

**Missio Dei:
Mission in Bold Humility
What can we learn from the past
that will equip us for now
and the future?¹**

Address to the NZ Baptist Research Annual Meeting August 2010

When Karl Marx was thinking about change in society, how it happens and what powers and empowers it he concluded that

Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, and its universal basis of consolation and justification.Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions. The criticism of religion is, therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo.²

¹ Dedicated to Laurice (Nov 30th 2008) and Alan Kilpatrick (August 24th 2008) Who showed me Christ in word and deed. And to Joy Smith and Jean Thompson: two missionaries who inspired me when I was a child.

² Full Quote is: Religion is, indeed, the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet won through to himself, or has already lost himself again. But man is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man—state, society. This state and this society produce religion, which is an inverted consciousness of the world,

Of course more latterly we might apply that description to hedonistic consumerism but at a time when opium was considered simply to deaden pain and render listless Marx makes comment about how faith was merely being used to prop up the status quo and keep the poor as quiet as possible while exploiting them to maximum advantage.

I want that as our background as we explore the question of *Missio Dei*- God's Mission - and to consider whether we in participating in that mission have in fact offered something that has merely given illusory happiness or something that has offered a genuine alternative, an abundant life, a life that reflects the fullness that God intended when he created the physical world and said repeatedly on looking at it 'Its good!' For in that mission lies the life and purpose of the church.

David Bosch was one of the foremost missional thinkers of the 20th Century. A South African who was actively opposed to apartheid he was an amazing bridge between the mainline and evangelical branches of the Western Church and Catholicism, and had substantial links to Orthodoxy as well. (Amahoro and Annemie) As Bosch reviewed the changing paradigms of missional thinking during the 20th Century in his *Magnum Opus*, 'Transforming Mission' and examined the way the International Missions Council and the WCC came together over that time, he

because they are an inverted world. Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, and its universal basis of consolation and justification. It is the fantastic realization of the human essence since the human essence has not acquired any true reality. The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion. Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions. The criticism of religion is, therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo.

points to the ‘momentous shift in the understanding of Church and Mission’³ In noting the shift which also occurred in Catholic Theology where the Second Vatican Council and those that followed it recognised that in the future the ‘Church is not presenting itself imperiously and proudly but humbly, it does not define itself in legal categories or as an elite of exalted souls but as a servant community’⁴ A seismic shift from a model of mission that had expanded with empire and had always been ‘out there’ while the church was ‘close here’.

There are some quite fundamental shifts in understanding that are compelled by this new understanding of the power of the gospel to transform life. Firstly the church becomes missional by its very nature- the kind of theology that was picked up in the Brian Smith era of College – inevitable from a missiologist- that our whole intent had to be missional. Its only 20 plus years ago but already its hard to remember the quite serious divide that existed between the established church and mission at that time. The result of hundreds of years of a tradition of Christendom. Secondly there was a profound re-understanding of what it meant for us to be a pilgrim people: ‘on a journey’ in popular parlance and that even if ‘there was an unbridgeable difference between the church and its destination- the reign of God- it is called to flesh that out already in the here and now’⁵ we needed to keep walking towards its vision of what the Kingdom of God might look like lived out in human community. What a mission! What a road to walk! That brought another profound change, one which doesn’t seem to be reflected in the pages of the Baptist I might add, about how one viewed ‘the world’. Rather than being the hostile power outside of the church, the world was that with which we had solidarity and was where God was active. Rather than being just the waiting room for the hereafter, the church was to be liberating people in the present while proclaiming God’s coming reign.

³ D. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Maryknoll, 1991), 371.

⁴ Bosch, 372.

⁵ Bosch, 374.

These trends I've just outlined, represent the reverse of something seen a century earlier and a movement which had profound effect on the work of transzend/NZBMS for the large part of the 20th Century- the shrinking boundaries of the gospel. Its important to detail this as a lesson for the future. In the 1830s 25% of the British Parliament was evangelical Christian. Its part of why you have to understand the Treaty of Waitangi as a document trying to live out some principles of the KOG. The man who drafted the principles of the treaty was an evangelical, an abolitionist and married to William Wilberforce's sister named James Stephen. Here is his instruction to William Hobson, charged with formulating a treaty

All dealings with the Aborigines for their Lands must be conducted on the same principles of sincerity, justice, and good faith as must govern your transactions with them for the recognition of Her Majesty's Sovereignty in the Islands. Nor is this all. They must not be permitted to enter into any Contracts in which they might be ignorant and unintentional authors of injuries to themselves. You will not, for example, purchase from them any Territory the retention of which by them would be essential, or highly conducive, to their own comfort, safety or subsistence. The acquisition of Land by the Crown for the future Settlement of British Subjects must be confined to such Districts as the Natives can alienate without distress or serious inconvenience to themselves. To secure the observance of this rule will be one of the first duties of their official protector.⁶

What a great pity the intention wasn't honoured by those who followed and probably a great pity that it was translated overnight by Henry Williams and his son. Perhaps one good lesson for mission into the future comes from this- take time and care to translate well and properly. This simply illustrates how Christians of that day saw faith impinging markedly on how they did business and politics- and in fact saw politics as one way of responding to the prayer of 'your kingdom come' The Clapham sect, to which James Stephen belonged was incredibly powerful and lead

⁶ <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/politics/treaty/read-the-treaty/drafting-the-treaty>.

movements like the British and Foreign Bible Society, RSPCA, Church Mission Society, the Small Debt Society (looks like a forerunner of Credit Unions) and Sunday Schools- which had in those days a very clear aim of educating the masses who could not afford school- a broad education. They were everywhere. So much so that Tomkin the historian said of them ‘The ethos of Clapham became the spirit of the age’⁷.

How did such a vibrant, politically involved , economically engaged, educationally committed and socially transformative movement become, within 2 generations, the initiators of the series of books called ‘The Fundamentals’ which is what, in the 20th Century lead us down a path to a version of mission where conversion became the sinners prayer and mental assent to a few basic propositional truths, where soul winning and church planting replaced discipling and life transformation as the outcome paradigm and social justice and social action became pejorative words describing a dichotomy of proclamation and action that is not only heretical but intellectually unintelligible, as well as practically unsustainable. That was the unfortunate trajectory of much of the evangelical church. Why? How did that happen?

I want to suggest three areas we need to look to in our history and in our theology that will help us regain that wonderful sense of being involved in what God is doing in the world, in *Missio Dei*.

Firstly. we need to rebuild our eschatology. One of the key theological changes that occurred between 1830 and 1910 was we moved from a Reformed post millennial to a pre-millennial view of the return of Christ. I know it won’t come as a surprise to most of you but suspect that for the vast majority of those in our churches converted by or brought up under the influence of the ‘Late Great Planet’ and the ‘Left Behind’ series, pre millennial rapture as the dominate eschatology is just one century old - its not the traditional view of the church. Combined, as it has somehow become with the support of the nation of Israel, its led to the formations of groups of people who seem to actively seek conflict, chaos and ultimately

⁷ S. Tomkins, *The Clapham Sect: How Wilberforce’s circle changed Britain* (Oxford: Lion, 2010), 1.

holocaust in the Middle East as a way of precipitating the return of Christ and the rapid exit of the saved. A few of the prophecy websites one can access should strike fear into the heart of any thinking person and prayer that none of these people have opportunity to influence American foreign policy. Just as damaging has been its effect on the Church's view of the environment, climate change and a myriad of social justice issues from fair trade to trafficking. Here's the issue in plain English. If what God is really concerned about is your eternal soul and not the totality of your life on this planet, if the ultimate goal of creation is annihilation of physical being and some kind of disembodied spirit existence 'up there' in the sky, if the second coming is 'just around the corner' so there is no time to put right the wrongs of human oppression, abuse and structural marginalization. If that's what we really believe stop listening to me now, rush out, spend all you have and start pleading with people in street corners. No takers? One of the enduring puzzlements of my life is that those who seem most heavily into this pre millennial doctrine (at least the North American version of it) are often the largest accumulators of stocks, bonds and other accoutrements designed to give security for the future. There is some kind of dissonance in this. I do not believe this is the Biblical view of the future nor the mandate for the present.

Irrespective of what we understand of the eschaton, we know that on judgement day the questions are not going to be about our grasp of substitutionary atonement, election and free will, or inerrancy. We have very clear guidance from Jesus himself on that. Look at Matthew 25 about the sheep and the goats or Matthew 5 around those hard hitting sayings called the beatitudes. Revelation and its wonderful cyclic exploration of the present/future for the church in troubled times is not designed to give us commentary on the hairstyles of the apocalyptic angels but on the fact that 'no matter what' we can trust God and ultimately God loves and makes us God's own people'. And it is knowing that which enables us to go to the bleakest of situations and tackle some of the appallingly unjust systems that deny a full life, and sometimes life itself, to millions of people. It is clear that this is what is required of us as followers of Jesus. We are not to wait for God to put it all to rights

in some distant, yet to break through future. Of course we are not likely to achieve all we see as possible and yes, we are not to labour under the delusion that we will bring heaven to earth through our well intentioned efforts - no more than precipitating conflict in Palestine is going to bring Jesus back. But pray for and work for the kingdom on earth we must. When all we have to offer the poor is food in some distant heaven and all we give the oppressive master is tacit support for their evil by saying nothing in the face of thoughtless injustice we feed opiate to them – and to ourselves.

Interestingly, there is little in our history books that indicates the depth of controversy that many have existed in our churches and thus in our mission over the last 125 years. In his rather quiet and gentle stirring of the pot in Vol 2 of our history Ayson Clifford concludes his brief summary of an early skirmish from 1884 onwards by saying ‘Time was not kind to either of the two schools. The horror of the First World War put paid to the Post Millennial belief that things would get better and better until the Day of the Lord. The predictions and date-fixing of many Pre-millennialists were falsified by events’⁸

Secondly.

It is time we got real about gender, sexuality and power. I note with interest two things. Firstly: Of the multitude of social ills to which the Clapham sect addressed itself, gender inequality was notably missing. Maybe, that is why its very powerful social impacts dissipated in a little over a generation. I also note that if I had to point to any weakness in Bosch’s work its failure to note the role of women. This is something also observed by Sugden⁹ It shows how its easy to miss that which is right in front of us. Development theory of today is pretty clear that intergenerational development is best sustained by training women. The results of a study of ninety-six countries from 1960 to 1985 showed clearly the economic

⁸ A. Clifford, *A Handfull of Grain. Vol 2.* (Wellington: New Zealand Baptist Historical Society, 1982), 102.

⁹ C. Sugden, ‘Placing Critical Issues in Relief’ in W. & Saayman, *Mission in Bold Humility* (pp. 139-150). (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996), 139-150, 140.

advantage of education for girls; increasing their numbers at the primary level of education leads to greater long-term economic prosperity than that of boys at the same level.¹⁰

The second thing I notice is that NZBMS is built on the backs of women. From the very outset the first missionaries were women. In our first century we list 126 missionaries. 80 of them are women, 43 of them single women¹¹ 3 Single men. Our first Missionary, Rosalie Macgeorge was a trained teacher and able speaker and had served in many departments of the church's life. She was described 'as young woman of fine appearance, strong character and deep devotion to her Lord'¹² and she was in her mid twenties when in 1886, the year after The New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society was formed, she was commissioned and sent from Hanover Street carrying 'the full confidence of those who send you in Christ's name'¹³ by Alfred North who pulled no punches as to the difficulties and deprivations she was going to. Clearly a person facing, 'a tax and drain on nervous energy, the sickness of heart from hope deferred and constant toil and anguish of heart' was not going to be some kind of second class citizen requiring the headship of a man. She was good looking but she was tough too. She lived that out, showing great courage in going as the first missionary ever to Narayangange and commencing work, with no-one in active physical support. It needs to be noted further that she determined early on to be self supporting 'to set an example to Indian Christians who were prone to expect support from missions'.¹⁴ In 1887 Rosalie was joined by the second NZBMS missionary, Annie Newcombe, an Australian who, similarly strong in person, had been so determined about her new views on Baptism, formed while studying for the LMS that she was forced to quit the LMS despite the fact this shattered 'the whole purpose of

¹⁰ A. Benavot, 'Education, gender and Economic Development: A Cross Cultural Study' in *Sociology of Education* (1989 Vol 62), 14-32, 14.

¹¹ S.E. Edgar, *Toward the Sunrise*. Wellington: New Zealand Baptist Historical Society, 1985), 273

¹² Edgar, 7.

¹³ Edgar, 8.

¹⁴ Edgar, 13.

her life'¹⁵ The third missionary to offer was Hopestill Pillow from Oxford Terrace. Both she and Rosemary were to die in the field within 7 years of commencing their work.

But as you look through that list of names in tranzsend's history, there is a procession of talented, professional, dedicated and incredibly strong women who lead groups, preached, taught, planned, nurtured and guided, wrote, inspired and enlarged the work of NZBMS/tranzsend *on the field*. Please note the emphasis here – 'on the field'. Incredible! And how many women did we have lead our churches, guide the union or mission society during that time in NZ? A very few. At the entrance to Carey College we have the picture of the first intake of ministerial students to the College- and there is a woman in among them. The token female for the next 50 years or so judging by the lack of women in the ministerial lists over that time. Slowly improving now BUT the whole issue of gender equality is not just about stats of those who serve in some kind of recognised authority. It goes to the heart of what we preach, and what is still preached in our churches about submission, about women not being quite wise enough to lead. Read my facebook entry about an sad but true article in *Christianity Today*¹⁶ where a woman who has been a senior advisor to special envoys, ambassadors to the UN and a speechwriter for senior government officials in the USA sits through a number of home group Bible Studies where a study on marriage instructs women to appreciate the desire of men to analyse and give counsel to them and quotes a series of verses that together suggest women are a bit stupid and need help to figure out life. She quotes 'I think men are more aware than women of their tendency to sin,' one of the men suggested. 'Maybe they can use this wisdom to help guide their wives.'¹⁷ The words of a Tui ad come to mind 'Yeah, right!'

Now its true that I probably have this stuff in my genetic makeup. My parents weren't always Baptist. When newly married and in

¹⁵ Edgar, 10.

¹⁶ J.C. Gates, 'Woman as Folly'. *Christianity Today*: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/augustweb-only/41.11.0.html> - retrieved August 14, 2010.

¹⁷ Gates, 'Woman as Folly'.

church my mother wanted to ask a question of a visiting missions speaker, she was told she had to ask through her husband. My father was so incensed that he suggested they leave the church and go somewhere else. They did. They became Baptist because his reading of Baptist theology intimated they believed in the equality and priesthood of all believers. Good theory not always worked out in practice.

In my present line of work I get to lead a research team that does occasional reviews of our Christian Commitment work in various places around the world. The key focus of our global research is the effect our church programs are having. Its part of building a case on the efficacy and even advantage of Faith Based Development programs. Given the reluctance of government and global institutions to fund anything to do with religion its an important piece of work. One very effective and extremely well integrated program WV is in the area of HIV/AIDS called Channels of Hope. Its very good at equipping pastors to deal with the multitude of issues that circle this disease. The physiology of the disease, judgmental attitudes, stigma, care of the dying, child headed households, grand parenting for a lost generation etc. Its all aimed to equip the church to be effective in their community and demonstrate communal faith in very practical ways. To begin with the program used the ABC of intervention. A for abstinence. B for being faithful and C for condoms. Of course there are some issues with some churches around condoms- and that has contributed to tens of thousands of deaths alone - BUT the problem with all three of these things is that the women have no power to insist on any of them AND the reason that powerlessness exists is the ongoing teaching of the church about the submission of women to men. I'm not going to try and join all the dots here as it would take too long, and we're talking more about contribution to, rather than attribution to, but its not difficult to demonstrate the complicity of the doctrine of submission in deadly disease here. Even in NZ, you'd hope that the horrifying statistics on family violence and related issues would make us reassess what and how we are preaching. Apparently not. And we wonder why young, well educated, savvy women searching for God, for purpose, and with a hope that their lives will add to humanity in some significant way,

come into our churches, hear sexist interpretations of scripture, see mostly male authority figures and observe the less than invisible family hierarchy, struggle to suck it up in their determination to follow Jesus or eventually give it away as some kind of anachronistic tool of oppression.

The Southern Baptist denomination have passed resolutions preventing women from pastoral leadership in their churches in the USA, have insisted that mission staff sign confessions of faith that support that particular abomination and yet happily continue to support the rapidly expanding house churches in China, more than half of whom are led by women. One suspects that the women in leadership in these house groups is a simple result of non hierarchy in such groups. A good reason for us to consider why that might be an important way to develop church in the future. If you want more in depth study around this whole area then one of our modern single women missionaries, Beulah Wood has some great material on the issue¹⁸. Of course these controversies around gender are closely related to other discriminations historically practiced or presently supported. The findings of a recent study in Europe that ‘Overall, the results of the empirical data are clear: even though the Christian religions preach brotherhood, charity and empathy with the weaker members of society, members of these faiths often do not follow this message. On the contrary, they typically hold rather more prejudiced views towards a number of groups – in particular, women and homosexuals, but also Jews, Muslims, immigrants and ethnic minorities, and even, to some extent, homeless and disabled people.’¹⁹

I was interested in listening last weekend to Helen Clark in Christchurch Cathedral talking about the millennium development goals. One of those goals is around maternal and child health and a figure known as MMR- the maternal mortality rate. The number of mothers who die in pregnancy or birth per 100,000 women. In Afghanistan its something like 1600, in the USA its 13 and in

¹⁸ B. Wood, *Side by Side* (Bangalore: SIACS, 2007) and *Families in the Plan of God: A Theology for South Asia* (Bangalore: SAICS, 2010).

¹⁹ B. Kuper, *Religion and Prejudice in Europe: New Empirical Findings*. London: Alliance Publishing Trust, 2010), 10.

Ireland its 0. Globally the average was 480 and the goal was to reduce that by 75%- to 120. At this point its still at 422. Perhaps she pulled her punches because she was in the Cathedral but its not difficult to see that this statistic is so unacceptably high because of the lack of education given to women, the secondary place in society given to women and the lack of economic resource given to women all of which is supported by cultures whose religious underpinning is the subservience of women.

If there is anything we should learn from our history that could inform us into our future in mission its that the gospel that restores us to a right relationship with God restores us to a right relationship to each other. To not restore that Biblical equality where there is no slave nor free, no Jew or Gentile, no male or female, is to fall short of the mission of God. *Missio Dei* is a mission that requires us to face our failures in the past with humility, to recognise our inadequacies in the present but to never the less go forward in humility too. To not do so, is to inject the oppression and denigration of women with the opiate of structural sexism and to fail both ourselves and our mission

That brings me to my third, final point: redefining salvation.

We need to go forward in bold humility as part of the mission of God in integral mission. We need nothing less than a total restoration of what salvation is all about. In the words of the Micah declaration

.. the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world we betray the word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and

political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing and saying are at the heart of our integral task.²⁰

Anything less is opiate!

This is what Lausanne 2 described as ‘the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world’ Effectively this means reinvesting the term ‘salvation’ with all its original intended consequences. Salvation that impinges on social, economic, health and educational areas as well as addressing the yearning of the human soul, the desire to be connected with the creator and sustainer of life itself. It may not be without significance that the propounder of that pervasive pragmatic heresy of the homogeneous unit principle of church growth, Donald McGavren, said once that ‘Salvation is a vertical relationship....which issues in horizontal relationships....The vertical must not be displaced by the horizontal. Desirable as social ameliorations are, working for them must not be substituted for the biblical requirements of ‘salvation’²¹ This is of course not only a false dichotomy but is partly related to the eschatology I referred to earlier. And If we’re just sorting vertical relationships as we pluck people out of the dark ocean of sin and, shivering in the miserable and cold little lifeboat called the Church while we wait for the liner JC to come blazing across the horizon and rescue us, I suppose that quote of his makes sense. BUT it does not gel at all if Salvation is not ‘out’ of this world but ‘of this world’. Paul’s soaring affirmations of the cosmic Christ in Colossians 1;15-16 says it all: Christ is exactly like God, who cannot be seen. He is the first-born Son, superior to all creation. Everything was created by him, everything in heaven and on earth, everything seen and unseen, including all forces and powers, and all rulers and authorities. All things were created by God’s Son, and everything was made for him.

²⁰ Micah Network, M. (2008). *Integral Mission*. Retrieved August 14, 2010, from <http://www.micahnetwork.org/en/integral-mission>

²¹ Bosch, 398

Tranzsend/NZBMS has lived that integration out for most of its life. From the outset Rosemary and Hopestill were involved in education and medicine. We've routinely invested in literature, in hospitals, health clinics, mobile Bible Schools, translation work, rotating loan schemes, further education, support of children in hostels for educational purposes. We've even helped build infrastructure – remember Chris Sorrell in PNG helping get airstrips built so that people could be rapidly moved to hospitals and goods could be transported. Right now we are involved in major projects in Bangladesh in the TCDC where key church workers are put in place in villages and they run a school, help with agriculture, educate women and lead community discussions on all sorts of things from family planning to starting small business and the ins and outs of the dowry system. It's wonderful integral mission. We have a major and growing series of projects in South Asia in jute bag production that allows those wanting to escape from the sex industry to find freedom. What an amazing team Kerry and Annie are building up there. Along with that is other industry and new employment options started by Ian and Colleen and Peter and Leonora. It is an extensive list. Or the business that supplies generators and is seeing its solid witness through ethical business bear fruit along with the endless questions constantly asked of the staff about their motivation. These things are not precursors to the gospel. They are the gospel, they represent the signs of salvation- or they do if you see salvation as restoration of life in its fullness. All this we have done well in our history and its good to be taking it into our future. We've learnt a lot and we have a lot to offer in this whole area in the manner in which we've approached the whole issue of business as mission and Development as mission with integrity of purpose and holism as our theology.

Integral mission means we will stand on the side of the poor on the issue of climate change injustice. It means that we will take care of refugees who risk their lives in little boats to escape the horror and helplessness of countries torn by conflict and persecution. It means we will support the millennium development goals and human rights because they align with our hopes for the Kingdom.

I want, however, to finish with a challenge. There is one area where we seem, as a denomination to be silent and, sadly sometimes, seemingly vocally resistant to the voice and the work of God in this integral mission area. Interestingly, it's not in the MDGs either. Maybe it's thought to be a bridge too far. That's in the whole field of peacemaking. We know that statistics – or we should do. I've quoted them often enough, although they are a bit out of date now: This was the story in 1990.

- 471 major wars since 1700
- 83 major wars since 1960
- 12.5 million killed in wars between 1960 and 1990 (84% civilian)
- International peace keeping forces cost over US\$265,000,000 pa.
- Military expenditure: US\$950,000,000,000 pa. (\$1.8 million per minute) 5.7% of GWP.

More recent figures suggest that military spending is now 1.531 trillion dollars per annum, a 6% rise in 2009, US\$225 for every man woman and child on the planet and 2.7% of the world GDP, 46% of which is spent by the USA.²² This is simply obscene and an ongoing crime against the poor to allow this to continue.

What would happen if we could lead a movement of peacemakers that took just a week's worth of that military spending and got it invested in water and sanitation, in health clinics, in primary schools, in job creation, in environmental concerns. It would be a transformed world! It might be accompanied by a blessing as well, 'God blesses those people who make peace. They will be called his children!' says Matthew 5. Or as Peterson puts it 'You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are and your place in God's family.' How to make that happen is perhaps the greatest challenge of global mission in our time. Our failure to effectively change the script on war to this point in human history

²² *Global Issues* (2010, July 7). Retrieved August 14, 2010, from World Military Spending: <http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending>.

points to our own history and failures too. We have a long way to go in our exploration of unity in the church. One of the things I loved about Bosch was his constant call to dialogue, to hear the voice of the other, to work together in ecumenical harmony and as a sacrament and sign to the rest of the world.²³

There are many more things I could add about the challenges we face in the future and the untapped resources from our past that we can take with us on that journey. I finish with the words of Jesus and simply say – As his followers, is this what the world should expect of us as we join Jesus in mission dei, God's mission to the world, in all the bold humility we can muster. A world, numbed by opiates other than those seen by Marx deserves true religion as an all embracing wake up call to life in its fullness.

Luke 7

¹⁸⁻¹⁹John's disciples reported back to him the news of all these events taking place. He sent two of them to the Master to ask the question, 'Are you the One we've been expecting, or are we still waiting?'

²⁰The men showed up before Jesus and said, 'John the Baptizer sent us to ask you, 'Are you the One we've been expecting, or are we still waiting?''¹⁶

²¹⁻²³In the next two or three hours Jesus healed many from diseases, distress, and evil spirits. To many of the blind he gave the gift of sight. Then he gave his answer: 'Go back and tell John what you have just seen and heard:

The blind see,
The lame walk,
Lepers are cleansed,
The deaf hear,
The dead are raised,
The wretched of the earth
have God's salvation hospitality extended to them.

²³ Bosch, 374.

‘Is this what you were expecting? Then count yourselves fortunate!’

A faith that reflects the risen and living Jesus is not an opiate. Its a totally transformative experience that constantly shows glimpses of the Kingdom of God and life in its fullness. That’s what being part of *missio dei*, God’s mission in bold humility, is all about. May our journey in the next 125 years reflect that reality.

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