also with them.

For as logical as this thinking was, it was also extremely radical for those who had not heard the message presented in this manner before, especially in the dramatically new approach to relationships. Dependence had shifted place towards being a description the older churches' role. This posited several consequences for them. First, they had to take more seriously their



responsibility for inaugurating the responsible community of the people of God. Then, they had to set clear priorities in the use of money. Third, they had to engage with political and economic struggles in order to alter existing balances of power in favour of the poor. Philip Potter (in Bauerochse 2001:73), WCC General Secretary, accurately summarised the situation which had not, nor would change in the immediate future: ‘... we have not got very far in the ecumenical sharing of resources and in our partnership in the gospel. The power of money and of other resources has prevailed’. A letter sent to the churches states: ‘Our world is deeply wounded by the oppressions inflicted by the powerful upon the powerless. These oppressions are found in our economic, political, racial, sexual and religious life’ (IRM 1980:253). Power is a neutral commodity until it is exercised. It is also a fundamental component of any relationship including sharing partnerships. What is vital, however, is that power:

should be faced openly and its implications confronted. The worst form of power is not so much that of naked aggression or the flaunting of authority but the disguised and manipulative schemings whose aim is control of opinion and decision-making. I suppose the slogan would have to be, “In all things, transparency” (Kirk 1999:198).

A positive aspect of Melbourne was that it was composed of delegates from churches and no longer from mission societies; integration had proceeded apace. Despite a virtual moratorium on talk about partnership, ‘mutual witness’ in a two way flow was emphasised that focussed on the use of power:

to build interchurch relations without challenging our own power structures which dehumanise and betray the kingdom, is to build on sand. ... We need to be converted ... towards an action that reflects the crucified Christ in the way we use power in mutual relationships (WCC 1980, para. 25)

A major concern which went beyond the functional quality of partnership, was the unity of churches in mission through missionary action and eucharistic celebration. This community was described in terms of *koinonia*. This raised not only issues of the balance between quietism and social action, and the need for celebration through the search for justice in church and world:

Where a people is being harshly oppressed, the eucharist speaks of the exodus or deliverance from bondage.

Where Christians are rejected or imprisoned for their faith, the bread and wine become the life of the Lord who was rejected by men but has become the ‘chief cornerstone’.

Where the church sees a diminishing membership and depressed budgets, the eucharist declares that there are no limits to God's giving and no end to hope in him.

Where discrimination by race, sex or class is a danger for the community, the eucharist enables people of all sorts to partake of the one food and to be made one people.

Where people are affluent and at ease with life, the eucharist says, 'As Christ shares his life, share what you have with the hungry' (in Bauerochse 2001:74).

However, little of positive worth emerged in the subsequent practice of the churches.

Yet, this does not minimise their relevance for the form that partnership takes. Sadly, the gap which separated rich from poor continued to widen. By the end of the 1970s, the term partnership came to refer to any form that inter-church relations, aid and activity took. The 1980s were to be occupied with discussions concerning the ecumenical sharing of resources.

#### **4.15 The Ecumenical Sharing of Resources**

The initiative for the study process on the ecumenical sharing of resources had its inception at the 1975 Nairobi assembly of the WCC. And this issue had its source in the moratorium debate. The credibility of Christian witness was at stake here. Several meetings took place at regional and national levels. Two main points emerged as the result of this process. First, the resources being referred to were not just material but also included spiritual, religious and cultural values. Second, there was a clear negative critique of the dominator model reinforced by unequal power relations. There needed to be a move on the part of the poor themselves to rectify these power inequalities. That is, the poor needed a stimulus to act as a periodic attractor to challenge the wealthy and powerful of the church and world. They must become participatory communities, ie. communities of partnership: 'To do this requires practical solidarity in dependence and interdependence on each other' (Bauerochse 2001:78). This basis was outlined at Melbourne in the concept of the church as a sharing community grounded in Eucharistic celebration and it requires mutual transparency and accountability. A new model was proposed, that of churches of equal standing sharing with one another eg. two younger churches.

#### **4.15.1 El Escorial, 1987**

These proposals were given concrete expression at El Escorial in Spain in October 1987. They were formulated as ‘guidelines for sharing’. Spiritual goods came to be considered of greater value than material resources, ie. ‘Information, communal traditions, wisdom, organisations and a technology of survival’ (in Bauerochse 2001:79). The practical implications of sharing were given more concrete expression than ever before in a number of guidelines:

- the involvement of the marginalised in decision making as equal partners.
- identification with the poor and oppressed and their organised movements in the struggle for justice.
- bearing witness to the mission of God by confronting the structures of injustice.
- enabling people to organise themselves and realise their potential and power.
- opening to one another as friends in mutual trust and accountability.
- sharing with one another our needs and problems in relationships where there are no absolute donors or absolute recipients.
- promoting the holistic mission of the church in obedience to God’s liberating will.
- the sharing of resources among churches of the south (Brown 1997:223).

In both the short term and long term these guidelines were not taken seriously and acted upon. There was a lack of commitment to change on the part of the older churches and the guidelines were not formulated in a user friendly manner with too much emphasis on ‘a globalisation exaggerated to the extreme’ (Bauerochse 2001:80). One positive result of the process arose out of advice tendered by Konrad Raiser to the El Escorial meeting which strengthened the ecumenical vision of the church as a sharing community which would not simply accept the existing ecclesiastical power structures.

#### **4.15.2 Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation (ME), 1982**

ME was the result of preparatory work carried out by the CWME which culminated in a document which represented the official policy of the member churches of the WCC. It met the aspirations of both the ‘ecumenicals’ and the ‘evangelicals’. The eucharist remains central to the movement of mission in unity of the church both in agreement and

divergence. In its Section ME6.37. ‘Mission in and to six continents’, the document emphasises the necessity of mission beginning at home:

**The Christian affirmations on the worldwide missionary responsibility of the church will be credible if they are authenticated by a serious missionary engagement at home’** [emphasis in original](WCC 2005:25).

Moratorium was raised in this context as a means whereby churches have ‘freedom to reconsider present engagements and to see whether a continuation of what we have been doing for so long is the right style of mission for today’ (WCC 2005:26). It reinforced the idea already mooted as early as the Nairobi meeting of the WCC in 1975, that mutuality in mission might best be expressed for a time between churches of the North and churches of the South respectively (ME 6.40, WCC 2005:28). This would introduce a new way of churches working together and provide a more authentic base for mission.

#### **4.15.3 San Antonio, 1989**

Few new advances were made at the world mission conference held at San Antonio. It continued to consider the universal church as a sharing community founded on the eucharist as *koinonia*. It focussed largely on global problems without making an in-depth analysis of them and their implications. The same may be said of how it dealt with the many resolutions which had been passed regarding partnership in mission. Joint church ventures were promoted and note was taken of the hindrance to eucharistic hospitality as the result of doctrinal differences. Note was also taken of the dangers of proselytism which were rife. The many deficiencies in interchurch relations in this regard which became the subject of a WCC study issued in 1997: ‘Towards Common Witness’ (WCC 2005:53):

... churches in partnership in mission must:

- repent of past failures and reflect more self-critically on their ways of relating to one another and their methods of evangelising, in order to overcome anything in their theological or doctrinal expressions or missionary policies and strategies which shows lack of love, understanding and trust of other churches.

This arose out of the situation of little change in North-South partnerships and the need to continually confront existing attitudes towards younger churches.

The conference continued to promote the idea that mission was the essential responsibility of every Christian community. It was of the essence of the church and not an arbitrary option. A major concern was to promote sensitivity in interchurch relations. However, while an aggressive approach has often yielded only negative results, great sensitivity has not been known to produce more positive results in many cases and no significant alteration in the practice of the mission of the older churches was discernable. The expression of partnership came to mean the exoneration of the older churches' responsibility arising from the combination of dependency and disobedience in the younger churches. A novel suggestion was made to the older churches that they engage in transformation 'through the transfer of power and funds to a common governing body in which all the partners – in both North and South – can share on a footing of real equality' (Bauerochse 2001:86). It was also suggested that they embark on experiments in mission in putting this, and other, principles into action.

In summary it might be agreed with Bauerochse (2001:86) that:

The term "partnership", which was hardly used anyway, experienced yet again a shift in emphasis. It had been used at the beginning ... to bind the churches of the South into the missionary work (Whitby), and later to justify the continuing right of Western missionary activity in the South in spite of the demand for a moratorium (Bangkok). Now in San Antonio it served to cover up conflicts, which had arisen out of the still existing imbalance of relationships. ... The term "partnership" now suggested a relationship between the churches based on equality and mutual sharing which however did not actually exist.

This constituted a damning indictment of many years of missionary relationships. Theo Ahrens (in Bauerochse 2001:86) pointed to a possible way forward when he suggested that the older churches needed to formulate their expectations of their partner relationships clearly and practically and invite their partners to share in these. While this might indicate an advance in thinking it seems strange that the younger churches were not invited to do the same.

#### **4.15.4 Vancouver, WCC, 1983 and Canberra, WCC, 1991**

These two WCC assemblies produced little that was innovative in the field of interchurch relations. Rather they reaffirmed the guidelines for sharing set out at El Escorial and those in the ME document. While at Vancouver, the critical stance in favour of the poor

was adopted, it was another thing when it came to offering a serious critique of the wealth of the West, both church and world. There was a clear dissonance between accepting the integrity of the poor but not of responding to it appropriately through action. Here was a missed opportunity to set priorities and adopt courses of action which would advance the mission of the church. The call to identify with the poor had been replaced with a move towards becoming their advocates. Little had been heard in recent years of the ability of the poor to articulate for themselves.

The call for humility was voiced at Canberra (1991). A two way giving and sharing could achieve reconciliation and mutual growth in order that 'all may fully participate in mission' (in Bauerochse 2001:88). The El Escorial guidelines were again recommended for implementation but there was no real advance in the practice of the older churches.

#### **4.16 Salvador (CWME), 1996**

Here there was a re-emphasis on partnership in mission and mutual interdependence with a concomitant re-emphasis on *missio Dei*. There was a double challenge; to the older churches to realise that mission was not simply a matter of overseas engagement; and to the younger churches to realise their potential as authentic churches. The good news is shared by all and is to be shared with all. This is a duty, responsibility and privilege: '... there is only one gospel, our common foundation for a proclamation and a witness; there is only one mission of God, in which we participate as collaborators .... (Report of section IV: 'One Sole Gospel – Diverse Expressions' in Klagba 1997:134). The collaborative nature of the exercise demands and is based in solidarity, mutuality, reciprocity and sharing of resources. Autonomy is almost anachronistic in this context. The implications are that a rethinking of mission theology is necessary as well as serious consideration of structural changes.

A recommendation was made that:

[t]he WCC should invite the churches, missionary institutions and local communities to practice a common discipline of mutual cooperation in mission taking into consideration the experience acquired and new models. The

fundamental values of this discipline are notably mutual challenge and encouragement, the creation of arenas where self-expression is free and without circumspection and where each is heard, a sharing of one's own resources to encourage an authentic interdependence, the participation in decision-making in respect to others' priorities, the patience and consideration of the dynamic nature of relations, the opening to and ongoing search for a greater solidarity, transparency and mutual responsibility, as well as other ecumenical values affirmed in former documents (Report on section IV in Klagba 1997:135).

As we can see there was nothing essentially new here although the challenge to act was clear, not only on the basis of this recommendation but on those of similar historic pronouncements. However, this was all dependent on giving mutual recognition and accepting the values of cultures encountered as well as giving up a competitive spirit in mission work. Openness would inevitably lead to mutual enrichment. In sum, this seemed as if successive conferences were constantly reiterating what had been decided and said before in the hope that someone was listening and ready and prepared to act.

#### **4.17 Consensus on Interchurch Relationships**

By 1973 (Bangkok), a degree of consensus on relationships between younger and older churches had been reached, in theory at least. These included a recognition that all churches are called to engage in mission; that every church is called to be a partner in the *missio Dei*; where a local church already exists, there needs to be mutual participation in decision-making; in partnerships, all partners have gifts to offer the relationship; maximum transparency should be the aim; all resources belong to God; mission and unity are inseparable; and mutual enrichment is the result of ecumenical sharing. The degree to which these principles have been implemented varies from place to place.

This consensus developed and in 2000, was given fuller form in 'Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today' by the CWME. It emphasised that:

Indigenous peoples are challenging the [western] churches to recognise the richness of their culture and spirituality, which emphasises interconnectedness and reciprocity with the whole creation. They are asking the churches to work in real partnership with them, doing mission together as equals, in mutual sharing (WCC 2005:78).

#### **4.18 The Self Image of the Sending Churches**

It is difficult to fully agree with Stephen Neill (1976:19): ‘that they [older churches] are, almost without exception, penitent churches. They have learned to look at themselves with a critical and appraising eye’. If that is so, then why has it been so problematic for them to implement the lofty mission ideals they formulated and proclaimed from 1910? It might be good if they had taken to heart the biblical injunction ‘Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye, with never a thought for the plank in your own?’ (Matt 7:3).

We may, however, agree with Neill (1976:19-20) in some of his areas of concern. For too long, the older churches have demonstrated great indifference to the enormous discrepancies in wealth between their nations and between their churches. There has been a further discrepancy in attitude between those who have demonstrated ‘patronising superiority’ towards those whom they consider to be inferior. Hence, relationships have often been marred by insensitivity and have been responsible for disunity. There have been inexplicable tendencies towards collusion with power when injustice has been uncovered and articulated but not acted against. Patronising attitudes have been demonstrated in the promotion of western ways as the ‘only possible Christian way’ (:20). Indigenous spirituality has therefore been denigrated.

#### **4.19 Conclusion**

At Edinburgh 1910, the younger churches were regarded as a means to mission. While the aim of partnership in the early conferences of the IMC from Jerusalem, 1928, was to co-opt churches for the work of mission, the relationship was approached from the attitude of churches which were independent in their responsibility and decision-making ability. Mission was the task of churches older and younger, not missions. Jerusalem talked of ‘partnership’ and ‘co-operation’. The Tambaram meeting demonstrated the coalescence of unity and mission in ‘joint responsibility’ and signalled the genesis of mission in reverse which was based in the local church. The active nature of mission was emphasised at Whitby as mission was designated as service, ‘partnership in obedience’



through developing mutual relationships. This arose out of the situation where it was recognised that older churches could not complete the task alone. This gave an opportunity for partnership in mission with both older and younger churches and other agencies actively involved in pursuing a common vision, task and service. Willingen continued this aspect of collaboration in common pursuit, 'mission in unity', of the *missio Dei*.

The Achimota meeting concentrated at a deeper level on the development of the self-identity of the younger churches. Mission and unity came together at New Delhi as aspects of the one mission of God through solidarity in action. As has been seen, by the time of the Bangkok meeting in 1973, there had been a significant change in the partner concept. Here, it was used to justify the right of mission societies and sending churches to missionary activity in foreign lands where younger churches were established and active. The issue of moratorium challenged these assumptions, at the heart of which were economic issues. The abuse of power in many relationships was challenged and social justice emerged as a necessity for both the mission and the world. This necessitated, also, new forms of relationships.

The specific emphasis at Melbourne was partnership through solidarity with the poor. This led to a degree of conflict with the evangelicals as the struggle became more political. By this time, integration was progressing well and led to a movement for an ecumenical sharing of resources. These developments in theological thinking were helpful and demonstrated a degree of partnership but they led to conflicts as the dominator model resisted the periodic attractor of the partnership model which promoted implementation.

Partnership was a much discussed issue, but it was not a practical reality from the perspective of the younger churches whose problems were largely economic, both in terms of their poverty and their dependence on foreign aid, and the use of the same money by donors to dominate and control these churches. Partnership cannot be used to describe the relationships between older and younger churches in a clear and

comprehensive way, for often it was a guise to veil conflicts. There had been little actual change in terms of repentance on the part of the older churches and agencies which was demonstrable through changes of courses of action. Hence, the San Antonio conference used the concept of partnership to cover up conflict in the mission domain.

A particular issue that militated against the development of Eisler's partnership model was a disparity in priorities. While the older churches were concerned to develop relationships in a manner they could continue to control, yet with more active participation on the part of the younger churches, these younger churches were more concerned with matters of physical survival in a rapidly changing environment. They were struggling with political issues related to a growing nationalism, the demand for independence and later, the results of independence. The strong urge towards the development of new meaningful relationships came from a combination of church leaders and the *afficionada* of the missionary world, who were deeply committed to expressing a renewed coalescence of mission and unity. They were the ones who had caught a vision of the church and world as it might yet be. They could see the value of working together to forge new relationships. Their theoretical base was impeccable. However, they had to contend with their own churches which travelled more slowly and deliberately, having the concerns of the whole church and not just those of mission to deal with. This led to resistance when, for example, it came to the allocation of funds for mission when there were many needs at home, not least on the home mission front, an area which the younger churches came to see as a vital locus of concern if they were to have anything useful to contribute to world mission. They represented the essentially conservative nature of the church. So resistance emerged from the churches they represented; from those who had not caught their vision or who were promoting a different vision, or who were threatened by the vision of reaching out in such a dynamic manner. They tended to retreat into or remain with the dominator model of operating as it provided greater security and also contributed to the maintenance of the *status quo*.

Perhaps a fitting and honest conclusion is contained in the 2000 CWME document 'Mission and Evangelism in Unity' (WCC 2005:84) in the light of the continued

existence of many partnerships which are still determined by structural inequality and a structural division which disadvantages younger churches:

In recent decades the churches have become ever more aware of the necessity to engage in mission together, in cooperation, in mutual accountability: hence mission partnerships have been established, some institutional mission structures transformed, and common projects undertaken. The same period however, has seen an escalation of confessional rivalries and competition in many parts of the world. These realities compel the ecumenical family to re-examine issues of mission in unity, cooperation among the churches, common witness and proselytism, and to work towards more responsible relationships in mission.

It is the light of this global historical survey that we now turn to consider the history of partnership in respect of the Church of Scotland.

## Chapter Five      **The Church of Scotland's Historic Approach to Partnership in Mission**

### **5.1      The Background**

While the missionary outreach of the Church of Scotland can be traced back to the formation of the church at Pentecost, it is with the Reformation that we first see clearly a commitment to mission. Prefaced to the text of the Scots Confession (1560) was a clear statement of missionary intent: 'And this Gospel must be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then the end shall come' and concludes with the prayer 'let all the nations come to Thy true knowledge' (Hewat 1960:1 cf. Cochrane 1966:159-184). Clearly, it was the intention of the nascent Scottish Church that world mission was a priority. However, for more than two centuries this did not materialise. Ross (1986:33) acknowledges the insignificant missionary impulse and indifferences on the part of the established church, claiming that mission had always been integral to the life of the church 'despite its high and low points'. In the interim mission work was taken up enthusiastically by voluntary societies. It was only in 1824, that the Church of Scotland gave its blessing to the cause of foreign missions.

However, Presbyterianism in Scotland was sadly deeply divided and this situation was exacerbated by the 'Disruption' of 1843 when a substantial section of the Church of Scotland left to form the Free Church of Scotland. In consequence, each church formed its own missions and maintained the divided witness globally. Basically, these missionary enterprises conformed to the 'dominator' model as they sought to impose western Christian values on indigenous peoples, often through the destruction of their traditional religious beliefs and values; through dispossession from their lands and through education which produced paradoxical results (see Duncan 2003). They were even referred to as 'these harbingers of westernisation, who eventually sowed the seeds for future white supremacy' (Stapleton 1994:217).

While Latourette (1953:924) accords his own assessment as ‘superficial’ there is sufficient truth in his assertion that:

... the spread of Christianity in the four and a half centuries after 1500 was an integral, secondary and inevitable phase of the world-wide extension of Europeans and their influence. That extension was partly by exploitation, partly by conquest, partly by vast migrations, and partly by commerce. ...

In one way or another, these were all violent (dominator) processes in the way they destabilised traditional societies and cultures because the Christian advance did not occur in a vacuum:

A large proportion, probably a majority of the Europeans through whom it was accomplished, although nominally Christian, denied it by their conduct. There were cruel exploitation and here and there extermination of non-Europeans. Withdrawn from the environment in which they had been reared, which, though by no means fully Christian, gave at least lip service to Christian standards, many Europeans deteriorated morally (Latourette 1953:924).

A more sophisticated interpretation, depending on the work of the Comaroffs (eg. 1991, 1997) suggests that ‘they ultimately contributed to the destruction of African independence through the fostering of a black, capitalist middle-class willing to challenge the traditional aristocracy’.

In 1900, the Free Church of Scotland united with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland to form the United Free Church of Scotland. A subsequent union took place between the national Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland in 1929 to form the present Church of Scotland. ‘Both Churches ... had roughly parallel ‘schemes’ [eg. foreign mission] supported by the whole membership. These ... were amalgamated with little difficulty’ (Burleigh 1960:410). Both churches had a proud record of missionary outreach which had a significant part in the movement towards union due to missionaries:

whose devoted labours did much to make union possible and inevitable, for on the mission fields close and intimate co-operation was natural and necessary. The reunited Church was ... a deeply committed missionary Church with responsibilities towards Christian communities growing up in many lands (Burleigh 1960:417).

Burleigh was of the view that the 1910 International Missionary Conference was the high point of nineteenth century mission and, therefore the fulcrum into the twentieth century

mission with its emphasis on fraternal co-operation or partnership. This missionary outreach is the subject of our discussion in this and the next chapter.

Clearly there were several changes in the air during this post-World War One period. The imperialistic confidence of the great powers had been destabilised and this had an impact on the work of missions which had been closely linked with imperialism and colonialism during the ‘long’ nineteenth century which culminated in 1918. Further destabilisation occurred with the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939:

Then war broke out. It was the costliest war humankind had ever seen, for it involved the entire globe. It was a war in which precisely those powers whose burden it supposedly was to civilise humanity actually dragged the entire world into their conflict. It was a war in which progress and technology showed their seamy side, multiplying the destructive power of human hatred. And it was a war that solved very little. For a few years after its end the globe was again involved in another armed conflict, distinguished from the first in that its scope was even wider, and in that the destructive power unleashed by it dwarfed that of the earlier war. ... Shortly after the end of this Second World War, it was clear for the first time it was within human power to destroy the entire species – and much of the earth with it (Gonzales 1975:429).

This would seem to indicate that even in the early twentieth century, the global situation had deteriorated to such an extent that it closely resembled the human extinction phase in Eisler’s schema.

Following this war, the Church of Scotland found itself having to work in the aftermath of this vastly altered context, not least of which was the vastly altered context of the international missionary movement. This was also true of the church of Scotland’s missionary outreach programme. Politically, the Church’s three main mission fields had changed out of all recognition. India and Pakistan achieved independence in 1947, the communist revolution took place in China in 1949 and the ‘wind of change’<sup>8</sup> which would bring independence swept through Africa in the 1950s:

Parallel to these political developments was the emergence of a vigorous indigenous church in all of these fields, bringing the challenge of handing over

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<sup>8</sup> A phrase used by Harold Macmillan, UK Prime Minister during an address to the South African parliament in February 1960, regarding the development of a world-wide non-racial and democratic spirit (Hastings 2005:414).

responsibility for Christian witness from the “mission” to the “church” (Ross 2006:1).

Yet, in Eisler’s terms there was cause for hope for:

all through recorded history, and particularly during periods of social instability, the gylanic model has continued to act as a much weaker but persistent ‘periodic attractor’ (1998:137).

This provides the context for a study of the Church of Scotland’s mission work. During the subsequent years, we will note a struggle to integrate a new concept in mission – partnership. However, this was not an easy exercise as it was far simpler to talk about partnership in mission than to realise it in practice. Nonetheless, there was a serious attempt to engage with partner churches in a new and novel manner which would enhance the integrity of the mutual relationships.

## **5.2 Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Policy**

The General Assembly of 1932, received a Foreign Mission Committee report of a substantial debt which had accumulated up to 1931 and had led to a considerable depletion of capital. This was the result of problems arising out of the 1929 union (Burleigh 1960:410) and also of no account having been taken of the increased costs of missionary work in the post-war (1914-1918) period. A project was undertaken from 1932:

to re-survey the whole of the work abroad with the view of appreciating the missionary values thereof, to prepare plans for its reorganisation at less cost in case it is found at the end of the present financial year that such is absolutely necessary, and to report to the next General Assembly or the Commission of the General Assembly if the report should be ready: with power to initiate prior to such report any such plans in whole or in part as they may deem fit (GA [General Assembly] 1935:611).

Historically, it may have been too early to expect any consultation with partner churches on matters which would affect them negatively.

This issue was related to local Church autonomy for, ‘neither the Mission Councils nor the Foreign Mission Committee as such have any acknowledged part in the control or administration of Church affairs’ (GA 1935:615). The words ‘as such’ offer a qualification that conceals the truth of this matter. In fact, Mission Councils wielded immense power in new younger Churches (cf. Duncan 1997:104ff.). Yet, ‘any policy of

forced and precipitate severance of missionary work from the churches in the field comes into conflict both with obstinate facts and with a true conception of the Church and its work' (GA 1935:616). There was a clear awareness that these very young churches were bereft of the benefits and endowments which the sending churches had accumulated over centuries and were the source of their wealth which enabled them to engage in mission in the first place. Too quick withdrawal would defeat the positive results of over a century of mission work for:

these young and immature Churches, consisting for the most part of the poorer classes of the community, are all attempting the very exacting task of maintaining their existence from the beginning on a purely voluntary basis, without the endowments and other forms of maintenance that supported the churches of the West for fifteen hundred years. ... To withdraw the moral support and leadership of the missionaries would almost certainly bring about material collapse (GA 1935:627).

In the light of concurrent developments in the ecumenical movement, the Church of Scotland would have been ill-advised had she contemplated any action which might lead to a complete break with any of the Churches which she had been involved in birthing (GA 1935:628). Even at this stage there was a recognition that 'material collapse' did not imply or indicate spiritual failure. And time and experience teaches that material poverty can sometimes be a stimulus to spiritual growth. This concern had evaporated by the early years of the twenty first century.

The Second World War (1939-1945) provided another challenge to the hegemony of the western world. The participants were exhausted by their war efforts and a new era of international politics began which was to bring significant challenges to the field of foreign missions. In 1946, a reassessment of the work of overseas mission was undertaken and commissions were sent by the FMC to China and West Africa. The report stressed the 'worldwide fellowship of giving and receiving' (in Lyon 1998:39) and thus anticipated the one of the outcomes of the imminent Whitby meeting of the IMC (1947). Concurrently, the Church of Scotland celebrated the formation of the Church of South India in the same year, where one of its constituent missions entered this union which represented the zenith of ecumenical achievement in the twentieth century, 'the ecumenical event surpassing all others' (Lyon 1998:40).



A primary task facing the CoS was the integration of the work of institutions (medical, educational) into the life of the young and developing churches. These had been separated from the work of the local churches and were dominated by missionaries through the existence of Mission Councils which operated quite separately from the young churches and reported directly to the CoS. The main concern was to promote integration which would facilitate a partnership between two churches in freedom with the entire work being transferred to the younger church. This required a new approach. In 1945 a special committee had been set up to consider the relationship between older and younger churches in India. This was done at the initiative of the National Council of Churches in India:

The time has now come when the missions from the West should carry on their activities in and through the organisations of the Church, wherever these have been developed, and cease to function through Mission Councils or other organisations which are not an integral part of the life and work of the indigenous Church (in Lyon 1998:43).

This was not a particularly novel idea for the FMC because in 1992 a board was established in Nagpur which took over the work of primary schools and evangelism. However, the outcome of the work of the special committee for India was that the FMC affirmed its desire to continue to be involved in the development of policy:

which meant in practice continuing to exercise the control from which it had seemed to be saying it wanted to withdraw. ... No rhetoric of partnership could conceal the reality that the Church of Scotland, through its missionaries and its grants of money, still exercised an inappropriate control (Lyon 1998:46, 47). Attitudes between these two churches (replicated throughout the missionary domain) were largely determined by disparities in wealth. It was often a source of deep frustration and resentment that comparatively wealthy missionary agencies held the power of life or death over, for instance, the continued existence of a primary school.

The year 1947 signalled the beginning of the movement towards greater devolution of the missionary task in each country to the Church in each locality. It also saw the process of the integration of mission and church resulting from the establishment of autonomous churches throughout the world. This 'left the way open, it was hoped, for new depths of partnership in the Gospel' (Lyon 1998:276). Laudable as this was, Lyon (:ibid) pointed

out the problems of integration being seen by sending churches as a branch of colonialism, and by the proponents of nationalism, it was interpreted as liberation from foreign hegemony. A constant failure on the part of the FMC was its desire to be involved in the formulation of policy decisions among its former scions and so partnership continued to be viewed as one sided, especially when the allocation of funds was discussed, despite this being a tangible expression of a desire for solidarity on the part of donors from and within sending churches.

### **5.3 A Wind of Change**

In 1946, Rev James Dougall had become the General Secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee. He was well aware of the changing world situation and the need for the church to change to meet this new context:

Some of us feel very strongly that the time has come for a new approach to our missionary obligations and that without any presumption on our part that we know better than our fathers, but simply that the situation has changed in all fields as well as in the Church at home' (Dougall to Morton, 7 March 1950, in Ross 2006:1).

The General Assembly of 1947 noted three points concerning the development of relations with 'younger' churches. First, 'the growing significance of the Younger Churches' (GA 1947:343), especially the South India Union with its strong desire 'to be free of control, legal or otherwise, of any Church or society, external to itself' and 'to express under Indian conditions and in Indian forms the thought and life of the Church Universal'. Referring to West Africa it was acknowledged that Churches were acutely conscious of their debt to the CoS, and yet equally sensitive to anything which savours of patronage or dictation. They were equally emphatic that missionaries must be men and women who are anxious to identify themselves with the Church and to work in and through it (GA 1947:343).

Second, was the Partner Plan Scheme which was to become 'the main instrument of missionary education' (:345). This entailed mission partners writing regular letters to partner congregations and presbyteries in Scotland informing them of aspects of their work and requesting prayer for specific topics. Partner congregations would appoint correspondents to keep in touch with mission partners and keep them informed of

developments in their congregations, presbyteries and the Church of Scotland at large. As an educational tool, the partner plan has never been surpassed and this has been attested regularly by the Church of Scotland (eg. GA 1978:334-335; GA 1983:349). Arising out of this, in the course of time, there developed links between congregations and presbyteries in Scotland and overseas (GA 1983:349) and then the concept of partner visits both to and from Scotland which served to give Church of Scotland members and members of partner churches an opportunity to experience one another's church life in greater depth than is possible simply by correspondence. These would become opportunities for 'awareness building and spiritual strengthening for their congregation' (GA 1978:334).

A new Partner Plan/Deputation scheme was introduced in 1971 whereby mission partners were attached to two presbyteries and concentrated on these relationships, though not to the absolute exclusion of other contacts: 'In addition to renewing and strengthening links with partner congregations, missionaries were invited to meet and to address other groups in the community' (GA 1975:387). Also, 'increasing numbers of partnerships are asked for. In the last quarter of 1972 there were as many new partnerships registered as in the whole of 1969' (GA 1973:495).

Third, an emphasis was made on the oneness of missionary enterprise which was recognised as the responsibility of all Christians and not the preserve of overseas fanatics:

We Christians of the Older Churches can no more stand alone in this post-Christian era without the fellowship of the Indian, Chinese and African Churches than they, without us, can be perfected in their mission. We need each other as we need Him who is able to make both Home and Overseas one. ...  
Is this not God's call to His people to close their ranks and to rejoice in their conversion from individualism and isolationism into the world-wide fellowship of giving and receiving, which is both the mirror and the means of His healing, forgiving and transforming love for all the nations? (GA 1947:345).

Here the essence of partnership is described in terms of interdependence and participation in a global Christian community. Ross (Partner Church Consultation 2005:10) attempted to answer this question almost sixty years later by appealing to the concepts of relatedness and *koinonia*: 'In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now' (Phil 1:4-5). Mutuality

was the new expression of the missionary relationship, but it was a contradictory mutuality for the Church of Scotland could still aver: ‘The Presbyterian Churches of the Dominions are all of them the offspring of Church of Scotland and delight to acknowledge their parentage’ (GA 1947:421). The concepts of paternalism and trusteeship had not disappeared.

Added to this, the convener of the FMC in his eloquent address to the 1947 General Assembly raised a thorny issue which continued to bedevil the CoS:

The proverb about cutting our coat according to our cloth applies only if there is no more cloth. But there is money enough in the pockets of Church members not only to do what is now asked, but to sow the seed of truth in many wide areas we have not even touched (Gunn ‘A Time for Greatness’ 1947:25ff. in Lyon 1998:64-65).

A continuing problem was the view that there was some kind of invisible barrier which separated home and foreign missions. This sometimes led to resentment when calls were issued for support for foreign missions. The FMC emphasised that foreign missions were not just a hobby for those who favoured this area of the church’s work but the responsibility of the entire church. Clearly, there was confusion, at least in the minds of many CoS members who were asking about the purpose of continued mission overseas when many of the former missions and younger churches were asserting their independence. This necessitated a fresh look at the missionary obligation, particularly in view of the rapidly increasing costs of maintaining overseas commitments. But the confusion extended to the issue of the relationship between foreign and domestic mission. The FMC responded by affirming the unity of mission and by attempting to ‘help the Church to take the word and reality of mission into its daily consciousness and habitual attitude’ (Lyon 1998:66).

Following the Whitby meeting of the International Missionary Committee in 1947, the Foreign Mission Committee issued a statement on “The Witness of a Revolutionary Church”. However, this theme was more true of the world than the Church! It was a statement of an ‘expectant evangelism’ which was necessary preparation for the first General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) based on the theme, “Man’s Disorder and God’s Design”. Strangely, there was no direct reference to partnership.

However, the change in conceptualisation was under way and there would be no retreat at least in theory, though the practical implications of theoretical implementation would persist until the present time. The 1948 report of the FMC to the General Assembly contained a 'Report of the Special Committee on the Relation of the Older and Younger Churches in India':

... the Foreign Mission Committee is now resolved that the time has come for a much more general and thorough-going attempt to apply to its work in India the fundamental principle that the missionary task is the responsibility of the Church in India (GA 1948:406).

... the Foreign Mission Committee for its part desires that its missionaries and its grants should be at the disposal of the Church in India and that the distinctive contribution of the Church of Scotland to the evangelistic task of the Church in India should be given in a manner which visibly and effectively expresses their unity in the ecumenical Church (APPENDIX I, GA 1948:407).

This led to efforts at integration which diminished the role of Mission Councils and began to emphasise the autonomy of the Younger churches. This came about as a result of the Church of South India attaining autonomy and was the precursor of other attempts at practical partnership. By 1950, it was reported that, in India, the process of integration was well advanced. Here there is a recognition of the changing relationship as the recently formed ecumenically based Church of North India emerges not only as a fully autonomous church but also as a leader in organic ecumenical progress.

The formation of the WCC in 1948 marked 'the end of the beginning' inaugurated in 1910 at Edinburgh. It was hailed as: 'a medium to express the unity which God has revealed to them'. Here we note the emergence of the concept of the coalescence of mission and unity: 'As Churches they must now learn to practise that continuous collaboration and mutual confidence which brought through their missionary agencies they have already found in the International Missionary Council' [IMC]. The IMC and WCC continued 'in association with' one another (GA 1951:370). Further it was at the 1949 General Assembly that note was taken of the progress made by African nations towards self-government. This would soon be linked to the movement towards ecclesiastical independence.

It is uncertain whether policy decisions were driven by financial constraints or global concerns from the beginning of the 1950s but there was a need for a policy review and a Statement of Policy was drawn up by Dougall. This was prophetic in a sense considering what was to happen in the early years of the third millennium!

Neither the Younger Churches nor the established institutions depending on support from abroad can be treated with anything but respectful consideration .... We have much to learn, many consultations to effect and understandings to reach, before this realignment can be worked out for each field of activity (GA 1950:401).

The theme of having much to learn and the need for consultation was one that would become quite tediously repetitive in the course of time. It might be asked, what was it that needed to be learned but could not be understood or learned, and why were there only references to consultation but little face to face communication in order to effect realignment? It is easy to conclude that there was no real desire to hear or understand when money was short and difficult decisions had to be taken. This implies a serious lack of trust in the integrity and ability of partner churches to participate in meaningful and effective discussions about matters which affected them and their future. This was demonstrated in a report presented by Rev Neil Barnard to the FMC in 1950 concerning the situation in Calabar:

The Church was independent, but this was just a mockery as they had neither cash nor property; co-operation between Education authority and Church was weak, missionaries showed that the church was inferior by refusing to become ministers and members, and they showed they were more interested in Mission than in Church (FMC, April 1950, Appendix :353ff. in Lyon 1998:87).

Although this was predominantly the case, it was not universally so.

#### **5.4 The Times They are a Changing**

A year later, in 1951 the context of the need for policy revision was spelled out. This was based on:

- a) changes in global economic, social and political conditions;
- b) growth and development of younger Churches and their desire for self-government;
- c) establishment of WCC and its relationships with these churches;
- d) declining financial support from Older Churches (GA 1951:371).

In addition, policy had to respond to rapid change in Africa due to:

strife for political power [which] has tended to embitter race relations. It is there above all that reconciliation is needed ....

Indeed it is in the providence of God that authority is being thrust upon the African Church by Missions rather than demanded by it from them' (GA 1951:398).

While it is true that there were instances of this being policy, the latter part of this statement is a little disingenuous as the church seemed to be responding to secular/political change rather than being in its vanguard. In a sense it was the younger churches which were wresting authority from their former ecclesiastical masters.

In 1952 (GA:351), the General Assembly was reminded that:

The power of the witnessing church on the field had been accepted as the primary consideration of the report of 1935. This was even more fundamental in 1950 because the Integration of the Church and Mission meant that the Younger Church had become a responsible partner to be consulted in all decisions, and its resources in personnel and experience now more clearly defined and limited the direction and scope of missionary activity. The Foreign Mission Committee had to ask of every undertaking how far it could enlist the interest and increase the vigour of the church on the field and how much that Church could now and in the future make itself responsible for a significant share in the undertaking.

Assessment of mission policy was conducted using a number of 'middle axioms', two of which are particularly significant:-

The main contribution was to be made through missionaries. More important than money was the need to 'keep alive the sense of missionary obligation and partnership in the sending church'; ...

evangelising communities should be the main missionary task' (GA 1952:351, I).

It was made clear that there must surely be a significant distinction between the relationships of older and younger churches which are only linked by the casual and informal contacts of individual Christian people, however strong their commitment, and those Churches which have a strong relationship founded on appointment of missionaries bound by contractual obligations who have offered and been offered, supported and guaranteed by the older church and accepted, integrated and commissioned by the younger church (GA 1952:370).

The IMC was also engaged in similar thinking eg. at Willingen, Germany in 1952, under the theme of the missionary obligation of the Church. The five main topics under discussion were:

1. The theological imperatives of the Christian mission;
2. The indigenous Church, its present strength and weakness as an instrument of world-wide evangelism;
3. The place and function of the missionary society in a new day;
4. Christian vocation and its fulfilment in a world-setting;
5. The pattern of missionary activity and the necessity for its reshaping.

Certain emphases emerged from the discussions held:

1. the primacy of evangelism;
2. the centrality of the Church, leading to the integration of the Mission with the Church;
3. the necessity of lay involvement;
4. the imperative towards unity.

With specific regard to the situation in India and Pakistan, several recommendations were made in order to effect 'a fuller partnership in the Gospel' (GA 1952:357). First, 'the CoS should be represented on appropriate church councils and boards by missionaries 'appointed in consultation with the churches' (1952:357). There was a danger here concerning whose interests the missionaries represented. Were they those of the CoS or the indigenous church? And why should the representation be by missionaries? In other places, eg. South Africa, where there were very few missionaries latterly, Church of Scotland representation was by local church people who were nominated by the local church, and this worked well. These were matters which could cause serious friction and problems for missionaries. Second, there was the matter concerning whether or not missionaries should become ministers and members of the Churches in which they serve. Third, was the issue that the receiving churches should take responsibility for the commissioning of missionaries and involve them in policy making bodies. These steps seemed to provide a logical process if the matter of partnership was taken seriously and would contribute to the development of authentic partnership. Fourth, there was the recommendation that representatives of Younger Churches be enabled to visit the CoS in order to experience its ethos. In all of this, consultation was the key approach.



Similar policy decisions were felt to be appropriate for Africa despite the considerably different and fluid political context. For instance, ‘... we cannot rely on this association with [a colonial] Government. For one thing it may prove an embarrassment when an African Government takes over’ (GA 1952:362). This corroborates the earlier stated assumption that it was political affairs that, at least in part dictated church policy. A strong emphasis was laid on the need to train Africans for the evangelism of their own people. It reaffirmed the principle that the primary agent of mission in a land was the indigenous church.

In all this an important qualification was made with regard to India which was of universal significance:

... by acting in time and sharing with the African Churches responsibilities and powers with respect to work and finance formerly controlled by a Mission organisation, we may avoid some of the embarrassments and strains which had become a distinct source of weakness and division in India before the war. The relationship of the Older and Younger Churches is indeed more cordial and mutually helpful than ever before, but it is always subject to external as well as internal influences. Political, racial and national feeling cannot be excluded. We know that a gift offered graciously before any claim is made is worth far more does far more good than a bigger concession granted with hesitation (GA 1952:363)

or grudging resentment. So timing was everything and it needed sensitive analysis of the total context. Change in one sector did not occur independently of the other components of society. There was an awareness at this time of the need for partnership in mission to be a two-way exchange which ‘can throw some light on the problems that confront the Church in Scotland itself and what may be the lines of their solution’ (GA 1952:371). This was important for the whole church because ‘the experience of the Younger Churches is not available for the Church of Scotland except through the FMC ...’ (:ibid). It is sad that despite this and other similar comments being made over many years, there has been little integration of ideas presented by partner churches concerning areas of church life in which they have experienced a measure of success.

The Central Committee of WCC met in 1953. It was reported that after a challenge had been made to the older churches to increase their missionary efforts as the concern of the entire Church, ‘this contribution from the West must be undertaken in a spirit of

partnership with the Younger Churches and along lines which will strengthen them for their own missionary obedience' (Letter from Central Committee to WCC member churches in GA 1953:379). This implies that there was a degree of consultation and listening in depth to what the Younger Churches are saying. This was followed by the growth of an ecumenical focus on partnership in theological education and other forms of training (GA 1954:376ff).

Missionary consultation took place through the Conference of British Missionary Societies:

for the more effective furtherance of the gospel overseas. It provides means for consultation among the Societies, for co-operation and joint action in such ways as may be deemed advisable and for the maintenance of contact with similar bodies in other countries (GA 1954:380).

This was fine but there were times when consultations took place about younger churches without their knowledge and participation. Partnership also developed through membership of international bodies eg. World Presbyterian Alliance (GA 1954:380-1).

Attention was given to issues relating to dependency eg.:

How is financial help to be given so that the Church on the Field will escape the wrong kind of dependence and grow stronger in its sense of mission and responsibility? .... Foreign money does not help the Young Church in the long run if it supports a system by which the very existence of the Church depends on this outside help (GA 1954:381-2).

Any attempt to divert funds to other and/or new work must be done in consultation and not independently of the Younger Churches. Again and again the need for consultation is emphasised but it was not a regular part of the relationships.

In 1955, the Foreign Mission Committee report to General Assembly focussed on the implications for mission raised in:

Stephen Neill's *The Myth of the Younger Churches* which referred to frustration arising out of the inability to engage in new ventures due to existing commitments to partner churches for which they are unable to pay because they are still so small and weak and under-resourced as well as being accused of being 'ignorant, and immature, and largely self centred' (GA 1955:418),

while the real situation is that they are immersed in trying to further the Gospel amidst '[p]overty and ignorance, disease and dirt, illiteracy and superstition .... The paradox lies

in the fact that although his material needs must be met his ultimate needs are not material' (:420).

In a section on 'Realism in regard to Younger Churches' the 1956 Foreign Mission Committee report takes an insulting and patronising tone by listing the perceived faults of its partners, listing 'immense backwardness ... faction and family strife, that marriages go wrong, that financial integrity is often wanting, that Christians yield to the threats and bribes of non-Christian masters or neighbours, and return to the worship of idols' (GA 1956:399). While there is little doubt about the truth of these charges in some contexts, it is strange that they were only levelled against 'younger churches' when these seem to have been persisting eternal features of the Church of Jesus Christ throughout the entire world. It might also be asked how and from whom were these habits learned? This attitude seemed to indicate a regression in mission thinking.

One interpretation of younger churches understanding of partnership given on their behalf was that it consisted of: 'understanding and prayer and personal services, it is not because they fail to grow in responsibility and self-help, but because the task is far beyond their own resources' (GA 1957:425). Again this reveals a certain paternalism revealed in the midst of sound missiological thinking: 'Mission in the Biblical sense is the task of the whole Church to the whole life of the whole world' (GA 1957:426).

Integration was not considered a barrier to the development of partnership (:432) in progress from Mission to Church. 'As long as Scottish missionaries are needed and wanted, the partnership should stand' (:433). There was a recognition of the necessity of personnel to maintain a partnership. The place and role of missionaries was clearly that they were needed and wanted, but to do exactly what? There was some confusion, even at this stage in relations about the exact nature of their responsibilities: 'Sometimes it is harder for us to receive than to give' despite examples of the contribution of overseas partners' witness in Scotland (GA 1957:447). 'We know that ... the contact with Younger churches can bring us not only revival of missionary interest but real instruction and encouragement in our own tasks here' (GA 1957:447). The Asian Churches were not

satisfied only to receive missionaries. They want to exchange Asian personnel with each other:

They go further and press for international and inter-denominational teams of missionaries and younger churchmen to demonstrate the character of the Universal Church and bypass the obstacles raised by contemporary nationalism' (GA 1957:447).

... as we hand over property and administration and control of funds to the local Churches, we shall gain a freedom and mobility and enriching fellowship for which many of the very best of our missionaries have struggled and prayed' (GA 1957:448).

The Church of Scotland had from the beginning regarded its foreign missionary enterprise as an integral part of the life of the Church, arising of necessity from the very nature of the Church itself (GA 1947, min 8799 in GA 1957:453). Here we see the younger churches asserting themselves and the consequent benefits are as much for the Church of Scotland as for their partners and this conforms to good missiological thinking. In addition, we note the beginning of the enormous and complex task of transferring property to indigenous churches.

Arising out of the Achimota meeting of the International Missionary Conference held in Ghana in 1957-8, a number of lessons were learned:

1. The Christian faith is spread by contagion;
2. The layperson can be used more extensively for the conduct of worship;
3. Laypeople need to be trained for voluntary work in Church and world  
The church should recognise more forms of Christian service and commission people accordingly;
4. The Church needs an adequate theology to guide its laity;
5. Hope that 'that a unity begun in the mission-field may extend its influence and react upon us at home' (Lord Balfour of Burleigh – GA 1960:439). 'It is among the Younger Churches that the need of unity is most clearly seen and amongst them also that the greatest adventures in unity have been made' (GA 1961:476).

However, by 1960, missionary activity seemed to be suffering from a form of paralysis which denied the need for reorganisation because: 'the Younger Churches so often are still dependent on missionary funds and that "the resources of the Older Churches are exhausted in helping the Younger Churches to remain where they are"' (GA 1960:445).

There was an uncertainty about missionary partnerships that seemed to indicate a certain loss of nerve:

The more complete the case for exercising a measure of freedom to choose where some proportion of our resources is to be spent on frontier work in Asia and Africa – that is, after full consultation, with the Church in the area and in partnership with it (GA 1960:446).

There was a strong feeling that the relations between the older and younger churches needed sensitive handling. The administration of the sending agencies might be tempted to hold on to control too long. They had exercised too much real power. But the younger churches were not aiming at independence, because all churches must acknowledge they are, first of all, dependent first upon God and then upon each other. At the same time their relationships ought not to be governed not by financial considerations but by common purpose, nor by national or racial differences but by their belonging to the same family of God (GA 1960:448-9).

While there was a clear realisation that total independence was not consistent with good missionary theology, there was also a realisation that things had to change in terms of power relations. However, it was not for the sending church alone to determine the direction to be taken. It was problematic to talk of common purpose when only one partner decided what that purpose was to be. While integration was proceeding apace, it travelled at differing paces depending on local circumstances. Although integration was achieved in a formal sense, as for example in India and Pakistan, the objective of establishing transparent and responsible partnerships between older and younger churches had not. Missionaries continued to exercise a disproportionate power and:

... The more ‘partnership’ came to be seen as the ‘way forward for effective co-operation in mission’, the more that differential grew in importance (Lyon 1998:132, 133).

The matter was reaching critical proportions and was well seen by the missionaries in place themselves:

We think that ‘the mission’ (and we consider that this, in the sense we use it, continues despite integration) with its impressive organisation and structure of institutions, its foreignness, and its influence closely connected to financial power, stands counter to mission. As things are, the Church does not know itself (always it has its eye on what ‘the mission’ expects it to do or say) and cannot act or speak

in freedom. We are still far from a free and equal partnership. The situation is bedevilled by what is sensed as imperialism, spiritual, moral and financial, on the one hand, and by humiliation and a simmering rebelliousness on the other, this despite every effort we make in personal ways on both sides (Minutes of Iona Community Meeting in Nagpur, January 1959 in Lyon 1998:133). This situation was replicated through the mission world. In South Africa, the Church of Scotland South Africa Joint Council (an interim council established in 1963! [Lyon 1998:222]) was only dissolved in June 1981. It is significant to note that, until the transfer of power to the local church, it could not communicate directly with the sending church and had to send all communication through the mission council. Nonetheless, integration did give a measure of freedom, hitherto unknown to younger churches, though they became burdened with a plethora of committees to cope with its results.

The Third Assembly of the WCC took place at New Delhi in 1961 along with the IMC (to be integrated later in the year) with a Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. The FMC took up the theme 'Jesus Christ: Light of the World'. The following year 'The World He Loves' became the theme of the British Missionary Societies. New Delhi had expressed the view that the Churches themselves are responsible for mission. This would include the younger churches as agents of mission in conjunction with the efforts of the older sending churches. The FMC supported the integration of the IMC and WCC. Integration was in the air and the FMC began to work towards the integration of the three committees which dealt with work beyond Scotland; the FMC, the Jewish Mission Committee and the Colonial and Continental Committee. Strangely, the Inter-church Relations Committee was exempt from consideration at this stage.

Concern with missionary vocation was raised in the 1963 FMC report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It was noted that it 'is not a matter of geographical location but rather a conviction that in a certain situation I am meant to be the kind of person I am, among the people I find there' (Bombay Report in GA 1963:424). This highlighted the changing role of the missionary from the status of being a pioneer to being a servant of the local church. What remained unchanged in terms of the missionary vocation was that it operates through obedience under a call from God (GA 1963:424).

In 1964 the Foreign Mission Committee underwent a name change to the Overseas Council. This change of name and also partly of ethos was the result of a number of changes which were taking place in the mission world including the disappearance of Mission Councils, the emergence of national leadership and the transfer of ministry and membership by many missionaries to Younger Churches who by this time were directing their own work. In addition, the political scene had substantially changed especially with regard to political independence:

To think of the new relationship as involving an association between Churches means also that we must think more of a two-way traffic. It is no longer a matter of Scotland speaking to the overseas churches and offering experience, people and money. We now consult together and work together. And increasingly we shall realise that we can learn from the experience of the church in other lands (GA 1963:427),  
if given a chance to teach anything. Here again, we note the appearance of a periodic attractor in the form of a change of relationship in terms of a developing intimacy. At the same time overseas Churches were beginning to consult amongst themselves eg. in the formation of the All Africa Conference of Churches (1963).

It was during this period in the early 1960s that the award of block grants became the norm, though the practice had earlier precedents. This allowed churches to draw up their own budgets based on their own discerned priorities. However, there was no involvement in the decision-making process concerning the amounts to be given. This was inimical to the development of partnership relations

### **5.5 Partner Church Consultation, 1965**

The idea of consultation was given classic practical expression when the Overseas Council convened a partner church consultation St Regulus Hall, St Andrews from 14-23 September, 1965. This was to be the first of two proactive consultations (another was held in 1999) in stark contrast to a consultation which was to be called in 2005 which was predominantly reactive. This consultation had its origins in a desire to take account of the rapid changes which were occurring throughout the world politically and ecclesiastically. It intended to review the policy decisions made in 1947 concerning

integration and to develop a response to changes in partner relations. It was felt that simple bilateral relations were outdated and there was a need for relations that reflected the implications of Mexico City's 'Mission in Six Continents'.

The consultation acknowledged the existence of a number of new factors which affected the global context for mission. These included the existence of self-governing churches, indigenous national leadership, the fact that all partner churches were engaged in union discussions and great political changes, ie. the growth of nationalism. So the consultation aimed: 'to attempt to see how best we could obey the call of God to go out together in mission' (GA 1966:497; it was to be 'a Consultation about the Mission of the Church in a very contemporary world of war and division, of suffering and need' (:498). The consultation's focus was on practical matters, property and finance.

Among the topics discussed were:-

1. The sense of mission in the Church, in the NT and today;
2. the Church and its mission in the contemporary world;
3. Building the church for mission;
4. The place of the missionary and the Christian abroad;
5. The future of institutions;
6. Property and finance;
7. Working relationships.

A good spirit prevailed in the discussions so that it could be affirmed, 'We met together as delegates of sister Churches and we humbly praise God that our church has been used in the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ throughout the world and in the creation of these various Churches' (GA 1966:499). The Overseas Council could claim that the ethos of the mutuality of partnership was firm:

... although they are self-governing, the churches of Asia, Africa and the West Indies made it clear that they still want our co-operation in people and in money, partly because they value this inter-racial emphasis and partly because, at this stage of their lives, they need our help.

... the Scots were conscious that there were aspects of church life in which we could learn badly needed lessons where the overseas Churches felt that our Church was complacent and self-centred, unconscious of its own dependence on other Churches. In particular we could learn from others about the training of the laity and the place of women in the Church. And we saw church unity as a necessity arising from evangelism, with disunity as a hindrance to the



proclamation of the Gospel of the one Saviour to the non-Christian (GA 1966:500).

Rev William Stewart, in his opening addressed focussed on a prime issue in partnership – the need for mutual consultation:

The whole field of thinking opened up by recent writing on ‘Joint Action for Mission’ points to this. The missionaries from another land will share in the policy making, but they do so within the Church in which they serve and not as guardians of some remoter interest. For this reason one longs to see the Church of Scotland willing to be represented much more frequently in active thinking by its representatives who come on visits for that very purpose, and longs to see more responsible thinking from all participants when decisions are taken (Report of St Andrews Consultation 1965: 71 in Lyon 1998:192).

It became clear that some partner churches took the relationship seriously as was clear from the Presbyterian Church of Ghana’s (PCG) decision in 1966 to send a gift of £1,000 to the Church of Scotland as a token of thanks for all the assistance she had received over the years. The gift was accompanied by a request for missionary ministers to enter its ministry rather than remain ordained ministers of their sending churches (Lyon 1998:200). A few years earlier, in 1960 and 1961, the General Secretaries of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synods had become symbols of partnership when they visited Scotland (Lyon 1998:215). A ‘fraternal worker’ was sought from Scotland by the PCG to be a Secretary for Inter-Church Relations. This marked a move away from the term ‘missionary’. Rev Colin-Forrester-Paton was appointed. Mutual appreciation of the relationship in mission was expressed between the CoS and the PCG which in the same spirit began to send fraternal workers to Europe and the USA (Lyon 1998:200-201).

This consultation marked ‘the transition from an Edinburgh-run chain of foreign missions to a network of Partner Churches spanning the globe’ (2002:25/4).

A year later, reflecting on the value of the consultation, the Overseas Council stated:

From the particular angle of a Western Church, the astonishing growth in authority and capability of the ‘younger’ churches sets limits to our freedom of action, but these limitations spring from a new mutuality and present tremendous new possibilities. This is the deepest meaning of the St Andrews Consultation. The Overseas Council acts in genuine concert with the Churches overseas and not only with them but with other churches and Missionary societies in the West

which are equally involved in a missionary partnership with the very same Churches.

Moreover Joint Action for Mission (which might be taken as the best summary of the significance of the Consultation) means that equal and reciprocal obligations are laid on us all and these are not the arbitrary demands of the ‘older’ on the ‘younger’ or vice versa but the spelling out of the law of Christ for the Churches in seeking to bear one another’s burdens.

The picture which St Andrews thus leaves on our minds is a picture of the Universal Church in which all our Churches have an honourable place and function (GA 1967:620-621).

Here was a sign of a clear recognition that the Church of Scotland was no longer the sole focus and originating point of vision. Rather the churches of Asia, Africa, and Latin America have become the main object of attention and the CoS as one of their partners yet essentially bound to them in a close relationship. This became a clear expression of the ethos of Mexico City (1963) where all churches worldwide are part of the whole fellowship of missionary Churches in six continents.

These are grand statements, and can be interpreted as a serious struggle with the meaning and implications of partnership not only in missiological terms but also in Eisler’s concept of partnership with its stress on mutuality and Russell’s concept of *koinonia*. However, there was no actual discussion on the issue of financial resources and who controlled them and this was a serious lacuna in the consultation because it meant that issues of actual power and control were not articulated and resolved.

## **5.6 After the Consultation**

There had developed a growing realisation that partnership implied relations between churches and not committees such as the FMC, Overseas Council and missionary committees on the mission field. This had implications for the financing of overseas mission which was the responsibility of a General Assembly committee and not the General Assembly itself. Hence, now that a holistic approach to mission had been adopted, it was necessary to have a holistic view of the financing of that mission. In 1961, the Co-ordinated Appeal became Church law in Scotland so every congregation was obliged to contribute to the work of the entire range of activities engaged in by the

church. At this stage, finance was a matter of concern for the Church of Scotland as membership was beginning to drop significantly. In 1960, it had 1,301,280 members; by 1966 this number had dropped to 1,233,808.

An awareness had developed that world mission could not advance by a sending body deciding independently where, with whom and how it would engage in mission. In the context of political and ecclesiastical independency, the Overseas Council acknowledged:

Our service is within other independent Churches to whom we go by invitation. As we see it, our main contribution must continue to be in terms of people, of men and women of a wide variety of qualifications who, through their work and daily living, witness to Christ and build His Church (GA 1970:483-484).

While there was silence on the role of money, there was a clear commitment to offer assistance through skilled personnel who were committed to Christ, his Church and God's mission.

Acknowledging the WCC meeting held in Bangkok 1972 with the theme 'Salvation Today', the Overseas Council emphasised the universality and mutuality of partnership in mission as an evangelistic opportunity:

Today, as never before, mission is to the whole world by the world-wide Church of Christ. It is no longer a question of the Christians of the West offering the good news to 'pagan' lands, but Christians from all nations of the world helping each other to realise the richness of the Gospel message and to witness to their faith to those to whom Christ means nothing (GA 1973:461).

In 1974, consideration began to be given to the ecumenical sharing of personnel. This was a natural extension of much current mission thinking. It had taken sending churches a long time to realise and enact processes to obviate the negative affects of duplication by several denominations working in the same area where other areas were left without the gospel, despite the existence of comity agreements in a number of places for many years. Now the realisation emerged that there could be much duplication in staffing too. This offered an opportunity for sending agencies, not just to talk together about their missionary work, but also to give practical effect to some of their lofty missionary thinking.

The issue of moratorium was raised with the General Assembly in 1975. This was a particularly sensitive issue because it cut across current missionary thinking and threatened the mission programmes of sending bodies. Even the partner churches could not agree on a unified response because their very existence might be threatened by the prospect of 'going it alone'. It challenged the understanding of independency at its core as well as the Christian understanding of partnership and interdependency. But it did raise serious issues concerning the continued existence of a church that could not attend to its own affairs without substantial external aid:

The Overseas Council sympathises deeply with the longings of a John Gatu to help his Church in Kenya to maturity. The working out of the process is not easy. The Churches in Africa speak often with two voices. The Overseas Council must be sensitive to know how to respond. This varies greatly from church to church and none has in fact put a moratorium into effect. ... all churches want to be independent. When they ask for help the need is real (GA 1975:361).

Serious consideration was accorded the concept and implications of partnership in the gospel in 1976:

Partnership in the Gospel between Christians of many different nations is the mark of mission today. It is a crucially important partnership, for in it lies the hope of our world so grievously wounded. We are privileged through the Overseas Council of having a part to play, and the Council is conscious of the charge laid upon it to respond costingly to the demands partnership makes. Just because autonomous churches have come into being in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and we in Scotland no longer have direct control of mission in those areas of the world, it is sometimes thought that the responsibility of the Overseas Council has diminished. This is a serious misunderstanding. Every resource of prayer, money, and personnel is required to meet the growing and already enormous demands the opportunity for mission world-wide lays upon the whole Church of God. Our partner Churches ... ask us urgently to share with them what they need. At the same time we hear them say to us that we must be prepared to receive from them what we need, so that together we may be better equipped to share the Gospel, and to participate in God's mission of healing and saving to the end of the world (GA 1976:324-325).

What was clear was that the old style of one-way mission from 'christendom to 'heathen lands afar' was passing. The concept of Christendom had disintegrated and the fulcrum of mission had passed to the Third World with its massive population growth. Mission had become a world-wide movement with no European base but a base which was to be found anywhere in the world. This implied a different approach to mission rather than its termination as a western exercise. The new approach would involve far greater

sensitivity than had been in evidence on relationships in the past, in response to God's calling and to the whole concept of sacrificial offering in terms of personnel and finance. (GA 1976:324-325).

The concept of partnership in the Gospel was further developed under the annual Overseas Council report theme 'Together in a Divided World' (1976)). It was 'the mark of mission' (GA 1976:324) ie. that which defines mission and it would indicate that it is partnership which constitutes the church in its missionary and ecumenical relationships. It provides hope in a sadly divided world. The role of the sending church is 'to respond costingly to the demands partnership makes' (:324), ie. kenotically. The diminishing direct control over mission is not the end of missionary responsibility in a context of the:

growing and already enormous demands the opportunity for mission world-wide lays upon the whole Church of God .... At the same time we hear them say to us that we must be prepared to receive from them what we need, so that together we may be better equipped to share the Gospel, and to participate in God's mission of healing and saving to the end of the world (:324).

Then there was a recurrent stress on openness to receive 'what our fellow Christians can give to us for our strengthening' (GA 1977:330). What the sending church needs is never defined and this has always been a problem in partnership. Receiving churches needs are blatant – personnel and money. But what exactly do sending churches need, and who determines those needs? Had it been possible to answer this question, many of the subsequent misunderstandings might never have arisen. Again the need for sensitivity is stressed but it is never clear how this worked out in practice and how receiving churches viewed this approach.

Certainly good communication was vital with the necessity of being 'sensitive to the issues and problems facing its partners, and must be ready to respond with understanding, a process that often involves not just long correspondence, but consultations and visits' (GA 1976:325). Personnel continued to play a pivotal role: 'The Churches want missionaries and ask unequivocally for them' (:325). However, the Overseas Council acknowledged that 'Even the word "partnership" has been suspected to be a hypocritical camouflage for unwarranted interference' (GA 1977:330) despite the emphasis on its laudable aim which it saw as 'to strengthen the Churches overseas ...and to encourage members of the church here [Scotland]

to appreciate that the mission to which all are committed is one mission whether at home or abroad' (GA 1978:316).

This led in 1977 to a restructuring of the missionary operation in Scotland where that former geographical area interests were replaced with particular aspects of missionary involvement eg. theological education and training for ministry. The hope was that this would lead to 'a more professional approach to the problem of relationships, which are to a large extent common whatever the context, and to the basically similar problems connected with institutions and organisations' (GA 1977:331). Missionaries would be seen rather as members of local churches and that relations are between churches and not the sending church and its missionary personnel. Newly appointed mission partners who were not yet ordained were expected to seek ordination in their country of service to the ministry of the local church. In the short term, this approach proved valuable. The new structures: 'have made it much easier for us to respond to the thinking and needs of partner churches, and have helped us to be more sensitive perhaps in our dealings with them. It has certainly strengthened our awareness of what we here have to learn from them' (GA 1979:319). The Regulations for Overseas Staff (1977:3) reflect this emphasis on 'equal partnership'. Yet again, no specifics are offered about these learnings! However, in the long term, this cross churches approach did not work and the Council reverted to area designations.

Despite the visits made by representatives of both partners, including bursars, there was an increasing demand for: 'ministers of their churches to serve in Scotland, on similar terms to those in which our overseas staff serve in theirs. They feel, as does the Council, that this move would appreciably strengthen our partnership for the sake of mission' (GA 1982:315). This did begin to happen in small ways but legal and other problems were always brought to the fore to explain why this would not work. Sometimes, even language was used as a hindrance when for years mission partners had operated, and still operate, without a great knowledge of local languages. Attempts to expose theological students to other contexts virtually came to nothing although exchanges of theological tutors met with greater success (GA 1983:333-4).

In 1987, following discussion on a remit from the Assembly Council which had been discussing policy on priorities, and the Finance Committee of the General Assembly, it was agreed to :

- (i) express grave concern about proposals the Assembly Council was to make at the 1987 General Assembly involving a cut from a quarter to a fifth in the share of the Mission and Aid Fund allocated to the Board;
- (ii) oppose these proposals at the Assembly for the following reasons, amongst others:
  - (a) a misunderstanding of the nature and needs of the Church of Scotland;
  - (b) a failure to respond to the expectations of the Church's younger generation;
  - (c) the serious implications for the relationship of the Church of Scotland to the world church, to the cause of Christian unity, to the needs of the Third World, and, in particular, to Partner Churches and to Christian Aid, which will result in the inevitable curtailment of the existing work of the Board<sup>9</sup> and prevention of fresh initiatives;
  - (d) the inadequate recognition of the limited financial resources of the Board apart from the Mission and Aid allocation;
- (iii) initiate an urgent programme to inform the Church at large about the work of the Board;
- (iv) thank the Convener for his energetic defence of the Board's interests, with full support for the case presented thus far (min.WM/87/16 of BWM 18.3.87).

This was not a new problem the Board was facing. From time to time, finance became a critical issue for the Board (see below chapter 5.6). It was at times of financial stringency that the Church of Scotland always retreated into an introverted position of maintaining its home mission and ministry while opting to make severe cuts in overseas spending. During these periods, the Board normally managed to maintain its commitments by putting a hold on recruitment of mission partners and by accessing its reserves which were substantial. However, the Board was not to be deterred from pressing on with new innovative ideas in the field of mission.

It was at this time that the concept of partnerships and twinnings between congregations and presbyteries came to the fore. These had happened independently of the Board. It was noted that partnerships or twinnings had developed between congregations in Scotland and congregations in various European countries, including France, West Germany and East Germany; that a partnership had been established, with the Board's assistance, between an Edinburgh congregation and a congregation in Prague in Czechoslovakia. It was further noted

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<sup>9</sup> The Overseas Council had become the Board of World Mission and Unity in 1984.

that the 1987 General Assembly had encouraged twinning arrangements and exchanges with Churches in the USSR and elsewhere in Eastern Europe; and that the Board had been asked to help facilitate visa arrangements for visits to East Germany. It was also suggested that a notice in *Life and Work*<sup>10</sup> and the monthly mailing to ministers could elicit information about existing twinnings and promote others. Then, it was agreed to appoint two members to constitute a group responsible for encouraging and assisting such twinning arrangements (Min. EU/87/2:4, Europe Committee, 14 October 1987).

However, the Board took up the initiative to promote such arrangements through its Committee on Local Involvement and soon it was reported that a linkage had been established between Ardrossan Presbytery and Nagpur Diocese of the Church of North India and that Dundee Presbytery was having difficulty in obtaining a response from Calabar Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria. St. Andrews Presbytery was in the process of setting up a link with Madras Diocese of the Church of South India (Min LI/87/7:2, Local Involvement Committee, 20 October 1987).

An interesting development in partnership in mission occurred in 1988 when the Board reported that it had been challenged by its partners to adopt a more biblical approach to mission and sharing in particular. This arose out of a WCC ecumenical world consultation on resource sharing held at El Escorial, Spain, held in October 1987, which called for:

a common discipline of sharing among all God's people. Our usual materialistic view of sharing has led us to assume that the richer we are the more we have to share and that in times of financial stringency we have no choice but to do less. Yet a deeper understanding points to the fundamental place in Christian fellowship of constant giving and receiving, in which our own and others' needs is essential if we are to experience God's grace in any real way (GA 1988:303).

The new life given by the Holy Spirit creates us as a new people, the first fruits of the new humanity, called to stand with the poor and oppressed, and to seek a new system of values in which such folk will take their rightful place at the centre of decision-making about the use of the world's resources, as equal partners with the rest of us (GA 1988:304-305).

These words were both prophetic and soundly practical and had they been taken seriously in the opening years of the third millennium, the problems which arose might have been avoided.

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<sup>10</sup> The Church of Scotland monthly magazine.



The consultation raised serious issues relating to priorities among the sending churches. These included: enabling partner churches to have a greater say in the allocation of funds and to teach the wealthy how to receive what they have to offer; a greater desire to share out of a context of wealth; and most significantly, ‘having the courage to look hard at the causes of poverty and take a fuller part in the political process needed to change things’ (GA 1988:304-305).

However, these were just words, but the consultation had quite a deal to say about profoundly practical matters related to real resource sharing. These were considered by the African, Caribbean and Latin American Committee of the Board at a meeting on 25-26 January 1988. A number of issues were raised which had serious implications for world mission. First, it was noted that partner churches were given no opportunity to comment on or influence the decision-making of the Church of Scotland. Second, despite all the difficulties, real and imagined, if Scotland was to demonstrate a willingness to enter into real partnership, it was becoming urgent that the Board make it possible for ministers in Third World Churches to enter into pastoral situations in Scotland as full members with all the rights and privileges currently enjoyed by Scottish ministers. Third, the General Secretary, Dr Chris Wigglesworth reported that he had been able to test out some of what was said at El Escorial in conversations with friends in the Church of North India recently. He had become aware that there is a rapid convergence of belief that the world church needs to talk about its total resources and not just those allocated to overseas mission work. It was no longer possible to talk about the exchange of people without also discussing the use of money, both by those who give and those who receive and the influence of the power that is wielded in the process: ‘The use of our money tests everything we say’. Similarly, mutual accountability would seem to require that the Church of Scotland needed to allow into its financial thinking real voices from Christians in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These were radical ideas for their time, despite their coming as no real surprise. To date, lip service had been paid to such ideas and partner churches were giving notice that relationships could not continue as before without attention being given to them.

Meanwhile, in 1989, the Board reported on a remit given to it in 1983 to ‘develop partnership in mission’ (GA 1989:365). It recognised the importance of ‘giving and receiving on a world-

wide scale' (:366). Yet, BWMU gave examples of how this begins at a local level and how this constitutes the church both locally and globally. One mission partner described such a situation as:

An entirely new experience of sharing when I shared my house with a family of twenty-five ... sharing water which had been carried over a mile ... I bathed with part of one bucketful, washed my hair, then clothes, then one of the mothers washed children's socks and undies, then the maidservant washed the clothes she had been wearing while cooking on the charcoal stove, lastly it went down the loo .... I think sharing is in small things, everyday things. I can't share with the 'Church Overseas' I can only share with a few members of the church in Kalimpong who have let me come near enough to share (G 1989:366).

Here is the essence of partnership both in theological and in Eisler's terms! It is totally devoid of domination and the need to control situations and people; it is self-giving in solidarity with those in dire need. It simply shares the menial resources available in the situation. And it arises out of local situations as it encounters real people in desperate need, yet it need no only do so in this manner.

In contrast, a rather academic understanding of sharing in a partnership relationship was demonstrated in the 1990 report to General Assembly (:401):

sharing allows us to receive guidance from our fellow-believers in the South about our responsibilities, before we can give in response to their needs. Not only can we receive guidance about our priorities. We can gain inspiration and even resources for our work in Scotland if we are prepared to accept our need of it.

The question of preparedness to receive was the crux of the matter. It was honoured, for example, in small ways in temporary appointments to Scotland, but not at all in long term posts. But even here, while overseas mission partners to Scotland played a very real part in contributing to an understanding of partnership in mission, it had no long term effect in terms of sustainability. The findings at El Escorial had retreated into the back of BWMU's agenda.

In 1991, related to the development of partnership in the Middle East with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, the BWMU expressed the principles on which this particular partnership was based:

- (1) The two Churches have a common mind in their desire to relate to one another in Partnership. Recognising that there is no one set form of partnership, the Churches seek to develop a relationship grounded in the purposes of God and relevant to the situation in which cooperation in specific acts of service has already formed a good relationship.

- (2) Partnership is not unity, meaning that within it the two churches will each keep their distinctive identity, though for the Church unity must always be the goal. The Churches will seek to share their particular gifts with one another in a flexible approach of mutual [sic] respect and support which will safeguard the sensitive areas in the relationship, such as their wider ecumenical relationships and the interpretation of their respective roles within the context of Israel/Palestine.
- (3) God is calling us to Partnership in practical ministries and mission: prayer, witness and service. The churches will identify tasks which call them together in partnership. Accepting that this has been more successful in the fields of Life and Service rather than in those of Faith and Order, the Churches expect that by responding to former challenges they may then find more common ground in the latter (GA 1991:425).

It is questionable why there needed to be a separate definition of the principles of relations in the case of the Middle East. In what ways was the relationship different apart from the different form of polity of the Episcopal church? While it is true that there is no one form of partnership, BMWU often operated as if there was in its relations with churches in other parts of the world. The issue of unity was not raised in other partnerships since the same form of polity was in operation.

Local to local links were well established by this time and were not all initiated by BMWU as was later suggested in the period following 2003. These included links between congregations in Europe as well as between Scotland and Africa and Asia (GA 1991:439-440).

Under the heading ‘Our calling in being threatened’, BMWU reported the following year that in terms of the increasing discrepancies between rich and poor throughout the world and the inability of church members to see the centrality of this to our relationship with Jesus Christ and the proclamation of his gospel, there was a critical issue relating to the issues of poverty, debt, trade, world development and the environment:

If we ignore them, or worse still, if we ignore the convictions about them which are voiced by our partners in the poorer world – the so-called “Third” World or the “South” – then our mission will be “so heavenly minded as to be of no earthly use”. Equally mistaken is to split them off as “justice” issues, to be dealt with by people who like this sort of thing, unrelated to the Church’s true concern with mission and the Gospel. It is precisely this sort of split which our partners refuse to accept, just as they refuse to be blamed for as well as victimized by poverty or powerlessness (GA 1992: 388).

From this, it is obvious that partner churches were not acquiescent in being objects of BMWU policy but active interlocutors on their own behalf, challenging the western

concept of the existence of a split between the spiritual and secular realms of life. This was one of the greatest contributions partners could offer the Church of Scotland where this had been a running argument for many years, if only it would be heard and acted upon.

It was in this year, that the term ‘mission partners’ gained acceptance as having ‘a wider acceptance in the world Church than missionaries’ (GA 1992:391). In this regard it was affirmed: ‘We have preferred to send people, often at considerable cost to the Board and personal cost, rather than simple financial grants, believing as we do that real partnership depends upon living, personal relationships’ (GA 1992:393). It was also noted that the health crisis in Africa was placing severe pressure on the Board to meet its commitments and required some re-evaluation of its commitments in this regard.

Partner churches were formulating their own values for partner relationships which included integrity, empowerment, imagination, responsibility and change (GA 1992:395-396). However, strident cries were beginning to emerge from partner churches with a renewed urgency which were not only directed at churches but to the global community:

... they ask us why we cannot share more with them, and why our nation seems to be less responsive to Christ’s claims and the needs of others. And they ask us to be their advocates, trying to convince them how the rich West adds to Third World problems’ (GA 1993:527).

Concurrently, referring to the recent departure of two mission partners from the Church of North India, ‘Without a two-way flow of people, it is difficult to see how a partnership can thrive’ (GA 1993:540). Direct links end with the return of mission partners (GA 1993:541). This was a critical issue for the reality and integrity of partnership at this juncture.

In 1994, the area of ecumenical relations was removed from the Board’s remit and it became the Board of World Mission. This appeared to indicate a change of attitude towards the issue of mission and unity which had a significant place on the agenda of the younger churches and had the potential to give the impression that unity was no longer

considered by the CoS to be of the essence of its missionary outreach. The report of that year took the theme ‘Partnership in Hope’ derived from Ephesians 1:9-10:

We were made to find fullness of life in this partnership of sharing, worship and witness which challenges men and women to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord. This partnership forms hope in the midst of greed, despair, oppression, fear, poverty, suffering and injustice, and it actively looks forward to the coming of God’s kingdom on earth (GA 194:535).

However, there was still an avoidance of the practical implications of partnership. Yet, the value of mission partners was reaffirmed, at least by the Board:

Mission partners are still by far the most valuable link in our partnership chain. Through letters and visits they share with their partner congregations their experiences of a different country, culture and church, while reminding us that we all belong to the one family of God (GA 1994:557).

It was revealed in 1995, that the CoS spends 84% of its income on itself. The proportion shared externally was decreasing. Yet, it was also noted that great gains are derived from our partner churches as they ‘take part in the witness of our churches here in Scotland. Their understanding of what it means to follow Christ in today’s world is essential to our witness here in Scotland’ (GA 1995:500). When these statements are taken together they resemble the situation of getting mission on the cheap. The issue of priorities was raised rhetorically, ‘or are we in danger of trying to save our own lives at the expense of others?’ (:ibid) in contradistinction to the dominical challenge.

Again value of mission partners in a two way movement was emphasised in the face of rapid social change and financial stringency:

Through those the Board sends overseas, the Church of Scotland is able to engage at depth with its partner churches and together with them find ways of advancing God’s mission. ... We believe that the presence of co-workers from partner churches overseas is equally vital for mission in Scotland (GA 1995:502).

Despite the possibility of appointing local people, there is often still a preference for expatriate mission partners.

By 1997, the Board sought to make a connection in its concept of partnership by relating mission to issues of justice basing this in Micah’s (6:8) teaching. It sought to benefit from the thinking and experience of its overseas partners (Proverbs 31:8, 9). This is related to humility in the widest ecumenical sense:

Our partners tell us to try and learn something from their obedience to Christ, and from their witness to their neighbours of other faiths. They ask us not to assume that we have all the answers, or that we will get them from more prosperous churches in the United States! Humility before God requires more listening to our poor Christian sisters and brothers (GA 1997:22/3).

We need to put ourselves in the shoes of Christian brothers and sisters in partner churches where the vast majority of their neighbours follow another faith (GA 1997:22/7).

At this time, the Board was also anxious to point out the discrepancies in value systems between the affluent North and the impoverished South.

The discrepancy between partnership for maintenance or mission was noted even in receiving churches. The maintenance model conforms well to Eisler's 'dominator model' and was well expressed by bishop George Ninan, Bishop of Nasik in the Church of North India regarding the '*tendency to side with the rulers. The members of the church tend to follow the values and life pattern of the richer section of the society than the poorer*' (GA 1997:22/8). He refers to the 'Christendom model' in which 'hierarchy, male domination, authoritarianism, success orientation etc. are perpetuated'. He then goes on to describe the more appropriate fellowship model of the 'Church of the Poor' before which, if it takes a stand, '*the powers and structures will tremble ... The responsibility of the church is to join hands with others in contributing towards the uprising of the poor*' (:ibid). Here we have a description of a community which accords well with Eisler's partnership model.

From another context in Jamaica, a vision of partnership both in theological and in Eisler's terms emerges, marked by togetherness, interdependence, co-operation and sharing (GA 1997:22/14). Equality of partners is the hallmark according to Lola McKinley:

*It is God's mission; we have a common call to participate in this mission. We are joined in common cause; before God we are on common ground. There is no lesser mortal and greater mortal; all are equal in value and should be recognised as such. There can be no lesser church and greater church (GA 1997:22/14).*

In 1988, the adopted theme was ‘Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me’ (Matt 25:40). Laudable as this theme is, it maintains recipients in a dependency relationship, unless it refers to the Church of Scotland and not partner churches! However, the context makes it clear that it is the poor of the world who are referred to.

This idea of common call and common cause was consolidated by a couple of mission partners based in Malawi, Colin and Sally Fischbacher who summed up the needs of authentic partnership:

*It is hard to see ourselves as others see us. Perhaps we have a responsibility to ask questions, while being very careful of sweeping conclusions and simplistic generalisations. We share a great deal with our Christian family in Malawi. We all face difficult issues, whether in Scotland or Africa. We don't need prescriptions from another country and we don't need hasty judgments or unhelpful criticism. We do, however, need to question one another, sometimes to challenge one another, and always to encourage and love one another. We need to share our experience openly, both 'successes' and failures, admitting out faults (GA 1997:22/7).*

The Board expressed concern about the two way traffic of money in terms of grants to partner churches in countries which were struggling financially due to the heavy repayments of interest on debts owed to the very countries where their church grants originated : ‘This is the modern rape of Africa’ (GA 1998:22/8). This led to increased grants to countries such as Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique.

A Faithshare partner coming to the end of his term of service in Scotland made comments on the state of the Church of Scotland and more to the point about partnership in mission:

More uncomfortable for us to hear was his criticism that whenever we perpetuate a relationship of dependency with partner churches we assume that we know best how money ought to be used in a partner church, or we have answers to the problems of their administration, or that we have a clearer vision of the way ahead for partner churches than they do. Norbert understood our own resistance to someone from “outside” telling us how to go about mission. His gift was in sensitive conversation in which both partners are able to take criticism and respond to the prompting of God (GA 1998:22/24).

This kind of comment anticipated the forthcoming partner church consultation to be held in 1999.

## 5.7 St Andrews Consultation, 6-10 September 1999

We have truly entered into an age of mutual partnership which our counterparts in 1965 were only beginning to glimpse (Fucella in Partner Church Consultation 1999:3)

As we move into a new century, we are determined to sustain our fellowship and explore new ways of sharing in the mission of God to our world. Not only from Macedonia but from all lands comes the call: “Come over and help us!”

Through carefully listening to one another, sharing our memories and our dreams, we have identified six areas on which we propose that our continuing partnership might be focussed ....’ (Final Statement 1999).

These areas were theological education, evangelism, holistic mission, mission in pluralistic societies, prophetic ministry and human and material resources.

The General Secretary introduced the proposed consultation: ‘ .... From 6-10 September we plan to confer with representatives of some 26 partner churches at St Andrews .... I believe this is a strategic opportunity to take stock of our involvement world-wide and discern God’s direction for the future’ (Ross to all overseas staff, April 1999, DPP). This would allow some reflection on external relationships

Commendably, the consultation based its consideration on the text, ‘Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others’ (Philippians 2:4). It was considered to be a ‘formative event’ which ‘brought a powerful affirmation of the commitment to doing mission in partnership which has guided the Board’s work since the 1960s’ (WMC report to GA 2001, Introduction, DPP). The theme of mutuality was paramount on this occasion ‘when equals meet’ to ‘- listen to their [partner churches] hopes, their fears, their priorities in Mission, and their critique of our relationships in order that the Board would be able to set its own priorities accordingly’ (Fucella in Partner Church Consultation 1999: 3). This positive message was confirmed:

We cannot now, if ever we could, lead a separate existence from all of you, our sisters and brothers in the Lord. ... We are to be partner churches in the fullest sense of the term and to work towards even fuller expressions of our unity in Christ, listening to each other and striving for the day when the remaining walls of



partition will come down (Main in Partner Church Consultation 1999: 8-9 cf. Spiers: 11-12). Despite this proleptic affirmation of the hoped for outcome of the growth towards full partnership, here was an acknowledgement that it was not yet all it might be.

The entire theme of sustaining and developing cross cultural and inter-church partnerships was a source of inspiration and enthusiasm as the churches represented struggled together to formulate the basis of future partnership commitments. With regard to the long standing missionary commitment to education, and particularly theological education, one mission partner expressed the core of partnership (both in missionary parlance and according to cultural transformation theory):

I think that Africa [and other places] is teaching us many things. One of them is that we live significantly, that we live abundantly and the only way to do so is to completely abandon and deny ourselves, even abandon our deepest concerns and worries and trust entirely in Jesus Christ. Love God with all our heart, soul and mind and truly love and serve one another. That, and not material wealth with its self-sufficiency and self-affirmation, is what really counts (GA 2001, 1. Theological Education, DPP).

Here is clear evidence of a *kenotic* understanding of mission.

This consultation affirmed the role of mission partners (Ross to overseas staff, November 1999, DPP) and was followed by the drafting of a new remit for the Board which included the commitment to: 'Develop and maintain mutually enriching relationships with partner churches overseas through consultation and the two-way sharing of human and material resources' (Ross to overseas staff, November 1999, DPP). The importance of overseas personnel was underlined by many of the representatives of Partner Churches at the St Andrews Consultation. Time and again they stressed how much partnership is brought to life by the presence of staff in the field (GA 2000:25/24). The two-way sharing was difficult in the light of the enormous discrepancy of the resources held by the Church of Scotland:

With what a wonderful range of resources God had blessed the church! Yet what a great challenge it is for the church to deploy all available resources to maximum effect in the mission of Christ. The Board seeks to rise to this challenge as it facilitates the giving and receiving of resources between the Church of Scotland and its partner churches overseas (GA 2001, 6. Human and Material Resources, DPP).

This challenge was about to be refocused on the deployment of ‘all available resources’ on a hotel at the Sea of Galilee Centre, Tiberias, Israel (see below, chapter 6.14). And to what effect in terms of relations with much loved and respected partner churches with all their many and varied needs?

New forms of partnership were another result of the St Andrews Consultation as the Board was encouraged to consider alternative forms of partnership. Already congregations and presbyteries had been experimenting in this area for a number of years. For example, the Presbytery of Lothian had entered into a twinning agreement with the diocese of the Eastern Himalayas of the Church of North India (BWM report to GA 2001, 6. Human and Material Resources: New forms of Partnership, DPP). In addition, recognition was beginning to be accorded to CoS members who were serving with other mission agencies. This coincided with a decline in the number of mission partners so that WM was unable to supply every presbytery. Ecumenical appointments offered jointly with other western sending agencies and churches were becoming more frequent (:ibid).

26 Partner Churches affirmed together: ‘We are thankful to be sister churches rooted in the Word of God and the Reformed tradition and historically connected to Scotland’. The strong links built up over generations were found to be a strategic resource for mission in the new world order which had taken shape since the end of the Cold War. The delegates concluded:

We rejoice in the inheritance of trust, of shared understanding, of common purposes which unites [sic] us and gives us the capacity to witness together to the coming of God’s kingdom in today’s world. ... As we move into a new century, we are determined to sustain our fellowship and explore new ways of sharing in the mission of God to our world. ... Our best years are ahead of us as a family (GA 2000:25/4).

This statement was full of confidence for the future, a confidence which would be sorely tested within the next five years.

But an interesting comment was made by one delegate from Ghana when he said, ‘The Church of Scotland took the initiative and “risk” to dialogue with her partners on mission priorities, strengths and weaknesses of the relationships’ (GA 2000:25/4). Here was an

interesting and vital approach to partnership both in Eisler's sense of the concept and the missiological sense. And, in turn the partner churches were freed to be honest in a series of delegate presentations (Partner Church Consultation 1999:39-51).

The importance of overseas personnel was underlined by many of the representatives of Partner Churches at the St Andrews Consultation. Repeatedly, they stressed how much partnership is brought to life by the presence of staff on the ground (GA 2000:25/24). This was 'a jewel in the crown of World Mission' (Main 2001:3).

Adopting the image of collateral damage, Rev Charles Kibicho, in his closing address then issued a challenge:

This is not the picture of churches in true partnership. If we are to be victorious in our common task of the kingdom, we must build one another up, we must recognise where our strengths and deficiencies lie, and, most of all, we must be one (Partner Church Consultation 1999:58).

However, this unity was not at all evident in the internal workings of the Board and required some external input.

## **5.6 Finance Problems**

From the time of the Union in 1929, the work of world mission has been hampered by a variety of financial difficulties. As we have seen, The General Assembly of 1932, received a Foreign Mission Committee report that a substantial debt had accumulated up to 1931 and had led to a considerable depletion of capital resulting from the union. This was further evidenced in the 1935 Foreign Mission Committee report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Although powers were given to effect retrenchments these were not implemented although various options in this regard were investigated (GA 1935:651ff.). Withdrawal from older fields of service was considered to be neither 'practicable [n]or desirable' (:652). Total abandonment of a field 'would be comparable to the evacuation of a salient or the amputation of a limb' (:652). Radical readjustments in the entire missionary enterprise were rejected because 'every one of the main departments of our missionary activities is essential and incapable of being dispensed with' (:653). All this was concluded after consultation with Mission Councils

but not with partner churches because ‘the Foreign Mission Committee, ... has been accustomed to trust the judgment of the Councils in most matters relating to the conduct of the work on the field, the movement of staff within it, the initiation of fresh developments’ (:654)! There was no place here for local church discernment of its own needs nor subsequent input.

From the end of World War II, the FMC was beset by financial problems and a shortage of missionary recruits. Consequently, the budget was progressively increased for a seven year period, but congregational donations never matched the budget. Interestingly, the Home Board (responsible for mission within Scotland) was experiencing similar problems. So, finance problems were the result of reduced income from congregations and current commitments were met from reserves to maintain existing work (GA 1951:412-413). It seemed that CoS members did not fully understand developments in the mission context ‘and did not appreciate the continuing importance of supporting Christians in other lands, in a variety of different ways, and of sending missionaries abroad’ (Lyon 1998:113). There was a sense in which overseas service was no longer deemed an honourable form of Christian service as it had been in earlier generations. Poor conditions of service was one factor in the difficulty in attracting offers of service.

Planned budgetary targets were not met in terms of relating finance to policy development (GA 1952:366ff). However, this was dealt with by reducing the operating budget and using funds held locally. A key factor here was that policy recommendations ‘were not designed to save money. So far as finance entered into the conception, realignment was intended to be simply a diversion of money from one object to another, not a means of reducing expenditure from home funds’ (GA 1952:368). This approach involved the younger churches who were encouraged ‘to consider the relative value of different parts of their work so that what is most central receives prior consideration and what is of secondary importance is not allowed to benefit at the expense of the rest’ (:ibid). A significant principle operating here was ‘it is not the policy of the FMC that requires less money from home, but if less money is available than is required the FMC

must still act in terms of its policy' (:ibid). This was quite different from letting financial exigencies determine policy.

A further issue related to this was: 'If missionary appointments are to become fewer because of the cost the question of missionary vocation becomes all the more vital' (GA 1952:370:

Perhaps the number recruited will have to be smaller and the requirements in every sense higher, but there is no sign as yet that the universal church has reached such a stage of cohesion and sense of partnership in obedience [Whitby definition] that its missionary shock troops or expeditionary force may be dispensed with.

By 1953, the FMC's reserves were almost completely depleted. In addition there was a growing shortage of missionary appointments due to lack of interest in missionary service. Basically, congregations were retaining for their own use, monies which might ordinarily have been devoted to overseas mission. Deep concern was expressed by the General Assembly Finance Committee which:

... with all respect, suggests to the General Assembly the need for grave consideration of the deeper implication of these material anxieties *viz.* the extent to which the financial state of the Church may be an indication of its spiritual health. The answer to the problem will not be found entirely in machinery or administration. It must be sought at a deeper level. – in those elements of the Church's corporate life which provide the source and inspiration of all its missionary endeavour and Christian liberality (GA 1953:80).

This situation continued until 1958, when an Overture was presented to the General Assembly suggesting the establishment of a Coordinated Appeal to congregations to support the entire work of the Church. This would remove the competition between committees in their fund-raising ventures. In 1954, Foreign Mission Committee expenditure was cut to meet its budget. Also, as in 1949, under-spending and low recruitment eased the situation.

From the 1960s, at least, the work constantly operated on a deficit and by 2001, it was noted that:

The current economic climate will bring lower investment returns and globally higher costs. World Mission must meet this challenge through more creative use of income, setting of priorities, and new programmes to share human and material

resources (GA report, 2001, 6. Human and Material Resources: Financial Resources: Generosity and Creativity, DPP).

This brief section has served to demonstrate that it was the mission and vision of foreign mission that drove the policy of the work and not financial exigencies.

## 5.7 Conclusion

From the time of the 1929 union, but having its roots in the earlier 1910 International Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, 1910, independent foreign missions attempted to operate on the basis of Eisler's *gylanic* model through co-operation with one another. The dominator approach disintegrated with the First and Second World Wars, relative to missions. Concurrently, we noted the growing independence of younger churches in the context of a growing desire and demand for independence in these same nations. This accords with the human actualisation or extinction phase of history where the developing concept of partnership acted as a periodic attractor and harbinger of change.

During this period (1929-1999), the Church of Scotland, through its mission agency, made a serious commitment to develop new forms of relationship arising out of the novel concept of partnership in mission, despite problems of implementation in practice. Younger churches reacted negatively to any form of western hegemony, while older churches recognised the need for fellowship, yet found it difficult to express this and work constructively with its partners to achieve the desired goal.

Important principles of partnership in mission which emerged were interdependence, participation in community, collaboration, mutual confidence and help, respectful consideration, mutual consultation, the need for reciprocity, a holistic approach to partnership and mutual accountability. All the ingredients of faithful partnership in mission relationships were there. They just needed to be taken seriously and implemented with conviction.

However, all was not well with the Church of Scotland's Board of World Mission internally. For several years it had been struggling with problems of its own making and these began to interfere with its external relations. It is to this topic that we now turn.

## **Chapter 6    Recent developments in Church of Scotland World Mission Council Policy**

I suggested that studying the relationship between the ‘West’ and its dominated cultural ‘others’ is not just a way of understanding an unequal relationship between unequal interlocutors, but also a point of entry into studying the formation and meaning of Western cultural practices themselves. And the persistent disparity in power between the West and non-West must be taken into account if we are accurately to understand cultural forms like that of ... ethnographic and historical discourse, ... where allusions to and structures based on disparity abound (Said 1993:230).

One cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, socially, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period (Said 1978:3).

These texts offer the theoretical basis for this chapter. They represent the dynamic of Eisler’s dominator model which marked the trend of the Board of World Mission and its successor, the World Mission Council from the beginning of the third millennium. Recent developments are characterised by problems within the total administration of the Board’s relationships both internally and externally.

### **6.1    Problems in the Administration of the Board**

It is difficult to determine exactly when problems in the administration of the Board began but these were consistently manifested in poor and deteriorating relationships both within the department and with mission partners. It is also difficult to know how many cases were instituted against the Board by its employees because an air of secrecy surrounded these dealings in which the Board was involved. In at least one case where the Board reached a settlement with an employee, that employee was required to sign a document agreeing to maintain absolute secrecy in the matter and its outcome. Even executive staff were not immune from these problems. An Israel and Middle East Secretary, Rev Robin Ross left the Board in circumstances which were not at all clear and in which there was a clear lack of transparency and accountability. However, one case study will suffice to exemplify the nature of these problems.



### 6.1.1 Rev Stephen Pacitti<sup>11</sup>

Stephen Pacitti was appointed a missionary of the Church of Scotland in 1977 and served as a theological tutor with the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT) for eighteen years. For much of this time, his wife and family remained in Scotland. The problem might be said to originate in 1988 when, strangely, the Board proposed to reduce Pacitti's allowance. In due course 'The whole matter of the possible reduction of salary appears to have been dropped as suddenly as it had been raised' (:37/2). In 1993, Ms Jill Hughes, Executive Secretary for Taiwan, visited the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan and had what she described as 'a very useful five days' (:37/2). Following this, she wrote to the PCT indicating that it might not be possible to renew Pacitti's contract due to financial stringency. The partner church was asked to contribute towards his salary. At this stage, the Board acknowledged that Pacitti's work was both 'important and invaluable' (:37/2). A little later, problems arose between Pacitti and the Board concerning the expiry date of his current contract. Eventually, the Board conceded Pacitti's interpretation in this regard and extended it until June 1996. These issues were determined to be stressful. Nonetheless, the contract was not renewed and Pacitti raised a case against the Board which was eventually referred to a Special Commission of the General Assembly, presided over by Lord Ross, a judge of the Court of Session.

The Special Commission concluded that the Board of World Mission had treated Pacitti badly in four areas. The first was in lack of consultation with both the petitioner (Pacitti) and the PCT:

The Board contended that there had been consultation with both PCT and the Petitioner at least on a "face to face basis". We readily accept that a body like the Board may well conduct some of its affairs by verbal discussion with interested parties including their staff, but if consultation required by the regulations has taken place orally, we would expect there to be contemporary written records of such oral consultations. ... It is also clear from the correspondence that PCT were

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<sup>11</sup> Unless otherwise mentioned, the quotations in this section come from the *Judgment of the Special Commission Appointed to Deal with an Issue between the Board of World Mission and the Reverend Stephen Pacitti*, *General Assembly Reports*, 1998 (37/1-11).

complaining that they were not being consulted and apprised of what was happening in relation to the Petitioner's appointment ...' (:37/3).  
With regard to the reasons for the non-renewal of the contract, the concern that Pacitti was not offering satisfactory service:

... we do not accept that that PCT ever expressed dissatisfaction with the Petitioner. Nor do we accept that PCT ever indicated that they did not wish the Petitioner to return. As will be seen later, we are doubtful whether any "face to face" communings concerning this matter did take place, and in any event, if they did, PCT made it clear they were satisfied with the Petitioner and wished his contract to be renewed (:37/3).

Allied to this was a contentious matter that would crop up again recurrently: 'Staff are accountable to the Board'. Those who adhere to Eisler's dominator model see little need for consultation, transparency and accountability; they often manipulate roles and relationships to enhance and entrench their power base. Time and again we will note in this chapter how board members often felt powerless in the face of executive staff members' more extensive knowledge and experience in certain quarters where decisions had to be made. While this could be an advantage, there were cases where knowledge was treated secretly and selectively in terms of informing Board members who had to make the actual decisions.

When Pacitti was informed that his contract would not be renewed no reasons were offered. The Special Commission concluded:

... when a missionary has served on a post for 18 years without receiving any material complaint from the Board about his conduct, it appears to us to be quite unacceptable for the Board to give him no reasons for deciding not to renew his contract. In our opinion, decency and fairness required reasons to be given in the circumstances (:37/5).

Not only this, but the Board had failed to respond to queries from the Petitioner over a period of nine months.

Later, three reasons were offered for the non-renewal of the contract. First, the partnership objectives with PCT were not being met. Then, the working relationship between Pacitti and the Board was far from satisfactory. Finally, the Petitioner was failing to render satisfactory service in Taiwan. With regard to the first reason, the PCT had stated "we believe his contribution is valued by the College and the students" (:37/6).

This was in addition to Hughes' comment about the importance and value of Pacitti's work. The Board was forced to admit that after the Petitioner's departure from Taiwan, the partnership objectives were 'now less effectively served' (:37/7). The second reason was rejected on the grounds that:

The petitioner's attitude to the Regulations cannot be faulted; he wanted the Regulations to be complied with.... The Board failed to comply with them. The Petitioner appears to have been fully alive to the requirements of the partnership, and the PCT were well satisfied that the requirements of the partnership were being met at that time. This reason too appears to us one which should never have been put forward (:37/7).

The third reason was also found to be without substance:

...before making these assertions both to the General Assembly and to this special commission, the convener and the GS [General Secretary] failed to observe that what they were alleging was inconsistent with the contemporary correspondence (:37/7).

This was based on the idea that 'If the Board are to be believed, PCT was praising the Petitioner in letters, and was privately expressing dissatisfaction with his services to JH (Executive Secretary)'. The Special Commission 'do not believe that PCT was guilty of such dissimulation, and we see no grounds for such a suggestion' (:37/8) ie. JH was lying. This matter was further complicated because:

the Asia Minutes of the Board appear to us to reveal inconsistency on the part of the Board. In the Minute of 31<sup>st</sup> May 1994 (WM40) reference was made to PCT's offer of a financial contribution in respect of the Petitioner .... "Ms Hughes [JH] identified the post[s] as a priority in terms of support, solidarity and shared learning with the PCT" (:37/9).

So none of the reasons advanced by the Board were valid and Pacitti was deemed to have been treated unfairly by the Board 'which must accept responsibility for the actions of its officers' (:37/10).

What was worse in this case was the damage done to partner church relations as the result of the heavy-handedness of the Board:

PCT was unhappy with the way in which the Board dealt with the matter. Not only that, PCT wondered whether the decision had been taken because of something that PCT or the Petitioner had done (see Production No. 61) .... There was a failure to consult with PCT in terms of Regulation 7. The recent correspondence with PCT makes it clear that, understandably, they feel badly treated by the Board. In the letter (Production 136) the former Associate General Secretary of PCT says "We felt that COS/BWM was being very unfair to Yushan

[theological college] and to you. In addition, it was obvious to us that COS/BWM did not wish to share with us what the rift was all about, and consequently ignored our requests for explanation” (:37/11).

Sadly, this was only one of a number of cases where the Board demonstrated significant insensitivity in handling both its affairs and its employees.

To corroborate this it will be helpful to comment on two other cases of Board insensitivity; both of these cases relate to the ‘spouse’ question where there was a distinct lack of clarity with regard to spouses who accepted joint appointments. The main problem related to the payment of National Insurance contributions for both spouses. World Mission was adamant that only one set of contributions would be paid, but this affected the pension rights of the other spouse negatively. In one case, this was completely inadvertent, yet when it was pointed out to World Mission in 1999 that a spouse had lost 40% of her United Kingdom pension entitlement, the response was negative. No one was blamed for the oversight, but when it was drawn to World Mission’s attention, they became extremely defensive and refused to consider compensation, or to admit that a potential problem existed for other spouses. This matter went as far as a General Assembly Appeal Group and the case was found in favour of the disadvantaged spouse. The matter was only finalised after three years on 5 August 2002. What is of note is that it was later discovered that there was a similar precedent which had not been revealed though it was raised by the petitioner in this case. The Grievance Panel of the Board of World Mission concluded:

The Board acknowledges that an amount was paid to Mrs AB. following an investigation into the facts of her particular case, as a result of which it was determined that Mrs AB. had, in fact, been an employee of the Board during a period in which she had not been formally recognised as such (Appeal of Mrs CD to the General Assembly Appeal Group: Response of the Board of World Mission, 16 July 2002, DPP).

This statement is to say the least, quite contradictory. Either Mrs AB. had been appointed an employee of the Board, or she had not. On settlement of her case, it was Mrs AB. who was required to sign a document which enforced secrecy regarding the outcome.

An issue of relevance here arises out of the question how did matters reach such a stage that Board employees had to take recourse to appeals to the Appeal Group of the General

Assembly and how was it that in each case, having exhausted the processes designed by the Board, and having failed to achieve redress, the Board was consistently found to be in the wrong even in terms of implementing, or even ignoring its own processes? Part of the answer lies in the intransigence of the Board in dealing with employment issues, and not being able to ‘hear’ what its employees were saying to it concerning its procedures and attitudes. There was a clear inability to negotiate itself out of its problems and compromise in order to achieve a reasonable level of operational competence. There was a serious lack of pastoral care for members of its staff and during the investigations into these cases, a document on the pastoral care of mission partners was being prepared, yet, no actual care was offered. In addition, the action and attitude of the Board demonstrated a lack of justice in its dealings with its staff. The Board seemed to prefer confrontation and conflict rather than peace and harmony. This would never have become an issue had it not been for the intransigent approach of the Board. For many years, appointments had been made on a relatively informal basis, particularly with regard to the position of spouses who were renowned for their substantial and informal contribution to mission work both in terms of the support they offered their spouses and the distinctive contribution many made in their own right. However, the discovery that pension rights were inadvertently affected raised a wider issue of justice where spouses became disadvantaged as the result of their commitment, largely in an unpaid capacity. A more flexible approach on the part of World Mission and a little concern for loss of pension entitlement could have helped avoid this situation.

## **6.2 The Process Continues**

In October 1997, the Board of World Mission received the report of a Special Commission which had been appointed by the General Assembly. It identifies problems relating to contracts and regulations for overseas staff and the structures of the Board and the Department of World Mission. The Board ‘very much regrets the failures identified by the Special commission’ (GA 1998:22/27). It immediately established its own internal Committee of Enquiry and a great deal of work was done in the following months which would require that:

a review of the Board and Department is undertaken as a matter of urgency. This will include an audit of the Departmental staff to ensure that there is a fair and equitable distribution of work and the staffing levels match present and foreseen requirements' (GA 1998:22/27).

It reported to the Convener in January 1998. One of the substantial recommendations which were taken seriously was to undertake a review of the Boards structures and operations. An interim General Secretary was appointed.

Subsequently, Rev Dr Kenneth Ross was appointed General Secretary in November 1998, some time after it had been identified that there were already serious problems in the running of the Board's administration. The first notice of problems was given to overseas staff in April 1999: 'Particular concerns of the Board include our reduced allocation from the Mission and Aid Fund, the future of our work in Israel and a petition seeking the appointment of a Commission to look into the Board's relations with its staff. This was to be dealt with in part: ' .... From 6-10 September we plan to confer with representatives of some 26 partner churches at St Andrews .... I believe this is a strategic opportunity to take stock of our involvement world-wide and discern God's direction for the future' (Ross to all overseas staff, April 1999, DPP). This would allow some reflection on external relationships. So it was not only internal relationships which were at issue here.

### **6.3 The McKinsey Consultancy Exercise**

... the Board made a start at considering the recommendations of the Special Commission which reported to the last General Assembly [2000]. The first major outcome is that we plan to have a management consultancy in the autumn which we hope will strengthen the Board's organisation and administration (Ross to all overseas staff, 17 July 2000, DPP).

The Board welcomed a team of consultants from McKinsey & Co who will be looking at the Board's structures and operations over the next eight weeks. You should have received a letter from me inviting your contribution to this process (Ross to All Overseas Staff, 18 October 2000, DPP).

The remit of the consultants 'included studying the structure of the Board and committees, and reviewing the Board/staff interaction and management structure'

(McKinsey 2000:4). The immediate context for the work of the McKinsey consultants was ‘organisational challenges, despite multiple special commissions and internal enquiries in recent years to try to address them’ (McKinsey 2000:4). Interviews and information were sought from Board members; departmental staff; overseas Mission Partners; and other stakeholders within the CofS. Excluded were Faithshare volunteers, Bursars and, notably, partner churches.

Basic problems uncovered included:

- Lack of overall **strategic focus**
- Unclear **roles and remits**
- Ineffective **decision-making and reporting processes**
- Inconsistent standards in quality of **management**
- Lack of sense of **values** lived out in the organisation (McKinsey 2000:1).

These provided the basis for Board future commitments:

- Clear strategic direction.
- Clear roles for all
- Efficient, effective and well-understood decision-making and reporting processes
- Well-managed Board and staff that **attract and retain top talent**
- Values driven organisation (McKinsey 2000:5) [emphases in original].

These would hopefully produce ‘the best mission board in the UK’ (McKinsey 2000:5). However, despite all the work done to date in consultations with partner churches (St Andrews 1999) and in drafting ‘a high-level remit for the Board’ (:7) there was no clear discernible focus to its multifarious work involvements and commitments eg. ‘the strategy for the Israel institutions [Tabeetha School, St Andrews Hospice, and the Tiberias development]’ (:7). This made it impossible to discern if and when goals had been achieved. In order to develop a vision and a strategic plan to clarify priorities, goals and objectives, the General Secretary was to be charged with consulting partner churches and organisations ‘to bring a balanced perspective on the needs of the world church into the Board’s strategic thinking’ (:8) and should become a regular integral part of the Board’s work. There is no available evidence that this was ever done.

With regard to the Board and its committees, the structure of their relationship was described as ‘opaque’ (:10) rather than clear with much duplication and lack of clarity about decision-making powers and responsibilities. Continuity is lacking in both

attendance at meetings due to pressure of commitments among members and frequency of meetings combined with little understanding of the extent of the commitment required of members (:11). The same problems emerge with regard to selection and training of new Board members. The structure of meetings tends to focus on non-essential routine business with little time devoted to ‘the cultural, political and theological issues facing the Board’ (:13). The problem of opacity is that it has the potential to provide a situation marked by obfuscation. It was recommended that the middle layer of committees be discontinued to facilitate better communication, decision-making and greater transparency (:13-14).

Relationships between Board and staff members resulted from lack of clarity regarding the purpose of the Board which is to formulate policy while the staff members are to implement it. This derives from the Presbyterian ‘ethos of the Church of Scotland that forms the rationale for it’ (:20). This was neither ‘well understood [n]or accepted by all stakeholders’ (:19). This was clearly a source of tension and most likely a problem to Board staff rather than members since the issue was over who has the power to control the decision-making process. With regard to reporting, it was recommended that it was necessary to: ‘Inform anyone if they could either (a) be affected by a decision or issue, or (b) be expected to know about it from another party’ (:20). It was further recommended that:

staff members are careful to *inform* and never to *dominate* Board discussions on matters of strategy or policy. .... The General Secretary should play the pivotal role on this issue – guiding staff as to when they should speak and advising the Convener when he should call upon staff to speak (:21) [emphases in original].

There was a clear crisis in the leadership of the Board arising out of the ambiguity of the role of the General Secretary, the lack of strategic focus and poor communication and the relationship with and between Assistant Secretaries (:23). Relationships between Board and staff members resulted from lack of clarity regarding the purpose of the Board which is to formulate policy while the staff members are to implement it. To alleviate this particular problem a ‘partnership team’ was formed with a view to encourage teamwork, improve communication and reduce the line management responsibilities of the General Secretary.



One of the most critical issues in the report concerned the role of mission partners, many of whom did not feel valued. Communication was poor: ‘Some mission partners feel that the issues they raised were not listened to and that no action was taken to resolve them; this causes frustration’ (McKinsey 2000:30). Particular issues concern circulation of minutes of meetings which were issued on an increasingly restricted basis, and the mission partners’ ‘spouse question’ (:31-32) which had led the Board into litigation at numerous points along with other matters related to staffing issues. With regard to these relationship problems within the Board, one Board member stated:

*Low esteem of the Board* – this could be the trigger for many changes. How many times has the Board been at the bar of the Assembly in the last 10 years ...?  
Credibility is low, and nothing is being done to challenge it (e-mail, KL to GH, 8 November 2004, DPP).

This particular comment related to a number of cases instituted against the Board by mission partners who were dissatisfied with their treatment, particularly in respect of termination of service (see above 6.1.1).

One of the most critical issues in the report concerned the role of mission partners, many of whom did not feel valued. It had also prepared four policy papers, one of which was concerned with the role of Board members and staff, an area where ‘McKinsey found it important that we achieve clarity’ (Ross to all mission partners, 1 March 2001, DPP). The role of departmental staff: ‘is to contribute their expertise to the developing and formulating of policy, and to implement that policy, when it has been agreed by the Board’ (Policy Papers, 1 March 2001, DPP). This would indicate that staff had a limited role in the formation of policy; their main role would be to implement it when agreed by the Board. However, there is a degree of ambiguity in this statement regarding the development and formulation of policy for it is difficult to separate a staff member’s expertise from his/her personal views because in some cases the expertise may have developed as the result of personal experience in the field. The task of the Business Committee of the Board was to ‘facilitate “best practice” working of all constituent elements of the Board’ (Policy Papers). Decision-making guidelines were formulated to clarify parameters of responsibility. Time would soon reveal that this did not happen.

For instance, a Partnership Team leader was appointed to co-ordinate the work of the assistant (area) secretaries and their clerical staff. However, this post was phased out within a short time as departmental changes occurred.

In 2001, when it was resolved to prepare a new remit on the strategic direction of the Board, a ‘Draft Statement of Identity and Purpose’ was formulated. In its discussion of the meaning of partnership the Statement (:1) said: ‘Within such partnerships there are resources of trust, of shared understanding, and of common purpose which are a strategic resource for mission in an often divided world’. Yet, common purpose was not always a priority with regard to deployment of mission partners, for there were occasions when there was a conflict between ‘the thinking of bodies who have to employ our folk and then we lay down our own, sometimes impractical from their point of view, rules’ (e-mail, EF to Strang, 25 September 2003, DPP). The issue here was that, as the sending body, the CoS employed one set of regulations to govern its total approach to its work throughout the world<sup>12</sup>. This took no account of the many varied contexts and these rules were imposed in an inflexible manner to suit the sending agency not the receiving church or institution.

The CoS’ faithfulness to her rich and varied history is recalled with a great sense of pride: The Board has walked with many of its partners for generations .... Such shared history creates bonds which run very deep. Much of the Board’s work is driven by a sense of faithfulness to this history. Often shared identity and ethos, formed over a long period of time, prove to be the key which opens up new possibilities for missionary initiative today (Statement of Identity and Purpose 2001:1).

The same is true of its broad missionary commitments: ‘Rather than being concentrated in one area or in one kind of work, the Board has found its calling in a broad extensive and varied involvement’ (Statement 2001:2).

All of this coincided with a renewed drive for recruitment: ‘please pray that the Lord of the harvest will raise up the workers who will sustain and develop our involvement in mission ...’. This was an early emphasis of Ross’ tenure. Arising out of the St Andrews

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<sup>12</sup> cf. chapter 5.4:131, regarding the partnership agreement with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

Consultation, Ross affirmed: ‘... will mean a major recruitment drive in the next year or two ...’ (to overseas staff, November 1999, DPP). Either, there was a distinct lack of foresight or a lack of commitment, but soon this lofty aim was jettisoned.

An interesting result of the entire process was promulgated at the General Assembly of 2001 when Standing Order 130 ‘which provided for missionaries and chaplains on furlough to be corresponding members of the Board of World Mission’ (Ross to all overseas staff, 6 July 2001) was abolished. This practice had been in operation for some time. The matter is of great interest when considering the intention of the Board in relation to McKinsey (:30) to improve relationships with mission partners and take their concerns into account. The Board’s interpretation of this policy development they proposed was ‘to enhance the participation of mission partners in Board meetings’. But, the reality was that mission partners were excluded from Board meetings as they were only to be admitted to the ‘conference’ sessions of these meetings where policy was neither discussed nor made! It was here that mission partners’ contributions would be ‘prominent’. ‘Our hope will be that this will not only provide the opportunity for Board members and mission partners to get to know each other but also enable mission partners to feed into the Board’s thinking the insights which they bring fresh from the field’ (:ibid). The present writer’s and others’ experience denies this for often mission partners were not given any opportunity to contribute (cf. Laidlaw to World Mission Partners, January 2002, DPP). Though this practice was to be evaluated a year later, it is not appropriate to alter General Assembly practice on the basis of untried policy. This process was declared to be illegal at the 2003 General Assembly but was only made public after the Board meeting of November in that year, further preventing mission partner involvement until after that meeting. The actual wording of the notification to mission partners is inventive:

The Board also decided to clarify the fact that its meetings are open to the public, except for the occasional private session which has to be held when there are sensitive or confidential matters to be considered. So, while we particularly encourage overseas staff to join us for conference sessions, you should be aware that you are also very welcome to stay for business sessions if you wish’ (e-mail, Ross to Dear friends, December 2003, DPP).

But the practice of excluding mission partners from business meetings of the Board had already been introduced some time earlier. A discussion with the Assistant Secretary (sub-Saharan Africa) in November 1999 (Dunlop and GHs) revealed the actual motive for the abolition of the standing order. Departmental staff had been becoming increasingly irritated by mission partner interventions at overseas staff conferences which had challenged and criticised staff on issues which were not previously known by Board members present ie. the issue was lack of transparency. This action had the result of silencing mission partner critique and of denying Board members insights into areas of information about which they were ignorant.

By late in 2002, it was clear that some of the implemented recommendations of McKinsey needed to be further refined and a review of the Partnership Team was undertaken (e-mail, Ross to Friends, 21 October 2002, DPP). As a result the post of Assistant Secretary (sub-Saharan Africa) was advertised in an attempt to appoint ‘a highly skilled organiser and communicator to sustain and develop our partnerships with African churches. ... [with] experience and knowledge of Christian overseas work as well as a real affinity with sub-Saharan Africa’ (:ibid). This was consonant with the McKinsey recommendation which aimed to ‘attract and retain top talent’ (McKinsey 2000:5). Further, the Board’s own requirements were clear in terms of skill and capabilities:

- Understanding of Africa – political, social and cultural background and current conditions
- Understanding of partner churches and institutions in Africa – liturgical, ecclesial and theological background
- Appreciation of issues arising in the management and pastoral care of mission partners
- Ability to prioritise and make trade-offs (BWM Policy Handbook and Yearbook 2002:2.2.10).

When an appointment was made the person appointed had little knowledge of and no experience in sub-Saharan Africa (or any other area of Christian work overseas) when at least two other candidates had both extensive knowledge and experience in the areas as well as the organisational and communication skills required.

Despite the changes resulting from the McKinsey report, the Board was experiencing difficulty in dealing in depth with its relationships and any restructuring in itself would not heal the wounds of the past or prepare the Board for its impending threatening future which was to be characterised by constant change. Hence, the situation was ripe for a retreat into the ‘dominator’ mode of operation.

#### **6.4 Change as the Only Constant**

The year 2002 saw the beginning of a movement within the CofS which aimed to challenge the system of allocating a proportion of the centrally co-ordinated Mission and Aid Fund of the church. There was a feeling that funds for overseas mission work should be raised from local congregations which should be more directly involved in such work. It also saw the publication of the ‘Policy Handbook’ (2002:1.1) which affirmed the Board’s remit to ‘Develop and maintain mutually enriching partnerships with partner churches and other bodies overseas through consultation and the two-way sharing of human and material resources’.

Change was further heralded when, at the same time, the Board reviewed its policy on overseas appointments and instructed all its committees to explore the possibility of localising appointments. This involved examining the nature of each appointment with the partner church to ascertain whether a local person could be pointed:

The Board recognises that some of our staff have exceptional gifts which could be nurtured within the local church and then shared with another partner. The nature of some Partnerships are changing to the extent that the resource being expended on sending a Mission Partner would be better deployed in enabling people from that Church being sent to Scotland and placed within the Church of Scotland to share their gifts with us (e-mail, Strang to IJ, 19 February 2004, DPP).

This was an appropriate course of action to adopt in view of the changing missionary context; it would allow the redeployment of valuable resources in a more coherent manner. However, partner churches were not asked if they thought that this was a relevant approach. It was imposed on them: ‘*Reaching conclusions without the other partner – and who cares? It is our money and we will do what we want with it*’ (e-mail,

KL to GH, 8 November 2004, DPP). There was a basic issue of stewardship here. All of the earth's resources belong to God alone and humans are merely stewards of these riches. A serious theological problem arises when a 'possession is nine tenths of the law' mentality is adopted and imposed. However, this became symptomatic of the Board's approach to its partners:

*Master/slave mentality* – ask yourself when we last partnered with a church that was numerically and financially stronger than the CofS. Always we choose the weaker church to be partnered with. Is this part of the South African problem, that it is getting stronger while we are getting weaker? We don't want to be in dependence to another Church of Scotland (e-mail, KL to GH, 8 November 2004, DPP).

... I fear that we don't discuss, we tell – and that isn't partnership. I have seen partners asking us to come, and because the staff don't like the idea of creating English language work, they decline. Never mind what the partner says, we are right (e-mail, KL to MN, 15 November 2004, DPP).

These comments are significant in that they come from a Board member of six years standing and point to another serious theological and practical issue regarding the meaning of partnership. This results in the maintenance of weak partner churches through dependence, rather than facilitating growth towards maturity and sharing on the basis of equality. The personal preferences of staff members become a benchmark for partner church engagement and the concept of partnership is honoured in theory while it is denied in practice. Increasing vulnerability was leading the Board to become less amenable to critique and challenge. The 'dominator' model was predominant in this kind of thinking and acting.

And yet, all of this took place in the context of partner churches being lauded as 'mature partners':

Today we are partnered with strong and mature churches with bright and vibrant witness to Christ in many different contexts. Even in places where numerical growth has not been great, often a witness of great integrity and importance is being offered. Many of these churches today are taking new missionary initiatives, giving every reason to believe that the torch of Christian witness will continue to burn brightly even in a time when the fire is burning low in our own immediate context (e-mail, Ross to GHs, 28 January 2005, DPP).

The integrity of the staff is related to this:

Bullying is not the word for the staff – rather failing to tell the whole story. Rarely do we as [Board] members find that we are making policy decisions. Rather we are doing what we are told is the only solution on the table (e-mail, KL to MN, 15 November 2004, DPP).

This is compounded by the ‘tendency to trust the staff at 121<sup>13</sup> as being in the know. This does have the potential that they shape the decisions by presentation of *opinion stated as facts* and these are very hard to understand’ (e-mail, KL to GH, 8 November 2004, DPP). Yet, another Board member commented: ‘At the end of the day individual Board members will have to accept the Board’s policy no matter how much they may have battled throughout the decision making process’ (e-mail, OP to QRs, 12 November 2004, DPP). The process of decision-making was in itself problematic and reflects adherence to the dominator rather than the partnership model:

The decisions are made by the Joint Committee (the Board Convener, Vice-conveners and General Secretary ... and the Board’s Finance Committee which has on it a couple of non-Board members from the Church’s Budget and Finance Committee – I have hinted that I suspect the latter gentlemen’s influence is disproportionate but I may well be doing them a massive dis-service). I and not a few others are particularly upset by the lack of opportunity for the Area Committees and indeed the Board itself to influence the outcome. At the end of the day that will be the Board’s failure for not saying ‘enough! This is not on’ (e-mail, OP to QRs, 12 November 2004, DPP).

The problem here is that matters have obviously been researched and discussed but are presented the Board members as matters that only require rubber-stamping:

We were appointed, the non-officers [Board members] believed, to ensure that when the proposals were considered at the Board in Sept. we would know the full implications and could proceed to a decision in the light of them .... Furthermore, at the meeting we were told the work we had done was to show the likely results of the decision in principle so that it could be put into effect – not so that it could be reconsidered.

Even after we [Board members] had lost the battle we were insisting as had been the case from the first mooting of the paper, that our partner churches had to be properly consulted and each mission partner seen personally and listened to sensitively. We were assured as we had been from the beginning that this was being done and the travel budget showed the visits. What your message shows is that not every visit was what we meant by pastorally sensitive and caring (e-mail, ST to GHs, 11 November 2004, DPP).

A further problem relating to control of communication and information arose when, in the process of ‘consultation’, some mission partners communicated directly with Board

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<sup>13</sup> 121 George Street, Edinburgh, UK, headquarters of the Church of Scotland.

members about their concerns because they were suspicious that their views were not being properly or adequately addressed. The General Secretary wrote to members on the ‘*advisability* on (sic) communicating with Board staff overseas’ (NH to Ross in e-mail, KL to GH, 22 November 2004, DPP). This was challenged on the basis of Board practice in inviting mission partners to attend Board meetings and conferences so that members could be updated on matters of mutual concern. The practice of inviting mission partners to attend Board meetings (noted above 6.3) had been terminated for some years because mission partners were viewed by board staff as troublesome employees who raised uncomfortable issues on which they had specific specialised knowledge which challenged staff plans.

There appears to have been a systemic control problem among the officers of the Board which could brook no negotiation, compromise or challenge. To all intents and purposes, the ‘dominator’ paradigm had replaced any equitable form of dialogue thus preventing the development of any form of shared partnership in mission.

Little energy was expended on preparing and sending mission partners in reverse from partner churches and there were even instances where the Board frustrated this option as in the case of a South African student who was invited by a presbytery in Scotland to undertake his probationary year within the bounds of their presbytery. Negotiations began involving staff of the Boards of World Mission and Ministry and were progressing well until World Mission said they could not afford to contribute to such a scheme when they had earlier said they would, and that they would seek out other funding. There was no discussion with any of the parties involved, just a decision handed down, and that only after enquiries were made about progress. This was in stark contradistinction to an earlier experiment:

1. (b) *Probationer Exchange* - Reported that Rev. Roderick Hamilton had begun his service at Troon St Meddans under the Rev. David Harper. His counterpart in South Africa was the Rev. Amos Mphongoshe. It was hoped that the exchange would begin in January 1990, when Mr Mphongoshe would come to Troon and Mr Hamilton serve at Pholela in Natal by the decision of the RPCSA. **Noted** meantime.



A detailed estimate of the costs involved in the Probationer Exchange was not yet possible. **Agreed** an allocation in the 1990 budget of £5,000 in the first instance. (BWMU Minutes, Latin American Committee, AF/89/21, 26 September 1989).

This approach of being partnered with supposedly mature strong churches became integral to the overall policy changes which were to be implemented within two years although this was denied by one of the area secretaries:

The duty to explore and test the appropriateness in localising posts during the contract review process is an instruction of the Board and dates from 11 September 2002 .... The current process regarding the Board's Future Shape is completely different. The circumstance the Church of Scotland finds itself in has overtaken previous events and discussions. The consultation processes with overseas staff started in early February 2004' (e-mail, Strang to GHs, 12 January 2005, DPP).

This is somewhat disingenuous as the prime circumstance of membership and financial decline in the Church of Scotland which had caused the current crisis was not a novel development. It had been in process for many years and was admitted by the General Secretary: 'The Church of Scotland is steadily losing ground within Scotland itself' (e-mail, Ross to GHs, 28 January 2005).

It is unfortunate that there was no in-depth evaluation and assessment of missionary vocation in relation to existing posts other than that which takes place at debriefing and contract review sessions when mission partners are on leave. This is strange as the result of Board policy which sought to respond to partner church requests and needs. Clearly, there was a great need for a substantial change in policy or at least its implementation.

## **6.5 A New Policy**

A new policy document was agreed in September 2002 which laid a fresh approach to policy formulation as the result of 'reducing resources' (Agreements with Partner Churches/Institutions for Mission Partner Support, WM/02/7112, 11 September 2002). All of the boards of the Church of Scotland suffered but the Board of World Mission

suffered from a 25% cut in its budget as the CofS gave priority to national mission work in Scotland.

... it will be for the Assembly Council to allocate a budget to the Council of World Mission and to set its remit without reference to the General Assembly, the Assembly now agreeing only the income disposition amongst Local Mission, Parish Staffing and Mission and Renewal. In many ways the working out of the remit and resourcing requirements of the Council go together and the Council of Assembly will wish to be satisfied that the work to be undertaken by the Council of World Mission will be affordable within its budget. That said, the Council of Assembly does not feel equipped to prioritise amongst different regions of the world and must look to the expertise and experience of the members of the Board of World (sic) and its staff in the difficult and sensitive matter of resource allocation (Rev Dr Finlay Macdonald, Principal Clerk of Assembly, in e-mail, UVs to GHs, 30 October 2004, DPP).

At a stroke, the Council of World Mission was removed from the authority of the General Assembly and given complete freedom to decide how to allocate its budget without reference to the Assembly. This shifted the locus of accountability and gave substantial powers to Board employees to influence Board members who might not have the experience and knowledge to question or challenge proposals.

The concept of long term mission partners disappears at this stage in favour of short and medium term appointments with the aim of partners selecting 'local candidates for the post so that training can take place during the period of the agreement' (ibid). This seems to violate the Board's own commitment: 'The sending and receiving of both long-term and short-term mission partners to the region [sub-Saharan Africa] continues to be one of the most important things we do' (GA 1998:22/7). Long-term mission also disappeared as an option with no explanation or justification. However, this trend had been apparent for some years. In 1989, the Board discerned three forms of service – short term, medium and long term/lifelong service for all of which there is good theological justification. It was reported:

1. Partnerships with Missionaries. (a) *Statistics* -

(i) There were 1,120 registered partnerships, of which 137 had been formed in 1988, the majority of them being transfers. This was a turn-over rate of over 10%.

(ii) At present there were three timescales of missionary service: short-term (one tour or less); mid-term (two or three tours); long-term. The balance of

partnerships had now moved from the long-term to the short-term and mid-term and the change-over rate of partnerships was likely to increase. (BWMU LI/89/7, Partner Plan, 15 February 1989).

In view of this it might be concluded that long term mission partners were a dying breed which needed to be protected in the light of their qualifications and experience. The McKinsey document referred to recent experience of partners and mission partners making assumptions about their length of service in overseas appointments. However, until this time the Board of World Mission had operated with the same assumptions. Poor communication was cited as a problem in the review process. However, this was not at all a new, but rather a historic problem (cf. McKinsey 2000). This policy was proposed as the result of consultation with mission partners and with the Partnership Team in a formal sense. A substantial issue was that at no stage were overseas partners consulted, particularly with problems of communication cited for the document stated: 'There will need to be communication of this policy with Partner Churches/Institutions' (Agreements). Further there was a sense in which poor communication from partners would result in penalties being imposed through a 'stronger negotiating stance .... so that should they not reply by a given date they are informed that the agreement will terminate on the original date' (ibid). In this not only would partners be disciplined but mission partners would also suffer from no fault of their own. This is worthy of some comment.

### **6.5.1 Comment**

At the time of the writing of this study, there had been a substantial decline in the number of mission partners and the Board faced a situation where it had been unable to meet the many requests from both partner churches and Scottish presbyteries for mission partners. This alleviated some of the financial pressure. However, there had been no concomitant reduction in the number of office staff employed by the Board of World Mission which is incomprehensible in light of the reduced number of mission partners and partner church commitments which needed to be serviced. The role of mission partners both abroad and in Scotland had been commented on in a communique from WM terms of their being a vital part

of public relations networking within Scotland. Also ‘Fewer mission partners? There’s nothing like a fired up mission partner for inspiring support for God’s action abroad’ (Urquhart 2004 *Insight* 19[March – May]:15). The Board itself had admitted the value of mission partners. Its Local Involvement Group had commissioned a market research project ‘to assess how effectively we are communicating our message .... When asked what they valued about World Mission, you will be glad to know that mission partners are top of the list!’ (Ross to all overseas staff, 11 September 2003, DPP). It is difficult to understand in this context how numbers can be reduced as a matter of policy and where a growing number of partner churches and Scottish presbyteries could not have mission partners allocated due to the fall in numbers. The seriousness of this may not have been perceived, but it is difficult to understand how World Mission could successfully engage in fund-raising and the promotion of its aims and objectives with seriously depleted numbers of mission partners who, it is acknowledged, are key figures in the promotion of the work. Further to this, history has demonstrated that when there are no mission partners in a particular country the relationship between the Church of Scotland and the partner church is adversely affected if not lost, cf. in Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa (1988-1998).

Further to this, there is a sense creeping secularization within the Board. The document ‘Agreements with Partner Churches/Institutions for Mission Partner Support’ provides no theological rationale for its proposals (as was the case with the first draft on the policy for the Pastoral Care of Mission Partners). The document does not in any place take account of the call to service with partner churches. Mission partners are not secular employees; they have responded to a distinct call from God to serve. At no point was there any exploration of mission partners’ continued call to service despite there being available to the debrief and review committees ample evidence of personal call being confirmed by both partner churches and institutions, in situations where mission partners were serving in denominations which were no longer designated as core commitments.

The document is about ‘Agreements’, but not all of the key interlocutors were consulted so any agreements were simply the result of internalized discussions which took place in Scotland. Only mission partners who had review meetings were consulted out of the entire body of

mission partners. This was different from the approach adopted when the draft Document on Pastoral Care and the Review of Financial Arrangements were being considered and all mission partners were invited to participate. It is not clear why partner churches were excluded from the discussion if real partnership exists. As a result those who drew up the documents and those who approved them had no idea why there were problems with partner churches not replying timeously. A ‘stronger negotiating stance’ is another example of the exercise of power by the strong over the weak. It is also interesting that the Board was, once again engaged in dealing with the pastoral care of mission partners for this had been dealt with extensively in 1986 (BWMU, Min 86/419, 86/420, 19-20 November 1986). Admittedly, some time had passed, but the problems experienced by mission partners were essentially similar unless some new factor(s) had emerged such as the causes of matters that led to potential litigation. Clearly, all was not well in relationships as we have already seen.

Deputation by mission partners was another area where concern was apparent. Mission partners frequently reported the strong interest and support for their work, and the low regard in which the Board of World Mission is held despite all the work done in the past few years to redeem its role in the Church. There was a real concern that unless this situation was attended to as a matter of urgency, support for world mission would be seriously eroded. In the context of reducing budget allocations, this would produce a critical situation where the input of mission partners at a local level in Scotland would be vital, particularly in the field of fund-raising. All of this led to the preparation of a new policy framework.

## **6.6 The ‘Future Shape’ of Church of Scotland Mission Work**

On 4 February 2004, the BWM gave its approval in principle to the ‘broad outline’ a proposal of great potential significance to the ‘future shape’ of the Board’s work. This was the result of a remit given to the Board’s Business and Finance Committees ‘to prepare an interim report on prioritisation’ at its meeting on 28 November 2003. It was sent to mission partners for comments and suggestions for it was recognised that ‘it is vital for the Board’s thinking to be informed by the realities of “the field” and here we depend heavily on your input’ (e-mail, Ross to All Mission Partners, 10 February 2004,

DPP). However, there was an aspect of the correspondence which was subversive of relations with partner churches:

It is also our intention ... to discuss the proposals with our partner churches and benefit from their perspectives. Obviously, this will take time and meanwhile please exercise discretion lest any of our partnerships should inadvertently be damaged (e-mail, Ross to all Mission Partners, 10 February 2004, DPP). Even at this late stage in the policy formulation, overseas partners were excluded from the process and this in itself was a damaging approach to adopt. But what was more problematic was the fact that mission partners were enjoined to what amounts to secrecy regarding the proposals. This took little account of the role of mission partners as members of their denominations and that some of them occupied leadership positions in these churches. Mission partners were placed in an invidious position which could be interpreted as disloyalty to the churches they were serving were it to become known that they had harboured such sensitive information. History would reveal that despite clear intention to 'listen' to the voices of mission partners and partner churches, decisions had already been reached by the beginning of 2004 and were to be implemented almost as they appeared in the draft document.

The report contained four working principles.

### **6.6.1 Balanced Budget**

First was a balanced budget. It is strange that finance should appear as the first principle in mission work. Historically, World Mission had hardly ever been constrained by such a concept (cf. ch. 5.8). While it is laudable that the budget should not over-run its available resources, it was novel that finance should control policy in order to give 'the Board greater freedom to develop its work as the Spirit leads' ('The Future Shape of Church of Scotland World Mission Work' 2004:1, DPP) in view of the poor theological basis of such a policy when the absence of such controls had enabled the work of mission to develop creatively, though somewhat haphazardly, for many years. And this approach seems more consistent with the operation of the same Spirit.

## 6.6.2 Fundraising

The second principle was fundraising. This was the result of a decision of the General Assembly which permitted boards of the Church to raise funds directly from congregations for specific projects ‘which would maximise the potential of the Church of Scotland to be involved in imaginative outreach in our own country and around the world’ (‘Future Shape’ 2004:1, DPP). It was intended to employ a professional fundraiser. The Board was encouraged to invest significantly in this venture which would be costly ‘in the confidence that this fundraising initiative will yield significant income in years to come’ (‘Future Shape’ 2004:1, DPP). Consequently, this seems to be somewhat at odds with the commitment to establish a balanced budget as it would involve spending undetermined sums of money to achieve an indeterminable result.

## 6.6.3 Categorisation

The third principle related to categorisation which meant that the Board would engage in work in three geographical areas guided by four qualifications. The first qualification was concerned with the commitment to work on the basis of partnership. Therefore, ‘it goes without saying that anything that is proposed would need to be discussed with our partners overseas before final conclusions are reached’ (‘Future Shape’ 2004:1, DPP). This was manifestly untrue. The second qualification involved designating areas on the basis of countries for the sake of simplicity, recognising that partnerships take on different forms depending on the nature of the relationship. The third concerns the relationship of geography to ‘a matrix which brings in other key issues such as the priority of people, capacity for local involvement, bias to theological education etc.’ (‘Future Shape’ 2004:1, DPP). The fourth qualification was concerned with the rapidly changing nature of the world which requires constant review of policy and the ability to change and adapt.

From this principle of categorisation, three categories of partnership were defined. The first was Category A - Core Commitments which would result from terminating

personnel and financial commitments in certain countries. The areas assigned would be chosen on the basis of;

a particularly strong history and where there are very significant needs and/or opportunities at the present time. The four areas ... are:

- Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh
- China
- Malawi and Zambia
- Israel and Palestine

If these became the areas of core commitment the Board

- would maintain a significant involvement in three continents,
- would have a bias to materially poor and disadvantaged countries,
- would be engaged with Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Judaism and African Traditional Religion,
- would build on the historical strengths of the Church of Scotland overseas missionary work,
- would be mainly involved in areas where the Christian church is in a minority situation,
- would be involved in some of the most significant areas of evangelism and church growth in the contemporary world.

We suggest that this is quite a good balance for a small national church seeking to 'participate in God's transforming mission, through the gospel of Jesus Christ' ('Future Shape' 2004:1-2).

The other criteria were the degree of need in a particular context and the opportunity to make a significant difference in that context

Secondary criteria were also defined as far as they could contribute to the ability of the Church of Scotland to contribute meaningfully to mission. These were distinctive contribution, effective partnership, local involvement, potential for impact and viability.

Category B – Secondary commitments would 'aim to facilitate continuing expression of these relationships through initiative from local level. This was already happening in Presbyteries and congregations through twinning agreements, exchange visits and raising funds to support particular projects so it was not a new concept. The idea here was that '[t]he Board would play a co-ordinating role, keeping in touch with cherished overseas partners and making the connections with enterprising local initiative in Scotland' ('Future Shape 2004:2, DPP). However, these relationships had often been developed through the efforts of mission partners and visitors to mission partners, and without any involvement or support from the Board of World Mission.



Category C – Specific Projects focussed on maintaining an ability to “read the signs of the times” and launch time-limited initiatives to meet specific needs/opportunities which may arise’ (‘Future shape’ 2004:2, DPP). This might be achieved through the use of dedicated funds rather than the central budget and might involve a number of agencies. An example is ‘Capacity-building at the national office of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe’ (‘Future Shape’ 2004:2).

#### **6.6.4 Implementation**

The fourth principle focussed on the implementation plan which would take place over a period of time up to 2008. It was only at the implementation stage that partner churches would be consulted, when all the decisions were finalised and partners would have no options available to them in terms of future partnership apart from either agreeing to maintain or end the work. Again, comment is necessary.

#### **6.6.5 Comment**

It is not clear to what extent these proposals had been given approval at the stage at which the document was sent to mission partners and whether the ‘broad outline’ was capable of variation. Some confusion arises out of whether the broad outline is a matter for discussion or this is the detailed outworking of this policy proposal: ‘I think letting mission partners in on deliberations such as this earlier on is a very important pastoral issue’ (e-mail, WX. to Ross, March 2004, DPP). Communication and care was operating at a low level of efficiency:

We received a resume of the minutes of the minutes from the last meeting including the ‘passed’ restructuring paper which states clearly which are the priority countries. This was how we heard we would not have our contract renewed. We then received a copy of the updated policy on redundancy, but when we wrote and asked which parts applied to us the personnel department would not give us an answer. We have **never** been written to personally about our future and have been shown very little compassion or consideration from the Board as far as the ramifications of this decision are concerned. When we have expressed concern to people in 121 about our future, the response has been ‘well we might not have jobs either’ – hardly sympathetic (e-mail, WX. to Board Members, 3 November 2004, DPP) [emphasis in original].

The same might be said of informing partner bodies:

The partner church (CCT) was only told because we asked for a letter to be written to them. Communication with the partner church has been so bad that they cannot accept what is happening and are continuing to make plans for us as if nothing has changed' (e-mail, WX. to Board Members, 3 November 2004, DPP).

The entire exercise seemed to deviate significantly from that employed at the time of the St Andrews' Consultation held in 1999, when considerably less far reaching proposals were discussed with partners at a much earlier stage of implementation. This approach taken at this consultation reflects Eisler's 'partnership' model of relationship. In this later case partner churches were only to be involved at a late stage of the discussion and raises the significant question, what does this imply about the theology and nature of partnership, particularly where there were clear precedents for partner church consultations? The issue raises the question regarding who sets the terms of partnership and what is its *raison d'être*?

The lack of consultation was a systemic problematic issue: 'Members of the Edinburgh staff travelled to overseas locations, not to consult, but to inform partner churches of decisions which had already been made' (DA, *The Rock*. 2005, 28:1). An in-depth investigation into the workings of the Board had not alleviated the problem:

The Board staff still do not seem to have learned how to consult satisfactorily. I had run- ins with Ken Ross over two other occasions in the past in which there was no consultation – firstly when our mission partners were withdrawn from Pakistan after the attack on Murree and when there was no consultation either with the partners or the local Church, and secondly, when a visit was arranged for the Moderator to Myanmar/Burma without the WXs being consulted when they were the only mission partners who were working with Burmese people (e-mail, YZ to Duncans, 3 November 2004, DPP).

On the issue of the attacks on Christian institutions in Pakistan in August 2002, the Board expressed a real concern for the safety of its mission partners, who expressed 'bitter disappointment' at being withdrawn (e-mail, Ross to All, 2 December 2002, DPP; cf. GA 2003:26/3), and a need to demonstrate 'meaningful solidarity' (GA 2003:26/3) with its partner church in Pakistan. This was good and right, yet: 'In these circumstances the Board faces the challenge of how to offer meaningful solidarity in the absence of staff on the ground' (GA 2003:4). This would become an issue almost immediately in the entire

scope of the Board's overseas interests. The problem was the lack of consultation with the parties involved and affected. Yet, strangely, in another similar situation, the Board commended a World Exchange volunteer:

who adhered to her decision to volunteer at a School for the Visually Handicapped in Beit Jala, Palestine, despite an outbreak of violent unrest only days before her departure. Her presence with the children and the Palestinian staff was an important witness for peace (GA Report, 2001, Scottish Churches world Exchange, DPP).

So much for consistency, and this in a situation where the volunteer had not even departed for the placement! So what was at stake in the incident in Pakistan compared with the Palestinian appointment. Basically, the issue was money. The World Exchange programme did not cost World Mission a significant amount, but the group of mission partners in Pakistan incurred a substantial cost to the Board and the attacks presented an opportunity to make a saving at a time when the budget was under strain (cf. GA report, 2001, 6. Human and Material Resources: Financial Resources: Generosity and Creativity, DPP). However, it has to be noted that the Board was seriously concerned about the security of mission partners and investigated various possibilities of ensuring the safety of its workers abroad. The recurrent issue was how to be sensitive to all parties in an area when a security issue arises, particularly when an emergency arises unexpectedly.

Insensitivity was a significant factor in the lack of consultation:

This failure all along the line to consult has done untold damage to inter-Church relationships and when will Ken ever learn? Sometimes difficult decisions have to be taken, and, while there may be hurt, it will be nothing like the same amount of hurt if there has been proper consultation. The processes which Alan Greig and Ken Ross have adopted have taken no account of the feelings of the people most closely involved (e-mail, YZ to GHs, 11 January 2005, DPP).

This was not a new theme for '[i]nsensitivity in relating to staff is, I'm afraid, a recurring theme' (e-mail, AC<sup>14</sup> to GHs, 28 January 2005, DPP). Writing directly to the Board Convener, YZ<sup>15</sup> stated:

I am afraid that there is still a lot of pain out there and I am not convinced that the Statement of the Board will greatly help to assuage it. Perhaps it has been possible to express an apology for the way that the process has been handled in the course of the face-to-face meetings (e-mail to Greig, 17 December 2004, DPP).

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<sup>14</sup> Former Moderator of General Assembly.

<sup>15</sup> Former mission partner in Nigeria and South Africa, former Principal St Columba's College and President of the Federal theological Seminary of Southern Africa, and former Principal St Colm's College for mission training Edinburgh, Scotland.

No such apologies were ever tendered. The withdrawal of mission partners in times of stress is a particularly complex matter for there may be considerations other than the personal security of the mission partners at stake. For instance, the mission partners may feel strongly that they need to maintain their missional integrity by remaining to identify with the local people and not be perceived as running away to a place of safety. Consultation with both the partner church concerned and the relevant mission partners is vital for the maintenance of good working relations and genuine partnership which can be enhanced in such situations. And basic to consultation is good communication as the board itself had acknowledged:

Effective partnership ... depends on good communication. In order to be a good partner to churches facing serious conflict in their societies the Board needs dependable systems of communication. ...

While modern technology offers wonderful opportunities for fast communication, these are to no avail unless there are strong, warm human relationships to make use of them (GA 2003:26/23-24).

But this is true of all situations and the Board was already in process of denying this need for good communication.

At no level whatever, was there adequate consultation as can be seen from a congregational perspective:

I would like to comment on the process by which congregations were made aware of the Board's decision. A letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> February to the Partner Plan Correspondent asking them to share the information with the Minister and World Church Team and then comment on the Board's options is simply unacceptable. Such important matters deserve full consideration in a Presbyterian church; and I believe Kirk Sessions ought to be given reasonable time to discuss the options and formulate a considered reply (AD. to Ross, March 2005, DPP).

While acknowledging the validity of financial problems in the setting of parameters, the question arises concerning whether or not this should actually drive policy formation 'and not primarily because of any missiological awakening' (e-mail, WX. to Ross, March 2004, DPP)? It leads to the question about Board policy being driven by financial constraints rather than the leading of the Spirit and careful consideration of a sound theology of mission. This is clear from the prioritisation given to a balanced budget and fundraising. Prioritisation is only

considered from the Board's perspective and it is not clear when and how the partners' priorities come into view, if at all.

Further, noting that these changes were made in the face of substantial budgetary restrictions which were being imposed on all Boards of the Church of Scotland, a number of questions have to be raised concerning the use of funds. For instance, it might be questioned whether or not the available money was being employed in the best manner possible? Was it necessary for Board members to have brief visits to partner churches where they have little exposure to the reality of the contexts and meet few people on the ground? Was it necessary to refuse offers of hospitality in favour of using hotels when such hospitality is offered by partner churches and/or mission partners? (note, GH to AE, January 2005, DPP; cf McKinsey 2000:31) – for '[h]ospitality in its deepest sense negates all aspects of greed' (Kobia 2003:7). The offering of hospitality is a sacred Christian ministry and in partner churches it is often considered insulting and insensitive to refuse it when offered, particularly when those refusing the offers are themselves former mission partners who should know receiving cultures better. And can it be that business class travel becomes an acceptable means of air travel for executive staff rather than economy class? Rather, the number of mission partners was reduced in the face of strong opposition from partner churches?

With regard to fundraising, what guarantees are there that spending 'significantly' will achieve the desired results? If balancing the budget has the highest priority, it might be asked legitimately how could the Board proceed 'in the confidence that such investment will yield significant income in years to come' and why it 'should it be prepared' to do this, and further what would the basis of such confidence be? A question might also be raised concerning the theological soundness of such an approach, particularly with regard to the Tiberias project (see below 6.13) about the potential for projects to run beyond budget and possibly out of control?

With regard to categorization, this was already being done with regard to the differing needs of existing partner relationships eg. some partnerships involve education, medical mission and agriculture depending on local needs within a particular partner relationship. The choice of countries on the basis of history, need and potential was inconsistent with

the results. For instance it could be claimed that South Africa had a far greater claim than any other country on the basis of its lengthy history extending over more than 180 years, its need in terms of its HIV/AIDS pandemic with the worst incidence of new reported cases and its potential for transformation within a new democracy. But, more than that, there were significant issues within churches, as in South Africa, where partnership could be a substantial help:

The critical question to the institutional churches in South Africa is whether we are indeed such precedent communities where difference-in-community is embodied. In my view the answer is no. Churches, who are structurally one, harbour in themselves deep racial and class divisions. In many churches gender is still a basis for leadership discrimination. ... istorical churches built their identities so strongly on their distinctive histories, liturgical practices and doctrinal convictions that the only option that remains is to be different – in-disunity (Naude 2006:954).

This could have provided a fertile area for in depth work on partnership with the UPCSA, one of the historical churches of Southern Africa, if there was the moral will. Further,

it might be more logical to choose countries where there are already experienced Hstaff. Surely long term staff already trained and *in situ* present a very great ‘opportunity’ ... in mission work, and should be considered as a very high qualifier when choosing priority countries’ (e-mail, WX. to Board Members, 3 November 2004, DPP).

Also, there is no guarantee that new appointments will stay the course since very few new appointments last for a lengthy period. It is not clear if it was necessary for the Board to be involved in local initiatives since many arose independently of the Board in the first place and had not originally been encouraged by the Board. Perhaps this was the beleaguered Board seeking for a future *modus operandi* which had already proven itself in practice through local initiative. This struggling with ‘a sharply reducing budget’ could have given a significant impetus to partner relations if only the Board had engaged with her partners who were very experienced in dealing with financial stringency, and if she had shared her problems and anxieties regarding the future of world mission. However, the sad situation that arose displays a lack of trust which excluded partner churches until almost the last moment when virtually all the decisions were made and almost implemented and were virtually irreversible. An additional point demonstrates the deviation from the McKinsey Report in this regard and the strategic commitments formulated in 2001 where the Board was ‘conscious of the danger of becoming over-

extended' (Ross to all overseas staff, 6 July 2001, DPP). In the light of the financial restraints suffered by the Board, it is difficult to understand the attempt to maintain such broad and varied commitments.

Further, it might be considered rash to embark on new projects at a time of financial constraint; where consolidation might be thought to be a better way forward in terms of strengthening and developing existing relationships rather than putting long term and historical relationships at extreme risk, cf. the concern about the response of existing partners should they get to know about the impending changes prior to being consulted officially? It might be problematic to explain satisfactorily the policy of core commitments to long standing partners who are excluded from the core, in what they would inevitably see as abandonment.

When a partnership has a lengthy history of dependency, it may be better to terminate the relationship after discussion of relevant issues, or enter a period of moratorium which would create the time and space to redefine the relationship. The same might be true when a partner church becomes strong and self sustaining and no longer has the same needs as when the relationship began. Concerning situations of need, while the gospel takes the poor and their context as the locus of mission, partnership is not primarily about the wealthy helping the poor in a relationship of charity: 'I believe that "mission" within the partnership paradigm belongs first and foremost to the local church and only to others as they enter in to partnership of solidarity' (e-mail, WX to Ross, March 2004, DPP). The temptation is for a feeling of moral superiority to develop on the part of the donor church. This militates against authentic partnership which can exist equally well between two poor churches or two wealthy churches.

There is a lack of clarity regarding the relationship of 'permanent' work to the statement: 'We live in a fast-changing world' where 'any reshaping of our work would need to be subject to regular review and have the capacity to change and adapt'. It might be queried whether or not this applies to 'permanent' work areas?

Given the four areas of core commitments this raises a question concerning the Presbytery of Europe and the Overseas Charges of the Church of Scotland and whether they would be

subject to the same rigours as the other areas of the Board's work since they are not earmarked as core areas of concern? Perhaps this would have been an opportune moment to carefully consider either the possibility of these charges coming under the Church of Scotland Department of Ministry since they constitute a presbytery of the Church of Scotland, or their being integrated into national churches as English-speaking components? For instance, it might well be argued that there was little need for English-speaking congregations in some locations eg. there were sixteen English-speaking congregations in Geneva in 1988. It would be difficult for existing partner churches to interpret the maintenance of work in Europe and overseas charges as necessary or desirable while they are relegated to the periphery of Scottish mission concern?

There is clearly some merit in the concepts of secondary commitments and specific initiatives. However, at that particular time these would be best catered for within existing relationships to strengthen historical ties and this is already catered for within Board initiatives.

The document omitted any reference to the role of mission partners and raises the question of the perceived role of mission partners, if any, in the future. This could lead mission partners to feel that they and their work is of little value for the future of the Board, even in those countries and churches which remain core commitments. This can be disempowering and dispiriting whether the policy is intentional or not and may seriously affect mission partner morale. But, more significantly, taking account of the difficulty the Board was experiencing in recruiting mission partners, it may have been better to consider retaining partner church relations in churches where 'we have highly skilled personnel who have committed themselves to the long haul?' (e-mail, WX to Ross, March 2004, DPP). This sentiment was echoed by YZ (e-mail to GHs, 3 November 2004, DPP):

It really does not seem to be a good use of the church's resources to enable folk like yourselves to build up huge experiences in places like South Africa, Thailand or Jamaica, and to be making great contributions out of that experience, then not to be allowed to use that experience in your particular field.

Long term commitment was no longer appreciated and might be interpreted as BWM moving away from long term missionary engagement.



Beyond all of this there appeared to be a sub-agenda which was only obvious to those who had been directly involved over a long time-scale. They had lengthy service in most cases of up to thirty years of involvement with the Board in one capacity or another, and had knowledge, experience and memories which stretched over several generations of Board employees.

We are of the opinion that among the various reasons that the Board no longer considers Jamaica and South Africa priorities for inter-church relations (we can't use the word partnership in view of what is happening!) are the following:

- The GHs, UVs and AF (among others), in their opinion, have over-identified with the countries in which they work.
- The church leadership in South Africa and Jamaica is too threatening/challenging to them for comfort ....
- The current leadership on the staff of the Board are making sure that the countries where they worked remain priority areas for Scotland<sup>16</sup> ....

(e-mail, UV to GHs, 7 October 2004, DPP).

While these cannot be taken as prime reasons for the decisions taken, there is a degree of truth in them. The named mission partners had taken seriously the Board's earlier policy of identifying with the Church and people in the country of service: 'members of staff are encouraged to become actively involved in the life and work of the Church in the country where they are serving'. 'They are also to be helped to enter into true partnership with the indigenous church in each situation ...' (Handbook for Overseas Staff 1998,1999 III.A:17; 3:1). The leadership in churches to be eliminated as centrally funded certainly had achieved a measure of maturity and were able to articulate their aims and objectives clearly and even forcefully. But exactly when were the partner churches to begin to be consulted?

## **6.7 The Beginning of Consultation?**

It is difficult to determine exactly when and how the process of consultation with partner churches began, if at all, prior to final decisions being taken. Within the Board there were different understandings of this. While by 8 September 2004 it was known that a residential

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<sup>16</sup> The General Secretary and his Partnership Team Leader had worked in Malawi. The Board Convener and one Vice-Convener worked in Zambia. These were the priority countries chosen in Africa.

consultation had been called for May 2005 (e-mail, Ross to All Overseas Staff:9, DPP), it was stated by an Area Secretary:

Only once the Board has been given permission from the Council of Assembly will the next stage within the process begin. We anticipate that this next process will involve both Partner Churches and International Partners and that specific details for developing a way forward can be worked through in detail' (e-mail, Strang to GHs, 22 November 2004, DPP).

But why was the permission of the Council of Assembly required when the Board had already been granted virtual autonomy? In fact, the first official communication from BWM to Partner Churches was issued on 6 December 2004.

### 6.7.1 A South African Case Study

It seems to us a very short-sighted strategy on the part of the Board to withdraw Christian support from a fledgling democracy – it is only ten years old – and one of the few democracies in Africa (e-mail, AG to GHs, 7 October 2004, DPP).

In terms of the situation in Southern Africa it might be asked what is the point behind redesignating the relationship with the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) when the core concern of theological education is a high priority area and where the HIV/AIDS epidemic is rife, when there are mission partners who are relative experts in these fields in place and whose ministry is acknowledged as 'unique' (Prayerlink [Insert in *Insight* March-May 2004:5). The idea of potential withdrawal would give a negative message to partners as they struggle with serious issues of transformation and reconciliation in which mission partners are intimately involved. This involves all races. Living in post-apartheid South Africa offers ample opportunities of forging reconciled relationships in a non-racial society as had been amply affirmed as long ago as 1992: 'in the immediate future, two large areas of need will open up. One is in the rapidly evolving new South Africa, where the Reformed Presbyterian Church [RPCSA]<sup>17</sup> is pointing us to the need for our increased participation in its new initiatives' (GA 1991:394). There may be a perception that exercising this ministry in a former white Afrikaans university, the University of Pretoria where the UPCSA trains its ministers, is departing from the ethos of the Board's work. However, is a

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<sup>17</sup> The RPCSA united with the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa to form the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa in 1999.

centre of theological education within a transforming institution with a majority of black students not an appropriate context for such transforming and reconciling ministry which prepares people to work amongst all sections of a community? Surely, this is what was expected of a post-apartheid society.

It might be argued that some account has to be taken of the ‘particularly strong history’ the Church of Scotland has with the Church in South Africa, dating from 1824, the year in which the Church of Scotland began to engage actively in overseas mission work, which involves the emerging leadership role South Africa is exercising throughout the African continent through NEPAD and the SADC, and the support she requires in this even on the ecclesiastical scene. A further issue relates to the continuing relationship with the Presbytery of Zimbabwe of the UPCSA when it has always been Board policy not to relate to parts of denominations but to the entire partner church. This had the potential to cause problems internal to the UPCSA in its relationships with its constituent presbyteries, when some were seen to be favoured over others.

In March 2004, Dr Kenneth Ross, General Secretary of the Board of World Mission visited South Africa, ostensibly to consult on the impending visit of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. During the visit he met with the officers of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2004. In an address<sup>18</sup>, Ross commented on the reality of decline in the Church of Scotland where membership had fallen from 800,000 members to 500,000 members by 2005<sup>19</sup>. This took place in the context of the ‘Church Without Walls’ project which contributed towards the move away from centralization in the Church of Scotland<sup>20</sup>. Ross referred to financial pressures within the Church arising out

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<sup>18</sup> Author’s notes of the meeting, DPP.

<sup>19</sup> In 1996, the membership of the Church of Scotland stood at just over 680,000.

<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, the 2006 General Assembly established a committee to investigate the growing centralisation within the Church of Scotland’s newly implemented structures. By the 2006 General Assembly this had become such an issue that a former Moderator, the Very Rev John Cairns, spoke out about the need for a ‘much more devolved church’ (Duncan 2006:18) and presented a petition which was accepted by the General Assembly:

It demanded a fresh look at relations between the hierarchy and the grassroots claiming congregations no longer felt in control and were suspicious about over-centralisation following the infrastructure overhaul’ (ibid).

of problems of the substantial underinvestment of the Pension Fund<sup>21</sup>, the changing priority of the Church of Scotland towards localized expenditure rather than overseas mission<sup>22</sup>, and the burden of the renovation of a hospice in Israel into a five star-hotel whose cost, he described as ‘beyond measure’. He also mentioned a move from work being organized from the centre shifting to the local. Concerning the relationship between the Church of Scotland and the UPCSA, Ross alluded to the rich history of the relationship from which the Church of Scotland had benefited enormously. He commended the UPCSA for the vision and courage which had brought the union to birth despite it being a surprise, though the subsequent problems were no surprise taking account of the speed with which the union was achieved. This was a context to learn from. He noted that the election of a Church of Scotland mission partner as Moderator of the General Assembly of the UPCSA was a symbol of the closeness of the relationship.

The Ministry Secretary of the UPCSA, Rev Mukhondi Ramulondi, commented on the role of mission partners in the relationship and requested some kind of coming together to work out the future relationship as had happened with the CWM. He raised the issue of the role of the new church in the context of partner church meetings as had happened in consultations such as the St Andrew’s Consultation in 1997. In spite of all that was discussed at this meeting, no actual mention was made of an imminent change in the nature of the relationship between the Cof S and the UPCSA and no clear conclusions were reached.

The following day, a meeting was held in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria with Ross. Present were representatives of the UPCSA and the Faculty<sup>23</sup>. Prof Maake Masango<sup>24</sup> expressed his view that partnership was concerned with equal sharing, particularly with regard to dealing with changing circumstances and claimed that promises made in this

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<sup>21</sup> This was claimed to be the result of international trends. However, it is interesting to note that despite this the Pension Fund Trustees were very slow to act to remedy this situation.

<sup>22</sup> He would later say ‘the commitment of the Kirk to mission beyond our shores has significantly slackened’ (e-mail, Ross to All Mission Partners, 23 June 2004). This became clear in the rise of 143% in the income of the Church of Scotland despite a decline in membership of 40% between 1984 and 2004: ‘While the communicant membership of the Church of Scotland continues to decline, the offerings of members and adherents continues to rise’ (GA 2004, Supplementary Report, Stewardship and Finance Committee:1). This makes it clear that in spite of increasing revenue, the Church of Scotland’s priorities had certainly altered when they would no longer maintain their overseas commitments at previous levels.

<sup>23</sup> Author’s notes of the meeting, DPP.

<sup>24</sup> Professor of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria, and UPCSA minister and former Moderator of General Assembly.

regard had not been kept, partly due to problems of communication. He felt oppressed by the manner of the discussion since the UPCSA had been kept in the dark about Co S thinking. He instanced the problematic furlough arrangements made for the UPCSA General Assembly Moderator during his term of office and considered the oppression from Scotland was worse than that suffered under apartheid.

Prof JW Hofmeyr expressed appreciation for the history of the relationship between the churches and the Faculty of Theology and confirmed that the presence of the UPCSA was of extreme value in the development of the multi-cultural process. He pleaded that the success story of the Church of Scotland's record be maintained.

The General Secretary of the UPCSA, Rev Vuyani Vellem, stressed problems of communication with the Church of Scotland with regard to the question of localization of the post at the University of Pretoria. From the beginning of 2004, problems had arisen with regard to the contract, salary and the absence of the Moderator of General Assembly, and these were raised with the Area Secretary of the Board, without response.

Rev Ramulondi stressed that the move to training ministers at the University of Pretoria was part of the UPCSA's involvement in the ministry of reconciliation. It was assumed that this would be received with enthusiasm on the part of the Church of Scotland, but this was not the case in the positive atmosphere in South Africa.

In response, Dr Ross acknowledged that reconciliation was the calling of the time and that there were administrative difficulties which had hampered efficient communication, but this should not obscure the wider reality. He agreed that there was a need for smooth communication and that there were pastoral issues regarding mission partners and raised the possibility of holding a post mortem to achieve a better process<sup>25</sup>. He reiterated the challenges the Church of Scotland was facing.

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<sup>25</sup> No such exercise ever took place.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the UPCSA needed to get clarity about the relationship from the Board of World Mission; that the communication logjam must be resolved; that the gifts of the UPCSA are needed by the Church of Scotland; and that mutual healing can only take place through mutual exchange.

Is interesting to note that even in intimate meetings with partner church and institution, there was so little trust to facilitate open and truthful communication which might have contributed to fulfilling the objectives established. Subsequent meetings, events and communication would reveal how little had actually been heard of the partners' views and needs.

A visit to Scotland by the General Secretary and Ministry Secretary of the UPCSA in November 2004 brought home the reality of a lack of communication. Despite taking part in a number of meetings, the CoS Board of World Mission staff and members refused to reveal to the UPCSA delegates the extent and nature of the cutbacks and new arrangements for future partnership relationships despite having been asked prior to the visit for a full and transparent account of CoS intentions.

A matter of concern voiced by a representative of the Department of World Mission was that:

Despite these attempts to make Partners aware of the growing financial crisis within the Kirk, many did not grasp or want to believe the concerns being raised. Indeed, the leader of one Partner Church admitted after attending the last Board meeting that he fully realized and understood the implications of all that had been shared with him over the last two years (e-mail, Strang to GHs, 4 February 2005, DPP).

This remark is interesting on various points. First, how was it known before any full consultation had taken place what partner churches thought or believed? Second, it is interesting that it was only when exposed to the business of the Board that an awareness of the reality of the situation emerges. Third, it is unfortunate to suggest that partner churches either chose, or chose not, to acknowledge the gravity of the situation. Fourth, from the above, it is clear that the matter of financial crisis was not explicitly referred to with two churches, at least, the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa and the Church of Christ in Thailand.

The stage was now set for further developments.

## 6.8 Subsequent Steps

The Board of World Mission met on 14 April 2004 and, *inter alia*, considered two major issues relating to partnership with other churches. The first was massive cuts in its budget from the central funds of the Church of Scotland; the second was the Assembly Council's review of the Church of Scotland's central structures with a recommendation that the Board of World Mission would become one of six organizational units in a re-shaped central organization. With regard to progressing the work on the 'future shape' '[t]here is a strong consensus in the Board around the direction set by this paper but it remains open to re-assessing points of detail within it' (e-mail, Ross to Mission Partners, 24 April 2004, DPP). The Report from the Joint Committee on 'Developing the Future Shape of World Mission' (:1, DPP) expressed its definition of partnership:

The relationships into which the Church has been drawn through its witness to the gospel are often described as 'partnerships'. Such partnerships are developed by the two-way sharing of human and material resources. Since the Church engages in relief and development work on an ecumenical basis through Christian Aid, it has given the Board of World Mission the remit to develop church-to-church partnerships. This means that the Board lays emphasis on 'saying it with people' as individuals serve for longer or shorter periods of time. It has also involved an emphasis on theological education, seeking to increase the capacity to understand and communicate the good news of Jesus in many different contexts.

It is interesting to note that the Board distinguished between church to church relations and development work as if two centuries of mission involvement had not taught them that these are inseparable. There was an express wish to 'sustain and nourish the partnerships with overseas churches which have become integral to the life of the [Scottish] Church' (Joint Committee Report:2, DPP). This is an interesting comment as it makes it clear that some relationships have not achieved the status of being 'integral' to the life of the Church of Scotland, and some of these have lengthy histories of missionary relationship, eg. South Africa, India, Jamaica. There is an acknowledgement of the changing Scottish context with ever increasing opportunities for local involvement and easier communication. However, no consideration is given to the contexts of the partner churches, or to their priorities. This represents a significant deviation from the approach taken at the St Andrews Consultation. Since '[t]here is a drive to work more from local initiative and less from national level' there was a drive to reduce the number of mission partners but not the central national

administration of World Mission much of whose work was being diversified to local level. A commitment was agreed to sustaining overseas partnerships primarily through local initiative; to operating at national level only in four geographically defined areas; and to engage in short term specific projects as particular needs arose. The move to local initiative had its source in the 'Church Without Walls' report submitted to the 2001 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland which 'urged congregations to research an area of the world church and establish a personal partnership with a congregation or project' (Joint Committee Report:3, DPP). The Board was involved to an extent in this but many congregations were doing this on their own initiative or through other means than the central structures of the Board.

However, there were other aspects of the definition and practice of partnership that were relevant:

In one of the Review papers, ... the conclusion of partnership is executive staff to executive staff level meetings: It is essential that key players on either side of the partner relationship [ie. World Mission executive staff and partner church executives] spend some time face to face, getting to know and trust one another' (GA 2003:24). To what degree is this partnership with the Church? Or is Partnership to be defined as head office staff relationships only? And are the executives indeed the 'key players' in reality and not those working on the field in daily contact with members of partner churches? If that was to be the case, I can envisage an argument developing along the lines of the following:

1. With 51 African countries removed from partnership potential, why retain the last 2? The argument derived from the Articles Declaratory<sup>26</sup> will not justify a 2 country African approach. The concept of mission is to the world, not two republics with a loose Scottish connection.
2. With so many evangelical churches swamping Zambia, why waste money on a not so sexy relationship and support the many missions to this HIV/AIDS afflicted land with their crusades and church planting plans? The reality is that many congregations are now looking to independent agencies to give them this lift in mission.
3. Having now spent 4 months in Africa, all of it in the 2 countries where we have decided to retain a presence, I note that our partnership does not seem to be all that important. The Methodists, the URC and we are all partners with the UCZ, and I felt the CofS was not really a major player. By the time I add North American partnerships we are the poor relation. ...  
an exec-to-exec type of partnership actually cuts out the Church that it seeks to serve (AB to Ross in e-mail, AB to GH, 22 November 2004).

But, further to this, such a policy had been found to be wanting during the 1960s where:

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<sup>26</sup> which contain the doctrinal standards of the Church of Scotland, including the necessity of mission to the entire world



There was a growing realization that partnership with Churches emerging from the foreign missionary enterprise had to be seen as partnership between Churches, and not in the main between auxiliary administrative committees such as the FMC and 'missionary' committees on the field (Lyon 1998:231-232).

In 1988 it had been noted:

There are three leagues of donors: those who dispense funds collected by church taxes (largely German); major charities (like Christian Aid); and mission boards **(like ourselves who contribute very little)** [emphasis mine]. (African, Caribbean and Latin American Committee of the Board at a meeting on 25-26 January 1988).

It seems that the Board had a greater sense of its own value to some partners churches than was justified. Perhaps this was the result of feeling it was involved in a larger league of major partner donors where it felt it could influence decisions in a manner which was out of proportion to its actual size and worth. This was one way in which the Board maintained its international links with other sending bodies. With countries such as South Africa, there were no other significant partners to interact with there was little kudos to be gained.

In 1991, again it was reaffirmed:

Since our present support, largely channeled through Church headquarters, has tended to separate the leadership in the Churches from their own rank and file to whom they ought to be fully responsible (GA 1992:395).

Again, there appears to be a confirmation of the adoption of a dominator model of functioning in the Board. There is no evidence that even the two selected African countries were consulted about their future relationship which would continue in the same dependency mode. There appeared to be little awareness of the reality of the partnership relationship in these two countries and of the impact of relating only at the highest level of church hierarchies on the assumption that this is the Church and not the people of God at the local level. In terms of countries selected, it is interesting to note that South Africa is deselected, possibly on the basis that it has no other significant partnerships other than with the CoS.

Added to this, in November 2004, the Board circulated a Consultation Document of the Commission for Africa established earlier that year (e-mail, Strang to All sub-Saharan Africa Mission Partners, 18 November 2004, along with Consultation Document, DPP). Strang, the Executive Secretary for sub-Saharan Africa, sought to elicit mission partners' views on the

document because the Commission was seeking to establish ‘a new relationship between the rich world and Africa; one of common objectives and of partnership in action’ (Consultation Document, point 6). This is strange in light of the Board’s intentions to significantly alter partner relations without consultation when the very first point of the Document was headed ‘The Importance of Consultation’! Perhaps the irony of this was lost on Board staff. ‘[I]t is for Africa, its people, its countries and its pan-African institutions to chart the course’ (Consultation Document, point 7). The focus was clear: ‘There must be an African answer to the question of the purpose of development, which includes an African definition of community, dignity and well-being’ (Consultation Document, point 10). Either the Board saw no relationship between the secular and sacred or it simply did not understand the relationship. The latter appears more likely to be the case. Otherwise, why engage mission partners in such an exercise?

With regard to priority areas, the Board continued with its plans, taking no account of many comments and suggestions received such as the above. It resolved “do a few things but to do them very well”. This approach is questionable theologically when we consider the nature of the missionary expansion of the Early Church. Had progress been determined by doing things well (by WM standards), it is unlikely that Paul and his companions would have contributed so positively to the phenomenal growth of the Church of the first century.

Again it has to be emphasized that no account was taken of partner church priorities, if these were even known to the Board. An outline budget drawn up in accordance with expected revenue revealed a substantial undetermined deficit with the comment ‘The aim would be to close this gap by fundraising under the Local Initiatives Committee’ (Joint Committee Report 2004:5, DPP).

In terms of organizational shape, it was proposed that:

The Africa, MENA [Middle East and North Africa], Europe and Americas Committees will remain but will have a more consultative and facilitative role and will meet less frequently. Specialist support will be offered by the Budget and Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee and the Publicity and Communication Committee (Joint Committee Report 2004:6, DPP).

Here we see a clear diminution of the role of the area committees with a concomitant rise to prominence of the financial committees of the Church of Scotland which had no particular knowledge or expertise in the areas of the committees' concerns. There is a clear resurgence of a dominator model in these proposals with a veneer of a partnership paradigm: 'A matrix or "fishnet" management structure will be developed where each element connects with several others so that the different ways of working are effectively integrated' (Joint Committee Report 2004:6, DPP).

As the process advanced all mission partners were asked to complete a SWOT analysis on existing arrangements and to answer the question "Why should we have mission partners?" (e-mail, Ross to All Mission Partners, 7, 10 May 2004, DPP). There is no evidence that any account was taken of submissions made in subsequent drafts of the future shape of World Mission. As with the draft of the restructuring document, no feedback was given to mission partners (e-mail, WX. to Board Members, 3 November 2004, DPP). There was also some doubt about 'how widely these responses were actually circulated amongst Board members' (ibid).

In a communication to mission partners, Ross reported that the Board's attempt to reduce the proposed cut in its budget from central sources from 25% to 10% had failed despite a strong challenge being made on the floor of the General Assembly by the Convener of World Mission and others to limit the extent of the reduction. 'The General Assembly decided in May to cut the budget of the Board of World Mission which oversees missionary work by £426,000 as part of overall savings of more than £800,000' (Breen 2004:6). This was one more piece of evidence that the Church's influence and interest in world mission was declining. And this process continued unabated. In May 2006, the General Assembly was informed that: 'The Church's income for that year [ie. 2003] was over £70 million but during the last four years expenditure had exceeded income by over £4 million. There was a continuing need for cutbacks to balance budgets' (Armstrong 2006:23).

However, it was claimed that this 'is balanced by the reality that in our church-to-church partnerships around the world we are ... in something more analogous to a family' (e-mail,

Ross to All Mission Partners, 7, 10 May 2004, DPP). If this is so, it must be asked is this how members of families behave towards one another, by one family member contemplating and enacting changes in relationships without adequately consulting the affected members of the family and imposing its decisions on them? Here we have an indication of a dysfunctional family, rather. This question might even be extended to the membership of the Church of Scotland: 'I wonder if the ordinary members of the congregations are aware of or would support decisions which are not accompanied by a strong pastoral concern for staff involved' (e-mail, AC to GHs, 31 December 2004, DPP). This concern was indeed reiterated by a Church member:

I am appalled as I learn more from various sources of the apparent financial mismanagement and personnel mismanagement of the Board, its apparent loss of clear vision and mission, and the insensitive way it appears to have communicated with its partner churches abroad and its most valuable asset, its missionaries on the field .... We do need to improve communication. Little of the debate and consequent cuts has been explained or shared with concerned congregations ... there was little informed debate beyond an inner circle in Edinburgh (e-mail AH to AI, GHs, 30 December 2004, DPP).

The Board of World Mission met next on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2004 and took a number of steps to progress its plans. It noted that a new World Mission Council would come into being on 1 June 2005 which would fulfill the remit of the Board with 'considerable continuity between the present Board and the new Council' (e-mail, Ross to Mission Partners, 29 April 2005, DPP). The paper on the 'Future Shape of World Mission' (Ross To All Overseas Staff, 10 September 2004, DPP) was adopted in the same form as the draft of April 2004. Attached to this document were the 'Findings of the Review Group of Work in "Non-Priority Countries"' (ibid). This was devoted almost entirely to financial matters. Work in 'non-priority' countries was to be phased out by 2008. Mission partners in these countries would similarly be phased out through non-renewal of contracts leaving them with the options of seeking employment in their countries of service, seeking another appointment with the Board, or returning to Scotland to work or retire. There was to be a possibility of redundancy or early retirement. Neither mission partners nor partner churches were allowed to suggest other alternatives. Overseas charges and European charges were to be required to become more self sufficient. The Salvesen Trust, as in the past, would contribute to the support of European charges and several overseas charges. It was anticipated that some of its income might be devoted to

priority countries though these funds were specifically dedicated ‘to support provision of the ordinances of religion to Scots overseas’ (Work in “Non-Priority Areas:5, DPP). A further document entitled ‘Findings of the Review Group on Movement of People in Mission’ was also appended. The document began:

Through an extensive process of consultation and discussion the Group has concluded that facilitating the movement of people is essential to the Board’s work in developing partnership in mission. While there are many ways in which partnership can find expression, the life tends to drain away when the warmth of human relationships is removed (Movement of People:5, DPP).

Five categories of ‘people-to-people’ interaction were identified. First, the mission partner was affirmed as one who ‘makes deep friendships and develops an empathetic understanding of a partner church and its context’ (:5) despite the attendant problems of lack of applicants for vacant positions, vulnerability of those on the field, visa issues, and the development of “mission partner dependency” (:5) and personal problems. What was not considered was the cost and lengthy time involved in the recruitment, training, induction, language learning of new mission partners. There are clear recognized benefits for the Church in Scotland with people they can get to know and identify with, and around whom initiatives can develop between partners. Two elements will be vital to a new approach. The mission partner will aim to work towards preparing a local person to take over the work and, being oriented towards a long term presence, they will be expected to be flexible in taking up new appointments to offer their gifts and skills in a number of varying contexts. Second, Faithshare would continue to offer short term (six months to one year placements) immersion to share and experience the richness of Scottish culture and share from their own culture. Third, World Exchange is a long standing ecumenical volunteer exchange programme undertaken by many highly skilled people who are prepared to offer for limited periods of service abroad. Fourth, it was agreed to investigate to possibility of reinstating “Mission Associates” who were traditionally persons who worked overseas and wished to retain a link with the Church of Scotland; often they were former mission partners who had remained in their countries of service having left the service of the Board<sup>27</sup>. This would be done following the reorganisation of the Board. This category of relationship had a certain attraction in these days when the Church has many more

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<sup>27</sup> Eg. doctors working in mission hospitals which had been taken over by the government in their country of service.

relationships with members and agencies serving overseas but outwith the official church channels. The fifth grade of person-to-person involvement would be short term visits and projects as an expression of local-to-local links and would be ‘a natural expression of the partnership’ (:8). The document refers to ‘nurturing vocation’ (:8) as a means of producing an integrated means of recruitment.

It was in this document that the first clear reference to consulting partner churches is made:

At the same time, the Board is mindful of the urgent need for consultation with partner churches so as to keep them abreast of the far-reaching changes taking place in the life of the Church of Scotland and to draw on their wisdom and encouragement (:9). This was to be achieved by visits to partner churches and a consultation to be held in Scotland just prior to the 2005 General Assembly. It is interesting that suddenly, the need for consultation was considered ‘urgent’ once the process was drawing to a close. Only then is the ‘wisdom and encouragement’ of partners sought as if they had nothing to contribute to the ongoing process from its inception. In addition, as we have seen in the meetings with the UPCSAs, the ‘changes taking place in the life of the Church of Scotland’ had been drawn to the attention of the partner church. What was lacking was information about the life of the Board of World Mission. Further to this, the Convener of the Board informed the General Assembly in 2003 that:

the restructuring of the work of the Board had been done in consultation with mission partners and partner churches. ... The Church of Christ in Thailand, and as far as we are aware, the other partner churches were never consulted .... even now, after the Board has passed the new structures, the partner churches have not been consulted – just informed that their mission partners will no longer be supported (E-mail, WX to BWM members, 3 November 2004, DPP).

This was undoubtedly true as past experience had demonstrated and was manifestly true also of the UPCSAs: ‘...having learned from the South Africans that there had been next to no consultation with them’ (e-mail, AJ to GHs, 7 January 2005, DPP). This being the case, it is difficult to understand the non-renewal of so many mission partners’ contracts on completion.

In sum, ‘[t]here seems to be little evidence of a quest for imaginative, flexible solutions to the problems, worked out together’ (e-mail, WX to Board Members, 3 November 2004, DPP).

In October of 2004, Dr Ross visited South Africa and met with mission partners to discuss their future. At this stage, they had not been informed what their future was. No agenda or notice was given of the purpose of the meeting apart from having a meal together. The mission partners raised this issue in their annual report for 2004: ‘When is the Board going to inform staff members officially that their existing contracts are not going to be renewed?’ (Annual Report, Graham & Sandra Duncan, 1 December 2004, DPP).

On 6<sup>th</sup> December 2004, BWM sent its first official communication to Partner Churches regarding the ‘Future Shape’ of its missionary work. In this letter, which replicates the agreed proposal for the ‘Future Shape’, Core Commitments become Centrally Supported Partnerships (CSPs) and Secondary Commitments become Locally Supported Partnerships (LSPs). In addition there was a section on phasing in the new arrangements and one on ‘Consultation’ (To: Church of Scotland Partner Churches, December 2004:3, DPP):

For many years the Board has been committed to working in a consultative way with partner churches overseas. This commitment remains strong today. During this year, as the changes we are facing have become clearer, we have availed ourselves of every opportunity to share our situation with partners when we have had occasion to meet. To our regret, what has not been possible is a full consultation process leading to an agreed decision before action is taken. This would be our normal way of proceeding and we are uncomfortable that it has not happened. We need to seek your forgiveness if this has been hurtful and ask you to understand that we have been placed in circumstances where we have had to respond quickly to a fast changing situation and which have not allowed the kind of full and extensive consultation which we would have wanted to complete before final decisions were taken. Despite these difficulties we remain committed to moving forward in a spirit of partnership and on the basis of thorough consultation.

This contradictory comment is revealing for despite the historic commitment to consultation, this commitment had not been honoured in recent years. Not only has a full consultation process not been followed, there has been almost no consultation that has directly addressed the issues facing the Board, but rather those that faced the entire Church of Scotland. Clearly there was some understanding that there is some concern among partners, for there is a request for forgiveness ‘if’ the process has caused hurt. Noting the timescale, it is difficult to understand why fuller consultation did not take place. Yet, the Board wished even at this late stage to enter into ‘thorough consultation’ though decisions had already been reached and are on the verge of implementation: ‘... now that the Board had defined the way ahead more

clearly following the current consultation process a structured approach in respect of our Partners would be embarked upon' (Statement from Board of World Mission to All Mission Partners, 7 December 2004, DPP). This virtually obviated the need for a consultation of partners, such as was envisaged for May 2005, unless the purpose was to appease, not only the partners but, the growing concern within the Church of Scotland at large.

There had been many responses to the proposed changes in Board policy and this was acknowledged: 'The obvious pain and disappointment expressed in many of the items of correspondence regarding the process was acknowledged with deep concern by the Board' (Statement from Board of World Mission to All Mission Partners, 7 December 2004). '[F]actors outwith its own control' (ibid) were attributed by the Board to the situation. However, this was only partly true for much of the Board's inability to sustain its work was due to the Tiberias project (see below 6.13): 'the Kirk's missionary programmes are being devastated by a £20m cash shortfall which critics blame in part on the controversial decision to spend £10m on a luxury hotel in Tiberias, Israel' (Breen 2004:6). It is important to note that it was the process and not the substance of the changes that had caused such concern. But there was also concern with the substance. The Presbytery of Aberdeen:

have been discussing the matter with a view not simply of expressing their unease with the decisions and the manner in which they have (or have not) been conveyed but positively of looking into the possibilities of assisting in the continuation of our mission partners' service ....

The work that is being done by our Partners is vital for some of the poorest and most vulnerable people on the world (...) – we cannot quickly retrain folks with this experience – and what of call? What also of our partner churches? Is there any theological rationale for these decisions or are they simply driven by finances? How is the Board's declared priority for Local Involvement going to be advanced by undermining the work done over the years in building up ownership of the work among congregations and encouraging the integration of insights from the world church into the pattern of life and mission?

... we would want the Board to appreciate the strength of feeling on this matter and the commitment of this Presbytery to supporting our Mission Partners and through them the churches with which we are partnered – our links with the world Church are integral to what it means for us as the Church of Scotland to be the Church of Jesus Christ. We shall endeavour to make a more detailed assessment of that support as we receive the responses from Kirk Sessions (McLean to Ross, 9 December 2004, DPP).

The Presbytery followed this with an appeal to the Board: 'requesting that those mission Partners whose contracts are due to end in 2005 have their contracts extended to allow time for



both them and their supporting local congregations to consider fully how to respond to the situation' (McLean to Ross, 9 December 2004, DPP). Incidentally, a long serving member affirmed: 'Theology of partnership has not been mentioned once in my hearing' (e-mail, KL to GH, 8 November 2004, DPP).

The Presbytery of Edinburgh unanimously expressed similar concern as it:

learned with deep concern that, as part of the major cut-backs for 2005, certain of its mission partners have been informed, though without consultation either with themselves or with partner churches/institutions where they have served faithfully for a number of years, that their present contracts will not be renewed because they are not working in countries which have been identified as priorities. The Presbytery therefore calls upon the Board of World Mission, within the necessary budget restrictions for 2005, temporarily to suspend these decisions affecting senior mission partners pending more adequate consultation with the parties involved, and allowing more time for alternative solutions to be found (e-mail, AK. to GHs, 30 December 2004, DPP).

Concern was also expressed by the Association of Returned Overseas Staff (AROS) of the Church of Scotland who claimed, with some justification, to be 'experienced former employees of BWM' (AROS AGM Agenda, 9 April 2005, DPP). They proposed to send a resolution to the Board of World Mission with a number of key issues.

Pressure such as this (from other presbyteries including Falkirk, Perth and Glasgow Presbyteries) [e-mail, AL to GHs, 23 February 2005, DPP] caused the Board to decide in February 2005 to offer to extend the contracts of mission partners whose contracts expired during that year until the end of the year (e-mail, Ross to All Mission Partners, 5 February 2005, DPP). It also resulted in the formation of a committee to explore models of local support (e-mail, Ross to All Mission Partners, 9 February 2005, DPP). Three possible models emerged from this process (e-mail, Ross to All Mission Partners, 17 February 2005, DPP); Model 1 where costs would be met by local parties in Scotland; Model 2 where costs would be shared with Partner Churches; and Model 3 where another body would become the 'lead agency' in the appointment. In all models, the Church of Scotland would play a significant role in the partnership arrangement as they had been doing for some time in the matter of ecumenical appointments with other sending agencies. However, this could be interpreted as a ruse to get the Board of World Mission through what was obviously going to be a very

difficult General Assembly. The Committee concluded that any of the three models could be applicable and would need to be considered on a case by case basis. Mission Partners were also encouraged to consider accepting appointments to Centrally Supported Partnership countries (e-mail, Ross to GHs, 17 March 2005, DPP); and at this stage partner congregations in Scotland were directly contacted for their views on the cuts and related decisions (Finlay to Partner Plan correspondents, 23 February 2005, DPP).

The final meeting of the Board in April 2005 had noted that two executive secretaries had been made redundant along with one office secretary (e-mail, Ross to Mission Partners, 29 April 2005, DPP); this compared with twelve mission partners.

The idea of locally supported partnerships was at this time not well understood or articulated.

### **6.8.1 Locally Supported Partnerships**

As we have already noted, the move to local initiative had its source in the ‘Church Without Walls’ report submitted to the 2001 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland which ‘urged congregations to research an area of the world church and establish a personal partnership with a congregation or project’ (Joint Committee Report:3, DPP). However, this had been a strategic commitment established at the St Andrews Consultation, held in 1999, and even before that, though as the result of local initiative as far back as prior to 1987:

It was **noted** - that partnerships or twinnings had developed between congregations in Scotland and congregations in various European countries, including France, West Germany and East Germany; that a partnership had been established, with the Board's assistance, between an Edinburgh congregation and a congregation in Prague in Czechoslovakia; that the 1987 General Assembly had encouraged twinning arrangements and exchanges with Churches in the USSR and elsewhere in Eastern Europe; and that the Board had been asked to help facilitate visa arrangements for visits to East Germany (BWMU Minute EU/87/2, Europe Committee, 14 October 1987, 4. Partnerships and Twinnings).

Here the Board only played a supporting role.

However, this was to become the over-arching commitment in the development of the new shape of World Mission:

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Board of World Mission is eager to sustain and nourish the partnerships with overseas churches which have become integral to the life of the Church. In doing so, it is conscious of significant changes in Scottish society which are reflected in the life of the Church. There is a drive to work more from local initiative and less from national level .... There is the potential for greater numbers of people to have direct involvement in overseas partnerships through new communications technology (e-mail, Ross to All Overseas Staff, 10 September 2004, DPP).

The Board was already involved to an extent in this but many congregations were doing this on their own initiative or through other means than the central structures of the Board. This was considered to be a significant innovation:

This has emerged as a primary form of mission in the new century. It is through that such local initiative that relationships with overseas churches can be given living expression in today's conditions (Ross to Church of Scotland Partner Churches, 6 December 2004, DPP).

This being the case it is interesting to note World Mission's continued commitment to operate from a strongly centralized approach rather than devolving its own administrative functions in line with its commitments to locally supported partnerships, for example to presbyteries where the core of such work would be located.

Category B – Secondary commitments (Future Shape) would 'aim to facilitate continuing expression of these relationships through initiative from local level. This was already happening in Presbyteries and congregations through twining agreements, exchange visits and raising funds to support particular projects so it was not a new concept. The idea here was that '[t]he Board would play a co-ordinating role, keeping in touch with cherished overseas partners and making the connections with enterprising local initiative in Scotland' ('Future Shape' 2004:2). However, these relationships had often been developed through the efforts of mission partners and visitors to mission partners from partner congregations and presbyteries as well as personal friends, and without any involvement or support from the Board of World Mission. These came to be known as Locally Supported Partnerships. A less sanguine view was that:

It is tragic that the Board is no longer able to fund even the work that used to be possible, let alone what we would like to do – and needs doing. We hope very much that local partnerships will take on some of the deserted work but we are not fooling ourselves: it's a tall order. Nevertheless, we hope such partnerships could be a possible way forward' (e-mail, ST to GHs, 20 December 2004, DPP).

Every congregation in the Church of Scotland is free to and encouraged to make any connection they wish to 'with the world, the World Church or World Issues' (Finlay WM02 2006:2), although if World Mission support through facilitation is sought, the twinning must be with a partner church. The main problem related to how is it possible to formulate any coherent denominational mission policy when each ends up 'doing what seems right in his own eyes' (Deut 12:8), since most of those who engage in local initiatives are simply responding to a perceived need or to a relationship which has been established.

One of the most significant means of establishing relationships is through twinning though the same point made above applies here too. It is important that the partnerships developed retain their own integrity in pursuing the principle of mutuality. In a developing relationship between the Dunblane Cathedral congregation in the Presbytery of Stirling and the Likhubula congregation in Malawi, it was affirmed that:

[i]n the end, answers for Malawi will come from within Malawi itself and in a range of creative and sustainable ways.

It is an important point, and the partners are learning that you need to be creative when you want to share resources while committed to equal partnership (Harvey & Barr 2006:11).

This is echoed in other comments such as Mr Nicanor Primavera from the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea:

Come visit, admire our cultural and natural landscapes, but please don't help us. Many problems will arise when you 'help' us. We want you just to accompany us in our journey, so that we gain the confidence that, with you walking with us and with God's assurances, we can help ourselves (WM02 2006:2).

The outworking of LSPs, however, has to be seen in context. The decision to introduce LSPs as Mission Council policy was not agreed by partner churches as is suggested (Hill 2006:6):

'In this relationship the relevant partner churches have agreed to decentralize support from the Church of Scotland from an Associate Secretary's desk and encourage the development of

“local to local” links’. This policy was either the result of a non-Board initiative or it was imposed despite there having been a Consultation in May 2005 and partner churches were simply required to agree to the policy change. No discussion of the principle or amendments to its implementation was allowed. While ‘it is considered vital ‘to encourage these partners to understand they remain very much part of the Church of Scotland’s remit and are not alone’ (:ibid) this is not how it is experienced by these same partners who now have little or no communication with or from the Church of Scotland.

For example, as the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa was relegated to the status of a LSP, no discussion has ever taken place about developing existing significant links with Scottish parishes. In fact, when two Scottish nurses from one partner parish became involved in AIDS awareness and palliative care training, an attempt was made to divert them to Malawian projects in a centrally supported partnership; so much for ‘nurturing the initial contact’ (GA 2006: 3). Yet, it was stated: ‘Far from long standing-partnerships coming to an end through lack of central funding, the potential is there for them to enjoy a whole new lease of life’ (GA 2005: ‘A Theme for the Year’). And when two mission partners went to Scotland on final leave, no contact was made by the executive secretary for Local Involvement over a period of eleven weeks to discuss their deputation, future links with the World Mission Council or the development of local initiatives which had been established, including a regular project to send ministerial students for practical work exposure in Scottish parishes. Further, more recently, referring to comments from one of a group of students from a church in a locally supported partnership visiting the World Mission Council offices in Edinburgh in December 2006, one partner correspondent commented: ‘I was saddened when he said he felt they were not interested in the work still going on in South Africa, only what was being done in Malawi’ (Blair 2007:18).

In promoting locally supported partnerships, Ross (2004:3) quoted Stanley Green’s experience of the Mission Board of the Mennonites in the USA:

We needed to be willing to adapt our self identity from that of a centralised bureaucracy that ‘owned’ the mission (we designed the initiatives, recruited the workers, deployed the personnel, and then courted and cajoled congregations to support our programme) to a more decentralized, networking entity focused on developing

synergistic partnerships with regional ... conferences, congregations, and international partners. What is interesting is that Ross did not see this as a central problem in World Mission's handling of its own missionary outreach. However, consultation assumed a vital role in the process as the 2005 General Assembly approached.

## 6.9 Partner Church Consultation (May 2005)

Just prior to the consultation a former member of the Board established the context for this event and the 2005 General Assembly: 'The Board is really imploding' (e-mail, AM to GH, 1 May 2005, DPP). The consultation took place at Carberry Tower from 17-19 May 2005 with representatives of twenty one partner churches. Its timing was extremely significant. 'It seems incredible that they are meeting with representatives of the Churches one week before the General Assembly, by which time their proposals will be in the Blue Book'<sup>28</sup> (e-mail, AK. to GHs, 30 December 2004, DPP) which precluded any amendment to the decisions about to be implemented.

Ross opened the consultation by 'Recalling the Past' (Partner Church Consultation, 2005:9-10). This was significant in itself as it was made clear to participants that the purpose of the consultation was to discuss the present and future and that there would be no recourse to any discussion of the past. So only one interpretation of history was on offer and that was the Scottish interpretation. Allusions were made to the historical concept of partnership as if it was still the model that guided Scottish decision-making. Ross drew on the work of Kirk (1999) and Taylor (in Partner Church Consultation, 2005:10) to indicate that World Mission thinking was consonant with the best of British missiological theory. However, this was in tension with World Mission's actual actions. Further, references to *koinonia* were made as if there existed relationships of equals when, in fact, the problem at hand was the issue of the exercise of power over unequal partners despite a reference to being 'equally important parts of the one body of Christ' (Partner Church Consultation 2005:10).

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<sup>28</sup> Published collection of Committee reports and papers for General Assembly.

Problems relating to partnership were raised. It was acknowledged that ‘ownership’ of missionary relationships was hard to achieve in the Church of Scotland partly as the result of financial problems, but also because the cause of missions had ‘receded in its consciousness’ (:11) and has become ‘a remote and distant memory’ (:12). But was this a true interpretation of the situation when the vast resources of publicity and promotion, not least by mission partners but also by the council and its predecessors are taken into account? Also, these statements were contradicted by the growth of local partnerships. What had become clear was that only selective information had been released to inform the minds of Church of Scotland members and this may well have been a factor in the decline of interest and involvement in world mission. Further the growing disparity between the rich and poor constituencies of the world was increasing. Ross made a strange comment: ‘When it comes to sharing material resources, the one partner **appears** [emphasis mine] to be vastly more resourced than the other’ (:11). This may have been an attempt to give the impression that, in its current problematic state, the Church of Scotland was not as wealthy as it might appear. However, despite that, the remark would cause some questions in the minds of partner church representatives!

In conclusion, Ross remarked on the issue of true discipleship: ‘To enter into partnership in the gospel with another church is to be prepared to offer meaningful presence and solidarity at the worst of times as well as at the best of times’ (:12). Two comments are apposite here. As far as the Church of Scotland was concerned they had abrogated that right by their proposed policy changes. And as far as the partner churches were concerned they were denied that same right to demonstrate such solidarity with the Church of Scotland at this difficult time, and this they could have done very effectively with their particularly strong spiritual resources.

The Board Convener, Rev Alan Greig, then offered his reflections on looking into future prospects by first, offering an apology for the way in which the matter of non-consultation had been handled. He then outlined the process that led up to the calling of the consultation. But no indication was given why, when it was clear by the 2003 General Assembly held in May, that all was far from well in the Church of Scotland, no approach been made to partner churches until late in 2004. He claimed that one-to one consultations had taken place with

individual churches during visits, but that was manifestly untrue in the case of South Africa and Thailand at least. Strangely, despite the intention of the Convener's paper, no discussion was offered on 'Moving to the future' (:13-14).

The 'new shape' of the Council was explained to partner church representatives and an apology was proffered:

that, owing to constraints within the Church of Scotland, this new shape was adopted without the full consultation which would have given partner churches the opportunity to sharpen the Board's thinking.

The partner churches graciously accepted the Board's apology and extended their forgiveness. The Board undertook to acknowledge at the General Assembly the lack of full consultation with partner churches.

It was agreed that the Board's successor, the World Mission Council should work with partners in a consultative way, that regional consultations should be held and that the review of the Council's structure and commitments in 2008 should include full consultation with the partner churches (e-mail, Ross to All Overseas Staff, 23 June 2005, DPP).

This requires some comment. It seems that the purpose of consultation with partner churches, had it happened, was to sharpen the Board's thinking, not to influence it. Again, a tendency is revealed to think that only the Church of Scotland can contribute constructively to the cause of world mission which by definition, involves others. An apology was given and received, but there is no evidence of genuine repentance in this act with a view to turning away from hurtful action and making some form of restitution. World Mission was operating from a defective notion of repentance:

In many cases of conflict there is a need for **repentance** (metanoia) before reconciliation can take place. Because there may be a situation of wrongdoing and guilt, personal or collective, that has caused the enmity or estrangement, true reconciliation cannot take place until the guilty party has repented of sin and wrongdoing ('Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation', WCC 2005:109).

This is closely linked to the idea of forgiveness, without which 'we remain locked in our relationships to the past and cannot have a different kind of future' (WCC 2005:110).

The World Mission apology appears to be a mere formality rather than a genuine admission of guilt premised on a theological understanding of what had gone wrong. It was not even:

[m]ere self-laceration arising from an unclear sense of guilt [which] is at best an unprofitable pursuit and at worst can lead to paralysis of the will. ...The outcome of penitence (if it is related to the reality of spiritual challenge and to the regenerative power of God) is resolute, constructive and carefully-considered action' (Neill 1976:20).



This was hardly the case so any reconciliation achieved was false in this regard; there was no indication of a movement towards a concept of reconciliation through ‘restoring justice’ (de Gruchy 2002) or making restitution for offence and hurt caused for:

[t]he very notion of reconciliation presupposes the experience of broken communion. This may be in the form of estrangement, separation, enmity, hatred, exclusion, fragmentation, distorted relationships. It usually also encompasses a certain degree of injustice, harm and suffering. Reconciliation in biblical as well as secular language, is understood as the effort towards and engagement for mending this broken and distorted relationship and building up community and relationships afresh (‘Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation’, WCC 2005:83).

In sum, the apology contributed nothing new in terms of World Mission’s attitude.

The Consultation agreed to confirm the Strategic Commitments for 2001-2010 agreed at the 1999 St Andrews Consultation, and agreed that the exchange of personnel was vital to working together. A commitment was made to foster good relations between national offices and local congregations who should report regularly on progress made. There was also an agreement to collaborate on common projects with other bodies.

Partner Church representatives responded by making a number of points including concern about unilateral decision-making, confusion regarding locally supported partnerships (this was to become a recurrent theme in the regional groups meetings which took place during the consultation), lack of flexibility and consultation. Advice was offered concerning need for the development of a missionary vision, the identification of special projects in relation to contemporary social issues, creating a sense of interdependence, developing links with student organisations and introducing the evangelical spirit, common in partner churches, into the life of the Church of Scotland (:21). They issued a common statement (:21-22) in which they lamented the lack of consultation and challenged the meaning of both the concepts of ‘partnership’ (described as ‘an elusive concept’:22) and ‘consultation’ in the light of what had happened. They commented on the rights of partner churches to make their own decisions, and also on the mutual responsibility that requires consultation when decisions affect the ‘Other’ and the relationship. Picking up on Ross’ use of Paul’s ‘body’ image, they expressed hurt at not being called upon when one part of the body (ie. the Church of Scotland) was suffering ‘We would have liked to have been able to share the pain with her and prayed with

her for guidance and healing, but we feel we were not offered that chance' (:22). This comment perhaps strikes at the basic problem of the partner relationship. Would a strong historic European church of the sixteenth century reformation consider that one or more of her offspring could offer anything resembling assistance and would she have the humility and courage to accept it? This demonstrates that the Church of Scotland did not realize the implications of what can be offered and received in such a relationship. This is of grave concern when it is realized that the same church had been promoting the concept of partnership for decades and yet, had not internalized its implications.

The partners complained of the arbitrary nature of the countries selected as centrally – supported partnerships and encouraged the board to be ‘more consultative’ (:22) and engage in regional consultations as other mission agencies did.

However, the matter did not end at the close of the consultation. During the subsequent General Assembly, a former Moderator, the Very Rev John Cairns, read a statement on behalf of nineteen of the partner church representatives under the auspices of the Assembly’s Business Committee in which he raised, among other things the matter of moral responsibility in partner relations:

Among other things they had discussed the meaning of “partnership”. One overseas representative said ‘Each member church has the right to make her own decisions like the recent decisions of the Board of World Mission ... but if she is in partnership she also has the moral responsibility to consult her partners especially when these decisions so radically effect (sic) the relationship between them’. The representatives were asked what advice they would have given had they been consulted and they did not see the point of responding because the decisions seemed to be irreversibly made. But it was agreed the division of countries into two categories (Centrally funded and Locally funded) let [sic] to misunderstanding and ill-feeling. It was further felt that the selection of which countries were chosen for which category was seemingly arbitrary and ‘had we been consulted we would perhaps have suggested that things be done differently’.

They urged the new World Mission Council to become more consultative in its decision-making in the future (Aitken 2005:13-14).

By any standards this was a damning critique of the World Mission Council, especially in the light of their sanitized version of the Carberry consultation. All of this demonstrates how far the Council had deviated from the definition of partnership determined in 1998. ‘Indispensable to this is a partnership as equals with sister churches in different parts of the world’ (Handbook

for Overseas Staff 8.4.98:1). There was none of the ‘Tell it to us straight’ (Ross in Partner Church Consultation 1999:20) that was sought at the 1999 St Andrews Consultation because World Mission itself had failed to do this. Though there appears to have been no overt conflict at the consultation, it is clear that there was at least, a significant degree of unhappiness. Perhaps a question which was asked in 2002 when the theme of the Board’s report to General Assembly was ‘Partnership in Conflict’, might again be appropriately posed:

So, one of the questions about “partnership” is how we can understand the feelings of the “other”, that is the people with whom we come in daily contact. But partnership in conflict also imposes on us a duty to try to share a vision of a different way of resolving conflict in which there is neither victor nor vanquished (Musgrave 2002:10).

However, from all of this it is clear that the partner churches had a far more developed and integrated sense of partnership than the Church of Scotland

Within a year, the General Secretary was claiming that ‘[I]nitiative in mission increasingly lies with the fast-growing churches of the south whose social context is one of poverty rather than power’ (e-mail, Ross to GHs, 15 February 2006, DPP). In the light of earlier actions, either World Mission had undergone a transformation experience or they were indulging in a public relations exercise. The next week the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met in Edinburgh.

## **6.10 General Assembly – 2005**

At the General Assembly the Convener expressed the apology of the Board to partner churches and mission partners. Those who did not hear the apology never received it. However, the section of the deliverance which read: ‘Commend the Board on the vision and courage with which it has reshaped the overseas work of the Church and endorse the new shape outlined in the report’ (GA 2005, Deliverance 3.) produced one of the liveliest debates of the Assembly. A number of powerful speeches were made by former servants of the Board, mission partners and others who affirmed that there was no possibility of their supporting the Board’s proposals. While admitting the need for changes, they objected to the manner in which they had been enforced. It appears that many commissioners were not totally aware of the gravity of the decisions they were making. The Board won the vote by 284 votes to 278 which

indicated that this was a matter on which the Church of Scotland was deeply divided (Aitken 2005:12-13). This was evidence of ‘the roasting they got at the Assembly’ (e-mail, AN to GH, 4 July 2005, DPP). Within a few days of the close of the General Assembly, the new World Mission Council was established.

## **6.11 World Mission Council**

The establishment of the World Mission Council says loud and clear that the Kirk intends to be a Church with global horizons and a commitment to its partners around the world (Ross in Partner Church Consultation 2005:5). This was a lofty ideal for a church which had just decimated its global relations and obligations and left itself with relationships with only a fraction of its former partners.

The new Council began its life with an expression of ‘need for God’s grace to ensure that the Council makes a strong start in its task of leading the worldwide involvement of the Church’ (e-mail, Ross to Friends, 28 April 2005, DPP). This was a somewhat disingenuous claim for the WMC since the large proportion of work was now being done through locally supported partnerships in which the Council had little or no involvement by definition. Further, the Council was only involved in mission work, and that only minimally, in eight countries throughout the world.

It is interesting to note that the first meeting of the new World Mission Council, which came into being on 1 June 2005, following the General Assembly, decided not to proceed ‘with models which involved it in taking the responsibility of employer and asked the Special Committee to prepare a final report for the Council’s next meeting in September’ (e-mail, Ross to All Overseas Staff, 23 June 2005, DPP). It decided to continue with the case by case procedure instituted previously. The only support World Mission was prepared to offer was ‘prayer, interest and funds raised by congregations wishing to participate in supporting the appointment’ (Interim Report of Special Committee Anent Support of Mission Partners in Locally Supported Partnerships, 20 April 2005, DPP) and furlough accommodation for former mission partners when visiting Scotland. One member complained that: ‘I was involved in the Special Commission set up by the Board – but its work was largely ineffective. Several

suggestions I made did not even feature in the minutes' (e-mail, AO to GH, 19 December 2005, DPP). What was at issue here was again the concern to be in control. As control of mission partners passed out of WM authority (as the result of their own planning) so too did WM's desire to be in any realistic relationship with them. As has been repeatedly noted, at no stage were partner churches consulted about possibilities in this regard. When representatives from the UPCSA tried to clarify the position of its mission partners, at a consultation in Scotland in November 2004 through a discussion about possibilities of their continued service with the support of WM, these were dismissed out of hand.

The meeting of the Council which took place October 2005 agreed to form a working group to consider the facilitation of LSPs and agreement was given to criteria for special projects.

A further example of disingenuous speech was the choice of one of World Mission's strategic commitments to be its focus during 2005-2006 – addressing 'the scandal of poverty'. It is difficult to comprehend this choice in the light of the removal of central funding from partner churches which struggled daily with issues of intense poverty in favour of a five star hotel in Tiberias (see below 6.13) which would absorb millions of pounds of its resources and become a continual drain on its reducing funds. World Mission seemed to have forgotten the lofty comments made in its 1998 Report to General Assembly:

We believe that the Church is most alive when it is at the cutting edge of God's work of recreating and healing the world. It is where the risen Christ is really present, for example with poor and oppressed people, widows and orphans. ... More and more of the world's Christians are part and parcel of the world's poor and oppressed than at any time since the earliest days of Christ's followers. ... Mission has to include more practical sharing (GA 1998:22/4).

## **6.12 Globalisation as a Perspective of the Church of Scotland World Mission Policy**

Globalization in many senses creates a mirage of unity and community, but is in fact an intensification and acceleration of modernity's individuation. ...

There are undoubtedly gains in efficiency and knowledge from which institutional and free churches also benefit, while they themselves become agents of globalization. But, one may speak of the Janus face of globalization. The dark side of the face is evident in at least two phenomena:

First on the surface level, the promise and advantages of globalization are favouring the strong and marginalise the weak nations, indigenous peoples, and the non-human environment. Second on a deeper level, globalization provides a value-laden meta-narrative that usurps all counter narratives as it establishes its authority via science, technology (especially the mass media) and digital capitalism (Naude 2006:958).

It is unfortunate that World Mission appears to have succumbed to the worst effects of globalisation ‘which tends to promote exclusion and fragmentation’ (Kobia 2003: 137). By this we mean that, despite protestations to the contrary, World Mission presents as a system into which all its constituent parts have to fit neatly without exception: ‘The GHs cannot be treated differently from any other mission partners’. This has demonstrated a high level of inflexibility and rigidity. A prime example is the handling of mission partner contracts. In one instance, and for good reasons, a proposal was prepared at the request of a Board executive secretary regarding a contract. The proposal formulated was specifically designed to safeguard the interests of all parties concerned. No response was received for several months and upon enquiry it was said that this would be discussed at the mission partner’s contract review. When this took place it was made clear that there would be no discussion despite the fact that there had been subsequent discussions in the country of service with the partner church and institution concerned where confusing messages were received in this regard. What is confusing is why this approach was adopted, why there was no discussion allowed and why the Board’s own regulations were ignored (see ‘Handbook for Overseas Staff’ Section II – Conditions of Employment, A -Contracts, 2 and 3 [particularly regarding appointments and re-location], DPP)? Exceptions are made in certain cases so why not in a case where there is ample overseas support for it?

The illegal exclusion of mission partners (corrected following the issue being raised at the 2004 General Assembly) from Board meetings also contributed to fragmentation as mission partners had fewer and fewer opportunities of meeting together and discussing issues related to their work situations and share commonalities and differences. Attending only conference

sessions of the Board on a daily basis did not allow for free interaction with colleagues or Board members who stayed in residence and could freely interact with each other.

The matter of mission partners' leave also raises many questions. The timing of leave is agreed within the terms of World Mission's regulations. The length (and consequently the timing) can become a problem. In one instance, a married couple of mission partners were told that they had to take leave together and when a number of problems in this regard were indicated they were told that the offer stood or that leave could be taken separately which would have meant them living apart for seven months. This seemed to indicate a contradictory logic. How and when mission partners take holidays within leave also becomes problematic. It is unusual in this day that restrictions are placed on the timing of holidays once work commitments have been honoured, and that further restrictions are placed on taking holidays in the country of work which is normal during contracts. Mission partners have been in the habit of giving up holiday entitlement in the UK in favour of spending holiday time in their country of service (which is often much more affordable) and have not suffered in any way as a result.

It is acceptable that there are anomalies in many of World Mission's overseas contacts and this is acceptable for there are no two partnerships which are exactly the same, where needs and resources differ from context to context, and there are no two mission partners' contexts that are exactly the same. If security is an issue in one mission partner's case and not in another, why should one be deprived of security or, alternatively why should security be provided where there is no need? We live in a post-modern world of diversity so trying to fit people like units into a fixed system is an inappropriate means of furthering world mission. Rather the existence of diversity should be cause for rejoicing and should be celebrated as such. Otherwise, there is a risk of stagnation, rigidity and a loss of creativity, all symptoms of the dominator model.

The Board exists to service the needs of world mission, its partners and mission partners. The impression now being given is that these parties sometimes exist to service the department's needs:

*Board for staff* – interestingly I challenged that earlier this year .... Does 121 exist for field staff or the other way round? Furlough, extra duties etc now have to pass through 121. The rules are there to protect people I was told. Now there was no way that the rules could be interpreted to allow personal developments like Moderator years etc. I tried, but failed to suggest that field staff are networking and making their choices (e-mail, KL to GH, 8 November 2004, DPP).

This is what is meant by globalisation. This is not to say that this approach is consistently adopted for there are areas where the work is still well serviced as we will now see. Perhaps the negative effects of globalization are seen in starkest relief in the case of World' Mission's involvement in a problematic missionary and economic exercise, the Sea of Galilea Centre at Tiberias, Israel.

### **6.13 Tiberias**

The impetus to engage in mission work among the Jews had its origin in the mid-1830s although the desire to work towards the conversion of Jews is evident from the time of the Reformation (Bonar & McCheyne 1839:5). The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland established a Committee on the Conversion of the Jews to the Faith of Christ in 1837. That Committee sent a commission to Palestine in 1839 with a view to fulfilling its remit. It reported to the 1840 General Assembly which agreed *'that the cause of Israel should from that time form one of the great missionary schemes of the church'* (Bonar & McCheyne 1841:445). However, it was only in 1885 that the 'Sea of Galilea Medical Mission' was established at Tiberias. The mission was associated for many years with the name of Dr David Watt Torrance who was joined by a clerical missionary. In subsequent years a girls' and boys' school were opened. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the Church of Scotland Jubilee Fund provided for the first buildings at the mission: *'In a very humble way the doctor started a hospital in a tiny native house, and in a year or two, on ground he had acquired, a more adequate structure was to rise'* (McDougall 1941:90). Jewish persecution led to the closure of the mission which was re-opened in 1894. The mission continued to grow but by the end of the First World War *'[t]he buildings were in a deplorable condition'* (McDougall 1941:134). In the 1950s, the hospital was converted into a hospice, a place for pilgrim travellers.



In the course of time, the hospice was considered to have become a virtual liability and the decision was taken to dispose of it:

John Spiers outlined the structural and other problems of the building which required urgent decisions and reported on the proposals from the group set up by the Committee. This group recommended that, because repairs were not financially possible or desirable, the church and manse with the land immediately surrounding it be sold and an alternative place of worship found. After discussion, it was **agreed** to accept the decision in principle, and to proceed in confidence with the matter if it proved legally and financially feasible. The Committee was asked to **note** this. (BWMU Minutes, EX/8718, Middle East and North Africa Committee, October 7, 1987, 3. Tiberias, Church and Manse).

The Advisory Group, appointed under Minute ME/87/7.d of October 8, 1987 to review the question of the structural defects in the church building, had recommended that the present building, which included the manse, should be advertised for sale; that an existing structure within the Hospice complex should be adapted as a church; and that the villa known as Yakfie should be refurbished for use as a manse. The reasons for this recommendation were:

- (a) a satisfactory shoring up of the foundations could not be guaranteed and the expenditure involved would be out of proportion to the result obtained;
- (b) the church would be much more conveniently situated within the complex of the Sea of Galilee Centre;
- (c) no planning permission would be required for the adaptation of the existing structure.

It was **agreed** to accept the Advisory Group's recommendations (BWMU, Exec Cttee, 18 November 1987, Minute EX/87/18 Middle East and North Africa Committee of October 7, 1987, 2. The Church and Manse).

This decision was later rescinded and so began the process of excessive expenditure on the Centre. All of this appears rather strange in light of the report made to the 1985 General Assembly where it was stated: 'Tiberias Hospice, with its 90 beds, is well equipped to meet the needs of organised groups of pilgrims' (GA 1985:37).

Various measures were taken over succeeding years to renovate and enhance the property and between 1990 and 1997, £500,000.00 were spent on capital improvements and annual subsidy. All of this was clearly focussed on pilgrims and not the local community to 'meet the likely growing demands for pilgrimage accommodation' (GA 1998:22/19). However pilgrim tour operators were still dissatisfied with the quality of the accommodation, despite the fact that the 1992 General Assembly authorised expenditure

of £200,000 and the 1993 General Assembly heard that the 'Centre is now well equipped to serve the needs of visitors, both local and foreign'. A year later, it was reported:

With its refurbished accommodation the Centre has had a busy year. Not only has it been well used by guests staying, but on regular tours which have now been organised it has been visited by many who are interested in its historical significance (GA 1994:550).

Further renovations took place in 1995 with the upgrading of its kitchen facilities (GA 1996:22/12).

It is interesting to note that, while the Church of Scotland had a lengthy association with mission work in Israel, there was no partnership relation until 1990 when a partnership was established with the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, its co-founder of the United Christian Council in Israel:

As a local church, however, the Episcopal community can act as a channel through which we can deepen our relationships with other indigenous Christian traditions which include Jewish believers whose isolated and difficult position is recognised (GA 1990:416).

In 1999, the General Assembly authorised the Board of World Mission to refurbish the Sea of Galilea Centre in Tiberias which had a lengthy tradition of offering hospitality and had a significant place in the affections of people in the Israeli and Palestinian communities and beyond. Part of the motivation arose out of the large amount of reserve funds the Board held and which produced a 'modest' income and supported the work of the Board. The actual situation was clearly set out in the 2000 Report to the General Assembly (:25/26):

Funding arrangements for the Sea of Galilea Centre at Tiberias have been agreed by the Board of Stewardship and Finance, the Church of Scotland Trust and The Board of World Mission subject to a **maximum** [emphasis mine] project cost of £9.5 million. The Board of World Mission will provide £5 million from its funds (partly through permanent equity and partly by loan). The central banking system of the Church may provide £3 million with the balance coming from local borrowing and tourism grants.

The Board of World Mission will require to sell some of its unrestricted investments to provide the stated £5 million. The approximate value of reserves which can be utilised for this purpose is £13 million.

While the Board did own £38 million of investments at 31 December 1999, £25 million of these are restricted funds. For example, many investments are simply held in trust by World Mission to provide sterling accounts for the educational,

medical and theological establishments of Partner Churches and this finance may not be used for the work of the Board. Moreover, the Board receives approximately one third of its income from investment holdings.

Nonetheless, investment income which could have sustained the entire work of the Board and met potential future deficits (as in the past) was dedicated to this particular purpose and the Board was deprived on a regular and substantial source of income.

Having taken ‘professional advice’ it was believed by some that an ‘appropriate amount’ (GA 1999:25/11) of the reserves could be better employed by being invested in the Tiberias project and produce an income which would also support the Board’s work. This would also maintain a presence in the Holy Land and possibly enhance the work of reconciliation there. Rev Iain Whyte has challenged the idea that the hotel would become a place of reconciliation as the result of the lack of evidence to support this. He stated that this was incongruent in view of the Board’s supposed commitment to the poor of the world (BBC CD 2005). Though there was a seeming commitment to providing a space for ‘both the Palestinian and Israeli communities – a place which, for many, is the only opportunity to meet in an environment of safety and peace’ (GA Report 2004: Middle East) there is no evidence that this has happened. While the occupancy of the hotel by Israelis stood at 47% in 2005, there is no mention of Palestinians although they must be included in the 10% other occupants, but are not a significant enough number to warrant separate mention. And there are no reports of any other opportunities for interaction between the two groups.

However, in the meantime, the world experienced the Intifada in the Holy Land and the 9/11 attack occurred in the USA. This put a different complexion on the will to travel worldwide and particularly in the Holy Land. And at no time, does it seem that any assessment of the viability of such a project was attempted.

By June 2003, the Board was in a relatively upbeat mood about progress in the hotel:

We were heartened to hear of the steady progress of the construction of the new Centre at Tiberias, despite the heart-breaking situation in Israel and Palestine. Creating a ‘safe space’ within which the good news can be shared in a land of ‘no-go’ areas remains a key objective of the Board and we will be keen to

promote the new Centre, even in the present difficult climate (Ross To All Overseas Staff, 20 June 2003, DPP).

This venture was seen by some as: ‘A matter of theological principle for the Church as to whether such [political] volatility was a reason for leaving or staying’ (Bennet 2001:8), and by others as:

a real step towards peace in the area and I felt to leave then would give the wrong signals. We were not, as I remember it, given any impression of the pressure it would put on other areas of the Board’s work .... Since then of course, the road to peace has been dug up, it has appeared that insufficient attention has been paid to the ground survey (though I doubt if anyone could have foreseen the obsession with the graves which was conceived by one local rabbi) and the value of the Board’s investments has dropped by one third (e-mail, ST to GHs, 8 November 2004, DPP).

This was confirmed by the Board Convener at the 2005 General Assembly (BBC CD 2005). But was it just the obsession of an individual?:

The Board (at its meeting of 27-28 June 2001) heard of how the discovery of ancient graves on the land at Tiberias on which it is planned to build parts of the new Centre has attracted opposition from ultra-orthodox Jews who are opposed to the re-interment of ancient remains. This problem is presently being addressed by the Israeli Government and we await the outcome of the discussions (Ross to all overseas staff, 6 July 2001, DPP).

The outcome of these negotiations is still awaited at the time of writing. This has affected the building of the main accommodation block which is necessary for the hotel to break even and possibly make a profit.

Later in 2003, along with a looming financial crisis in the CofS, the situation was:

compounded by the fact that the new centre at Tiberias will open next year in circumstances which are unpromising from a business point of view. Until there is a political solution to the Israel-Palestine situation it is unlikely that the centre will make the level of profit which would allow it to pay interest on the loan from the Board with which it has been developed. Hence there is significant loss of revenue for the Board and to this may be added trading losses if the centre is not able to break even. While we are doing everything in our power to ensure that the centre is a success, again it is only prudent to make contingency plans for the “worst case scenario”. All this means that the Board felt it had no alternative but to place a severe limitation on the recruitment of overseas staff ..., with appointments to be made only when savings can be made elsewhere in the budget. This is a position adopted with deep regret but it is the only way which the Board could find to keep on track for a balanced budget in 2005. Please note that this will not affect existing staff who are continuing in post. Having established a holding position, we will be working early next year on our “discerning priorities”

process with a view to determining what the future shape of our work should be (e-mail, Ross to Dear friends, December 2003, DPP). This requires some comment because it here that we find the interface between the Tiberias project and the Board's financial problems which were already serious enough as the result of severely reduced budget threats. It is difficult to comprehend the decision to proceed with a project in the face of such problems. The political situation was unstable and extremely unlikely to be resolved in the short term. The financial position was precarious and was to dominate decision making and hamper the achievement of the Board's entire mission and vision. The commercial situation was therefore unviable. The outcome was to cut back everywhere except Tiberias which had limited potential for furthering the missionary vision of the Board. Further, it is clear that the discernment process was somewhat superfluous since Tiberias was the priority and that little money would be available for other 'priorities'. As we have already seen above, the assurance that existing staff members would not be affected was far from the truth. Contrary to the statement, the Board did have alternatives but these were never given serious consideration such was the strength of the commitment to Tiberias.

Even before this time, there had been opposition to the project. One Board member commented:

The business plan was stupid and pie-in-the-sky. The rationale (which is explicit now in the Board's statement) of a place to stay for foreign visitors is way outside what the Board should be doing (we were criticised for calling it a hotel not a guest house, but hotel was the first word the supporters used), the original funding plan was sick (involving a cut in the budgets for all other areas – 5% at the time I think ...) and the costs were clearly going to soar (e-mail, AN to GHs, 20 March 2004, DPP).

While 'professional advice' had been sought, other professional advice had warned against embarking on the project. Interestingly, the project has been called the 'Scots Hotel'. It is clear that there was a plan for cutbacks well before the imposed cutbacks enforced by a subsequent General Assembly, although it was referred to as 'the Tiberias "folly", which we see as the prime cause of all of this' (cutbacks in mission work) (e-mail, AP<sup>29</sup> to GHs, 11 October 2004, DPP). 'We would laugh at the absurdity if we were

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<sup>29</sup> Church of Scotland minister, Queen's Chaplain and former General Secretary of Action of Churches Together in Scotland

not weeping in rage’ (e-mail, AQ<sup>30</sup> to GHs, 22 December 2004, DPP). ‘I think it’s absolutely preposterous that the Board is spending millions on a hotel in Tiberias while cutting back elsewhere very severely ...’ (letter, AR<sup>31</sup> to GHs, 25 May 2004, DPP). These comments by distinguished churchmen demonstrate the growing unease with which the project was viewed. Part of the reason for this was the dissonance between the desire to further this project and the long term commitment of address the ‘scandal of poverty’, a strategic commitment for 2001-2010, though it had been a much longer term commitment than that. Many saw this as a direct contradiction of the purpose for which the Board existed:

In consultation with partners, the Board will be especially committed to ministry among the most excluded and deprived members of the community .... The Board will aim to raise consciousness in Scotland about issues of global justice (Strategic Commitments, 2001-2010, Ross to all overseas staff, 6 July 2001, DPP).

The Board risked losing its credibility as it was pouring millions of pounds into a five-star hotel.

By 2004, the Board had experienced great difficulties in completing the project and hoped to open the sixty nine bedroom centre in May of that year.

Reopening with a revived facility and a revived spirit, the Board considers the continuing of such opportunities as a vital activity in that part of the world, as is the encouragement it gives to guests from outside Israel and Palestine to take advantage of the many opportunities to meet and interrelate with other guests from the different local communities thereby giving witness and support to the ‘living stones’ of the Land (‘Future Shape’ 2004:3, DPP).

‘The church hopes that the hotel which opened in October after long delays, will foster dialogue between Jews and Arabs, but critics say it has been a ‘black hole’ for church funds’ (Breen 2004:6) and hardly provided the opportunity envisioned.

At the 2004 General Assembly, there was an attempt to arrest the flow of church funds to the project. Clearly there was a great deal of vested interest in maintaining this hotel:

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<sup>30</sup> Church of Scotland minister and sometime Professor of Practical Theology, University of Edinburgh, now Princeton Theological Seminary, USA.

<sup>31</sup> Former Moderator of General Assembly, Dean of the Chapel Royal and Professor of New Testament, University of Aberdeen.

Clearly Tiberias was sucking WM dry and I attempted in the Assembly to get a cist put on pouring more millions there at the expense of partners in other places. I was 'heavied' by 8 people from WM and Stewardship round the table in the Martin Hall to try to 'persuade' me to drop the amendment. If I hadn't had training in Debates at GU<sup>32</sup> I would have felt intimidated. In fact I felt angry and sad that folk like Walter, who has been a friend, behaved like Alistair Campbell and Peter Mandelson<sup>33</sup> (e-mail, AM To GHs, 6 October 2004, DPP).

This is only one example of the anger expressed at the Assembly.

As one person remarked, who of us individually would invest our own personal funds in property development in Israel at the moment, so why should the church (a charitable body) risks its funds in a speculative venture (e-mail, AS to GHs, 6 October 2004, DPP).

This entire project indicates a strange change of long term Board policy which had for many years consistently denied assistance to poor churches requesting aid for building projects in the Third World, yet massive reserve and budgeted funds could be allocated to a building project leading to the opening of a five-star hotel in Israel. This was interpreted by some as the Church of Scotland becoming more parochial 'with its outlet being the funding of a Private Finance Initiative in Sharonland'<sup>34</sup> (e-mail, AM To GHs, 6 October 2004, DPP). In fact, the Israeli authorities had offered \$2 million if the hospice were to be upgraded to a five-star hotel (BBC, CD 2005).

In defence of the project, Ross drew on the monastic tradition of hospitality (2004:16) as being 'a way of showing the love of Christ in a practical form'. But to whom was this love demonstrated. The hotel was furnished with imported artifacts including Royal Danish porcelain and Turkish rugs when there are many projects among the local Palestinian community which could have benefited from such patronage. Further, the main occupants of the hotel have been American and Jewish people whose commonality was signified by their wealth. To allude to this monastic tradition was to miss the point. Monastic communities were early forms of the community centre open to all in whatever kind of need. Then, Ross claimed that this provided 'a physical space where they can find unconditional acceptance and the opportunity to engage on equal terms with those from other communities' (:ibid). But the real need was for space for Israeli and Palestinian to meet together and this was not possible in

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<sup>32</sup> Glasgow University

<sup>33</sup> UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's 'spin doctors'.

<sup>34</sup> Sharon was the Israeli Prime Minister.

the context of a five-star hotel. And what programmes were provided for this to happen? Perhaps it is helpful to note in this regard that such opportunities for both Jewish and Arab Israelis could meet in a peaceful and relaxed manner had been developed in the period, 1982-1988 when Rev Robin Ross was Director of the hospice and that did not require massive expenditure.

So the Board embarked on this project ‘to envisage a commercially viable centre which would be able to meet its own costs and bring to an end the long-running drain on the resources of the Board of World Mission’ (ibid). In the light of what was known to the Board by this time, this was purely a public relations exercise designed to obfuscate what was becoming only too clear – that the project was a monumental error of judgment. Ross perverts David Bosch’s use of the concept of ‘bold humility’ (1991, cf. Saayman & Kritzinger [eds.] 1996) in mission when he employs it to justify the building of a five-star hotel. Nothing could have been further from Bosch’s mind when he coined the term. But a certain dissonance in thinking was demonstrated by Ross (:17) when he wrote: ‘Words of solidarity, however, would ring very hollow if we were to remove our presence on the ground – something which, at every opportunity, the Christian community has said is of value to them’. And was this the only way of demonstrating a presence in solidarity? It would be instructive to allow Ross to comment on how this statement can be equally applied to the partner churches with which the relationship was altered as the result of this project because all of the Church of Scotland’s partners had made the similar comments for many years.

The situation was rapidly deteriorating: ‘The 9.5m ... hotel ...is currently estimated to be losing about £200.000 a year’ (Young 2005). Yet, some were engaged in a massive public relations exercise and this was exemplified in a comment by the then Moderator of the General Assembly:

The centre ... was refurbished at a cost of more than £10m. “It’s a huge **gamble** [emphasis mine] by the church but I believe in it and have always supported it 110 per cent. I think the millions (of pounds) are worth it and it’s time to try to make it work .... It is our centre and the criticism should stop now and support should begin”<sup>35</sup> (Hill 2005:13).

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<sup>35</sup> Comment made by Rt Rev David Lacy, Moderator, General Assembly, Church of Scotland in Hill (2005: 2-13).



It is surprising to have a Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland refer to a church project as a ‘gamble’ when the same church has had a history of opposition to gambling! The ‘gamble’ meant that of the £10.3m, £60,500 went ‘on necessary “changes to the hotel’s fabric” after it opened, and that for 2005 the average occupancy rate had been 53%’ (Johnston 2006). And this ‘gamble’ led to ‘[t]he Kirk’s missionary programmes [...] being devastated by a £20m cash shortfall which critics blame on the controversial decision to spend £10m on a luxury hotel in Tiberias, Israel’ (Breen 2004:6).

It was reported in the Scottish press on 17 July 2006 that the Church of Scotland hotel in Tiberias, Israel (recently named as Israel’s boutique hotel of the year’ [Johnston 2006]) had been forced to close as the result of Hizbollah rockets landing in the vicinity of the hotel on Saturday 15 July, early in the war between Israel and Lebanon (Paterson 2006). Following the first strikes, guests were sent into bomb shelters. They left later in the day but were forced to return following a second wave of strikes, including one only 50 metres from the hotel: ‘people began to evacuate the area and all the guests left the hotel’. Mission partner, Jennifer Zielinski, commented ‘There was another alert and I thought I had better leave. I won’t be going back until the situation has settled down ... the Israeli people are stunned. They did not believe Hizbollah had enough firepower to hit Tiberias’. No one from the Church of Scotland was available for comment. Sad as this was, it realized one of the greatest fears of opponents of the hotel who were concerned about the high level of money being expended on a luxury project in the middle of a potential war zone. Added to this was the realization of the prediction (or was it prophecy?) that ‘The project ... will have to operate in a market where there are virtually no tourists from abroad’ (Armstrong 2006:24).

An apt comment was made by Walter Dunlop (Report on ‘The Situation in the Middle East’, 4 August 2006, DPP), the WMC executive secretary charged with the supervision of the hotel: ‘The high hopes for the year, in parallel with the anticipated upsurge in tourism to the region have all taken a knock – how severe? There is no way of knowing at this stage’. Yet, that was not quite true for earlier experience taught the price of having a hotel in the Holy Land for there had been ‘a tourist slump after conflict in southern Lebanon and northern Israel and tensions with Syria over the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights’ (GA 1997:22/16). It was

understood that the Israeli government would offer compensation to cover the difference between the revenues of 2005 and 2006. This, however, does not account for the situation the CoS found itself in despite the optimism shown by Dunlop: ‘I think, in the circumstances, we are doing very well, all things considered’ (Johnston 2006) with its two qualifications. The hotel manager perhaps reflected the real situation when he said: ‘It is a hard situation, not just for us, but for a lot of businesses. Every few years we have wars, unfortunately. You get used to it and the tourism business gets used to it’ (Johnston 2006). The very fact of frequent ‘violence and political unrest [which] consistently grip the region’ (Johnston 2006) was one of the main reasons given by the ‘beleaguered hotel project’s’ (Johnston 2006) opponents from the inception of the plan to build in 1999. The hotel was expected to break even in 2006 (Johnston 2006), but this prediction is somewhat disingenuous when it was argued that another fifty rooms needed to be added to make it viable, and in a war situation!

One view concerning the ultimate cost to the Church of this project was given by a seasoned former member of World Mission staff: ‘... the loan repayments on Tiberias will force BWM to end all missionary contracts by 2010-12 in my view!’ (e-mail, AT to GHs, 19 January 2005, DPP). But ultimate responsibility must go to ‘the ministers and lay people who voted the proposal through at General Assembly, at the recommendation of the Assembly Council’ (e-mail, AT to GHs, 19 January 2005, DPP) and ignorance can be no excuse in this matter. It was reported to the 2005 General Assembly that ‘its non-payment of interest means a reduction of £380,000 in the annual income of the Board. Additionally, the Board has to cover any trading losses incurred by the Israel centres at this difficult time (it is budgeting for £175,000 in 2005)’ (GA 2005: Financial Pressures)! With the budget cut ‘these factors lead to a very substantial reduction (almost £1 million) in the income of the Board’ (:ibid). Yet, the new WMC continued to allocate money to the Scots Hotel with impunity: ‘It was **agreed** to increase the amount allowed for the Scots Hotel from the Council’s unrestricted budget in 2006, from £100,299 to £125,000’ (WMC minute WM/05/49. 2006 Budget, 23 November 2005, DPP). And this was just prior to the report for 2005 which stated that:

Restricted funds of £543,179 were used, which was £90,556 more than budgeted. This was mainly due to using more Israel funds than anticipated to restrict the cost of the hotel in 2005 to £170,000 .... The Scots Hotel’s operating loss before depreciation and

interest was £243,931 (WMC minute WM/06/5 Reports from Tiberias, Update, 1 February 2006, DPP)!

It seems that only Tiberias could lead to deviations from the commitment to meet a balanced budget as had been agreed in the 'Future Shape' document as recently as 2004. Further, this contradicted the policy of the Board regarding Israel Centres: 'The committee shall adhere to the budget provided by the Board of Stewardship and Finance as approved by the General Assembly' (6. Budget, Finance and Property [2002], *Policy Handbook and Yearbook* 2002:2.7). During the 2006 General Assembly debate on World Mission, the Convener, Rev Alan Greig, gave an assurance that 'no further action would be taken without several key safeguards being met. He also said that the necessary checks and balances for any future development were in place and agreed by the General Assembly' (Armstrong 2006:24-25). This was true but these 'checks and balances' had already been set aside when they proved to be inconvenient.

The year 2005 yielded a 53% occupancy rate as against a projected 58%. This seems very low in a 69 bed hotel which is intended to accommodate a total of 130 rooms. The main clients were Israeli (47%).

The hotel continued to be a drain on WMC finances, so much so that consultants were employed to draw up a business plan to improve the situation. This plan would supercede that drawn up in the late 1990s, on which the decision had been taken to proceed with the project. Clearly, the hotel was in crisis because the consultant was to be retained on an ongoing basis 'to work for 1-2 days per month .... And to the identification of a potential partner in its future development' (WMC minute WM/05/9.2, 9.3 15/15 /June 2005, DPP). Was this to be an ecclesiastical or secular partner and how would WM be able to retain its original vision for the hotel if this happened?

## **6.14 Conclusion**

World Mission's policy developments meant substantial change for all the parties except World Mission itself. Mission partners had to face changes in their status, positions and incomes; partner churches lost a great deal of communication, support and grants; all WM lost

was a few staff members for, in large measure, it went on as before with reduced commitments; and partner congregations and presbyteries gained greater involvement in partnership. During this period under review, there was an in principle move from ‘broad extensive and varied involvement’ (cf 6.3:157) towards a limited involvement based on questionable criteria (cf. 6.6.3; 6.8).

The mandate to ‘read the signs of the times’ (Strategic Commitments, 2001-2010, Ross to all overseas staff, 6 July 2001, DPP) was easier for the Board to read than to discern what was going on within its own immediate domain. For instance, its 2001 Strategic Commitments demonstrated the Board’s inability to deal with this with its mission partners: ‘seeking to strengthen the witness of the church in situations of division, conflict and oppression’ (Ross to all overseas staff, 6 July 2001, DPP).

In sum, partnership came to mean continuing to relate with the world church through its work in European charges, centres in Israel and Palestine and a select group of ‘younger’ churches with no guarantee that even these churches could be supported in the long-term. Its policy of maintaining Locally Supported Partnerships could give the impression of maintaining a relationship but appeared rather more as an example of ‘having one’s cake and eating it’. Perhaps the apogee of the ‘dominator’ model was the use of the term of self designation: ‘The Church of Scotland as one of the “mother churches” of the Reformation’ in its 2006 report to General Assembly ((2) The Ministry of Reconciliation, *The Commitment*). In mission circles the use of such a term (even in inverted commas) nowadays is reprehensible.

While the development of world mission policy was, in part, determined by the *Church Without Walls* initiative, the result for partner churches was a Church despite walls, for barriers were erected which alienated partners through a process that might be described as ecclesiastical callousness as was demonstrated in the Pacitti case and from which lesson the Board appeared to learn nothing even after the McKinsey consultancy.

The methodology employed is incomprehensible in the light of how to handle human relations and the critique provided by the McKinsey consultancy. It is difficult to understand the

unwillingness to consult with partners at an earlier stage in the opening years of the third millennium, when mission partners were informed of the impending crisis, even in such a threatening situation where mutual support could have been discussed and offered. Exposure to vulnerability through threat and emergency could have done much to enhance partner church relations and strengthen the concept of partnership in mission. An example from the United Church of Canada will suffice here. When it became apparent to its Division of World Outreach in 1996 that budget cuts would be necessary, it took immediate steps to consult its partners on determining a basis for reductions in allocations. It:

has succeeded in involving its partners in other countries in setting priorities for the use of its resources. It has exercised accountability to its partners for the allocation of funds and has shown a very marked degree of transparency in those relationships (Brown 1997:236).

However, perhaps the best conclusion may be offered by the Church of Scotland itself when its Panel on Review and Reform reported to the General Assembly in 2006 (:7) and explained the rationalization of boards and committees into departments and councils. In the following comment, it may well have been referring directly to the World Mission Council:

This will ensure a better decision-making process, will avoid duplication of work and achieve better stewardship of time and money.

**3.1.5** Still there are some blocks which are slowing down progress. Some of these blocks were identified in the discussion sessions at the Panel's conference:

- fear of change;
- a lack of confidence allied to a sense of vulnerability or failure;
- too much negative thinking and not enough challenging;
- entrenched in the past with an overdependence on Church law which results in the church's trying to sell what is no longer attractive;
- a fear of losing control at all levels;
- power issues – on the one hand negative (“it can't be done”), on the other a lack of knowledge how to empower;
- a lack of purpose which produces a watered-down sense of commitment.

**3.1.6** *Church without Walls* has encouraged innovation, yet the Church remains an institution which is cautious about taking risks. Quality of worship and education is promoted but we still measure success by our statistical returns. We discuss strategies without wide ownership of what this means for the whole Church. We promote openness and transparency yet there are still parts of the Church where this ethos is yet to permeate.

This critique is damning for any council. However, in the case of World Mission, which had been through the McKinsey consultancy exercise only five years earlier, it is devastating for all of these symptoms were manifest in the operations of the World

Mission Council. In addition, these symptoms were all necessary factors in the emergence of the dominator model as a periodic attractor s a form of resistance to the weaker but more tenacious gylanic model.

The matter of needing to exercise control in a situation where the Board had lost control of its future led to the adoption of a dominator approach to partner churches instead of a consultative partnership approach which had been adopted in days of less threat cf. the 1965 and 1999 St Andrews Consultations. If we remember that an important contributor to the possibility of transformation is the development of systems stability and systems change, we note that this was absent in the post-McKinsey era. Eisler has argued that:

all through recorded history, and particularly during periods of social instability, the gylanic model has continued to act as a much weaker but persistent ‘periodic’ attractor’ (1998:137).

However, this chapter has revealed that it is not only the gylanic model which acts as a periodic attractor, but also that failure, weakness and vulnerability in World Mission have stimulated the dominator model as a periodic attractor moving the centre of concern away from harmony towards conflict and confrontation.

## Chapter 7 Alternatives, Summary and Conclusions

Eisler's desire to establish a model based on harmony in society is consistent with a Christian approach to history. This may help to understand recent developments in the world mission policy of the Church of Scotland and offer a way forward that may enable it to integrate with younger churches into a truly viable and creative relationship of partnership.

### 7.1 Alternative Possibilities

Possible alternative more equitable courses of action were open to the World Mission Council by drawing on their own involvement in the mission history of the twentieth century.

First of all, from a theological perspective, there can be no healing of ruptured relationships unless and until there is sincere and authentic *metanoia* on the part of the churches, but particularly the older churches, for insensitive behaviour. There needs to be a resolute turning away from former practices which maintain a servant mentality and begin with a new relational spirit. This implies changes in obsolete structures in preparation for a renewed thrust in mission.

For instance, at an elementary level, having noted that the 'ongoing patterns of work continue to reflect old colonial connections and denominational lines' it was an option that older churches give serious consideration to adopting a 'one-mission-board model, through the combining of mission overseas and mission within the country' (Larsson & Castro 2004:144) as had happened in the United Church of Christ in Canada. This would have resolved the ongoing dichotomy between domestic and overseas mission which inevitably led to home mission being awarded greater resources especially in times of financial constraint, as the result of a 'possession is nine-tenths of the law' mentality. It would also have produced a more coherent approach to mission where there were often

discrepancies in approach to these two aspects of the one mission of God based in the church.

At another deeper level, the World Mission Council was well aware of the work of CEVAA (ch. 4.11.2) and CWM (ch 4.12), both of which offered time-tested workable alternatives to their go-it-alone model. Ross, General Secretary of the WMC, himself drew on an example from the United Church of Canada (ch.6.14). But further, one of the former Board's own members had made a similar suggestion sometime prior to the crisis following the Church of Scotland's substantial cuts in its world mission budget:

At one meeting I suggested that the Board give all its money away to its partner churches and start relating to other churches on a completely equal (ie. no money) footing. I was laughed at, even when I suggested that no money be spent by the Board except in consultation with and in full agreement with our partner churches. I put all this in a letter to Ken Ross when he asked Board members for their ideas. He replied respectfully but the one thing middle-class white people can never conceive of doing is actually giving all their money away to the poor and starting again where everyone else is (and Jesus too, incidentally). The only reason we have a BWM and most of our partners don't is not that we care about world mission and they don't; it's because we have money and they haven't. If our Board can't use its money properly and cooperatively with those who have always been our partner churches, and can only operate (as they seem to have been doing) along Stalinist lines, we should give it all away in one grand history-making gesture and start again (e-mail, AN to GHs, 20 March 2004; cf. Guitierrez 1974:301f in chapter 3.3.3.7).

CWM had become aware of the problems and implications of such innovative policy changes which were predominantly based in issues of power:

This giving up wealth in favour of equitable relationships would be tantamount to voluntary disarmament. The basic problem is that: Money carries with it notions of power, domination and paternalism, sometimes even under the guise of partnership (CWM 1996:294).

CWM had adopted equitable long term measures to deal with the discrepancies in their partner church relationships for the good of all partners where there would no longer be 'Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:28). This text continues by emphasising the common inheritance of 'heirs' through their common 'issue' from Abraham:

in Christ gender, cultural divisions and class do not disappear, but they are relativised in an egalitarian faith where all become children of Abraham. The



diverse and “naturally” divided faith community should now use their freedom to “serve one another in love” (Gal 3:13-15) (Naude 2006:954). Using this model the unity of the body becomes more important than the possession of resources and the exercise of power.

With specific regard to the situation in South Africa, one of the countries designated to become a locally supported partnership (though equally applicable to all LSPs), another approach was made directly to the General Secretary of the World Mission Council:

... I wonder if the BWM have considered the possibility of an ecumenical partnership or innovative local appointment with the UPCS, if the local church is supportive. This might involve, for example, the UPCS and others locally being their main employer responsible for their salary, but the BWM might facilitate their continued work by assisting with pension contributions, medical aid and UK national insurance. Scottish congregations would continue to be enriched by links which widen our horizons and challenge our comfortable assumptions (AH. to Ross, 9 January 2005, DPP).

This could have been eminently possible with a three way partnership between the Church of Scotland WMC, the UPCS and the University of Pretoria. The problem centres around with whom does one enter into ecumenical appointments? It was only a concept which had hitherto been adopted among sending agencies, but there was no reason why productive partnerships could not have been fostered among both sending and receiving agencies in the formation of ecumenical partnerships<sup>36</sup>.

I also intend to suggest that, if the Board of World Mission were to reverse the policy of Priority and Non-Priority locations and put such money as is available into a single pot whether the whole work overseas might not be funded by a combination of World Mission funding, Local Mission Partner Church funding and Prayer Partner Church funding. The matter may be complicated but if it solves the problem it would be worth it (Aitken, *The Rock* 2005, 28:2)

As we have seen above, no notice at all was taken of any constructive suggestions which would alter policy or course of action.

The important challenge is to enact these sentiments in the twenty first century in a way we had failed to do in the twentieth century. Partnership is an integral part of the success of any

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<sup>36</sup> Although it is not discussed here, there was an even greater problem because while World Mission might be in partnership with eg. Christian Aid in one context, this was considered inappropriate in other contexts where other partnerships existed. It is incomprehensible why there was not a greater flexibility in the face of such need worldwide. Historical reasons cannot be adduced because World Mission had already demonstrated that it had little regard for historical relationships in her policy restructuring.

successful strategy. However, it must be formed in the process of answering the question regarding the aim of partner relationships. Is it maintenance or the discernment and meeting of real needs to further the *missio Dei*? And by whom are these needs determined? There has been:

a recognition of unequal power relationships in mission (2 Cor 8), and the rejection of a vertical, top down approach, with far-reaching implications for our life in the *oikumene* .... Mission means risking our identity for the sake of the gospel, losing and saving our life in order to discover, once more, who God is calling us to be (WARC 2004:6) ie. it is *kenotic* and is a matter of challenging the assumptions of the present order and being transformed through a renewal of the way we think and act (Rom 12:2). A possible way forward is for parties to work at developing a list of priorities which specify the exact needs in terms of the experience of personnel to be involved in the context of prayer, study and consultation which is the optimum route to insight. Scherer (1987:238) has developed a thesis which is apposite:

As current structures tend to maintain the dominance of wealthy Western partners, do not express the international and inter-racial character of mission, and are therefore inadequate for expressing oneness in Christ, high priority should be given to designing structures for sharing mission resources and engaging in joint planning on a regional, national, or local basis. This is especially necessary in the case of Western ending agencies and growing churches of the two-thirds world. What is clearly needed is 'a focus on mission that will produce fresh missiological thinking and energy in response to the new contexts in which [Reformed] churches find themselves at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century' (WARC 2004:6).

Despite all that has been said above, partnership in mission is not an unattainable dream. Truly reciprocal relationships can emerge when the *missio Dei* approach to mission displaces church-centred mission. It does not require absolute equality for mutually interdependent relationships to develop. This can occur through an understanding that all Christians are participants in God's mission in the world.

The *semper reformanda*<sup>37</sup> principle of the Reformation, and subsequently of Reformed churches, provides a significant reminder of the constant need for assessment, evaluation and reflection on past and current practice for renewed action. There is no reason

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<sup>37</sup> *Ecclesia reformata et semper reformanda*: a Reformed church ought always to be in the process of reformation.

whatever, to maintain outmoded practices when the practice of the universal church is premised on the operation of the Holy Spirit which is dynamic energy constantly renewing God's Church in the world for mission. It is strange that having spent so much time in prayerful discussion, such a lack of innovation and creative thinking was the result of the World Mission Council's deliberations. It is possible that a concentration on current business and management practice was a hindrance even although the McKinsey consultancy exercise had apparently been embarked upon in good faith.

## **7.2 Partnership and Management**

The so-called business methods, imposed by those who feel that the bureaucracies can be made more efficient if run in a businesslike way, only accentuate the irrelevancy of our outdated agencies. Such methods may create demands relevant to an affluent American business style, but they increase the aggravation of related churches that cannot afford our computer-age management methods (Hopkins 1977:116).

Organisational development focuses on replacing top down (male oriented, dominator, giving orders, rigid, vertical structures) management systems which are not sustainable and amenable to transformation. In this matter, there is a clear need to address gender in a holistic manner and not exclusively in terms of feminine perspectives. Women and men who can think and operate in a gender holistic manner may bring qualities which encourage sustainable development eg. flexibility, empathy, negotiation skills which involve the formation of a relationship rather than a win-lose outcome:

In the information society, as the manager's role shifts to that of a teacher, mentor and nurturer of human potential, there is even more reason for corporations to take advantage of women's managerial abilities, because these people oriented traits are the ones women are socialised to possess (Naisbitt & Aburdene 1986:241 in Eisler 1994:39).

Helgesen (1990 in Eisler 1994:39) demonstrates how workplaces managed by women tend to resemble "webs of inclusion" rather than hierarchies of exclusion' (which are pyramidal, top down): marked by the value of information sharing and good communication.

There is a need to consider another trend of elevating the feminine value of a shift from a 'redundancy of parts' (people) to a 'redundancy of functions' (abilities) ie. a counter to machines replacing people. There is a significant need for flexibility here. Yet some supposedly masculine characteristics are still of value for effective leadership eg. decisiveness, assertiveness, risk-taking. That is why a gender holistic approach is advocated. Therefore, there is a clear need for systemic change, ie. towards partnership.

That this has not happened in the World Mission Council is not the result of not having women in executive positions. In fact, at the time of writing there are three, the Local Involvement Secretary, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Secretary. However, as we have seen in Eisler's studies, being a woman in an executive position does not necessarily lead to the move towards or adoption of a partnership model of functioning. A sense of intimidation, superiority or job insecurity may, in fact, produce a dominator response in the hard business context. There has been a clear sense of threat in World Mission prior to the changes implemented in 2005.

James Baldwin (in Rich 1986:176) has commented appositely, 'Any real change implies the break up of the world as one has always known it, the loss of all that gave one an identity, the end of safety'. By definition, this is a risky exercise. What is incomprehensible in the case of the World Mission Council is that enormous risks have been taken with regard to the extremely risky and expensive Tiberias project; yet, no similar risks could be taken with regard to long standing relationships with partner churches in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

### **7.3 Inauthentic Partnership**

A major concern is the relationship of the Board with partner churches and involves a consideration of the meaning of partnership. Partnership implies a relationship of some level of equity (ie. based in justice, *shalom* [harmony] and integrity). That this is problematic was acknowledged as long ago as the concept was adopted by World Mission and was well articulated by a former General Secretary, David Lyon (1978), in his book *How Foreign is Mission* written almost thirty years ago. We seem to have some way to go yet if money and personnel are not still to be used to perpetuate a master/slave mentality. This can be seen in situations governed by the donor mentality. Perhaps it is more comfortable to respond to clear

financial and personnel needs than to struggle with other issues of partnership such as working out mutual relationships between partners of patently unequal standing. Too often it seems that decisions are made in Scotland and transmitted to partners overseas under the guise of consultation when virtual decisions have already been made. How often are initiatives allowed to emerge from partner churches to be seriously considered and implemented if appropriate, rather than being initiated from Scotland? The relationship is uneven and therefore cannot develop to a level of full maturity and authenticity:

Any authentic relationship between partners must include dialogue on the structure of such relationships. If round-table conferences on how to allocate and administer resources for particular projects in the third world are to gain in meaning, they should engage the sociology of power around the table. Most communities and institutions in the South seeking support for public initiatives are trapped by their vulnerability to Western funding agencies. The very concept of donor/recipient relations is ethically unsound, so new language and discernment must be found. If proximity to resources is defined in terms of power, then it will be impossible to develop relations based on mutuality .... Resources must be subject to the norms of accountability, horizontal relations and management of the gifts of God for the people of God (Kobia S 2003:169-170), and also, by the people of God.

The only leveling factor in such situations has been the presence of mission partners who gain in-depth knowledge of church and culture over a period of time. They operate at grass roots levels and are enabled to discern, to a degree, the mind and views of local peoples, through experience, as well as that of the wider church. This cannot be easily achieved through occasional and necessarily brief communications at executive levels of sender and receiver. Even when it is there may be problems in communication through lack of understanding of local cultural practices and methods of communication. Often, this can cause human relationship, and consequently inter-church, problems.

At times, it seems that younger partner churches are still treated as junior members of the partnership, not quite having attained their majority in terms of maturity. Yet, they constitute the very places where there is vibrant church life, where enormous church growth is taking place and the places where our partners have to deal with life and death struggles. There is a certain integrity in striving to acknowledge in real terms which partner has most to offer in a context where one party which has money has the final say in how that money is allocated.

Issues of power and control inevitably arise in a dispute where a partner church wants support for a project where the powerful Scottish partner does not agree. The danger is that the matter descends into the exercise of paternalism through an attitude of trusteeship. Again, the development of enriching relationships is hampered by the manner in which money and other resources are employed.

Despite protestations concerning the need to learn from partner churches, the Church of Scotland and its World Mission Council was extremely unwilling to practice such a creed. For instance, missiology emphasizes the coalescence of mission and unity and this was taken up by the Board in its name and policy, the Board of World Mission and Unity (1984-1994). However, the Church of Scotland was simply unable to sustain this in practice and in 1994 reverted to the Board of World Mission with a separate Committee on Ecumenical Affairs. Further, in its 2004 report to General Assembly, the Board had recourse to one of the outcomes of the St Andrew's Consultation in 1999 regarding the priority of evangelism. 'Encounter with overseas partners has reminded us that we are living in a great age of evangelism' (GA WM Report 2004: Evangelism: Regaining our Nerve). What is of concern about this is that, in the midst of decline, the Church of Scotland could hardly take note of this great truth and not use any of its insights in dealing with its own greatest contemporary challenge.

#### 7.4 World Mission Council Policy

Writing in the context of doing social theology in Scotland, a universal truism emerges: 'The appreciation that those others whom one needs to relate to are different from oneself already throws up the potential, not only for community, but also for conflict' (Cuthbertson 2003:139). This arises out of ignorance, superiority, a desire to exercise power and inherent racism when people of other races are involved:

There is still a significant problem when those who are the powerful initiate change even from the best motives. Thus, for the process of redemption and reconciliation, the primary perspective that has to be understood is that of the individual or group that is excluded. Those who do social theology need to find these people, if they are not already members with them, and help the process of social analysis and theological reflection as to their exclusion, and act **with** them, and if necessary, **against** the powerful pace-setters, to create or recreate full membership and participation of those excluded, **alongside** those who had previously set the norms [emphases mine] (Cuthbertson 2003:139-140).

As we have seen, it does not matter where this occurs. It is unfortunate that WMC did not take account of the deeper significance of what was happening within the Scottish context to help it understand the significance of social trends, apart from noting its own internal numerical and financial decline. However, it did have available to it the experience and wisdom of some who had experience of the church in and beyond Scotland:

What is new in the last 100 years is the church's imitation of the kind of corporate body or corporation of which the modern national state and modern large enterprises are models. The marks of such a corporation include a bureaucratic structure, a professional staff and a high degree of centralisation. By adopting this form, the church has combined the centralising tendencies of nation and of corporation to the detriment of local initiative, decision-making and vitality. ... All of this shifts the focus of attention and energy even further away from local and other small-scale communities.

These two trends from the local – to the national and to the global – combine to reduce local and other small-scale communities politically, economically and culturally, as well as ecclesially. So face-to-face community is being squeezed from “above” (Morton 2003:150-151).

Here again, we note the predominance of the dominator model of operation over a considerable period amounting to more than half of the period the Church of Scotland has been actively involved in world mission. By adopting secular managerial forms of operation, it has removed itself from the intimacy of mutually enriching relationships despite frequent protestations to the contrary. What is of some concern here is that the entire *Church without Walls* project which seeks to remove barriers had been of so little effect in renewing the church in its structures and activities in terms of the central organisation. This does not bode well for the future noting that we exist, in Eisler's seemingly paradoxical phase, where the imminent future lies delicately and precariously balanced between human actualisation and human extinction.

WMC continues to act as if there is no relationship between national mission within Scotland and world mission. Yet, social theology has provided certain universal truths which also apply to Scots who engage in world mission for:

[t]he challenge for those who seek to do social theology is also to understand and analyse within the Christian community the social processes that have led to exclusion, and work to restore a measure of integrity and community to the church' (Cuthbertson 2003:141).

This is as true of world mission as of national mission in Scotland. From this we can discern that our theologising is a matter of disposition of attitude as we approach those different from ourselves and who are in need, in our opinion, of our assistance.

### **7.5 The Value of Eisler's Model in Terms of Partnership in Mission**

Eisler's model offers useful insights into an interpretation of history. While we might wish to challenge some of her generalisations, there are a number of interesting features in her approach. It may be difficult to apply her macro-paradigmatic theory to all historic periods of shorter duration although we may not discount the appearance of periodic attractor micro phase changes within macro phase changes; yet, there are possibilities of applying it as a hermeneutical tool nonetheless. Her model basically focuses on how power is used – over or with others. It is gender-holistic, thus rendering it more inclusive. It is not inconsistent with other work in the field eg. paradigm changes. Perhaps, more importantly, it offers insight into how destructive our patterns of behaviour can be in a time of potential self-annihilation, especially if we do not consider how quickly periodic attractors arise as society becomes more technologically sophisticated. It is easier to discern characteristics of models often than to see similarities in a total phase.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, with the genesis of the ecumenical movement at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, 1910, we note attempts to replace this model of missionary operation with the concept of 'partnership'. This should not be seen to imply adoption of Eisler's partnership or *gylanic* model necessarily although there are significant and interesting similarities. Research indicates that the commitment to partnership was more apparent than real in terms of achievements throughout the twentieth century although there was particularly strong support from those committed to both the missionary and ecumenical movements.

In terms of mission history, it is difficult to know how far Eisler's model may apply in an absolute sense since her studies surveyed millennia and, therefore, cover the long view of



history. However, we may make some preliminary remarks. Modern mission history has a history of little more than 200 years so the time scale involved is minimal in comparison. It falls within Eisler's Industrial, Nuclear/Electronic/Biochemical and Human Actualisation or Extinction Phases. During this period, the *androcratic* model has predominated; however, the *gylanic* model has acted as a 'periodic attractor' and persists as such. Consequently, it is not possible to discern long term trends or changes as in Eisler's earlier phases, especially in an exercise in contemporary history such as this.

If we consider the modern missionary movement as having begun at the outset of the nineteenth century, we note that this was during the Industrial Age when the dominator model predominated. We can see this in the early approach to missions and indigenous peoples where traditional cultures were destroyed with traditional societal leadership structures, and western education and religious forms were imposed. Volf (1996:17 quoting Derrida 1992:82ff.) describes Europe's self-identity as totalitarian which explains its need to dominate every situation in which it took an interest and involved itself to remake it in its own image through a variety of forms of exclusion; elimination, assimilation, domination and abandonment.

Evidence shows that younger churches were more committed to unity and to the partnership ideal than the older churches which had more to lose especially in terms of power and control. This is clear in an in-depth examination of the Church of Scotland's approach and response to mission work. However, in recent experience it emerges that the greater the degree of vulnerability and insecurity of this older church, in this case resulting from falling membership and reducing resources of finance, ie. substantial regressions, the greater the tendency for the dominator model to act as a periodic attractor against the partnership model and to impose western solutions on partners throughout the world without consultation. This militates against and actively prevents the achievement of human actualisation on the part of the younger churches and has the potential to lead to the extinction of the World Mission Council in its present form as an instrument of mission on behalf of the Church of Scotland.

While it is difficult to apply Eisler's theory regarding phase changes to the period of history under review in any absolute sense, there are clear resonances with the characteristics of her *androcratic* and *gylanic* models. With particular reference to the Church of Scotland World Mission Council, there is little doubt that its recent behaviour conforms to the dominator model marked by rigidity in its approach to its recent problems and the design of the 'Future Shape of the Board'; hierarchical ranking through its use of power, its wealth and its unilateral approach to determining the level of its future relationships with its partners; and violence through psychological manipulation and spiritual abuse of these same partners (cf. Kirk 1999:198 in chapter 4.14).

## 7.6 Conclusion

World Mission's theoretical concept of partnership has not in recent years been consonant with its practice. It was no longer governed by 'limits to our freedom of action' (GA 1967:620). Therefore, it lacked integrity. It became a matter of partisanship and not partnership in mission in the selection of churches to benefit from centrally supported partnerships. This involved a denial of its missional integrity. These countries were selected on the basis of dubious criteria, when applied to all partner church relationships, whereas it might have been possible, through discussion with partners, to maintain multi-partnership relations, in Africa for example, in line with continental developments such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

As the Church of Scotland became more and more vulnerable through membership and financial decline, its attitudes were replicated in its World Mission policy. This, in turn led to an inappropriate abuse of power. World Mission had missed the point that: 'God has chosen what the world counts weakness. He has chosen things without rank or standing in the world, mere nothings, to overthrow the existing order' (1 Cor 1:27b-28); and 'I am content with a life of weakness, insult, hardship, persecution and distress, all for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong' (1 Cor 12:10). Here is the essence of *kenosis*.

There appeared to be a lack of vision while policy was dictated by financial necessity. The question was ‘Who sets the agenda when it comes to partner church relationships?’ Is it one partner, or both in consultation? The experience of the Church of Scotland’s partners was that of ‘He who pays the piper, calls the tune’! (cf. Lyon 1998:194). Even at the 2005 Partner Church Consultation, the agenda was set by the Board of World Mission prior to the consultation and no discussion was allowed concerning the history of the relationship of partnership, thus depriving the participants of a foundation on which to base their deliberations, a vital factor in churches which operate in the non-Western world. At the present time, the indications are that, unless there are significant changes in the Church of Scotland as a whole and its World Mission Council in particular, current approaches to missional involvement are likely to lead to the demise of the World Mission Council, with its wonderful tradition of outreach, in its present form. That change is likely to be as painful as struggling through the present crisis.

However, in the final analysis, only a *kenotic* missiology can replace a relationship based on unequal power relations and lead to true *koinonia*, for it:

must mean a renunciation of power. Churches of the North need to reject their reliance on power, placing themselves in faith before God in solidarity with peoples who have been marginalised, so that all peoples’ hopes and dreams may be transformed in God’s image. The *kenosis* of mission keeps the church from initiating a new form of colonialism, and mission becomes the power of self-emptying (Wickeri 2002:349).