

# All-inclusive mission – A discussion of *Transforming mission* (1991) by D.J. Bosch

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## Abstract

**All-inclusive mission – Discussion of *Transforming mission* (1991) by D.J. Bosch**

*Bosch's important work, Transforming mission, is still relevant in the present missiological debate. It is clear that Bosch has a comprehensive outlook on mission and that this view is all-inclusive. A question that must, however, be asked is whether this broad view of mission does not make it impossible to focus mission on the ministry of reconciliation as outlined in 2 Corinthians 5:11-21. Although it cannot be denied that Bosch also emphasises evangelism and conversion, a tendency towards socialising mission is evident in this publication. The church as an institution is not the sole agent of renewal in the community and should not exceed the limits of its very calling. The kingdom of God must come in all its glory and though mission does proclaim that, the main focus in mission still remains the ministry of reconciliation.*

## 1. Introduction

In his book, *Transforming mission* (1991), D.J. Bosch investigates the philosophy of paradigm changes and comes to the conclusion that mission has to be seen within a new paradigm as having an ecumenical nature. This approach supplies him with a new and more inclusive paradigm for modern mission. In this discussion Bosch's approach and his conclusion will be scrutinised and his broad view of mission, as well as his use of the paradigm philosophy, post-modernism, and of church and kingdom will be considered.

## 2. Mission in many modes

The discussion of the task of mission still continues today. The post-modern trend is to allow mission a very wide scope. Similarly it seems as if mission has become *all-inclusive* in *Transforming mission*. In his previous works Bosch defined mission as the total task which God sets the church for the salvation of the world (Livingston, 1990:3). It is clear that Bosch, at that stage defended the position that mission has a definite goal in proclaiming salvation to people. In *Transforming mission* this point of view still exists, but the spectrum of mission

is seen as very broad: it is regarded in the light of the church in combination with other aspects: *missio Dei*, mediating salvation, quest for justice, evangelism, contextualisation, liberation, inculturation, common witness, ministry of the people of God, witness to people from other faiths, even theology in action and in hope (Bosch, 1991:368-510). All these aspects contribute to a very broad spectrum. Mission is therefore regarded as all-inclusive.

Although Bosch has an eye for the traditional paradigms among the Evangelicals, he is inclined to the view that mission includes much more than evangelism and salvation only. Especially in *Heil vir die wêreld* (Bosch, 1979:198-201) he makes it clear that the existence of the church in this world always has a missionary dimension, although everything does not have a missionary focus. He thus carefully steers clear of a reduced gospel as understood by the Evangelicals, and also the watered-down gospel of the ecumenicals. He wishes to make it quite clear that the *missio Dei* is all-inclusive, however not in the sense that everything becomes mission. According to his theology of mission it is clear from Luke and other passages in Scripture that God's mission in the world includes social and other aspects of Christian witness.

Although Bosch was inclined to include the widest scope in the dimension of mission from the beginning, in *Transforming mission* he tends to place all the different views of mission on a level where they are co-related. Saayman (1990:104) says that Bosch views evangelism as the heart of mission and then suggests that Bosch is not able to differentiate between himself and the Evangelicals. In this latest work he, however, adopts a new and wider approach, closer to the above-mentioned general trend which, in view of the new ecumenical paradigm, regards mission as broad enough to include all the aspects mentioned above. J.J. Kritzinger (1990:147) discusses the problem of Bosch's definition of mission in his earlier works and then states that mission in Bosch's view is broad, directed towards the kingdom of God and the expression of God's concern for the whole world and in a specific sense all its dimensions. Mission is also contextual. According to Kritzinger, it is clear that Bosch is still aware of the problem that mission may become all-inclusive, but that he also tries to reduce it to grass-roots level.

It must be said, however, that from the very beginning Bosch described mission as the focal point of God's involvement in world history (Livingston, 1990:9). In 1989 he (Bosch, 1989:5) emphasized that there are three major thrusts in the ministry of Jesus as portrayed in Luke. Each presupposes the other and they must not be isolated from one another. The three thrusts are the following:

- Empowering the weak and the lowly
- Healing the sick
- Saving the lost

In *Transforming mission* Bosch proceeds from the incarnation and crucifixion, resurrection and second coming of the Lord to put forward his thesis that mission implies discipleship of Jesus in his incarnation and salvation. In this sense mission is moulded by the fact that Jesus served as the example of the way in which the people of God should act.

Bosch (1991:512) clarifies his wide scope of mission as follows:

We do need a more radical and comprehensive hermeneutic of mission. In attempting to do this we may perhaps move close to viewing everything as mission, but this is a risk we will have to take. Mission is a multifaceted ministry, in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualization, and much more.

He even admits that listing the dimensions of mission is fraught with danger, because it constitutes an attempt to define what cannot be defined (1991:512), and that therefore one should be careful not to try to “incarcerate the *missio Dei* in the narrow confines of our own predilections” (1991:512). His view of the church and theology of mission uses so wide a scope that he regards the church in its mission as trying to state what justice, liberation and peace in the broad sense of word really are.

In this work Bosch also discusses the role and task of the church in the world, including both Roman Catholic and Protestant views. He mentions (1991:377) that Roman Catholic theology distinguishes between church and kingdom. It is not clear whether he accepts this viewpoint himself. His notion is that the church should be the church with others that it encounters. Church and kingdom are both important aspects of God’s rule. The new paradigm leads to tension between two views of the church (1991:381). On the one hand the church sees itself as the sole bearer of the good news in the world. On the other hand it is regarded as part of the illustration of God’s involvement in the world (1991:381). Bosch’s contention is that the two views are not mutually exclusive (1991:281). According to him (1991:384) mission is overtaxed in the new definition of humanization: “There is, thus, a legitimate concern for the inalienable identity of the church and there should not be any premature amalgamation and confusion between it and the world” (1991:386). The church is not yet the reign of God but it anticipates this reign in history (1991:388).

Thus Bosch keeps to the distinction between church and kingdom. However, he sees a very comprehensive task for the church and therefore for mission. Mission, in his view, becomes all-inclusive. The task of the church therefore covers a very broad spectrum and the church is expected to be relevant for all issues. In this sense church and kingdom become one.

Very important aspects which are discussed by Bosch are inculturation and contextualization. Bosch (1991:420-432 and 447-457) states that the gospel relates to a specific situation and culture. In this situation and culture the comprehensive aspect of the message of liberation needs to be heard. Although he clearly emphasises the very important aspects of respect for culture and the realisation of the meaning of contextualization, he tends to lean towards the premises of liberation theology. The way in which the gospel is brought to people must therefore be seen against the background of liberation. Bosch carefully steers away from a one-sided approach, but nevertheless he is of the opinion that liberation is the way in which God's salvation surfaces in inculturation and contextualization. Nothing is more important than comprehensive salvation (Bosch 1991:399). He expresses this idea in strong terms:

We stand in need of an interpretation of salvation which operates within a *comprehensive* christological framework, which makes the *totus Christus* – his incarnation, earthly life, death, resurrection and parousia – indispensable for church and theology. All these christological elements taken together constitute the praxis of Jesus, the One who both inaugurated salvation and provided us with a model to emulate.

Salvation must therefore be seen in a total light. Salvation is “comprehensive” “total” and “universal” (Bosch, 1991:399). He sees the role of the church as a comprehensive role to change the situation in which people are exploited and undermined to a situation in which they can experience true life with and of Christ. Bosch continues: “The integral character of salvation demands that the scope of the church's mission be more comprehensive than has traditionally been the case. Salvation is as coherent, broad and deep as the needs and exigencies of human existence.” However, it is not clear from Bosch's use of the term that he specifically emphasises redemption from sin in Jesus Christ as *focus of salvation*. That is the issue that needs to be addressed.

### **3. The use of the theory of paradigms**

#### **3.1 The philosophy of paradigm switches**

The way in which Bosch approaches the whole theme calls for a more thorough discussion. The philosophy of paradigm changes is new, although it has already been used by Hans Küng to approach the history of the church. Bosch (1991:185) admits that the term “paradigm” is not without its problems and thus must be used carefully. He (1991:184) continues along this line of thought:

These two factors alone should suffice to make one cautious about the possibility of applying any of his ideas to theology. If I nevertheless invoke Kuhn in this context I do it because of the catalytic role he has played in recent years in the theory of scientific research, and I use his views only as

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a kind of working hypothesis. I believe that Kuhn has, in a sense, uncovered and made explicit what many knew implicitly.

(In line with the idea mentioned in the above quotation also see Kuhn, 1970:240-245; Masterman, 1970:65; Van der Walt, 1992:48; Van der Merwe, 1975:342; Van Huysteen, 1987:72-72.)

A danger exists that the theological development may be based on certain preconceived and wrongly postulated paradigms. The whole issue of scientific objectivity thus comes into play. According to Bosch (1991:186) himself, the matter is further complicated by the fact that a person may be committed to more than one paradigm at a given moment. Although it is possible to discern paradigm changes, it remains more difficult to build a theory for missiology on them.

Bosch (1991:186) also admits the existence of vast differences between the natural and social sciences. It must therefore be stressed that the theory of paradigm switches cannot address all the problems experienced by new world-views. In such cases science cannot cover up subjective choices. Paradigms reveal the determinants of science: they do not guarantee their truth *per se*. Bosch (1991:186) also admits the problem of this approach: "One of the criticisms against the theory is that there really are no ultimate norms or values." Thus paradigms do not pretend to have the final word.

Bosch describes ecumenical mission in clear terms, but it is also discernable that mission becomes more than what one would expect. He attempts to substantiate his view of the paradigm from the gospel and by way of the gospel. Never must a given paradigm shift be effected in opposition to the gospel (Bosch, 1991:187). Bosch discusses the view that if mission becomes all-inclusive it is no longer mission, but it becomes the whole spectrum of theology, and thus theology is disguised as mission. He, however, states that it is impossible to restrain mission because of the broadness of God's grace and the power of his reign. Mission must be recognised as the way in which the greatness of God's grace is proclaimed.

### **3.2 Post-modernism and Bosch's use of the concept**

It is clear, however, that Bosch relies on Kuhn for his own views concerning paradigms. This provides him with a new tool for discussing the importance of all-inclusive mission.

He deals with the problem that it is not yet clear that a new paradigm has been put forward, but he envisages the emergence of this new paradigm. It is exactly the Enlightenment itself which has to be challenged in seeking a new view of life.

Certain aspects become clear in the seeking of the new paradigm in post-modernism. Rationality is discussed. Bosch (1991:354) declares:

I am therefore not suggesting the abandoning of rationality. We need to take the best of modern science, philosophy, literary criticism, historical method, and social analysis, and 'constantly think through and rethink our theological understanding in the light of all'. We should, indeed, retain and defend the critical power of the Enlightenment, but we should reject its reductionism.

The subject-object scheme is also challenged. Nature and people may no longer be viewed as objects.

Such a new epistemology for mission means, also, that technology must be confronted with a reality outside itself which does not depend on its canons of rationality and which therefore will not be subservient to its deterministic power. This reality may be identified as the reign of God, which stands in polemical tension with the closed system of this world (1991:355).

The theological dimension is also rediscovered and a movement in the direction of eschatological thinking can be discerned.

The notions of repentance and conversion, of vision, of responsibility, of revision of earlier realities and positions, long submerged by the suffocation logic of rigid cause and effect thinking, have surfaced again and are inspiring people who have long lost all hope, ... at the same time giving a new relevance to Christian mission (1991:356).

Progressive thinking is also challenged. The danger inherent in even the liberation model is important. The radical distinction between facts and values is also no longer acceptable. "Since we now know that no so-called facts are really neutral or value free, and that the line that used to divide facts from values has worn thin, we stand much more exposed than we used to" (1991:361).

Optimism is also chastened. There is a movement in the direction of interdependence. In this time of testing mission should be newly understood: "We live in a period of transition, on the borderline between a paradigm that no longer satisfies as one that is, to a large extent, still amorphous and opaque" (1991:366).

Bosch wishes to take into account the future and the past, to reach out to the future but also look to the past.

This means that both the centrifugal and centripetal forces in the emerging paradigm – diversity versus unity, divergence versus integration, pluralism versus holism – will have to be taken into account throughout. A crucial note in this regard will be that of creative tension: It is only within the

force field of apparent opposites that we shall begin to approximate a way of theologizing for our own time in a meaningful way (1991:367).

#### **4. Towards criticism of *Transforming mission***

The first problem with Bosch's view is the very broad scope of his theory of mission. Mission becomes the vehicle of God's interest in the world. God is the God of justice, peace and reconciliation. Mission has the task to proclaim this God. But the important question that remains is the question what the scope of mission is. Should mission not be pinpointed to the essential aspects thereof?

##### **4.1 Bosch's view of mission: critical reactions**

Haak (1992c:207) differs from Bosch's interpretation of the proclamation at Nazareth in Luke 4. According to him, Jesus declared that He was the Messiah and was for this reason not accepted. Bosch states that He was rejected because He omitted the declaration of judgement. According to Haak, this means that God's wrath is turned away and that mission no longer (according to Bosch) means that people should be saved from His wrath but that general peace and goodwill should be proclaimed in this world (1992c:207). It is, however, open to discussion whether Bosch by his exegesis of Luke totally omits the continued wrath of God against sin or that the wrath is turned away in Christ Jesus. Haak (1992c:207) also differs from Bosch on the inclusion of social aspects on the basis of the exegesis of Luke.

Haak (1992b:188) continues to discuss Bosch's use of Scripture and shows that Bosch tends to delete the important way of salvation, atonement and reconciliation through the cross. He even accuses Bosch of postulating his own view of Jesus (1992b:188). Concerning the poor, Haak (1992c:206) issues a strong warning against Bosch's interpretation of the poor and the heathen. He is of the opinion that even the poor are in need of reconciliation in Christ and that salvation is for both rich and poor.

In his discussion of the liberation of the poor, Saayman (1992:40), however, voices the opinion that the Bible clearly teaches the liberation of the poor and that the liberation of the poor is essential for the spreading of the good news – also to the rich.

Haak (1992d:226) is of the opinion that Bosch uses the wrong starting point in his exegesis and is thus misled into proclaiming a gospel that does not accord with the essence of Scripture. He states that the use of higher criticism misled Bosch. Haak also states that Bosch omitted very important aspects of mission, namely the conversion of the heathen and the planting of the church (Haak, 1992a:167).

Although Haak's points of criticism are important, one cannot agree with them without certain reservations. The fact that Bosch stresses the grace of God and his goodwill to all does not necessarily imply that he totally disregards the wrath of God. It is clear that Bosch does not reject the idea of sin and salvation. In his discussion of evangelism he does not exclude salvation and the need for salvation. However, his broad scope of mission must be discussed. Yung (1992:322) discusses the problem and then shows that Bosch is eclectic in his approach. According to him, Bosch omitted crucial elements in his proposal such as apologetics, power clashes, being in the midst of suffering and persecution, and people's movements. He states: "For unless some criteria exist then there is nothing to stop everything from becoming mission" (Yung, 1992:323)! It seems to me that this criticism is sound. Bosch's very broad view of mission makes it difficult to pinpoint the distinguishable aspects thereof.

#### **4.2 Church and kingdom**

There is no question about the kingdom of God being all-inclusive, but the problem remains that the church is not the kingdom (admitted by Bosch) and cannot claim to be in control of such a wide spectrum. Thus, according to the reformed (in the tradition of Dooyeweerd) point of view the church proclaims the new life in Christ and expects the citizens of the kingdom to apply the Bible to the different walks of life. The church as institution is called to proclaim God's plan of salvation. Van der Walt (1994:452) states that one must distinguish carefully between church and kingdom. The church proclaims the kingdom of God in the world to everybody. The church is there for the sake of the kingdom (1994:452) and the church is a sign of the kingdom (1994:452). Crucial to this concept is that the church, as it manifests itself in its offices, administration of the sacraments and preaching of the gospel, does not take over or encompass the total life of the believer (1994:454). According to Van der Walt (1994:454) the church should fulfil its responsibility in accordance with its own nature. He (1994:454) continues:

The task of the church does not lie in the design of all sorts of sociological blueprints or programmes. Should this happen, it would mean that the church was trespassing. In such a case there is the very real danger that salvation is identified with political and social liberation from poverty, exploitation and oppression.

It seems to me that the distinction between church and kingdom is very important and should be acknowledged. One should acknowledge that the kingdom is coming and that the justice and peace of the kingdom should be proclaimed. It must, however, be emphasized clearly that the proclamation of the kingdom is the task of the citizens of God's kingdom and not of mission as such. The church through its mission should not be misled to try doing what it is not called for. The



church through its mission cannot be a political force and cannot work out political blueprints. The church should proclaim God's reign and the justice of this reign but should never try to represent the kingdom itself.

### **4.3 Paradigm changes and mission**

With regard to the issue of paradigm changes another point of view is important. According to Spindler (1992:107), Bosch leaves us in the lurch by arguing that the Biblical mission paradigms are also open to change, thereby abandoning the Protestants' only legitimate focus, namely Scripture. Mission must always be seen in the light of the Word. Mission must be defined by the Word. If the authority of the Word itself is open to debate mission itself becomes doubtful.

Pillay (1990:117) also criticizes Bosch's use of paradigms:

This dimension of Kuhn's theory – the pattern of the revolutionary replacement of one paradigm by another, the competition of paradigms and the nature of one paradigm's triumph over others, the crises of the pre-paradigm stage that give rise to a new 'normal science' – which for the historian is crucial – understandably does not take pride of place in the schemes of either Küng or Bosch, who, having ascertained the six macro-paradigms, work out with great incisiveness the distinct tradition that each has fostered in theological history (Küng) and in mission history (Bosch).

In this respect Pillay (1990:121) states:

Assuming, then, that history is not cumulative and that its progress is evolutionary (though this does not imply that human society does not constantly grow in self-awareness) and that the history of ideas can be described in terms of paradigms, it must also be allowed that these paradigms or frames of reference will differ according to the perspective through which one views that history.

This view that paradigms could differ as a result of different views of history needs more clarification. Although the philosophy of paradigm changes is important for distinguishing certain important epochs in history, this distinction is made from a certain perspective. This is exactly what happens to Bosch. He has to rely on a certain perspective which is also open to criticism. Maybe Pillay does not realise clearly enough that Bosch uses the paradigm theory to come to conclusions concerning periods of transition in history, but one must agree that Bosch uses the tool too uncritically in his view of history and the emergence of a new paradigm.

There can be no doubt that paradigm changes do occur. The importance of the new emerging ecumenical paradigm must also be acknowledged. This fact also has an effect on the way in which mission is seen. Bosch developed the idea of

mission in a very broad way. The wide scope of mission itself may, however, lead to the abandonment of mission itself. If missions must also be seen as God's total involvement on earth the scope for the kingdom diminishes and the church with its mission becomes all-encompassing. It seems as if Bosch tries to wed liberation theology and reformed theology, but the problem is that this approach leads to the abandonment of reconciliation as the substitution of Christ for the sinner as central focus of mission. Bosch (1991:442) states:

Liberation theology has helped the church to rediscover its ancient faith in Yahweh, whose outstanding qualification – which made him the Wholly Other – was found on his involvement in history as the God of the righteousness and justice who championed the cause of the weak and the oppressed (cf Deut. 4:32, 34f; Ps. 82). (Also see Bosch, 1991:443-447.)

#### **4.4 Bosch's use of post-modernism as a basis for science**

Concerning post-modernism certain questions must be asked. Although post-modernism contains much that should be appreciated – aspects such as its questioning of rationalism, its ideological criticisms, its humbleness with regard to the forming of new theories, its denial that we are divine, from a Christian point of view one is forced to ask whether these perceptions and points of departure have been grounded on the Bible and a biblical life- and worldview, in which God, as Creator, is also acknowledged as Lord of our thoughts and the way we think.

Westphal (1995:119) states that we should not demonize post-modernism, but warns against its lack of acknowledging its atheism:

But Derrida does not speak this way. He does not so much argue for the unreality of God as assume it, so when he shows that *we are* not the Alpha and Omega he talks as if he has shown that *there is* no Alpha and Omega. This is a *non sequitur*, and my primary criticism of Derrida is that he regularly falls into it. My complaint is not that he assumes atheism, but that he forgets that he has done so.

Cuthbertson (1992:80) is highly critical of Bosch's overview of the Enlightenment and its influence on Christian mission. Bosch, however, contends that the new way in which rationality is evaluated, leaves scope for science and religion to reach out to each other in a new way. This approach is in accordance with the new way in which he believes mission should be seen.

Regarding the above point of view, the question which should be asked is whether we are not handed over to relativism in post-modern philosophy without clear goals being set as to how we should practise science. The background of

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science and philosophy should be investigated more critically in the light of a few central biblical guidelines. Reaching out to science as such is not enough.

## **5. Mission as the ministry of reconciliation**

### **5.1 Views on mission**

Bosch's view of mission is not presented in a void. Different voices can be heard; therefore it is essential to listen to some of these other voices, as various views of mission exist. From a Reformed point of view, J.H. Bavinck's (1977:58) definition is important for this discussion: "Mission is the great work of Jesus Christ through which, after his completed work as mediator, He draws all peoples to his salvation and makes to partake of the gifts which he has obtained for them." This definition of mission clearly indicates the definite emphasis in the reformed view of mission in accordance with its general approach of the relation between faith and science and church and world.

According to Anastasios of Androussa (1978:364), however, a development in a different direction occurred in the World Council of Churches: "The increased sensitivity to social duties and concern with the agenda of the world which marked the Mexico talk, ultimately contributed to a quiet shift in the anthropocentric direction."

Kim Yong-Bock (1991:171) defines the salvation of God in no uncertain terms: "God's election has been misunderstood as exclusive. God's special favour is not exclusive, but rather inclusive of the poor, the gentile and the enslaved, the alienated and yes, all the suffering and struggling people. This is the nature of God's special favour." He continues: "The perennial problem of mission has been the separation of the individual from the community and networks of participation and solidarity" (1991:175).

Mortimar Arias (1991:414) goes even further by stating that the neighbour becomes the sacrament of Christ. The proclaiming of a holistic gospel also leaps to the eye. Julio de Santa Ana (1990:444) interprets mission in the sense that God's mission for all intents and purposes implies the conversion to the life style of Jesus in service of liberation.

Crafford (1989:4 e.v.) criticises the San Antonio meeting of the WCC on the grounds that according to the views expressed there evangelism loses its meaning, and mission becomes social upliftment. Consequently there are two definite ways in which mission is regarded. The Reformed view is linked to the way in which evangelicals see mission, but then again it extends beyond that. Bosch tries to satisfy both definitions and to bring together different views in one theory.

Other writers also defend a view of mission that includes many dimensions. J. de Preez (1985:1) proposes the possibility of a ten-dimensional approach to mission. In this regard Bosch thus does not stand alone, but the criticism against this approach remains vital.

## **5.2 Mission and reconciliation**

From the perspective of Reformed philosophy (as developed by D.F.M. Strauss and B.J. van der Walt) which acknowledges God's guidance for our thoughts and which consequently proceeds from the central viewpoint of creation, sin and redemption, mission in my view centres in the vicarious death of Christ, and the *Missio Dei* must therefore proclaim the great deeds of God in his vicarious reconciliation. This point of departure would of course include the political and social spheres as Christian concerns, but distinguished from mission as such. Furthermore, these spheres would be included in such a way that Christ's death of atonement is acknowledged in both mission and the spheres outside of this.

What then does the concept of substitution mean and how should the vicarious death of Christ be seen in the ministry of reconciliation?

The gist of the discussion by Breytenbach (1990:64-68) lies in the different views expressed concerning the ministry of reconciliation. Breytenbach concentrates on the aspect of representation. He is very clear on the meaning of reconciliation which he describes as the way in which enmity, especially between Kings and cities and nations, is resolved. He dismisses any possibility that reconciliation has something to do with *kpr* in the Old Testament, namely atonement.

Of course, God's reconciliation brings about a complete change. God himself creates man anew. He justifies the ungodly (Rm 4:5; cf. 5:8). He reconciles his enemies to himself (Rm 5:10). Neither is a human being agent of this change, nor is a person's conversion precondition for the justification or reconciliation (Breytenbach, 1990:67).

Yet the way in which the reconciliation is effected remains a point of discussion. Is Christ our substitute before God or does He represent us before God to bring about the new situation?

In my view the ministry of reconciliation centres in the fact that Christ is the substitute before God; that He was made the object of sin in our place so that we might be saved. The main issue is whether the ministry of reconciliation implies the substitution of Christ in his vicarious death on the cross.

Du Rand (1983:22) underlines the structure of the pericope (2 Cor. 5:11-21). According to him a chiastic structure is clear in this passage. The deed of reconciliation and the ministry of reconciliation are represented in a in chiastic

structure and therefore the deed and the ministry go together. In a structural analysis of the passage it is clear that substitution is the centre of the pericope (Verster, 1989:14). The substitution in the death of Christ can clearly be seen in the whole theme. If one looks at the main aspects in the analysis it is clear that four aspects are eminent, namely apostolic power, one dying for others, new creation and the ministry of reconciliation.

The core of the passage is therefore that Christ acts vicariously in this death (Rissi, 1969:71; Delling, 1972:24; Du Rand, 1983:26).

This idea is borne out by the following:

- Christ presents Himself for others, the one who gave his life for those who would be saved and brought to Him.
- Christ is the one who put himself in the place of others and saved them by way of his substitution.
- In this way Christ represents righteousness before God, the one who brought about a new relationship between us and the living God.
- Presenting Himself for others, He also saves us from the depths of destruction and brings us before God to be saved. He is called the Saviour who brought us his peace.
- These views do not exclude the fact that the incarnation is essential in the Bible as the way in which God effected salvation. The incarnation must, however, always be seen as the way in which God brought about the ministry of reconciliation.

More emphasis on these aspects would bring about that mission would be seen as the proclamation of the ministry of reconciliation. In this respect Bosch tends to bring about a new way of thinking on the ministry of reconciliation. In criticizing Bosch's view one must keep in mind that evangelism is very important to him, but not in the same sense as in the ministry of reconciliation as described in 2 Corinthians 5.

Bosch (1994:40-57, 75-92) discussed this pericope in his book *A spirituality of the road*. He emphasised the aspect of the ambassador that has to be prepared for his mission. In this sense the ambassador is the one who brings the message of salvation. Christ is the missionary's example of humble submission. This aspect is so important and there can be no doubt that Bosch does emphasise salvation, redemption and a new life with Christ. The vicarious death of Christ in his substitution does not, however, become the *central focus* of mission.

However, the social aspects are not to be excluded and the question remains how the social aspects can be introduced into mission. In Reformed philosophy a distinction is made between the church as body of Christ and the kingdom of God over which Christ rules. The solution lies in the fact that the regeneration of society is the task of citizens of the kingdom in their capacity as citizens of the kingdom (Van der Walt, 1994:452) and not of mission as such. Mission is the primary task of the church, but the deed of social regeneration must be brought about by the citizens of the kingdom in obedience to the Lord of the kingdom. Van der Walt (1994:452) writes: "The Church is the recruiting office, the mobilisation field, the preparation centre for the training of the warriors of God, who have to fight for the good at all the frontiers of the world." There is thus a very narrow but important difference between the task of mission and that of the citizens of the kingdom. Mission does not reach out to all aspects of society as their own sovereignty is not the same as that of the church. The church introduces the holiness of God and calls for the acknowledgement of His rule over all aspects of society, but it is not the task of mission as the primary calling of the church to claim all sovereign aspects for herself. Mission is like an arrow bearing reconciliation. It has a sharp edge, the ministry of reconciliation.

## 6. Conclusion

*Transforming mission* is such an important work that justice cannot be done to it in a few critical remarks. The importance of this work must not be underestimated. Bosch's very broad view of mission makes it very difficult to pinpoint facets in respect of which he omits important references from Scripture. It is, however, precisely this wide scope that leaves room for the possibility of criticism.

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