

THE VOCATION OF MAN AND THE

GREAT COMMISSION

A Theological Dissertation
based on the
Doctrine of Reconciliation
in
Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics

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ABSTRACTIntroduction and Outline of Method

The purpose of this thesis is to establish a theological basis for an ecclesiology which takes account of the claim which the Lordship of Jesus Christ asserts over his appointed servants and the appropriate response from the Christian community corporately and from the members of the community individually. The interpretation and application of Christian discipleship by liturgical acts of the community in which the individual members participate and are prepared, trained and nourished for the purpose of equipping them for their corporate and individual task of witness is based on the promise and command of Jesus Christ recorded in Acts 1:8.

The theological interpretation of the key concepts of the promise of power in the Holy Spirit and the commission to witness in the world is based on the theology of Karl Barth.

Chapter I outlines the immediate context of the doctrine of vocation and the sending of the Christian community and the wider context of the doctrine of reconciliation and its place in the whole of theology.

Chapters II and III enlarge on the vocation of man and the sending of the Christian community in the power of the Holy Spirit as the two parts of the doctrine of reconciliation which have particular relevance for our interpretation of the great commission.

Chapter IV is devoted to an hypothesis of a special ethic based on Barth's unfinished work and Appendix A to methodological outline.

Appendix B considers the practicality of this hypothesis in the light of two contemporary ecumenical interpretations and applications of the great commission.

A concluding critique recognises the problems of the hypothesis and the inevitable problems that arise from any attempt to formulate a system or to define in precise categories the unique event of God's free and gracious love poured out and given to us in his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

I Karl Barth's Doctrine of Reconciliation and its place.

The doctrine of reconciliation is the heart of all theology for it speaks of the κίνησις of God the loving father reaching out to his lost creature, coming himself to stand where we should stand and taking our sin and condemnation on himself and carrying them away by dying for us and in our place. He effects our reconciliation with God by being Emmanuel, God-with-us, in Jesus Christ, the reconciling God who is at the same time THE reconciled man. In the death and resurrection of Jesus is accomplished once and for all the atonement on behalf of all mankind. The resurrected Jesus, in the unity of reconciling God and reconciled man, ever lives in the glory of the Mediator, who has restored the broken covenant between God and man and continues his work in the world, through his Holy Spirit at work in those who hear and obey his call, witnessing to the truth that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. It is always the self-witness of Christ and never a human witness that speaks through the witness of the community and the individual Christian in community in acts of worship and acts of witness both in the community and in the world. It is Christ who is the basis, the meaning and the eschatological goal of all theology, the alpha and omega, author and finisher of our faith and the sole source of knowledge of the truth of God. He is the electing God who predestined himself to be THE elected man called to effect the atonement and fulfil his own eternal purpose for his creation.

Barth followed the Reformers on justification and sanctification and added to them the doctrine of vocation as the dialectical unity of the two. The priestly and kingly work of Christ are drawn together and conceived as a unity in the prophetic work which looks to the τέλος already fulfilled in Christ. On the basis of an internal dialectic of three dynamic movements of God coming down to man in humility, man exalted as Lord and the God-man reaching out into the farthest corner of the earth as true witness and guarantor of the atonement, the superstructure of the doctrine of reconciliation is formulated in a threefold dialectical paradigm in which I set out the four overlapping doctrines of Christology, sin, soteriology and pneumatology in all their phases as parts of the doctrine of reconciliation. The doctrine of pneumatology is sub-divided into ecclesiology and the life of the individual in the community. This looks forward to chapter IV in which I include a proposed continuation of the paradigm, setting out a third section of pneumatology, the liturgical acts of the Christian in community, which lead conclusively to the controlling principle of Christian ethics, viz. the concept of the Christian as the witness of Christ.

The survey of the doctrine of reconciliation is supplemented by a reference to its place in the whole of Barth's theological thinking. It is a climax and crown, the Gospel in nuce, throwing light on his whole Christological method. Christ is at the very beginning of all Barth's work, whether it be part of his system of dogmatics or a smaller independent work. He makes a radical departure from older theology by introducing the doctrine of election as the Christological basis for the doctrine of God. Our knowledge of the humanity of God can only be derived from our knowledge of his deity. A correct understanding of Christ as the subject and object of election is crucial for this knowledge of both the deity and humanity of God. There is a unitary thread which runs through the whole of Barth's theology - it is Christ at every point as the sole source and criterion for all theology.

II The Vocation of Man

The primary thing about the calling of man to follow Christ is that it comes from Jesus Christ as a creative call to follow the way he has already trod as representative man on our behalf and because he has trod it he has made the crooked places straight. He is the light of life attested by the Gospel of John and the darkness was unable to extinguish the light which still shines to lighten our way. This means for those who follow him that they do not have to endure what he has endured because he has endured the Cross once and for all and overcome the power of evil. He accomplished the reconciliation to God for all mankind by coming as the man he himself elected in eternity to take the judgment of the world upon himself. Sinful man can only be elected and reconciled to God on the basis of his election and the reconciliation accomplished in himself as representative man. The Christological basis is the connective link that runs right through Barth's theology. At this crucial point Calvin divorced predestination from Christology and from the vocation of man, leaving us with a hidden absolute decree of God made in eternity which controlled the destinies of all men, some for redemption, and some for damnation and which is irreconcilable with what we know about God through his self-reconciliation in Christ. By setting the doctrine of election at the heart of his Christology, Barth has overcome this difficulty and also avoided the consequences of Calvin's doctrine of predestination by which Christ was interpreted, by some theologians at least, as being merely the means God had to employ to carry out the absolute decree and counter the waywardness of man.

The existence of the Christian is grounded in his vocation which is based on the election of Christ and it looks forward in hope to the eschatological fulfilment in all creation of what has

been fulfilled in Christ but is not yet fully revealed. Christian existence carries with it a responsibility to be open to all men, understanding non-Christians in the responsibility of the vocation of Christians to be witnesses to Christ in the power with which he equips them.

Sin threatens Christian existence in a threefold way. The pride of man stands in opposition to the light of life which comes to man in encounter with Christ. The sloth of man hinders his appropriation of the love of Christ in sanctifying grace. Both these forms of sin are overcome in the gathering and quickening power of the Holy Spirit and then a deeper more subtle sin appears in a third dimension, denying the prophetic work of Christ which he is executing in this interim period between his first and second coming. This is the sin of falsehood against the Holy Spirit, which denies both the justification and sanctification already effected and thus hinders the effective appropriation by the Christian of the creative call of Christ which comes to him in his new standing as witness. Sinful man thus continues in a state of guilt-consciousness which characterises his religiosity and he continually tries new ways of approaching God, trying in a number of ways to storm heaven, scorning the more simple way of following Christ, which is an offence to his intellectualism. Only when by grace he believes and appropriates the true witness, by which Christ affirms in the enlightening power of his Holy Spirit that he has justified and sanctified the man thus condemned of falsehood, when he ceases to seek a logical answer and the stumbling-block to his faith is removed, does he enter into a peaceful relationship in communion with Christ.

It is in this perfect fellowship, "the peace in which we now stand through faith" that we are nurtured by Christ and fed on the "bread of life" as a preparation for our being sent out in the enlightening power of his Holy Spirit to witness to what God has done in Christ for the world. It is not in our power that we go but in his power mediated to us through his Spirit at work within us and it is not a human witness that we take but Christ himself who witnesses through us and who accomplishes his prophetic work in this way. The work of the Holy Spirit and the work of Jesus cannot be separated. It is one work and one power. This power is the power promised by Jesus in Acts 1:8. It is the power that calls the Christian into existence as a Christian, a creative call which appoints the Christian to be a witness to Christ in all the earth. The miracle of conversion is that it gives the Christian the freedom to be a child of God if he abides in Christ in this fellowship which the Reformers described as unio cum Christo. The power at work within the Christian in this fellowship with Christ which includes a knowledge of the real presence of Jesus in his risen

glory, is the power which overcomes falsehood and reveals the truth in its place. The existence of the Christian is itself the witness; if he denies his calling, he forfeits his existence and ceases to be a witness. Only by constant repentance and renewal is he enabled to execute his vocation. The essential element in our calling is that in the interim period Christ works with our help for both us and the world. In this way we are graciously included in his covenantal purpose. During his life and in his death he worked perfectly without us for us and for the world and will work in the same way at his second coming when he perfects all things, without our help but for us and the world. It is not primarily for the sake of our individual blessedness that we receive salvation through Christ. The primary purpose is to involve us in his missionary work and the actualising of the atonement in each individual as he becomes a Christian is not to be isolated from the whole purpose of God for his creation. This involves every Christian in community. He cannot be a Christian in isolation for then he evades his witness and escapes the affliction that will oppose itself to his witness in the world. The Christian can only meet this affliction and avoid anxiety in the face of its threat if he clings to his certain hope in Christ as the τέλος to which he is moving, in spite of all that threatens his spiritual pilgrimage. The opposition and affliction is a sign that his witness is effective and true and that Christ is using it to challenge his hearers. If they refuse to believe his witness he can only continue as an ostracised outcast. He cannot command power over the Holy Spirit in an effort to effect the conversion of his hearers. He can do no more than witness. That is his task, his mission to which he is called by Christ and for which he is liberated by his conversion, set free to become a child of God.

III The Holy Spirit and the Sending of the Christian Community

This chapter seeks to answer four crucial questions concerning the sending of the Christian community in the power of the Holy Spirit into the world as witnesses. The questions concern:

- 1 The nature of the world and the existence of the community in it.
- 2 The way in which the community is FOR the world.
- 3 The task of the community
- 4 The ministry of the community.

These questions are dealt with under the four sub-sections which Barth makes in this paragraph which has the same heading as the one I have taken for this chapter. This chapter follows Barth in that paragraph more closely than elsewhere as this exposition of his theology is to form the basis for the next chapter on the special ethics of the vocation of man.

1 The People of God in World Occurrence

World history is the sphere in which the people of God have to exist in community in a form which is manifest to itself in Jesus Christ from whom it derives its existence and new reality. Apart from its own knowledge of Jesus Christ in whom it exists the reality of history is still concealed from it as it is from other men. What it sees as world history corresponds to but also contradicts its new reality in that there is still a great gulf between the providence of God and the confusion of man. Only the community knows that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself". and that Christ has removed human confusion and restored order in his world; that he is the meaning and reality of all history; and that, nevertheless, there is still time and still history because the world and the community gathered by the Holy Spirit in the world is not the end or goal of God's work.

The vocation of man and his existence as a Christian can not be separated. Together they constitute him as a member of the Christian community as Christ unites individuals not only with himself but with each other. They are united in his work, not theirs. The foundation of the Christian community cannot be taken exclusively from any one text but the whole of the gospel narrative is the story of Jesus and the founding of his community which he still continues to maintain in the power of his Holy Spirit as the earthly-historical form of his existence.

The first of three questions considered is what takes place in the historical environment of the community in world-occurrence. The individual Christian is not taken out of the world by virtue of his existence as a Christian but he continues to live in the world as a new creature with a new meaning, basis and goal for his life. He is in the world because Christ is in the world and precedes him, empowering him to live as a living witness to Christ. When he does this faithfully Christ continues his work of salvation in the world operating through the work and witness of the Christian empowered as his human witness. The Christian knows that God is Lord and that what takes place outside his will is not outside his control. Hostility to God's will can only be das Nichtige. It takes place on the left hand of God when man, rejecting God and left to his own devices, heads towards his own destruction. Das Nichtige must not be conceived of as a Hegelian antithesis nor as a dualistic principle. The two elements of God's good creation and das Nichtige which aims at negating the good, do tend to be confused by man so that often man gives to das Nichtige a positive power which it does not really possess. It is men who confuse (confusio hominum) and God in Christ unravels the confusion. The confusion is error and leads to sin but it is not the work of

the devil for even Christians in their human ignorance contribute to the confusion. But das Nichtige which gets confused with providentia Dei is the work of the devil which the community knows has been overcome once and for all in Christ.

World history takes place in this strange co-operation of God and man and the Christian community understands itself in this way in the light of the prophetic witness with which it is entrusted and in the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit. The community sees the same things that those outside the community see in world history but it sees them differently and therefore cannot fear or hate but can only love. In this way it affirms and is a witness to the atonement made in Christ and will do or refrain from doing certain things proportionate to its life in Christ. But what it does is never more than relative to what Christ does. It is Christ's own work which is decisive in the work of reconciling the world to God. The community will erect signs of the atonement which will influence world history.

The second question concerns the way in which the community understands its existence in world-occurrence. It is always both visible and invisible. Its invisibility consists in the reality of its existence as the community of the people who have found their existence in Christ and have recognised their election based on his election and consequently also their vocation. The community is in danger when, involved in his work in the world, she compromises her existence as his pilgrim people and slips into static institutionalism. The visible nature of the community must not be static because it lies in the event of the calling to activity in which the invisible, the hiddenness of the Christ-relationship, is always becoming visible to the world as more and more are added to the community by the work of the Holy Spirit. The community is both visible and invisible in that it lives visibly in concrete form in the world as his community and at the same time has as its basis its unio cum Christo which is only visible to those who partake together of the fellowship and not visible to those outside the fellowship amongst whom the community is thrust by the Holy Spirit as Christ's living witness.

The third question, concerning how the community lives within the environment of the world as his community, has its answer in the secret of the invisible existence which it has in Jesus Christ and in which he maintains it.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring together and guarantee and maintain the unity which the community both corporately and as individuals enjoy with Christ and with one another thus holding together the divine and human work and action in the sending of the community in the world as Christ's witnesses. (Acts 1:8)

2 The Community for the World

Here Barth makes another radical departure from tradition which classically defined the church as the elect community, gathered, protected and preserved by Jesus Christ through his Spirit and Word in the unity of faith to eternal life. (Heidelberg Catechism). He agrees with the reformed doctrine of ecclesiology as far as it goes but it does not go far enough, so he questions the claim that the church can be an end in itself. He builds on Calvin's rediscovery of the prophetic office of Christ, as we have already seen in the doctrine of reconciliation proper. Scripture decisively describes the community as representing Christ in the world in his ongoing reconciling work, sent into the world as Christ was sent by the Father, directed to exist for it and being not 'of' but 'in the world'.

The true community is the fellowship in which it is given to men to know the world as it is, the society in which it is given to men to know and practise their solidarity with the world and the society in which it is given to men to be under obligation to the world.

That the community exists for the world in this way does not arise from humanism but it is a sign of the freedom of the community to exist for the world in this way and we cannot equate the fulfilment of the promise with the existence of the community. God is not bound to unite men with himself; he does so in divine freedom; it is not given to all men to exist for the world in this way for they do so in freedom as they respond to his call; only some men respond in this way as the promise is not fulfilled contemporaneously and equally in all men. It is a statement of faith that the community exists for the world, based on the origin and continuation of the community through the operation of the definite power of the Holy Spirit, its confession that Jesus is the Christ being no more than a grateful response to the fact that Jesus Christ first confessed the community as his people and continues to do so, appointing the community to be his witness in being itself a likeness, a provisional representation of the divine-human reality which is distinct from itself, which it denotes and portrays as this likeness. The community is not identical with the reality of Jesus Christ but only his appointed earthly-historical form of existence, constituted and maintained in the power of his Spirit but still subject to human confusion. It exists as the provisional representation of the calling of all humanity and all creation to the service of God in his kingdom which has come and will come in fullness in him. The community which follows his call also precedes his universal call and has to make it known in the world for whom it exists that the Lord is God and his voice must be heard in the earth.

3 The Task of the Community

The task of the community has a definite content - Jesus Christ who is the origin and content of the knowledge which binds the community together is also the origin and content of their task which is to confess him. Acts 1:8 confirms that the community is set in the world to attest him and it has to manifest and confirm the Christian position which includes God's Yes to his creation in Christ and also his No to all sin and rejection of himself which is also said in Christ who has put right man's alienation from God.

The specific people to whom it is the task of the community to address the Gospel are those who do not yet know Jesus Christ. They have to be addressed not as sinners but as men loved and reconciled to God by God in Christ; they will only know and recognise their sin in the light of the true witness in the encounter which comes to them not in the human witness but in the Holy Spirit who makes Christ known to them in the witness of the community. If the man to whom it is addressed refuses to hear the community it has to overlook its attitude and ignorance as God does when he encounters man in Christ. He can only be dealt with on two levels, the one which recognises his desperate need of the Gospel and the other level in which he is known to be the man whom God is drawing unto himself. His future is breaking in to his present and he cannot be given up for God does not give him up.

The task which comes to the community in all its purity from the Lord is threatened by virtue of the fact that it comes into the hands of men liable to creaturely limitations and sinful fallibility. It is subject to distortion and falsification due to the failure to see that the Gospel is always the living Word of the living Lord and also due to the failure to see that it is always the constant Word of its one Lord and must not be perverted into "another gospel".

The community's task is in danger both when it fails to rise up and follow him and when it does rise but follows its own autonomous will and not his call to obedience. It is in danger when it decides that it will be better off without some men and fails to address them with its message and also when it confuses its ministry with attempts to secure success to its own advantage.

The community should evaluate its task in the light of the general statements that the world would be lost without Jesus Christ and his Word but would not necessarily be lost without the church and the church would be lost if it had no counterpart in the world.

4 The Ministry of the Community

The ministry of the community is very definite, being the task committed to it by its commissioning to be Christ's witnesses in the world in the promised power of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8)

It is subject to human limitations deriving from the fact that the ministry executed in the power of the Holy Spirit is, nevertheless, a human work. It is limited as a human work by the active subordination of the members of the community to God who is the Subject of the work of ministry, making it a divine-human work when properly carried out. The criterion for ministry is always that it must be service to both God and man; it cannot be service to God to the exclusion of man, nor service to man to the exclusion of God.

No more is demanded in the ministry of the community than that it be a service of witness. This means that in all that it thinks, says and does, the community not merely witnesses by spoken or written words of preaching, proclamation, exposition and address, but is itself a living witness to its living Lord manifested by its very existence as a Christian community and in the life it lives in the world, which can only be a life of witness or the community forfeits its existence as the people of God.

In the ministry of the community the promise of the enabling power of the Holy Spirit is fulfilled as the members of the community are gathered together, quickened and enlightened in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ in faith, love and hope. The witness consists in it being made known to the world that this community lives and moves and has its being by faith in its reconciliation to God accomplished in Christ. Its existence witnesses to the second and continual coming of Jesus Christ which now takes place in his Spirit and points to his final coming fully revealed in glory.

The unity of the work of ministry lies in the baptismal command and the plurality of the ministry corresponds to the active life of Jesus himself in speech and action. Jesus in his life on earth spoke and healed the whole man and he continues to do this in this age through the ministry of his community, which in proclamation, explanation and address or application is always witness to him as Lord who continues his prophetic work as True Witness of the atonement.

The ministry takes various basic forms which together form the integral whole work of witness which is the διακονία of the community. They are: praise of God; preaching; teaching and instruction; evangelisation of the community by itself; mission to the world; theology; prayer; pastoral ministry; leadership and example; the diaconate; prophetic action; and the establishment of fellowship.

IV Ethics of the Doctrine of Reconciliation

This chapter is the last stage in the search for a theological basis on which to establish a Christian ethic, appropriate to the Christian community which can only exist under the Lordship of Christ and, therefore, can only exist insofar as it is faithful to the task to which he has commissioned it and to the extent that it appropriates and receives the promised power of his Spirit for the fulfilment of its mission.

On the basis of Barth's superstructure a hypothetical structure is outlined in the form of a paradigm which takes account of the dialectic of the doctrine of reconciliation. The paradigm considers, as part of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, of which ecclesiology is a sub-section, a further sub-section entitled: The appropriate liturgical acts of the Christian in community. Following Barth's method, ethics can never become an independent doctrine; man's response is always considered after the action of God for individual man and for the world. The actions of some men in response to grace are man's ethical response. These actions are the work of the community, not on their own behalf, but for God and the world, as a provisional representation which anticipates the parallel response by all creation when God's will and purpose for his world is eschatologically fulfilled.

The threefold work of grace, through faith, love and hope, evokes a threefold response from the community, corporately and individually, representing the beginning of the Christian life in baptism; its continually being made more perfect as it prays according to the way Jesus taught his disciples and in the way in which his indwelling Spirit directs it; and its movement towards its eschatological fulfilment as it receives its spiritual nourishment, essential for its life, at the Lord's table. In the world, and ever becoming visible to the world, the faith of the community is reflected in the faith of its members, its love in their witness to the truth and their hope in Christ is manifested in their patient forbearance and endurance to the end.

This is not really a hypothesis or philosophical presupposition but rather a statement of faith based on the indications of Barth's theology. Its positive purpose is to establish a guideline for practical Christian ethics.

The paradigm is read and explained dialectically, both vertically and horizontally,

Appendix A: Christian Love and the Lord's Prayer, and Christian Hope and the Lord's Supper.

This appendix explains the methodology by which the paradigm was formulated and clarifies the questions that arise. First, it explains how the Lord's Prayer finds its place in the doctrine of reconciliation as part of the second form of Christian ethics. Secondly, it explains how the concept of the Christian as witness, an integral part of the third form of the doctrine of reconciliation, becomes the controlling principle of the second form of Christian ethics. Thirdly, it discusses the third form of the Christian ethic which corresponds to the vocation of man in the doctrine of reconciliation and finally, it considers the way in which the Lord's Prayer becomes the guideline for practical aspects of Christian life.

This last section involves a brief exegesis, following Barth; emphasis is on the first person plural and the importance of the prayer as a communal prayer. The first three petitions invite the community to take up God's cause by making petitions on behalf of that cause. God does not demand that we take his work and make it ours but that we submit to his Lordship, praying that his name will be hallowed, his kingdom will come and his will be done. The community prays provisionally for what the whole world has need of for Christ's reconciling work to be universally effectual. In the last three petitions the community is also invited to ask God to actively participate in their own cause, making their cause his own. God answers in divine freedom which, because it is grace, has to be asked for and waited for but cannot be controlled by man. All of what the community prays for is united in the work of Jesus; always for God's glory and our salvation; never to satisfy personal desires and pietistic egoism. In praying, the community lays all things in God's hands and waits for the promised power and guidance of his Holy Spirit in the practical directions in which they live as Christians. The distinctiveness of the Lord's Prayer is that in it Jesus attaches himself to his disciples and they to him, in a personal relationship and fellowship.

The Lord's Prayer is action, not speech; it is an act of love, which responds and corresponds to the love of God for the world manifested in Jesus Christ. The Christian cannot love of his own accord, but, praying the prayer for others in love, he receives anew of the love of Christ which the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in Christian hearts and, through them, into the world. By virtue of their calling in Christ, Christians are sent in the power of his Spirit to love all men, witnessing by their words and actions, to the atonement already accomplished in Jesus Christ. They can only undertake their service of witness by constantly seeking his guidance, praying as he taught them.

APPENDIX B: Critique of two Contemporary Ecumenical Interpretations and Applications of the Great Commission

Is Barth relevant for practical theology and is the hypothesis of a special ethic a workable one? That question cannot be fully answered in the context of this thesis but two contemporary ecumenical statements are reviewed. The purpose of this critique is not so much to test these statements by the hypothesis as to test the practicality of the hypothesis.

I have looked for evidence of a well-balanced understanding of the controlling principles of total commitment through faith in Jesus Christ, bold and unflinching witness in the love of Jesus Christ and patient endurance in adversity in the hope in Jesus Christ.

The most important criterion is that love be seen in word and action as a witness to the reign of love in the world. The true community of Jesus Christ will do no more, and also no less, than speak and act the truth in love. The community can only do this as each individual and the community as a whole abides in prayer, taking the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer as the guidelines, not directly for action, but for prayer from which witness in action and spoken word will follow.

1

The S.A.C.C.: A Message to the People of S.A.

This is not a complete study and I preclude myself from making an evaluation of the S.A.C.C. and its work. The document is reviewed and tested as a practical exercise. On my criteria, it does not earn top marks. The doctrines of reconciliation and of sin and the Holy Spirit are given scant treatment. The document is in the nature of an apologetic and there is a clear polarisation. The most shaky aspect is the implication that those who do not agree with the document are denying the Holy Spirit. i.e. the third form of sin. The Message does not give sufficient recognition to the fact that even if apartheid was removed from our legal code it would take more than that to change hearts. I do not think the Message was designed in a way that would lead to re-commitment to Christ and a change of hearts through the love of Christ. It fails to speak the truth in love, and fails to manifest a conscious application through prayer of all the petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

2

Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the W.C.C.: A Letter to the Churches.

Once again, only a theological evaluation of a document is offered. It indicates that the Assembly have not heeded the answer that Jesus gave to the question: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" (Acts 1:6). The vocation of man has been

recognised but not balanced with a proportionate recognition of a need for renewal of our justification through renewed faith and our unfinished sanctification through love. By equating the 'liberty of the children of God' with a secularised view of liberation, the document opens the door to the current view of the W.C.C. which gives sanction to violent means of obtaining liberation by those who want to throw off the yoke of colonial rule. The ultimate in such sanction is the support given to terrorist movements by the W.C.C. and the declaration one year later at Lusaka, at the A.A.C.C., that God sanctified violence on the Cross. We are thrown back on the unsolved dilemma of Christendom, concerning the exegesis of Rom.13:1ff. and texts which suggest the opposite to Calvin's well-known exegesis. The East has not had the same emphasis on justification as has been evident in the West. The schism between East and West is a theological one, mainly a difference in the interpretation of the doctrine of vocation. This has become acute. The Letter misses the mark at the crucial point by committing the assembly to a blanket commitment for all causes in a particular category and overlooks the fact the the primary function of the community is to proclaim all three ways in which Christ reconciles man to God and that the third one is essentially a unity of the first two. It recognises the importance of Jesus having come to save the whole man in every aspect of his life, but does tend to denigrate justification.

Barth's influence on Faith and Order theology is discussed and the conclusion is reached that we are left with a gap between our knowledge of what God has done for us and our knowledge of what he expects us to do. The greatest deficiency in the Dogmatics is the incomplete Ethics. Theology owes its discovery of the doctrine of vocation to Barth. Christendom can only pray that the Light will shine in the darkness as dialogue continues between the opposing theologies in W.C.C.

CONCLUSION.

Theology is always brought back to our historical situation in the world in the encounter with the witness of the Holy Spirit. The task of the community is to live in the world as servants of the Word, whose sanctification is not yet complete; its ministry is the unity of its commitment and witness through faith and love which make hope and endurance possible. Vocation cannot be considered apart from both justification and sanctification otherwise it becomes secularised. Endurance in hope is the crown of Christian ethics and is not possible without prayer, by which faith and love are increased. The rediscovery of the prophetic office of Christ and the doctrine of vocation are most relevant in our search for a Christian ethos, which Barth left incomplete but ethics must not be systematised. The missionary period has given way to the great age of mission as we move on from Math.28:19 to Acts, preceding and following Jesus Christ, abiding in prayer.

INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE OF METHOD

This thesis has as its content a search for a theological basis on which to establish the appropriate response of the Christian community which is called and sent by Jesus Christ who is himself in his very existence THE man called by God and THE man who is sent into the world. The community is commissioned to hear him, whom God has declared to be his only Son - "This is my son, my Chosen, listen to him". (Luke 9:35) It is commissioned to carry out his command in the strength of the promise which is embodied in the whole life and work of Jesus and expressed in his parting words to his apostles when he departed from this earth and appointed them to be the instruments he would use in his on-going work in the world until that day when the Kingdom which has come with his first coming is brought to its completion and fulfilment in his second coming when God will be all and in all... "When all things are subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one". (I. Cor. 15:28)

It seeks to establish a theological basis for our understanding of the claim which the Lordship of Jesus Christ makes on his community and attempts a statement of the appropriate Christian ethos in the light of the commissioning of the apostolic community and the promise of the power of the Holy Spirit which would equip them for their ministerium Verbi divini. When Jesus charged his disciples not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father which, he said, they had heard from him, he reminded them that John had baptised with water but "before many days you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit". (Acts 1:5) When they asked him if he was at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel he rebuked them and said:

"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth".
(Acts 1:7-8)⁽¹⁾

For the purpose of this thesis the key concepts from that text are the receiving of the promised power and the great commission. In what does this ministry of the Word consist and what is the action which constitutes the specific feature of the Christian? The meaning of the concept of the Christian as witness is encapsulated by Barth in the following extracts from the relevant section in Church Dogmatics:⁽²⁾

1 All Biblical references are quoted from Revised Standard Version
2 Barth, K. Church Dogmatics (= C.D.) published in 13 volumes by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh. C.D.I 1 translated by G.T. Thomson, remainder translated by various translators, Edited by G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance. (First German publication date indicated in parentheses.)

"And if the Christian has the power to make perceptible the self-witness of Christ as its echo in the world, this power is Christ's and not his human power. To the Christian and his fellow-man it is always a miracle when his witness has this power. More than his human witness, then, is not demanded of him. But the service of his human witness is demanded... The question is not...whether he regards himself as able or worthy, nor whether he is willing, nor whether he can guarantee specific results...'Ye shall be witnesses unto me' - this is enough for the one to whom Christ speaks and who has heard him...with his whole existence he is a responsible witness of the Word of God. He is called to be this. As such he is set at the side of God in the world, and... set over against the world...bound both to God and men... he and his service, his very existence, are the appointed sign of the living Word of God, and therefore of its substance, of the kingdom of God drawn near in all its concealment in the person and act of the One who alone can and does reveal it...The concept of the Christian as witness (is taken) up more broadly in the section devoted to the sending of the community ...is the basic concept in the doctrine of the command of God (which makes it) the controlling principle of the second form of Christian ethics." (1)

The second form of Christian ethics was never written. It was to have appeared as par.76, following the doctrine of baptism, and would have included a "presentation of the various practical aspects of Christian life under the guidance of the Lord's Prayer." The conclusion and crown was to have followed, viz.

"the doctrine of the Lord's Supper (as the thanksgiving which responds to the presence of Jesus Christ in his self-sacrifice which looks forward to his future).(2)

In Jesus Christ, the Lord of history, the authority of the eternal will of the Father is asserted over the times and seasons (Acts 1:7) and the eschatological nature and limits of the time between his first and his second coming again in glory and power at the end of the age are signified and embodied in Christ's promise of the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and the commission to witness. This is the period of the true apostolic church established

"in the discipleship...and under the normative authority, instruction and direction of the apostles, in agreement with them, listening to them and accepting their message"(3)

The promise and commission established the existence of the apostolic community as

"The earthly-historical medium of his self-manifestation...the awakening power of the Holy Spirit has no other earthly-historical form than that of the power of witness...thus the existence of his community is always its history in its encounter with this witness - the history in which it is faithful or unfaithful to it in its exposition and application." (4)

1 C.D.IV 3(2)(1960), Edin.1962, par.71, 609f
 2 C.D.IV 4 (Fragment) (1968),Edin.1969, Preface, ix
 3 C.D.IV 1 (1953), Edin.1956, par.62, 714
 4 ibid. 718/9

Setting the doctrine of vocation and the sending of the community in its wider context as part of the doctrine of reconciliation, Chapter I is a brief survey of Barth's treatment of the doctrine of reconciliation and its place in his Christology and the whole of theology. Chapters II and III enlarge on parts of that doctrine which relate to the great commission, under the same chapter headings as Barth's own, viz. The Vocation of Man and the Sending of the Christian Community.⁽¹⁾

Chapter IV attempts a statement of the probable form of the second and third forms of Christian ethics which Barth never completed. He planned to base them on his doctrine of vocation and the sending of the Christian community, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, on a correlating doctrine of man's liturgical work in the community; i.e. man's grateful response to God's gift of grace, taking a threefold form: (i) baptism, marking the beginning of the Christian life, (ii) the Lord's Prayer, as a guide-post for the whole of life and (iii) the Lord's Supper, as a memorial of the Lord's death and the eucharistic participation in fellowship with the living Lord, which nurtures and confirms him in his hope in Christ and looks forward to his eschatological future hid in Christ. The ethical conclusions are based on Christian love⁽²⁾ and the Lord's Prayer, and Christian hope⁽³⁾ and the Lord's Supper, as outlined in Appendix A.

In order to make possible an assessment of Barth's relevance, Appendix B briefly considers these contemporary ecumenical interpretations and applications of the great commission:

1. South African Council of Churches: A Message to the People of South Africa, June 1968
2. World Council of Churches: A Letter to the Churches, from the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism Assembly, Bangkok 1973

A concluding critique recognises the inevitable problems and the need to be constantly brought back to our historical situation in the world. Because the history of the Christian community is always its history in its encounter with the witness of the Holy Spirit its task is to live the life of Christian discipleship in a way relevant to everyday life in the world which at the same time remains grounded in the only basis and foundation of all evangelism, Jesus Christ himself. As members of the Christian community we are only servants of the Lord and his Word because THE Servant of the Lord, the living Word IS ahead of us out there in the far country in HIS world and

"If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am there shall my servant be also; and if anyone serves me the Father will honour him". (John 12:26)

1 C.D.IV 3(2), par.71 and 72, 481 - 901

2 C.D.IV 2 (1955), Edin.1958, par.68, 727 - 840

3 C.D.IV 3(2), par.73, 902 - 942

Chapter One

KARL BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF RECONCILIATION
 Brief Survey and its Place in Theology

For Karl Barth the doctrine of reconciliation can never be dreary dogmatics nor a thing of dry bones. It speaks of life in every phase. It is a song of joy, analogous to the song of the angels in heaven - and surely accompanied by Mozart! It is the very heart of theology, no less than the Good News that God is Emmanuel, God-with-us. And because he is God-with-us in Jesus Christ he is God-for-us and we may be we-with-God. The four volumes on the doctrine of reconciliation⁽¹⁾ begin with the one unique act of God in history in which he turns towards lost man in a new and unique way, which becomes the stumbling block, the offence to reason, to Greek and Jew alike. The challenge to man's reason makes him ask how it can be possible for the transcendent God who is wholly other and wholly God to be at the same time wholly present in the form of man and fully man in every respect. Yet he can be no other than this if he is God-with-us in this way in Jesus Christ. He comes as the electing God who is at the same time THE elected man, God's chosen one⁽²⁾ to retrieve the lost cause of his creature.

Our problem is to understand the very humanity of God who is God-with-us, Emmanuel. The constant threat to theology is its tendency to formulate its doctrines by starting with man, attempting to build a stairway, to storm heaven and bring God down. Barth's merit is that he turned the theological ship around so that it faced diagonally in the other direction, starting from God in his self-revelation in Christ, with the compass set by Christ, following him in his humiliation as Servant and his exaltation as Lord and moving with him towards the eschatological goal in Christ, the Ἐσχάτος - Christ at the beginning, Christ at the end, the alpha and the omega. Barth was still busy with C.D.IV 3 when he delivered a lecture in 1956 to a meeting of Swiss reformed ministers⁽³⁾ and said that we have to "derive the knowledge of the humanity of God from the knowledge of his deity",⁽⁴⁾

from the knowledge of Christ, who
 "comes forward to man on behalf of God calling for and awakening faith, love and hope and to God on behalf of men, representing man, making satisfaction and interceding"⁽⁵⁾

1 C.D.IV 1, 2, 3(1) (1959), Edin.1961, and 3(2)
 2 C.D.II 2 (1942), Edin.1957, par.33, 94 - 194
 3 Humanity of God, Fontana, London, 1967,
 4 ibid. 34
 5 ibid. 44

The conclusion reached at the end of the first section of the doctrine of reconciliation⁽¹⁾ is that God-with-us speaks of the fulfilment of his redemptive will, tells us that he has himself on his own fulfilled his own will for salvation, closing the abyss between man and God by occupying it himself, putting his body where his words are and in consequence lifting us up out of the abyss, setting us on our feet, free to be we-with-God and free to be for God. Only because Jesus Christ is God-with-us may we be, in him, with God in Christian faith, love and hope. This is the Christological basis for the whole of the doctrine.

The remainder of par.57⁽²⁾ sets this unique act of God, in which he is Emmanuel, within his covenantal purpose, ordained before the foundation of the world. (Eph.1:4-5) Not only is the covenant the presupposition of reconciliation but reconciliation is the fulfilment of the covenant between God and his creature.

We are referred again to the theme of the doctrine of creation: creation as the external basis of the covenant and the covenant as the internal basis of creation.⁽³⁾ The work of reconciliation,

in which God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (II.Cor.5:19), is the atonement, the fulfilment of the covenant broken by man. This reconciling work of God is the subject matter of the doctrine of reconciliation. It is Christology all the way, grounded in God's love for the world which was so great

"that he sent his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son not to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through him".
(John 3:16)

Barth has taken the two great themes of the Reformation, justification and sanctification and tested and confirmed them by the Written Word of God which

"we know only through the revelation which makes proclamation possible, or through the proclamation made possible by revelation"⁽⁴⁾

and he found that we cannot speak of justification and sanctification without speaking also of vocation. The threefold schema is clearly expressed in Paul's theology, perhaps nowhere more succinctly than in Romans 5:1-2:

"Therefore since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God."

Being the unitary theologian that he is Barth draws together the three great themes of the gifts of grace in faith, love and hope as three great moments united in Christ as God incarnate who comes

1 C.D.IV 1, par.57.1, 3-21

2 *ibid.* par.57.2 and 3, 22-78

3 C.D.III 1 (1945), Edin.1958, par.41, 42-329

4 C.D.I 1 (1932), Transl.G.T.Thomson, Clark, Edin.1936, 136

to us as the Ebed Yahweh, as the resurrected Lord who sits in glory at the right hand of the Father, who ever lives to make intercession for us and the God-Man who ever lives and reigns in His Spirit, striding out into his lost world as the guarantor and witness of the atonement, continuing the work of Jesus Christ in the world in the glory of the Mediator, in the unity of the Ebed Yahweh and the Lord in glory:

"Jesus Christ as attested to us in Holy Scripture is the one Word of God whom we must hear and whom we must trust and obey in life and in death" (1)

Jesus Christ is himself the event of reconciliation of man to God. Justification, sanctification and vocation take place not in us but in him as representative man and on behalf of all mankind. Only because it takes place in him can we, being in him, be reconciled to God... in him we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28)

The third of these themes is the subject of my study - the movement of God to man in which Jesus Christ continues his eschatological work out there in his world from which we are wont to try to escape, and he beckons his church, saying "follow me". In this chapter I am giving only a brief survey of all the phases which interlock and overlap in the doctrine of reconciliation. It is essential to hold these together in a unity as the way in which God is with us, not separated chronologically, but constituting together the eternal reconciling act of God which is not a doctrine, not merely something we believe in and confess, but nothing less than Jesus Christ himself, eternal Son of God, the living God in all his ways and work ... Jesus Christ who is the beginning of all the ways and works of God and the τέλος of his eternal purpose.

Barth's ground plan becomes immediately clear from his heading and summary:

The content of the doctrine of reconciliation is the knowledge of Jesus Christ who is (1) very God, that is, the God who humbles himself, and therefore the reconciling God (2) very man, that is, man exalted and therefore reconciled by God, and (3) in the unity of the two the guarantor and witness of our atonement.

This threefold knowledge of Jesus Christ includes the knowledge of the sin of man: (1) his pride, (2) his sloth and (3) his falsehood - the knowledge of the event in which reconciliation is made: (1) his justification, (2) his sanctification and (3) his calling - and the knowledge of the work of the Holy Spirit in (1) the gathering, (2) the upbuilding and (3) the sending of the community, and of the being of Christians in Jesus Christ (1) in faith, (2) in love and (3) in hope. (2)

On the next page I have drawn up a paradigm setting out the main emphases of the many facets of God's reconciling work in Christ.

1 C.D.IV 3(1), par.69, 3
2 C.D.IV 1, par.58, 79

Paradigm based on Barth's Threefold Schema of the Doctrine of Reconciliation.

<u>JUSTIFICATION</u>	<u>SANCTIFICATION</u>	<u>VOCATION</u>
Christ's priestly work	kingly work	prophetic work

1. CHRISTOLOGY: The content of the doctrine of reconciliation is the knowledge of Jesus Christ who is attested in the Scriptures, supremely in John 3:16 and II Cor. 5:19 as the:

Reconciling God	Reconciled Man	Unity of both.
Jesus Christ the Lord as Servant.. humbles himself in obedience as representative man.	Jesus Christ the Ebed Yahweh as man reconciled to God and exalted as Lord.	Jesus Christ the true Witness..in the glory of the Mediator, guarantor and witness of the atonement.
(1)	(2)	(3)

2. DOCTRINE OF SIN: The threefold knowledge of Jesus Christ includes the threefold knowledge of the sin of man, which is always rebellion against the will of God, and manifested in:

Pride and fall of man which stands against obedience of the Lord in his humility and Servanthood.	Sloth and misery of man which stands against the Ebed Yahweh exalted as Lord.	Falsehood and condemnation of man which stands against the true witness and denies the atonement, accomplished in Christ, the God-man.
(4)	(5)	(6)

3. SOTERIOLOGY: God answers man's sin with his threefold act of reconciliation accomplished in Jesus Christ as the active Subject and the primary object of the atonement in the event of:

The justification of man..God in Christ as Judge and judged, pardon for all.	The sanctification of man..discipleship and conversion and awakening.	The vocation of man- event and goal of vocation, Christian as witness in affliction..liberation of the Christian.
(7)	(8)	(9)

4. PNEUMATOLOGY: Jesus Christ continues his reconciling work in the interim period in the power of his Holy Spirit whose work is the work of witness to Christ accomplished in the heart of those made obedient by grace to his command.

4.1 Ecclesiology: Holy Spirit takes the fulness of God's work in Christ and works it out in the community in threefold way:

Gathering the faithful into the community which has its being in time by grace.	Quickening the community, building them up in spiritual growth and ordering the community.	Sending the community, the people of God in world occurrence, for God and the world, task of $\sigma\iota\lambda\lambda\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha$.
(10)	(11)	(12)

4.2 Individual members of the community acknowledge the new life in Christ in acts of:

<u>faith</u>	<u>love</u>	<u>hope</u>
In awakening power of Holy Spirit Jesus summons sinful man in encounter, gathering him into community in confession and repentance.	In quickening power of Holy Spirit Jesus places sinful man in his community, nurtures him through prayer in fellowship and free to correspond to his love.	In enlightening power of Holy Spirit Jesus calls sinful man to partake in community of the glory of his kingdom.. through mediation of his real presence and sends him into world as witness to his prophetic work.
Baptism with water	Lord's Prayer	Holy Communion
(13)	(14)	(15)

Notes to the paradigm on page 7

- 1 C.D.IV 1, ch. XIV, 157-780
- 2 C.D.IV 2, ch. XV, 3-840
- 3 C.D.IV 3(1) and (2), ch.XVI, 3-942
- 4 C.D.IV 1, par.60, 358-513
- 5 C.D.IV 2, par.65, 378-498
- 6 C.D.IV 3(1), par.70, 368-480
- 7 C.D.IV 1, par.61, 514-642
- 8 C.D.IV 2, par.66, 499-613
- 9 C.D.IV 3(2), par.71, 481 -680
- 10 C.D.IV 1, par.62, 643-739 and C.D.IV 4 passim.
- 11 C.D.IV 2, par.67, 614-726 and C.D.IV 4 passim.
- 12 C.D.IV 3(2), par.72, 681-901 and C.D.IV 4 passim.
- 13 C.D.IV 1, par.63, 740-780 and C.D.IV 4 passim.
- 14 C.D.IV 2, par.68, 727-840 and C.D.IV 4 passim.
- 15 C.D.IV 3(2), par.73, 902-942 and C.D.IV 4 passim.

In his own inimitable way Barth thus holds together the unity of the multi-faceted reconciling work of God in Jesus Christ.

The Word of God who was in the beginning and was with God and was God... and became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (John 1), who, as Servant of the Lord, was exalted as Lord and was thus man reconciled to God on behalf of all mankind, now continues to work in the world in the glory of the Mediator and in the unity of Lord and Servant, as the guarantor and witness of the atonement.

Man in his pride and unbelief rejects the obedience and humility before God of the Ebed Yahweh. The awakening power of the Holy Spirit overcomes his sin in the encounter with Jesus, summons him to confession and repentance through faith in Jesus Christ, imputing righteousness to him and justifying him in the re-birth of this sinful man into the new life in the Spirit, gathering him into the community of the people of God and affirming that he has his being in time by the grace of Christ, to whom he now belongs as servant, who, as his Lord, now commands of him humility and obedience analogous to his own.

The justified man is lazy and stupidly continues to despair in his sloth and misery and his very wretchedness denies that his Lord is the exalted Son of Man. The quickening power of the Holy Spirit overcomes his sloth and apathy, nurturing him in the love of Christ which converts him and places him in the community in freedom to love with a love corresponding to the love he receives in Christ. In this way the Holy Spirit builds

up the community of the true Church, enriching its growth, keeping order and upholding it, preparing it for its task of mission.

The justified and sanctified man is not yet made perfect but must strive to look ever unto Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith, who abides in those who abide in him. Jesus comes to meet him continuously as he calls on the precious name of Jesus Christ, renews him and sets his feet again towards the goal. It is for discipline that we have to endure, for God treats us as sons (Heb.12 passim). The Christian community, and the members individually, are liable to be guilty of the sin of falsehood and evasion of the truth and witness of Jesus Christ, the glorified Son of God. Unlike the people who have not yet been gathered in by the Spirit, the people to whom the community of Christ is called to witness, the community of Christ earn their own condemnation when they forget who they are and deny whose they are. The Holy Spirit is the enlightening power, by which Jesus Christ overcomes the falsehood and condemnation of sinful man. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. (II.Cor.4:16). Renewed then in faith, enriched in love and confirmed in hope in Christ and the certainty that because He lives we shall live also, we partake in community of the glory of the Kingdom. This involves us in mission and service. The church is mission. When it ceases to be mission it ceases to be the church of Jesus Christ. For the church of Jesus Christ is constituted as the community of those who have heard the apostolic witness and who have themselves received power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. By that same awakening, quickening and enlightening power of the Holy Spirit they are appointed by Jesus to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8).

This is the Good News, Τὸ εὐαγγέλιον of Jesus Christ. It demands a response from every Christian in terms of faith, love and hope in Christ. This is the content of the doctrine of Jesus Christ the reconciling God. I have given no more than a brief summary which has sought to embody the joyful swing of this Gospel message as it comes to us in Jesus Christ, to preserve something of the majesty and inscrutability of God and to speak in every sentence of the incommensurable love of God for his lost children. The vocation of man which is his call to discipleship is taken up in the next chapter from this point and forms itself the necessary preliminary and basis

for the sending of the Christian community as the people of God in world-occurrence, the community for the world whose task and mission is διακονία.

In my survey I have tried to reproduce a sense of the dialectic of the movements, down, up and across, as this is how I understand the continuous dialectic of God's work in Christ taking place in the human heart, the whole Christ constantly renewing the whole man. I have not tried to present an ordered summary of Barth's four volumes dealing with the subject. There are several excellent summaries available as, for example, Come's "Quick Tour of the Dogmatics"⁽¹⁾ which follows Barth's sequence, treating each of the three movements in turn. Kung's critique and comparison with Roman Catholic theology⁽²⁾ is also useful. However, all available summaries are surpassed by Barth's own summary.⁽³⁾

The place of the doctrine of reconciliation in Barth's own theology is clear from the beginning. As the climax, it becomes the crown, the Gospel in nuce; it is what gives meaning to the whole, as it throws light on all that has gone before. Apart from his radical departure from tradition in putting Christology right at the beginning with his doctrine of the Word of God, we have the doctrine of God, the doctrine of creation and finally the doctrine of reconciliation. C.D.I sets the basis, meaning and goal of all theology in Jesus Christ and governs the whole of the Dogmatics. C.D.II and III deal with the first article of the Apostles' Creed and C.D.IV brings the second and third article of the Creed together in a way which avoids the danger of tearing asunder the humanity and deity of Christ, thus departing from the older dichotomy of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. So, although Barth basically follows the format of the Apostles' Creed, he does make radical changes at every point. Another significant change is that his doctrine of election is part of the doctrine of God, not because he returns to the Thomist tradition of election being pars providentiae, in such a way that an eternal decree governs providence and creation, but because Jesus Christ is not only the Electing God but he is also the Elected Man and he, not a hidden decretum absolutum, represents in his own existence as the Word of God, God's eternal decree and purpose for his whole creation. For Barth there can also be no separate doctrine of Christian ethics, since man's ethical response arises at every point in the Dogmatics

1 Come, A.B. An Introduction to Barth's Dogmatics for Preachers
S.C.M., London, 1963, ch.4, 87-129
2 Kung, H. Justification, Burns & Oates, London, 1964
3 C.D.IV 1, par.58, 79-156

as man encounters God in Jesus Christ.

In the series of lectures which were later published as Dogmatics in Outline Barth said that he was not saying anything essentially new for readers of his Kirchliche Dogmatik.⁽¹⁾ In that work he starts with his usual Christological basis and then follows the Apostles' Creed more specifically than in the Dogmatics. In Credo⁽²⁾ and Faith of the Church⁽³⁾ the pattern is the same although the handling is slightly different - "for the whole creed refers to our knowledge of God in Jesus Christ".⁽⁴⁾ His theological method and order is: Christ, God, creation, reconciliation. There is no place for anthropology - for man can only be the Man we know in Jesus Christ. Individual man can only become the man he was created to be when he is reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and renewed in faith, love and hope. The doctrines of sin, the Holy Spirit and the Church are all part of the doctrine of reconciliation and no doctrine can be abstracted and treated in isolation. Although the doctrine of redemption was never written the direction it would have taken is already laid out in the Dogmatics and written in eternity. Conforming to Barth's own stand there is no place in his theology for apologetics.⁽⁵⁾

Bearing in mind this sense of unity of theology and the place of the doctrine of vocation in the doctrine of reconciliation and in the wider context of the whole of theology, I now deal in more detail with a part of the doctrine of vocation, viz. the vocation of man and the sending of the Christian community, the appropriate ethical response of the community to the command to witness in the world and the promise of the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

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- 1 Barth, K. Dogmatics in Outline (1947), S.C.M., London, 1949, 7
 - 2 Barth, K. Credo (1935), Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1964
 - 3 Barth, K. The Faith of the Church (1943), Fontana, London, 1960
 - 4 op cit. 34
 - 5 Further reference as background to this chapter is made to the following sources:
 Barth, K. Theology and Church (1920-28), S.C.M., London, 1962
 Torrance, T.F. Theology in Reconstruction, S.C.M., London, 1965
 Camfield, F.W. (Ed.) Reformation Old & New - A tribute to Karl Barth, Lutterworth, London, 1947
 Nicholls, W. Pelican Guide to Modern Theology Vol. I, Penguin, Middlesex, England, 1969, Ch.2 75-149
 Berkouwer, G.C. The Triumph of Grace in Karl Barth, Paternoster, London, 1956
 Richardson, A. (Ed.) Dictionary of Christian Theology, S.C.M., London, 1969
 Barth, K. Evangelical Theology - an Introduction, (1962?), Fontana, London, 1965

Chapter Two

THE VOCATION OF MAN

"The Word of the living Jesus Christ is the creative call by which he awakens man to an active knowledge of the truth and thus receives him into the new standing of the Christian, namely, into a particular fellowship with himself, thrusting him as his afflicted but well-equipped witness into the service of his prophetic work"⁽¹⁾

Positing the Word of the living Jesus Christ right at the beginning of this synopsis, Barth recalls us immediately to the two previous paragraphs where he began the third movement in the doctrine of reconciliation with Christ the true witness of the atonement, who has made peace between God and us and also between us and himself. Jesus Christ is himself our peace but the decisive thing is that he is this peace in this twofold way so that the covenant is actualised and fulfilled by him from both sides. The implication for us as we consider the creative call to man is that he who makes the call has already heard and responded to it himself as representative man. He is the light of life which the Gospel of John attests, who came into the world and shone in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out and he is the light which lightens the life of every man. (John 1:5ff) It is the glory of this light, the light of life which is the only source of knowledge of truth. In the light of his glory we receive life. But we receive it only because he brought it into the world, coming as he did as the man whom he himself elected from all eternity to be the man justified before God, the sanctified man and the man called to be the witness to the truth and sent into the world for that purpose on behalf of and for sinful man. In this eternal election of grace he effected man's justification, sanctification and vocation primarily in himself, not only in his temporal existence but in his pre-existence and unto all eternity. Only on the basis of his election can sinful man be reconciled to God. So in electing himself for sinful man it is clear that in his grace he has elected sinful man for himself, taking away man's rejection of God and all that separates sinful man from God. In the prior history of man it is actualised in him and in the unique act of God in which he becomes man in Jesus Christ and comes into the world as light in the darkness he actualises it in the temporal history of man, so that henceforth the same light still shines in the darkness as he continues in his Holy Spirit what he began in his incarnation.

1 IV 3(2), par.71, 481

At this point where it is established that election is the basis of vocation⁽¹⁾ we find again the connecting link that runs right through the Dogmatics for this recalls us to the doctrine of election in C.D.II 2 where Barth associated himself with Calvin insofar

"that Calvin did speak plainly of the eternal election of man, or of certain men, as the presupposition of their vocation and not vice versa, and of the vocation of man, or of certain men, as the historical fulfilment of their election. For him vocation and election are indissolubly co-ordinated. Election looks forward to the future event of vocation; vocation looks backward to election"⁽²⁾

Barth refers again to what has been already fully covered by him in his doctrine of election, viz. that because Calvin's understanding of election as an abstract decretum absolutum, which elected some men to eternal life and condemned others to eternal damnation, departed at this point from what we know of God's will as revealed to us in his self-revelation in Christ, Calvin did not conceive of the election of all men based on the election of Jesus Christ. The vocation of man lost its Christological basis and meaning and its goal was obscured because it was understood by Reformed teaching to be the fulfilment of a hidden decree rather than the creative call by Jesus Christ to all men whom he has elected to salvation in him from the beginning. (Eph. 1:4) He has called them by the Gospel, providing in himself as the light of the life of men both the atonement for their sin and their salvation, setting them free, in the awakening power of his Holy Spirit, to be converted to him in faith as the one whom they must hear, trust and obey. ⁽³⁾

Christians, according to the New Testament, are ἐκλεκτοί and therefore they are καλοί and only on the basis of both their election and their calling are they, as Christians, i.e. those called, described as holy and faithful. On this basis, Christians may know they have been elected, not by a hidden decree, but on the basis of the election of Jesus Christ, in whom they believe. Their vocation is the fulfilment and the confirmation of their election to a new standing and relationship of fellowship with him. Because this is a dynamic relationship Christians are constantly being called by the Gospel to the fulfilment of their election in him. It is never behind them but always before as well as he calls them to follow. The existence of the Christian and his future is directed towards his vocation and this means that he must always be open to all men to whom he is called to witness to the light of life which shines in his own life. This

1 C.D.IV 3(2), par.71. 484

2 ibid.

3 C.D.II.2 passim provides the basis for what is said of election in C.D.IV 3(2) as the basis of vocation.

Calvin's position is taken from Calvin, J. Institutes of the Christian Religion (1559), James Clarke & Co, Gr. Britain, 1962

implies a responsibility to understand not only himself but also non-Christians in his responsibility to his own calling. His very existence must be an effective reminder of the calling of every man and disturb the peace of the non-Christian. His own personal calling needs to be constantly renewed so that he remains sure of the event of his calling and distinguishes himself from non-Christians, although he is called to identify himself with them in his life of witness.

Before proceeding further with the aspect of the Christian in affliction and his liberation from affliction as he is involved in witness to which he has been called, the nature of the sin which threatens his existence as a Christian must be mentioned. The sin of falsehood denies the glory of the Mediator and his victory over the darkness which cannot extinguish the light of life. It denies his election as the elect man chosen in eternity on behalf of all men; and it denies the election of every man to his vocation as a Christian in a new relationship with God, to which he must give witness in his life in the power of the Holy Spirit promised and given as God's gracious gift to man. The way in which Jesus Christ encounters man in his historical situation and history basically alters his life and death. As always, Barth's own précis effectively states the nature of this encounter:

"As the effective promise of God encounters man in the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, man proves himself to be a liar, in whose thinking, speech and conduct his liberation by and for the free God transforms itself into an attempt to claim God by and for himself as the man who is bound in his self-assertion-a perversion in which he can only destroy himself and finally perish". (1)

The sin of man in opposition to the prophetic work of Jesus follows the pattern of the other two forms of sin, viz. the sin of pride and the sin of sloth. The pride of man makes him exalt himself in a desire to be as God and to be his own judge in opposition to the God who comes to him in Christ as Judge and stands in place of all mankind before himself as Judge, taking upon himself the judgement due to man. This pride stands in the way of the reconciling God coming to man in his priestly work of justification and cannot be overcome by man himself. Only God in Christ in the power of his Holy Spirit can set aside man's pride and replace it with the peace of God in the faith which takes place in the heart of man when he subjectively appropriates the atonement which Christ has once and for all effected for him and for all mankind. The sloth of man is the second form of sin, in keeping with Barth's method which has established that the doctrine of sin cannot be abstracted from the doctrine of reconciliation but forms an integral part of its threefold form.

The sloth of the man who has been gathered into the Christian community by the Holy Spirit and has heard and appropriated as truth that he is justified by faith in Jesus Christ is the second form which sin takes because it is sin which stands in opposition to the sanctification of the Christian community and denies that the sanctification of the reconciled man avails for the community of Christ which has its existence by virtue of his existence and is the earthly-historical form of his own existence. In its stupidity and despair it revels in its guilt-consciousness and wears itself out in its self-made religious forms and liturgies, ever seeking new experiences and new ways of appropriating for itself the confirmation of its sanctification. The man who has been justified by faith lives his Christian existence in this constant dialectic, the two opposing moments of which consist, on the one hand, of man's eternal desire to perfect himself and work out his own salvation, and, on the other hand, the gracious love of Christ for his own people, which is poured out in grace for these sons and daughters who so earnestly seek the peace which he alone can give. This abounding love of Christ is manifested in the life of the community as the upbuilding power of the Holy Spirit, which sets aside man's recurring and insistent effort to assert his own will, the will of his lower nature, (in Paul's terms), and renews again and again the right spirit within his heart so that the man who was born again in the spirit at his conversion is day by day being made more perfect, in spite of his own nature. This war between the two natures of man is adequately summed up by Paul in Romans 7. The conclusion made apparent by his masterly exposition is that when the Christian does what he does not want to do, it is no longer he that does it but the sin which dwells in him and conversely when he does what he wants to do in conformity to God's will for him, it is not he himself that accomplishes it but the work of grace through the Holy Spirit abiding within him. Who shall deliver such a wretched child of God? None other than Christ, his Lord and Saviour, who promises that if we, his children, abide in him and do not reject his love and perfect will for us, then he will abide in us, overcome our misery and sloth and laziness and bring us, in that day when all things are perfected in him, into full perfection where we shall be perfect as he is perfect.

As we move in this dialectic way through the three forms of sin, Barth's method brings out the advantage to be gained for our understanding of God's reconciling work by discussing sin always and at each new stage after Christology, in the conviction that sin is only understandable in the light of the Gospel. It also becomes clear how much theology has gained by Barth's method of starting with the reconciling God who comes to us

as the Servant of the Lord in the form of man instead of the more traditional method of starting with the kingly office of the man who is reconciled by God and exalted as Lord. The high-priestly work takes precedence because we cannot even begin to think of our sanctification in the light of his sanctification until we have seen how far we have gone into the far country from which we can only be brought back by him who primarily came out into the far country to find us and constantly comes into it again in his spirit to seek and find the ones still lost.

This third form of sin, in which man proves himself to be a liar, hinders the work of witness, to which the Christian is called and which is the controlling principle of the second form of Christian ethics (vide page 2 and chapter IV of this thesis). This sin is unmasked, discovered, exposed and judged by the truth revealed by God in Jesus Christ, the true witness of the saving grace of God as it has appeared in him justifying and sanctifying man. The reality of the falsehood is exposed in encounter with Jesus Christ. The man who has been justified and sanctified and set free for God is found to have abused his God-given liberation, having perverted and falsified what he has heard as God's Word to man in Christ. But this sin itself reveals the creaturely limitation of sinful man for the truth asserts itself in Christ who is victor over das Nichtige. The sin of pride and of sloth are sins against the grace of God and so is falsehood. But in this form of falsehood man's sin operates in a third dimension for in denying the true witness which comes to him in Christ through the interior witness of the Holy Spirit, he virtually denies also his justification and his sanctification and coram Deo he is conscious of having continued his sinful habits of pride and sloth in spite of having been cleansed of them by his conversion to God. He becomes aware of having asserted his own autonomous will against the will of God in an attempt to claim God by himself and for himself. By his own action he has rejected the free grace of God in Christ which set him free at his conversion to be for God and he has bound himself again to his lower nature which, in its self-assertion threatens to destroy him. He has forfeited his liberation and his existence as a Christian is threatened. The true witness of Christ accuses, condemns and judges him. It is only in the light of the true witness that he knows he is a liar and knows the extent of his falsehood, as John proclaimed in his first epistle:

"that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin". (I John 1:5-8)

When the Christian fails to be a witness to Jesus Christ in all that he thinks, says and does, he commits the sin of falsehood, for he is trying to convert into a lie the Word of God which attests that those who walk in the light of life have fellowship with God and with one another. In their fellowship they carry out their appointed task of witness to Jesus Christ. If there is no fellowship there is no witness for the Christian cannot witness in solitude.

God is not limited by man. He does not have to be God-for-man and man-for-God but he willed to be this in Christ in the divine freedom of his love for his creature.

"The unity of true God free for man and true man free for God constitutes the existence of this One who is the true witness. As free God and free man meet and are one in him, he is the truth and declares the truth in relation to which every other man shows himself to be a liar". (1)

On the basis of this twofold relationship between God and man and man and God our own existence as justified and sanctified sinners is manifested in a new relationship with God in which we stand as witnesses to the truth in Christ, in whom we have our existence. Jesus Christ comes to us as true witness in the way he promised to come as the Holy Spirit who witnesses to him and leads us into the truth known only in him. He comes to us as the suffering Jesus Christ in whose passion and humiliation and death the name of God was hallowed, his kingdom came and his will was done on earth as it is done in heaven. It was in his humiliation and exaltation to glory that God reconciled the world to himself and he still lives in his glorious session at the right hand of God in the unity of the suffering Ebed Yahweh promised in the prophecy of Isaiah and the exalted Lord of the resurrection. Prophecy was fulfilled in him and he has borne our transgressions once and for all but the man Jesus Christ, risen and ascended in glory, still bears the marks of his affliction and he comes to us as the Lamb that was slain for us and still stands as our guarantor between God and the abyss from which he rescues us when he comes as the Spirit of Truth, enlightens our darkness, overcomes our falsehood and leads us into all truth, setting us free to be man-for-God.

In the new relationship with God in which he places us in our liberation we can only be witnesses to him in whom we live and move and have our being. He appoints us and commissions us to witness to him wherever he calls us to be, in the promised power of his Holy Spirit. And so he comes to his own and they, who know him, know his voice, and they hear him and follow him. If the Christian denies his vocation, he denies his Lord who is the Way, the Truth and the Life; he slips back into falsehood;

and if he continues in it he can only destroy himself and finally perish. This sin of falsehood thus consists in a movement of evasion of the truth for it presupposes that he knows the truth in Christ which has been revealed to him in the gathering and quickening power of the Holy Spirit in his justification and sanctification. If he does not know the truth he cannot be convicted by the Holy Spirit of his falsehood. If he knows he is a liar coram Deo and believes the truth revealed to him in Christ, he receives the promised power of the Holy Spirit of Truth to enlighten him and in the light in which he stands he can only be a witness of the atonement effected in Christ and of his election to eternal life on the basis of Christ's resurrection.

For Scriptural illustration of the classic original form of this kind of sin as falsehood which perverts the true witness Barth refers us to Job's comforters. In their speeches the true witness is turned into a false witness because it is most difficult to distinguish truth from untruth in their pious claims about God's justice. Their theodicies are ultimately proved only by God himself to be pious lies.

In the concluding section of par.70 ⁽¹⁾ Barth sums up his study of this third form of sin with the conclusion that, as pride leads to the fall of man and sloth to his misery, so his falsehood leads to his condemnation for in refusing the truth he refuses his own pardon and his attempt to turn the truth into untruth is nothing but a foolish attempt to turn his pardon into the opposite, into judgment and condemnation. Every Christian lives constantly in this threat to his existence as a Christian, in that he can bring his own condemnation by false witness. This lays on him the necessity to abide in Christ, praying continuously for the gift of discernment and wisdom so that his witness may be true. In this observation, I again point forward to my chapter on special ethics where the second form of ethical response is marked by prayer and the controlling principle is reflected in the life of the Christian individually and in community as witness. (vide chapter IV)

This review of the three forms of sin which oppose themselves to God's work of reconciliation in Christ has brought into focus the event of vocation in the life of the Christian as the third form of what objectively takes place when God reconciles man to himself. Before I can move forward in the next chapter to consider the subjective realisation of vocation through the work of

1 C.D.IV 3(1), par.70.3, 461-480

the Holy Spirit, the sending of the Christian community, several other aspects arise from the calling of man and must be dealt with in the present chapter.

The first is Christian existence; what is its meaning, its basis and its goal? A common error is for Christians to think that existence is primary and that calling comes after existence. Referring again to the synopsis of par.71, quoted supra (page 12) it is the Word of Jesus Christ awakening man to a knowledge of truth which man hears at his conversion as a creative call. The call of Jesus Christ re-creates and in this coming-into-existence as a new creature the Christian is born as one called. The fact of his calling constitutes him as a Christian in a new relationship with God which he did not enjoy previously. As he lives his Christian life as one called and if he responds in a manner appropriate to his standing as one called, then he will hear and obey and his obedience will be manifested in community and in the world as he is sent by Christ in the work of witness. Another common error is the idea that somehow the work of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit can be different. Jesus sends the Spirit whose power awakens, quickens and enlightens by witnessing not to the presence of the Holy Spirit, but to the presence of Jesus Christ. This is the only way Jesus can be present in the Christian because this is the way in which the exalted Lord reveals his real presence as the same Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and forever. He is the Mediator between God and man, himself the unity of God and man, and the only source of our knowledge of the truth and of our knowledge of God the Father. The only way in which we can know Jesus Christ is by the work and power of his Spirit who does not work without Jesus but is the sign that Jesus is present. This is the content of the promise of power that Jesus said the disciples would receive when the Holy Spirit came upon them. In that power Jesus calls the Christian into existence; the call is the determination of his existence so his vocation and his existence as a Christian are mutually dependent on one another; if the Christian denies his call he forfeits his Christian existence. The classic Scriptural example is Peter's denial. The miracle of the vocation of the Christian is that it gives him this freedom to become a child of God. (Jn.1:12/13) He can only be a child of God if he remains under the Lordship of Christ for, based on the only model of divine sonship that he can use as a criterion, the Christian's sonship is one of θεογονία, for Christians are still men, though children of God. They are not deified by conversion.

The next aspect for further consideration is the particular fellowship which the Christian enjoys by virtue of his union with Christ. There can be no question of identification of the

Christian with Christ; Christ remains the one who as Lord speaks, commands and gives; the Christian remains the one who hears, answers and receives as the slave of the Lord. In this fellowship which the Christian has with Christ, the sovereignty of God is not restricted and the Christian is free to continue to live in this perfect fellowship. If it is broken the breach is from the side of man when he forgets who it is who is his Master. Like the union of God and man in Jesus Christ, the union in fellowship between Christ and the Christian is also hidden, though a reality for those who experience it. This union is the most essential element of the meaning and the goal of vocation. It is this union that permits the Christian to be a fellow-worker with Christ in this his prophetic work. Christ's work of reconciling the world to himself in his life and death and resurrection is unique and he accomplished it once and for all, for us and the world but without our help. But his prophetic work is the unity of the justification and sanctification of man which was primarily effected by and in him as THE justified and THE sanctified man exalted as Lord. In his prophetic work in which he continues to actualise the reconciliation to God already effected, by justifying and sanctifying and making Christians, he works for us and the world with the help of Christians. In his final work of redemption when he comes again in glory, when all shall see him as he is and know who he is, he will work for us and the world once more without our help ... so perfectly accomplishing his will and at the same time preserving in perfect fellowship with himself those who abide in him.

It is the way in which he works now with our help that is the essential element of our calling. With his emphasis on the unio cum Christo as constituting the calling of the Christian Barth clarifies and works out systematically a concept that was present in Luther as decisive in justification. In Calvin the union had two aspects - both sanctification and justification. Calvin did not draw out the consequences of the twofold meaning. If he had done and if he had not lost the Christological basis of election, then Calvin also would have made the connection between the threefold reconciliation of man to God and the unio cum Christo for it follows from Reformed theology, as soon as vocation is grounded in election and election is based on the election of Christ rather than a decretum absolutum. (1)

Considering the question of what it means practically and concretely to be and become a Christian, Barth has to reject the classic answer which was that the salvation of souls was for

1 C.D.IV 3(2), par.71, 549 - 554

the sake of the individual blessedness of those converted and that the organisation and work of churches should be primarily directed to that end. Christians do enjoy this special blessedness in the unio cum Christo but if we consider that as the primary purpose of God's reconciling work which he continues in Christ at work in this period between his first coming and his parousia in glory then we obscure God's covenantal purpose in creation which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ but will only be completely fulfilled in all his creation in that day when God is all in all and his glory is visible to all in the new heaven and new earth. In the interim, the period of the church, those who hear the call of Jesus Christ and are converted to God are involved by the call to be the messengers he sends in the power which he gives them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and to the ends of the earth. They do indeed enjoy a perfect fellowship with Christ which looks forward to the eschatological goal of their calling and which they already partake of now in this fellowship which is part - the essential part - of their existence as a Christian but is not fully revealed to the eyes of the world. In this sense the individual blessedness is a reality but it is secondary, a by-product, to the primary purpose of vocation. Scripture, both New and Old Testament, offers many examples which confirm that the execution of a task to which a man is called constitutes his existence as a man of God. Abraham is the classic example of the Old Testament and Paul the classic one of the New Testament but numerous other names can be added to the list. The common denominator of them all is that in acquiring the task they are consecrated to it and they cannot continue to exist in some other way in and for themselves. Their lives are changed in the new direction in which they are now facing as a result of their conversion which is in reality a literal about-turn. Henceforth they live only for the commission to which they know God has called them.

The essence of their task is that God makes them his witnesses. It is not simply that they now go out and witness to what has happened to them and exhort others to follow them. Unfortunately the Christian Church has never been able to completely rid herself of Pelagianism. It too easily enters again by the back door as newly converted Christians enthusiastically urge others to emulate their own spiritual pilgrimage. It is at this point that theology as the "watchdog" of the church's proclamation must seek to establish a theological basis for an ecclesiology grounded in the vocation of those who are converted to Christ. The newly converted Christian is added to the Church by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of becoming a further instrument in whom and through whom Christ can continue his prophetic work of reconcil-

iation. If the community corporately is to remain true to its calling and not become corporately guilty of the sin of falsehood and evasion of the truth then the proclaimed Word which Christ uses as his witness must announce to the individual members of the community that this vocation is the meaning, the basis and the goal of their existence as reborn children of God. Then the individual Christian will learn that he cannot call others to follow Christ. He can only witness to what God has revealed to us in Christ and what he did for us in this unique act in the history of man, in which he is Emmanuel. We, as well as Barth, are indebted to Søren Kierkegaard for having brought out so clearly that what I have inwardly appropriated as subjective truth can never be passed on to another person as the truth; in communicating it I communicate it as an objective statement; it remains an objective uncertainty for the person who hears it until he himself makes it the truth for himself by the same process of interiorisation, the existential dialectic that was at work in my own coming-into-existence as a Christian. The witness of the Christian has to be one that signifies Christ, as John the Baptist pointed to the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. When the truth is faithfully proclaimed by the Christian who has subjected himself to the Lordship of Christ as the servant of the Word then Christ in the power of his Spirit uses the human testimony making it in the ears of the hearers his own effective call. It is always Christ who calls the new Christian into existence; not the Holy Spirit and not the human voice. They are the means Christ uses to actualise the call making it contemporary to every one he calls directly. Kierkegaard described this witness we give to what is the truth for us as "indirect communication". The direct communication comes from Christ in the encounter with him.

This distinction between indirect and direct communication is essential for clarifying the nature of our co-operation with God. If we hold to this distinction between the idea of Christ calling men through us to follow him and the idea of us calling men to follow Christ then we will not be tempted to think of our ministry as co-operation with God, as a synergism, but rather hold to the New Testament understanding of διδασκαλία, so that service, not co-operation, is the basic determination of discipleship. Barth describes the way in which Christ exercises this prophetic office - the vocation of man and the sending of the Christian community - in the power of the Holy Spirit, in us and with us and for us and for the world, in these terms:

"He does not will to be alone...he calls certain men to his side and commissions them to be his disciples or pupils, i.e. Christians. In his form as the one Speaker of the Word of God, he not only makes himself known to them in

the power of his Holy Spirit; he also takes up his abode in them, living in them in order that they for their part may live in him as the one who works in this form...It certainly means that they should hear and be told in person the Word of the covenant of grace... unless they are told it, how can they be fit and ready and willing for the specific task to which Christ calls them? Yet this conditio sine qua non is not the ratio of their life in him... They do not become Christs in their action. They can only follow Christ. He alone is always the Lord, the authentic, original, immediate and direct Speaker of the Word of God - he who is also alone the Doer of his work...He summons them, however, to be his heralds. He calls them - and it is in this sense that we may really speak of their cooperation in his prophetic work - to the ministerium Verbi divini, to the service of God and his Word. This then, the divine Word, the Word of Christ, is the τέλος and meaning of their service".(1)

The last aspect of vocation which needs to be considered is the affliction of the Christian and his liberation from whatever it was that previously determined his way of life before he became a Christian. The man who has been set free for God does receive personal endowment which equips him for the ministry of witness. His personal liberation from anxiety, from doubt, indecision and fear as well as from the dominion of material things and a desire for self-justification, sets him in this new relationship in a state of peace, in that he is no longer bound to these things or ruled by them. It is essential for him to remain in this peace which is incidental and additional to his liberation as an appointed witness but at the same time is his existence-medium for the Christian could not be this witness if the content of his witness did not reflect itself and impress itself upon his own life. Nevertheless, this personal liberation of the individual Christian is never the main thing and it is small in relation to the great liberation of all creation which is accomplished in Christ and for the revelation of which the whole creation waits with infinite longing.

Because of this greater liberation of the whole creation compared with the personal peace of the Christian, the hope in Christ in which the Christian looks forward to the eschatological goal does in fact keep the Christian in peace rather than in anxiety if he clings to his hope in Christ, in spite of all that threatens it and seems to deny it. If he lets anxiety overpower him he will lose his peace with God. If he abides with Christ in prayer he will not lose his peace because to be in communion with Christ is itself what constitutes peace. I will come back to this again in my chapter on special ethics but it had to be mentioned here in relation to the Christian in

1 C.D.IV 3(2), par.71, 606f.

affliction. The Christian can only meet the affliction which he is certain to have to endure in the execution of his task of witness, if he meets it in the assurance of his own certain hope in Christ. It is the personal perfect fellowship that he enjoys with Christ that keeps his hope alive and turns an objective uncertainty into an inner certainty and conviction that anxiety cannot attack. If the Christian holds fast to this unio cum Christo he will not become anxious when evil threatens and attacks because he knows that he meets the affliction in Christ's strength and in the power of His Spirit. He knows and claims for himself as truth the truth of Christ's promise that he is with us always; that he will never leave the desolate to mourn; that he will never allow us to be tempted beyond what we will also be given grace to endure, et al. This is what it means for the Christian to abide in Christ. This is what Barth meant by his final phrase in his synopsis at the beginning of par.71, viz.

"thrusting him as his afflicted but well-equipped witness into the service of his prophetic work" (p 12 supra)

The affliction which does constantly assail the Christian signifies pressure which is exercised on a man from without by relationships or even by a hostile environment, over which he has no control and which comes upon him as trial and tribulation during the execution of his task as witness to Christ. It is not surprising that he is tempted to retreat into inwardness where he can give no offence to others with his witness. If he does not evade the truth of his vocation, then he cannot avoid being a disturbance, in various ways, to those he encounters in his daily life; his witness becomes a pressure to which they can and will react with counterpressure. He cannot avoid this affliction. The oppressive feature is that he is exposed as a witness to Christ to defamation and ostracism by those who find the Good News he brings to be, for them, not good but bad news, constituting an offence. The Christian can, on the other hand, not seek this affliction as a self-appointed martyrdom. Nor can he offer cheap grace, not even in the name of love, to those who find the gospel message he brings a stumbling-block. He can confront the world in no other way than as witness and his own action in his witness is wholly dependent on the truth and the reality of what he attests but he cannot, of his own power, change the minds of those who oppose him; he cannot command or control the Holy Spirit. Only Jesus Christ, not the Christian, is the Baptiser with the Holy Spirit. The Christian who usurps the work of Christ is guilty of falsehood. Turning to Scripture for the classic illustration we find it once again in Paul in the way he endures attack in the face of his witness to Christ which witness must never suffer loss for the sake of Paul's own body.

Chapter Three

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE SENDING OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

With this chapter I come to the central theological theme of my study. Several questions arise concerning the sending of the community in the power of the Holy Spirit into the world; the same world in which the community exists as the people of God who are FOR the world because God in Christ is FOR the world; the world which does not know him and in which it is commissioned as his community to a special task of ministry:

- 1 What is the nature of the world in which the community of Christ is called to exist as the earthly-historical form of his existence?
- 2 In what way is the community of Christ FOR the world that distinguishes it from the way in which the world is for itself?
- 3 What is the task to which the people of God are commissioned as the earthly-historical form of his existence in the world and for the world?
- 4 What is the ἰδρυσις of the community and how do they exercise it?

The method I have followed in order to obtain clarity concerning the theological implications so that a special ethos may emerge in the next chapter, is to follow Barth closely in this present chapter, presenting a concise summary of the relevant parts of the four sub-sections into which paragraph 72 is divided under the following headings:

- 1 The People of God in World-Occurrence (1)
- 2 The Community for the World (2)
- 3 The Task of the Community (3)
- 4 The Ministry of the Community (4)

But first, Barth's synopsis at the head of the paragraph, showing in advance the direction he will take:

"The Holy Spirit is the enlightening power of the living Lord Jesus Christ in which he confesses the community called by him as his body, i.e. as his own earthly-historical form of existence, by entrusting to it the ministry of his prophetic Word and therefore the provisional representation of the calling of all humanity and indeed of all creatures as it has taken place in him. He does this by sending it among the peoples as his own people, ordained for its part to confess him before all men, to call them to him and thus to make known to the whole world that the covenant between God and man concluded in him is the first and final meaning of its history, and that his future manifestation is already here and now its great, effective and living hope." (5)

1 C.D. IV 3(2), par.72, 681-761
 2 *ibid.* 762-794
 3 *ibid.* 795-829
 4 *ibid.* 830-901
 5 *ibid.* 681

1

The People of God in World-Occurrence

This section attempts to answer the question of the nature of the world and its history which is the historical environment of the people of God. It is the environment in which his community exists as his earthly-historical form of existence and in which it can exist in no other way than as the people of God. This throws us into the context of the doctrine De providentia which Barth has already covered in detail and shown to have nothing to do with an optimistic evaluation of the world.⁽¹⁾ The twofold aspect of hominum confusione et Dei providentia does in Christ lose its appearance of autonomy and finality but it is by no means dissolved. Because Jesus Christ has as representative man removed human confusion, restored order and concluded peace the twofold aspect can no longer be conceived as having an irreconcilable contradictory character. It is known to the community of Christ but not to the world that the reality of world history lies in what he has already accomplished in and by himself and his call has already made this known and continues to make it known as it is heard and appropriated and obeyed by his community in the power he gives them in his Spirit. His community knows that even after the appearance of Jesus Christ there is still time and history; the world and the community gathered by the Holy Spirit in the world is not the end or goal of God's work.

The vocation of man into the living community of Jesus Christ constitutes his existence as a Christian and can never merely complement that existence, nor can the one be separated from the other. Christ's purpose is not merely to unite individuals with himself but also to unite them with others whom he has and will call to be his disciples and witnesses. The work they are united in is his work, not their own and their foundation or establishment as a community has nothing to do with their own social needs. The very impossibility of structuring a systematic ecclesiology on a Scriptural basis, only the ethical part of which this thesis attempts, is adequately illustrated by ecclesiastical history and the many patterns that have emerged. Barth suggests that: "the reason why the establishment of the community by Jesus himself could not emerge as a definite and distinctive event in the Gospel tradition is rather that this is the theme of the whole Gospel narrative as an account of Jesus...an account of the birth of the Christian community...of the people of God of the last time which has been inaugurated with the coming of Jesus Christ".⁽²⁾

1 C.D.III 3 (1950) Edin.1960, par. 48/49, 3-288

2 C.D.IV 3(2) par.72, 683

No one single text can be taken as the locus classicus for the foundation of the Christian community - not the calling of the disciples, the mission of the twelve, or of the seventy, the Beatitudes, the words of Jesus to Peter about the rock on which he would build his church, the feet-washing, the Last Supper, the missionary command before his ascension or the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, or any other. All of them speak in different ways of the origin of the Christian community.

The existence of the people of God in the world focusses on three questions, viz. what takes place in this historical environment, how should the community see and understand itself in this environment and how does it live in this environment?

The first question can never be considered as a world-view from a philosophical point of view. Although the community is still in the world it is no longer in the world as its members were individually in the world before they were gathered into the community. The individual Christian is in the world as one of the community of Christ who precedes his community and each one will be Christ's witness by his very existence as one of his community, in the promised power and in the places where he leads each one. Salvation history takes place where the community is present because Christ is present there before his community. What takes place in world history in distinction from the history of his community does not escape his will but it takes place only on the left hand of God, not outside or beyond his control, but in hostility and opposition to his will and can only be das Nichtige. The history which takes place outside salvation history is different in that the reconciliation of man to God is not known in it; a true relationship with God is not established the true basis, meaning and goal of history is concealed; it does not disclose that in Christ the contradiction of man's contradiction of his Creator has taken place; and it is different because man, left to himself seems to move towards his own destruction yet God has not yet given it up. Under his providence salvation history continues in spite of the world's rejection of Christ. He continues his work in the world which still does not know him and refuses to recognise him and where he is, his community - his servants - shall be also. (John 12:26) That is what Christ's work in the world is all about; and that is what the work of his community is all about. If it abrogates itself from its servanthood it denies its discipleship.

God is Lord over his own people and also over all peoples whether they acknowledge his rule or not. Although the community of Christ does acknowledge his rule over all things they, too, are involved in the distinctive reality of confusio hominum and they, too, will

constantly be tempted to wonder if the confusion is not, in fact, the reality. But there can be no dualism and no concept of the providentia Dei and the confusio hominum as Hegelian thesis and antithesis resolving themselves in synthesis. The two elements of good and evil always tend to be confused by man but even when the confusion assumes the mastery, God has not withdrawn himself. The word that is addressed to the world in Jesus Christ is the new thing God has done; it is a new reality of world history and this is no Hegelian synthesis. Barth draws attention to the word hominum - it is men that are subjects of this action which results in confusion, not God. God wills, and has achieved in Christ, the unravelling of the confusion which does not indicate a state in which men find themselves but rather an activity in which they are engaged. Men "wander and collide and get confused and as they do so...world history takes place".⁽¹⁾ Barth prefers not to call the devil the author of this confusion for the devil can be abroad only where man is alienated from God and even Christians can cause confusion which can be wholly evil but it need not alienate men from God for Christ unravels the confusion. On the other hand, men alienated from God do create confusion which makes world history seem to be strongly bedevilled. Theologically, the two elements of world history are always entangled by man, viz. on the one side God's good creation and on the other side what we may seriously speak of as the work of the devil, the reality and operation of das Nichtige, the negation of the good creation, which negation can only be negated, rejected and excluded by Christ. What is at issue in this confusion by man is not the negation itself that leads to das Nichtige⁽²⁾ but the confusion of good with evil, which is the most of which men are capable under the limitations of God's providence. They are capable of this as sinners against God. The confusion arises because men ignore the fact that these elements are absolutely antithetical and they tend to relativise the one by the other instead of placing the good creation absolutely above das Nichtige as the reality which is opposed to and excludes the impossible. In confusio hominum everything is reversed and das Nichtige is given a positive existence instead of being treated as excluded by reality, with the logical consequence that das Nichtige, the negation of the good creation of God, emerges as the controller and ruler. The extreme misuse of cosmic and personal powers result in constant wars and the work of destruction caused by the confusion of man goes on even in so-called peace but the glorious feature of all world history is that God's good creation cannot be removed, destroyed or set aside by man's confusion of it with das Nichtige.

1 C.D.IV 3(2), par.72, 695

2 das Nichtige is fully discussed in C.D.III.3 par.50, 289-368. The English translation 'nothingness' fails to convey the meaning conveyed by the original German which I have retained.

Nevertheless, as a result of the confusion of man in the world, the power of the good creation of God can now work only negatively instead of positively and this is the truly terrifying element in the form and picture of world history. World history takes place in this strange co-operation of God and man and the Christian community sees and understands it in this way in the light of the prophetic witness with which it is entrusted and commissioned. Often the existence of the Christian community in the world has been described as an irrevocable tension between these two elements as a dialectic of two kingdoms but to bring the providence of God and the confusion of man under a common denominator simply adds confusion upon confusion. We cannot get behind the twofold view. The grace of God can never be reduced to a principle. It is always a free and sovereign power and a free and self-disclosing truth. This can be the only presupposition in a search for a Christian understanding of world-occurrence and world history in the light of the prophetic witness entrusted as a commission to the people of God. The community sees the contradiction and the conflict and accepts the twofold view but it also sees in this that it is itself created and sustained within the world-occurrence as the people of God. This fact determines its attitude and it awaits the final manifestation of Jesus Christ in the certain hope that he will overcome all the confusion in the world because it is certain that he died and rose again for the whole world. This new thing has made itself known in him as the work of God for the world and his Word to the world. The task entrusted to the community is to attest this new thing to the world and to attest that in spite of the confusion in the world it is not deprived of grace, but, in fact, only continues to exist in the confusion, under the grace of God. The covenant between God and man has been fulfilled in him and in him we do really have the new reality of world history. This is the deliverance and liberation of the world in spite of das Nichtige and in spite of man's confusion for Christ has overcome the former and removed the latter, restoring order and peace between God and man.

The community knows this by faith not sight but the coming of the kingdom for which we pray will be the final, universal and definitive manifestation of Jesus Christ and of what has already taken place in him. In the world-occurrence the people of God sees no more than others see but it sees with "sharper eyes than others and recognises here the antithesis between the rule of God and the confusion of man".⁽¹⁾ It sees the same things differently and because it cannot fear, it cannot hate and can only love. It will affirm and be a witness to the atonement made in Christ and will do or refrain from doing certain things, as appropriate to

1 C.D.IV. 3(2), par.72, 716

the community of Christ. What the community does can never be more than relative to what Christ does. "But the point at issue is that there should be this relative alteration of world history by the erection of signs".⁽¹⁾ The community exists in its hope in Christ, in the world reconciled to God, the covenant fulfilled by him and the order reconstituted by him and it waits for his coming again and rejoices in it for it sees in his coming the goal and end of history.

The second question arising from the world-occurrence of the people of God concerns the way in which the community should see and understand itself in this situation. This question is of course only fully answered in the next three sub-sections of this chapter where I consider the meaning of the community being FOR the world, its task and its ministry. Here, several aspects of the nature of the community need to be mentioned.

Of prime importance, the community is always properly and totally both visible and invisible. This is analogous to the two natures of Christ, and the same problem arises as does in Christology if we stress either the visible or the invisible nature of the church. Because Christ is actually with us and is the meaning and basis of the existence of the community as his earthly-historical form of existence it exists visibly as the community who proclaims Christ as Lord. But it has its existence by virtue of its invisible nature as the community called by Jesus Christ, the ἐκκλησία. Its election and calling in Jesus Christ is known to itself but because the community exists in the world its vocation is not immediately visible to the world which surrounds it although if it obeys its Lord and remains true to its vocation, the invisible aspect will continuously be emerging as the visible. The danger which threatens the community is that the clamour of the environment crowds out the invisible Christological basis and the community all too easily forgets who she is and whose she is. The visible nature of the community is not static; to find its visibility in mere buildings and institutions is to overlook that the community exists visibly as an event of its own history. Under the heading, the Being of the Community, Barth said:

"The church is when it takes place that God lets certain men live as his servants, his friends, his children, the witnesses of the reconciliation of the world with himself as it has taken place in Jesus Christ, the preachers of the victory that has been won in him over sin and suffering and death, the heralds of his future revelation in which the glory of the Creator will be declared to all creation as that of his love and faithfulness and mercy".⁽²⁾

1 C.D.IV 3(2), par.72, 720

2 C.D.IV 1, par.62, 650

Thus the visibility lies in the event in which men are called into activity in the community and find their existence as Christians as one which involves them in their vocation to be living witnesses to Jesus Christ both in the community and in the environment of the community. The community cannot be ideal but must always have concrete human form occurring in the world of flesh and blood, in men awakened by the Holy Spirit to a thoroughly human activity in their historical existence and the visible church must not be identified with any abstract concept of an institution, even though this is the way those outside the community will observe it, for they cannot perceive its invisible nature until they see by faith and no longer by sight alone. The community is dependent on its world-occurrence and therefore also on its social forms and structures but it is not bound to them; its dependence is not a restrictive one for it always exists as the community of Christ in total freedom. Nevertheless, it exists in the world like Cain, a "fugitive and vagabond in the earth". It does not feel at home in the world and appears to the world to exist only in weakness but the community who rests and abides in Christ knows that it finds its strength precisely in returning to its alien land in weakness where it finds its strength in God, for the glory of the community of Jesus Christ is hidden in him until his final revelation.

"this earthly-historical form of existence of Jesus Christ, is the community. He is the Head of this body, the community. And it is the body which has its Head in him. It belongs to him, and he belongs to it...Because he is, it is; it is, because he is. That is its secret, its being in the third dimension, which is visible only to faith".(1)

Thus the community is essentially made up of ordinary, sinful men and women who live in the world and stand in constant need of forgiveness but it is essentially a people who are en route, pilgrims in an alien land, moving towards their eternal home. It can never be determined by the society in which it happens to be or compromise its Christian existence by stooping to serve secular interests. Christians are primarily Christians and only after that are they members of a particular class or culture or state.

The third question asks how the people of God live in world-occurrence. Like the previous discussion, this is also supplementary to the more important question of the task and ministry of the community.

The community lives within the environment of the world by virtue of its secret which is that it is the people called by Jesus Christ and is maintained in existence by him as his witnesses who are committed to him as Lord. Again I refer to the discussion on the Being of the Community, especially the footnote on ὄντως Χριστοῦ (2)

1 *ibid* 661
2 *ibid* 662-668

and also to Barth's section on the Growth of the Community, especially what he says about the communio sanctorum.⁽¹⁾ The community does not exist by its own activity or by its faith or its love or even its hope in Christ, but it exists as a "prédicate, dimension and form of existence of his".⁽²⁾ This is the secret and basis of its existence in world-occurrence. He is not dependent for his existence on it but it cannot exist without him. It exists on the basis that first, in God's eternal election of grace, he made himself its Head and therefore made it his body. (Eph.1:4).

"For the reconciliation of the world to God accomplished in Jesus Christ is first the history of a breaking through of God to man, and only secondly and in consequence a history of the relationship and intercourse between man and God".⁽³⁾

Thus the life of the community, the way it lives in world-occurrence, is not by any means separate from its commission.

"It is not a case of its having a commission, in order then... to have its own Church life. Rather its commission is also immediately its life. This, too, is to be understood on the basis of Christology."⁽⁴⁾

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring together and guarantee and maintain the unity between the transcendence and immanence of Christ. and to hold together in the work of the community both the divine and the human working, being and action; on the one hand a creative freedom and action and on the other, the creaturely. He does not identify, intermingle or confound them but brings them into harmony and binds them into a true unity. In the work of the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ precedes his people and is present and received in the life of his community of any century, in any land or place where he leads them and where they exist as his people.

2

The Community for the World

In this section Barth establishes the theological basis for his thesis that the community is for the world, which is the presupposition for what he outlines as the task and the ministry of the community. He clearly sets out his direction, starting as always with Christ. First and supremely, God exists for the world because in Christ, God is not for himself but for the world and in Christ, God who is truly God has become truly man which is the decisive orientation, meaning and purpose of his community. On that basis, the community of Jesus Christ is the community for the world as it exists for men and the world and so also for itself. It also exists for God, the Creator and Lord of the world and for the fulfilment

1 C.D.IV 2, par.67, 651-660

2 C.D.IV 3(2), par.72, 754

3 ibid. 753

4 Credo, 143

of his purpose and will for and to all human creatures. The disciples were not told that they should be merely salt and light, but the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and as such he sends them forth.

At this point Barth makes another one of his radical departures from traditional theology. He points out that the classical doctrine of the church - in the patristic and scholastic, Reformation and post-Reformation doctrines - reflect a gap at this point which should not be affirmed and passed down to the future in this form. What he suggests then is virtually a restatement of ecclesiology. He sets his theology wherever possible on a Scriptural foundation but, as Church history has shown us time and time again, Scripture is capable of being interpreted in different ways, often opposing ways. It is for this reason that Barth himself, at the very beginning of the Dogmatics clarifies the task, place and limits of theology. He always recognises that Jesus Christ, attested by the Scriptures and proclaimed by the Church, is the one criterion for theology and that theologians never have all the answers but always remain students of theology. The most that theology can claim for itself is that it exists to test the proclamation of the church as the guardian of the Word but theology can never claim authority in its own right. For Barth, all theology must be Christ-orientated, Christ-centred and move towards Christ as its τέλος. Whenever he does differ from theological tradition, as in this case, he presents the pros and cons, measures his view by Scripture and then takes a firm stand in the direction he believes to be supported by Scripture and moves forward with his conclusion as a new premise for the next point in his reconstruction of theology. Obviously there will always be scholars who differ with his interpretation at various points and can therefore not accept all his premises. As I am moving towards the structuring of a hypothetical doctrine of special ethics based on Barth's doctrine of vocation, I do not presume to enter into debate on this or other points, such as the doctrine of election, which I accept on the basis of the support Barth himself has given for his departure from tradition at these points. Attention had to be drawn to this fact at this stage because we are approaching the more controversial aspects of the task and ministry of the church where even Barth's exposition is open to confusion and liable to be interpreted in contradictory ways which can lead to great divergence and often open hostility. This especially applies to the interpretation that is to be deduced from Barth's constant emphasis on the nature of the church as witness to the Word which can lead, on the one hand, to pacifism, and on the other hand, to activism. This will be illustrated in chapter Five where a critique is offered on contemporary ecumenical interpretations and applications of the great commission.

At this stage, therefore, I accept that Barth is justified in saying that the Heidelberg Catechism (1563, Qu.54) gives an indisputable definition of the church but does not say all that it should say in the following:

"it is the elect community which from the beginning of the world to its end will be gathered, protected and preserved by Jesus Christ through his Spirit and Word in the unity of true faith to eternal life". (1)

Barth finds fault with Calvin, too, for not defining the goal of the existence of the Church. According to Calvin:

"its only function is to be, as Cyprian put it, the mother of believers as God is their Father, to nourish them as infants and children, to surround them with motherly care as adolescents, and to bring them to the goal of their faith". (2)

Barth questions the claim that the Church can be an end in itself in its existence as the community and institution of salvation. He finds it surprising that Calvin's rediscovery of the prophetic office of Christ did not work itself out either in his own doctrine of the church or in that of his followers. Barth's own reconstruction builds on, rather than departs from, Calvin's ecclesiology, reading into Calvin's ecclesiology the implications for the church of the two decisive New Testament texts, viz. II.Cor.5:19 and John 3:16. The point at which the classical doctrine seems to fail is in its failure to take cognisance of the essential relationship of the institution and community of salvation to the world outside, so that it suffers from the same 'holy egoism' as Barth found in the classical doctrine of man's vocation. For Barth, the church exists originally and essentially for the world and in classical ecclesiology the fact that it exists for the world does not appear at all. As Christ was sent into the world by the Father, so the community is sent into the world and is directed to exist for it, being not 'of the world', though 'in it'. (John 17:14-18).

Before expanding his theological foundation for this assertion, he elaborates on the more essential elements concerning the basis on which the community exists for the world, not idly, but in the active execution of its commission in obedience which is linked with its sending into the world. The true community is the fellowship in which it is given to men to know the world as it is, the society in which it is given to men to know and practise their solidarity with the world and the society in which it is given to men to be under obligation to the world.

The world does not know itself, does not know God, nor man, nor the relationship and covenant between God and man but the community of Christ knows the world concretely, being aware of what, both inwardly and outwardly, is involved in man's existence. The true commun-

1 C.D.IV 3(2), par.72, 765

2 ibid. 766, quoting Calvin Institutes IV.1.1

ity exists visibly in the world as a sign, although those who see the sign cannot know that it exists in the power of the Holy Spirit. But this inner basis will be visible in the manner in which the community comes to them, acts, speaks to and concerning them and finally in the manner in which it discharges its commission. This is the criterion by which we may know whether all is well with the community or not.

The community is to know and practise their solidarity with the world but not to conform to it, lest the salt loses its savour. Solidarity with the world means full commitment to it, participation in its situation, identifying with it and recognising that it, too, as the community of Christ who himself exists as the Saviour of the world, can exist in worldly fashion, willingly and with a good conscience, in the recognition that its members also in themselves in some way actualise all human possibilities. If they boast and rejoice in the Saviour and would win men they must be prepared to be human and worldly like them and with them. Solidarity means not conforming to the world by dividing into groups like the world does.

"It manifests a remarkable conformity to the world if concern for its purity and reputation forbid it to compromise itself with it. Coming from the table of the Lord, it cannot fail to follow his example and to sit down at table with the rest, with all sinners." (1)

The world is the society in which it is given to men to be under obligation to the world because the community knows the world, is united in solidarity with it and is made jointly responsible for it and its future as the earthly-historical form of existence of Jesus Christ their Lord who, when he was in the world, suffered with it and for it and acted for it and to it. Within the limits of its creaturely capacity and ability it is ordained and summoned to co-operate with him in his work. Since his work is on and in the world, the community is pledged to the world and made responsible for what is to become of it and cannot be neutral or passive or withdraw into itself.

"It is thus impossible that the community which believes in this God should pass by those who are without as the priest and Levite passed by the man who had fallen among thieves." (2)

It follows that if the community is to give to the needy they cannot do so without first receiving from their Lord. What the community gives in love passes through its own hands and it feeds itself also from the same bounty, existing as it reaches beyond its own needs into the world. Its activity is always directed to those who are not visibly within the community.

1 *ibid.* 775
2 *ibid.* 778

It is not a human trait that the community exists for the world in this way. That they do this is a sign of their freedom to exist for the world in this way in the liberation by grace which they neither earned nor deserved. The grace of this liberation does not automatically accrue to every member of the community for that would be an illegitimate equation of the fulfilment of the promise with the existence of the Christian community and a false restriction laid by theology on the sovereignty of God. God unites with men but is not bound to them and the union of men with God as the purpose of their history with God has always to be specifically and personally realised by each of them. So we cannot say that it is in virtue of their membership of the community that it is given to all men to exist for the world in this way for that leaves no room for either the freedom of divine grace or the freedom of human will which operates in the regenerate man within the confines of God's sovereignty. The fulfilment of the promise takes place in a specific measure and manner in the being and action of some men but not contemporaneously or equally in all. For that reason we must avoid making a distinction between the believing and unbelieving or the elect and reprobate among the members of the community. Only abstract philosophy entangles us in such distinctions.

"On the basis of the one Lord, the one calling of his community and the one promise and order which he has given it, we can only see and understand all those united in it as elected by him and therefore as summoned and ordained to faith and obedience, but also as participant in the forgiveness of sin in all its forms, and therefore as those who deny faith and withhold obedience, as those who in some way are all both generally and individually recalcitrant in relation to the One who calls them...on this basis, i.e., of what they are in and by Jesus Christ, we can only describe all of them as the invisible church, i.e., the church which in its reality is directly visible only to God and to its own members only in faith, but also...as the visible church which both they and the world may know".(1)

In this way, Barth avoids making a distinction between a pure, invisible church and a mixed visible church and calls us to exercise restraint and describe the community:

"not as the society in which it is given to all men, but rather as that in which it will be given to men, i.e. to some men, to exist for the world".(2)

Barth sets out a clear Christological basis for the presupposition that the Christian community is for the world so that we may know that this is not just an idealisation or a 'programme' with a men-conceived basis. It is not a philosophical postulate or assumption but a statement of faith. All ecclesiology is grounded, critically limited and also positively determined by Christology, on the basis of which the community knows that it owes its origin and continuation to a definite power, the operation of the Holy Spirit; that

1 *ibid.* 783/4

2 *ibid.* 784

its task can consist only in its confession of Jesus Christ; that that confession can only be a grateful response to the fact that first and supremely Jesus Christ confessed it, does confess it and will continually do so; and that the community can and should understand itself in the full New Testament sense of the term as a likeness... a provisional representation of the divine-human reality distinct from itself, which it denotes and portrays as this likeness.

The community can only portray and denote this divine-human reality imperfectly and inadequately.

"The reality distinct from itself which it denotes and portrays as this likeness is the kingdom of God which commences and is already particularly revealed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the terminus a quo of its own specific history, and which will be definitively and universally manifested in the final appearing of Jesus Christ as the terminus ad quem of its own history." (1)

The community is not identical with the reality of Jesus Christ, not an extension of the incarnation, but must recognise itself as the earthly-historical form of his existence and therefore, his likeness, within the limits of its human limitations and the resultant obscurity and confusion. The purpose of its existence as his community is the provisional representation of the calling of all humanity and all creatures to the service of God as it has gone forth in Jesus Christ, for the coming of the kingdom of God in him is the establishment of the determinative lordship of God and his Word and Spirit in the whole of his creation. The function of the community is to follow and at the same time to precede his universal call to the world to "Know ye that the Lord He is God", (Psalm 100) and to "let the earth hear his voice."

On these grounds, Barth concludes that as the community of Jesus Christ perceives itself to be this likeness it can and should see and understand that it exists for the world.

3

The Task of the Community

The community is sent into the world and exists for it with a task which constitutes and determines its existence. The task has a definite content, is addressed to specific people and there is a purity of its content and of its relation to those it addresses.

The task is defined in Acts 1:8:- "you shall be my witnesses..." He himself is the content of the task; the community has to confess Jesus Christ in the world as the Saviour of the world; in doing so, because it confesses him only in the power of the Holy Spirit, it effectively "takes Jesus Christ into the world", for

no one can confess Jesus is the Christ except in the power of the Holy Spirit (I John 4:2) and where the Holy Spirit is, Jesus is really present. The community is set in the world to attest and affirm the Christian position which includes not only God's Yes to the world in Christ, but also his No to sin. It asserts the necessity for repentance, naming sin as opposition to God, and revealing the consequences of sin in the form of man's pride and sloth and falsehood.

"In the measure that it does this, it is true to its task and serves it. In the measure that it does not, it turns from it and works against it. If it does not do it at all...it has abandoned its task and it has ceased to be the Christian community and must be called to life again."⁽¹⁾

In proclaiming that Jesus is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the community attests the goodness of God actualised in him, the same yesterday, today and forever, always present in his world.

The specific people to whom the task of the community is directed are the people who do not yet know that Jesus is the Christ and they have to be addressed in a manner appropriate to the way in which Christ addresses us in his Word in our need. The man to whom the community is directed is the man who lacks the Gospel and stands in supreme need of the knowledge of it. We do not commence by confronting him with his ignorance and misconception, for when God addresses man in the Gospel he does not really commence with the fact that man does not know him and is remote and alien. It is the new thing which God gives in his self-revelation in the encounter with the living Christ that shows man to be a stranger and unbeliever who has been in untruth but is now pointed in a new direction. Only when confronted by the truth does man know himself to be a sinner, alienated and hostile to God. God confronts him in this condition but God is not interested in his sinful condition and refuses to recognise it for God considers and calls him on the basis of what he is already in relation to what Christ has done for him and on his behalf. In addressing him God addresses him as man reconciled to God and links him with his work for all mankind, already accomplished in Christ but yet to be fulfilled. The community cannot see this man in any way other than the way in which God confronts each and every man. In its witness it is to represent the new thing in the Gospel and it cannot fail to regard him as the one with whom and for whom God was in Christ and will be, in spite of his own evil attitude. The man so addressed may persist in his rejection, he may become arrogant or merely disinterested; he may become religious, or an atheist, a sceptic or a philosopher; but as God overlooks his ignorance and his attitude so we must. We can only deal with him on two levels, the lower one in which he is in desperate need and

¹ *ibid.* 798

mortal sickness, and the upper level in which he is the man who in all his misery and descent into hell is loved by God and impelled by his love in an upward direction. He has actually been rescued from his danger but his persistence in ignorance is the threat under which he stands of himself. His future in liberation by God is already breaking into his present and the community must regard the man it addresses as the one who is already moving towards this future. It cannot give up one whom God has obviously not yet given up.

The purity of the task of the community is threatened by the fact that it consists of men doing their only too human work which is always subject to two possible distortions and falsifications. In the first place, there is always the danger of a failure to see that the Gospel is always the living Word of the living Lord. If the Gospel is presented abstractly and objectively, the impartation will not go out as a concrete demand for a decision of faith and obedience. The community is vulnerable at this point. It can find many convincing reasons for either remaining neutral or keeping to generalities. For example, it may claim to be waiting on a clear directive before taking any step towards its mission; or there may be differences of opinion in the community as to how the mission should proceed; or it may claim that the purity of its message must be maintained by keeping to a general abstract and neutral Christianity which never compromises itself or upsets anyone. Such signs are indications that the community needs to start its task of evangelisation with itself, praying for renewal. When the gospel is no longer presented as relevant to specific times, it is no longer preached as the living dynamic Word of the living Jesus Christ... it is emptied of its content and loses its purity...the salt has lost its savour.

In the second place there is the danger of the failure to see that the Gospel is always the constant Word of God. This is the opposite tendency to the one which abstracts the Gospel. In its zeal for its task the community may lose the identity or constancy of the Gospel, falsifying it by transforming it into "another Gospel". (Gal.1:6f) Here we have falsification of the content as represented in all the heresies of every age, from ancient gnosticism to rationalism, romanticism, speculative, empiricist and existential philosophies. Their common starting point is that the gospel is a sum of dogmas which must be formulated in a way which will best reach the men of this particular age; the spirit and knowledge of the age becomes a measure, criterion and instrument in the translation, interpretation and application of the Gospel. The community cannot be allowed to impose on the gospel its own faith, mode of thought and outlook in an effort to make it readily accessible but must itself as the community of the living Christ whose Word is

living, dynamic and constant, maintain an attitude of pure receptivity and allow itself to be mastered by it. Jesus Christ is the living Subject of his prophetic Word and he makes it his active Word which constantly challenges and renews his community too and they may not distort or falsify it, but must continue learning in the school of the living Word.

There have been doubly dangerous moments in history when the community failed to rise up and follow him and alternatively when it did rise up but substituted an autonomous movement for an obedient movement, thus breaking its vital contact with its Lord. Without this contact it cannot speak the Gospel as God's Word, alive and relevant to all situations and all men. When the community patronises its hearers instead of treating them as its counterpart it also fails in its task. It cannot decide that it will be better off without any one of the men to whom it must address its message. It can only represent the cause of Jesus Christ and must not confuse its ministry with attempts to secure certain advantages or successes. The community can only serve and not control the world.

Three general statements offer an evaluation of the task of the community:

- 1 The world would be lost without Jesus Christ and his Word and work.
- 2 The world would not necessarily be lost if there was no church.
- 3 The church would be lost without its counterpart in the world.

The community can only be faithful to its ministry, which we must now consider, if it remembers those three points about its task.

4

The Ministry of the Community

The ministry of the community is very definite, limited and full of promise.

Its definiteness consists in all that has been said already about the nature of the world and the existence of the community as the community which has its existence in Christ in the world and is for the world because he is for the world; and in what has been said about its task and mission, constituted by the promise of the enabling power of the Holy Spirit which makes it Christ's witness in the world.

Its limitation lies in its active subordination to God from whom it derives and therefore to man to whom it is sent to serve as it serves God. It transgresses its limit if it expects to carry God's work through to its goal or makes this goal its aim and purpose, assuming responsibility both for the going out of the Word and for its coming to man which can only take place in the power of the

Holy Spirit. The constant criterion it must apply for distinguishing other things from what is demanded is:

- 1 Where in a given situation it is not clear that it has to render service of both God and man.
- 2 Where it is a matter of supposed service to God to which the character of service of man is totally alien.
- 3 Where there is a question of a supposed service of man which has nothing to do with the service of God. (1)

Here Barth insists that no more is demanded of the community than this definite witness. It must not radically criticise human existence and its state of disintegration but must attest the light which has broken into the world, rather than the darkness which the light dispels when it falls on to it.

"Their ministry consists in causing this divine Word of this divine work to be heard in the world, and therefore in confession to the world as his witnesses that Jesus Christ is the One in whom it has taken place and revealed. Beneath the level of the witness determined by its origin, theme and content the ministry of the community must never sink if it is to be true and genuine service of both God and man. The matter in which it is engaged is no less than this." (2)

I have quoted Barth in full as he defines what he means by a ministry of witness as the fine knife-edge on which the Christian must walk, constantly testing his witness by the criterion of whether it serves the divine Word or not. This is the crucial point at which Barth is most often misunderstood. It might seem that he says too much in saying that no more is demanded or expected than this definite witness. This certainly offers a basis on which to build a pacifist theology. Crucial to understanding what Barth is saying is the meaning he attaches to the one word 'witness'. If you take witness to mean what it means in secular use then it can only involve words and not actions. But an interpretation of witness as only direct attestation and testimony by proclamation or any other means does not do justice to all of what Barth has said in the preceding four volumes and particularly concerning the doctrine of vocation. He has described the Christian community as one which is a witness to Christ by the very fact of its existence and life as the people of God. This concerns their relationships with one another in the world and their relationships both corporately and individually with those in the world but outside the community. Relationships witness to themselves by their manifestations in the lives of people in their everyday life. He has also said that when the community does not represent Christ as present in their life and in the world then they cease to be the witness to which they have been appointed and forfeit their existence as Christians. In all of what has gone before, I fail to find

1 *ibid.* vide 834
 2 *ibid.* 835

any justification for taking Barth to mean that witness can ever be only words. The Word is preached and proclaimed in words. But in many cases actions speak louder than words and often actions can deny the integrity of the words if they do not confirm the spoken testimony. The Gospel message is distorted if we overlook that it exhorts us to be doers of the Word as well as hearers. Surely the ministerium Verbi divini means service of the Word which comes to us in Christ primarily and only secondarily, as attesting him, in the Scriptures, the written Word. Jesus Christ, the revealed Word of God, did not only speak. In McAfee Brown's often used words "Jesus Christ put his body where his words were and we must do likewise". I think that this is embodied in all of what Barth says about the community as the earthly-historical form of Christ's existence. I take my stand at this point with the interpretation that when he says the community must only witness and no more, causing the divine Word to be heard in the world, he means that by all that it thinks, speaks and does, the community must be a living witness to him as its living Lord, providing in its actions and its words evidence that it lives and moves and has its being not by its own autonomous will but by divine grace. It must certainly cause his voice to be heard in the world and it can do this only in the power of his Spirit when his voice is heard by the whole earth speaking the divine word of salvation in and through the human lives of men and women who live their whole lives under his Lordship as Σιδάρονοι. If we give to ministry the true New Testament meaning which is denoted by δίκονία then we cannot fail to see that a ministry of witness implies service in both word and deed. Holding to this interpretation of ministry which is both definite and limited witness to Christ in the sense outlined supra I move on to Barth's next point, viz. that ministry is full of promise, which is followed by the nature of the ministry and then the forms of ministry.

The promise is the origin, theme and content of its witness. In the fulfilment of the promise that "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:8) the community is gathered, awakened and enlightened as it is constituted as his community in the power of his Spirit which is the way he continues his work in this period between his first and second coming. The Jesus who comes to us in his Spirit in the present period is the same Jesus made known in the incarnation and who will be made known fully revealed in all his glory at his final coming. On those terms it would be correct to speak of three comings, the second of which is the way in which Jesus is now present in his community in the fulfilment of the promise he gave to his disciples before he ascended to reign in glory. This would avoid the confusion that arises because of the gap that seems to some to exist between his coming at the incarnation and his final

coming.

In the boldness and power in which the community exercises its ministry certain fruits of the spirit 'fall into its lap' but the community does not live by such individual fulfilments nor should it set itself to experience them nor seek to live by them. They cannot be more than signs. The community can only live by the promise of its ministry fulfilled in Christ which will not fail.

The ministry takes various forms but its nature is the same in all its forms. It is always declaration, exposition and address, or the proclamation, explication and application of the Gospel as the Word of God entrusted to it. The community has the power to set up signs by its declaration of the Gospel.

"Its whole being and action in every aspect and form has the sterling content of witness in the simple or varied proclamation: 'Jesus Christ is risen, He is risen indeed'...Yet if its witness is to be authentic, dignified and powerful, then it must also have the naive force of a simple proclamation of the Gospel permeating and sustaining all its activity." (1)

In explanation or explication it proves itself to be concerned that the right understanding of the gospel reaches its hearers. Here, too, it can only set up signs and not communicate knowledge as truth for the work of the Holy Spirit is to lead them into knowledge of the truth.

Evangelical address is application of the proclamation and the explication. It cannot achieve this in a vacuum. It must really know the men it addresses, know the point where they are and where they may be reached. In evangelical address men are claimed in advance for what is to be made known to them and they are summoned to the rest and peace of God which invites them to partake of the feast prepared. It gives them at least an indirect push in the direction of salvation and peace. The community realises its existence concretely by not shunning the world but meeting it across the frontier.

The forms which the ministry take manifest both multiplicity and unity. The multiplicity is normal because it is created, justified and sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit in divine freedom. There is also an abnormal multiplicity which derives from its perversion by fallible human nature. The Holy Spirit does not enforce uniformity but manifests the divine calling and endowment of the Christian community in manifold new, different and specific ways, demanding in each specific case obedience and faithfulness. In any particular community care must be exercised that the group does not depend on arbitrariness but on divine gifts and that the life of the community really takes place within the communion of

the Holy Spirit, not as an inactive static society, but as a manifestation of Christ's living presence in the world.

Paul illustrates the function of ministry by his image of the body and its members. In the first place, the body is one and as such has many members with different ministries according to the different gifts of grace given. In the second place, the many individual members constitute one body. Christ himself is the original of the relations of unity and multiplicity. (I Cor.12:4f, Romans 12:3f and Eph.4:1f).

In every age and place specific forms of the witness of the community come to us indicating both the unity and the plurality of the activity involved. In the first place, the unity is primarily implied in the missionary or baptismal command. (Mat.28:18-20) All power is given to Jesus who requires one thing of his disciples, viz. that they are to help all nations to become what they themselves are; they are to make them disciples by calling them, in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; i.e. by appealing to the authority of the triune God, vested and manifested in Jesus, to a new beginning, to the state of hope and to prayer for the Holy Spirit for their equipping for the work of ministry; Christian baptism which the Christian asks for and receives from the community is the sign given as a human response to God's work of reconciliation; it indicates a new beginning, the beginning of his life in Christ. They are not automatically made disciples by their water baptism. They are to be made disciples by teaching them what Jesus himself taught them, and what he continues to teach his disciples in every age in the power of his Word.

The plurality of the ministry has its basis in the active life of Jesus himself, differentiated into speech and action, and the direction given to the disciples has a corresponding twofold form. The deed or the word of Jesus are sometimes emphasised and referred to separately but they are twofold in their unity. The whole of the Gospel message is one of witness to the God who not only speaks but acts and the decisive act of God which gives meaning to all history is the event in which he not only gives man his Word but gives with it himself, coming to man as the living Word, a living witness in word and act to God's love for all mankind. The greatest of all is Emmanuel, God-with-us, in whom he gives himself. In him we are called to present also our bodies, dedicated to his service, a daily witness that God is with us. Jesus spoke and healed; he healed the whole man. We are to speak and heal the whole of his creation in his Name in specific activities which support and are supported by the proclamation, exposition and evangelical address by the community of the Word of salvation entrusted to them.

The community is empowered by the promise of the Holy Spirit and commissioned by its Lord in his words, recorded in Acts 1:8, to be witnesses in all the world that in Jesus Christ the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled and claimed by him in his own authority to have been fulfilled:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

In both its unity and differentiation the community represents what it is its task to represent to the world, viz. the likeness of the kingdom of God.

Barth now lists twelve basic forms of ministry which may be named separately but cannot possibly be separated from one another as together they form an integral whole. At this point he makes a statement which cannot be overlooked and which confirms my claim (supra) that Barth could never have conceived of ministry or witness as consisting only of speech in one form or another. Where he does speak in one place or another, sometimes very lengthily, of what can only be verbal witness, we have to hold fast to his clearly stated intention that speech always has its counterpart in action. It is distortion of his exposition to abstract any one statement of his from his whole theological intention.

"...the right to understand the whole from these main stand-points...will find confirmation in the fact that we cannot discuss the speech of the community in detail without realising in detail that in it we are always concerned with a concrete action, and conversely that we cannot discuss its action without having to maintain that it is impossible without concrete speech." (1)

The fulfilment of the threefold function of ministry in the form of proclamation of the Gospel, explanation of it in teaching and evangelical address in application and summoning men to the Gospel, is manifested in the following ministries of the community. (2)

1 Praise of God

Praise is speaking and action in a concrete sense; the community sings, not for entertainment but from an inner necessity.

2 Preaching

It has to speak the Word actively, not just speak about it; it does not reflect, reason, dispute or instruct; it proclaims, summons, invites and commands. When it does this preaching is a liturgical act.

3 Teaching

Instruction of the community must neither be over-estimated

1 *ibid.* 864

2 Scriptural basis jointly in I.Cor.12:4f, Rom.12:3f, Eph.4:1f.

nor under-estimated; the community must avoid the tendency to confuse its basic task with that which only God can do. Preaching must not become instruction, nor vice versa. Each has its specific place and role. Instruction is not liturgical.

4 Evangelisation - home missions

This is addressed to the immediate environment in which the community has its existence. On the basis of the custom of infant baptism practised by a large section of the community there are many who seem to belong to the community but do not really belong to it by a living faith. Evangelism reaches out specifically to these people who are part of the visible church but have as yet only believed the Gospel as hearsay knowledge and do not have an inner conviction of true knowledge. Evangelism awakens a sleeping church. The community must always be engaged in evangelism which is continually hindered by the notion that all nominal Christians are already at the place to which they are summoned by the Gospel. Evangelism must not engage negatively in the criticism and destruction of this notion, not attempt to separate the sheep from the goats, but must continually address all its members as being in need of the gospel of renewal, summoning them to commitment and re-commitment to their Lord.

5 Missions to the whole world

The whole community is committed, whether they actively go out into the world or not. Foreign missions announce to the heathen that salvation is for all and any particular missionary or missionary society does not act in isolation but acts representatively and on behalf of the whole people of God, the whole missionary community. If other purposes predominate, such as the extension of Western culture and civilisation, or the desire to support any particular political ideology, then mission is falsified. Mission has to take seriously the false beliefs of other world religions it encounters and evaluate them by the light of the criterion of truth in Christ, not compromising or finding points of contact with the Gospel, but clearly and radically opposing the Gospel to them in its uniqueness and particularity. Missions concern the establishment of the whole ministry of the church and cannot avoid including education and improvement of physical health through medical missions but these tasks must not become an end in themselves; nor must the goal be simply to convert the heathen; the goal is to attest to the heathen the work and Word of the God who has created them by his call to be his witnesses and who wills to equip them also for ministry in their own right. Thus the mission does not set itself above the community or patronise it but integrates itself and subordinates itself to it as part of the wider community of Christ.

6 Theology

Theology is at every point critical scholarship in the context of the ministry of the community. In its ministry of theology the community tests its whole action by the standard of its commission and in the light of the Word. Theology, both biblical and exegetical, expresses witness to Christ. Theology is threatened by every kind of human pride and, in solidarity with the community, must always have the whole world in view and remain constantly aware of whom and what it speaks when it speaks of man who was created to be in fellowship with God and with man, and only finds the meaning of his existence in Christ, true man and true God. Theology does not need apologetics but must offer only good dogmatics, based on the truth revealed in Christ.

7 Prayer

Prayer is the responsive action of the community to the ever-present reality of the living Christ in whom and with whom they live in perfect fellowship; prayer is indispensable to the community, both corporately and individually. When the Christian ceases to pray he ceases to be a Christian for he only has his existence in Christ by virtue of his relationship with Christ through the Holy Spirit. When he prays he does not pray by his own spirit but by the inner witness of the Spirit within him who unites him through prayer with the living Christ; it is a two-way communication, not a soliloquy; in prayer he asks for direction and receives the confirmation that it will be given when and as needed. The Christian does not just pray sometimes... he is to pray without ceasing, both in thanksgiving and intercession and supplication. Prayer is more than an act of faith...it is the reality of Christian existence experienced daily in the lives of those who are united with Christ. Prayer is the origin and basis for Christian ethics and will receive more attention in the next chapter.

8 Pastoral Ministry

God is the one properly concerned with the cure of souls but in the ministry of witness he commits his people to a corresponding human concern, in his Name, for everyone who has any need whatsoever. All the various ministries listed here, directly or indirectly, are involved with this service which is not merely of man, but is service offered to both God and man in his Name and power. There can be no regular programme. The community depends daily on God for direction to be on hand to offer this service in extraordinary conditions and emergencies as they arise in daily life.

9 Leadership

Definite personal examples of Christian life and action are

always in evidence and may be pointed to as witnesses and they in turn need to protect themselves from self-glorification and from acquiring disciples who follow them and not Jesus.

10 The Diaconate

This represents not only a specific action of the community but the whole of its action and witness with which it serves both God and man. In the diaconate the community accepts solidarity with 'the least of the little ones', those in obscurity, the hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless, sick and imprisoned; it offers service to the man who has fallen among thieves. This is service fulfilled in company with Christ who declared himself true Neighbour of the lost. The action of the community in this ministry includes:

"caring for the sick, the feeble, and the mentally confused and threatened, looking after orphans, helping prisoners, finding new homes for refugees, stretching out a hand to stranded and shattered fellow-men of all kinds".⁽¹⁾

Particular problems arise in theory and practice of the community. These problems influence the particular interpretation which any section of the community may put on the way it is to execute the great commission. These are briefly illustrated in Chapter IV, Appendix B. Here, they need only to be noted.

First, concerning the task of giving help to the needy:

"its distinctive task cannot be undertaken... unless the community realises that the need of individuals is also ... decisively, though not exclusively, grounded in certain disorders of the whole of human life in society, so that at certain points a limit will be set to what it can do or try to do by prevailing social, economic and political conditions. The community must not close its eyes to this fact, nor try to evade its partial responsibility for it. Has it not contributed to their emergence at least by its silence? This recognition will not cause the diaconate to refrain from fulfilling its task at the frontier set by these relationships. But it cannot refrain from expressing this recognition, from imparting it to the community in order that the latter may raise its voice and with its proclamation of the Gospel summon the world to reflect on social injustice and its consequences and to alter the conditions and relationships in question. In this situation there is need for the open word of Christian social criticism in order that a new place may be found for Christian action and a new meaning given to it."⁽²⁾

Secondly, it can happen, as it did in Christian socialist Germany, that the state,

"under an original Christian impulse but mostly in its almost irresistible development to a more or less openly totalitarian and therefore a welfare state, has taken over the tasks once discharged by the diaconate, assuming responsibility for them so that first education and now pastoral care in the widest

1 *ibid.* 891

2 *ibid.* 892

sense have come under its wing, being transformed into a varied apparatus of social security...the pastoral care the state gives can tackle the various evils only from outside... so that there is no care for the whole man." (1)

Thirdly, the diaconate, like missionary work, is the work of the whole community and they must resist the temptation to conclude that the welfare state or the existence of charitable groups and societies renders the diaconate superfluous or relieves the community of its responsibility. The community must not only participate in this work but must link it with the whole of their ministry and concretely with the liturgical act of divine worship. The whole community needs to become aware of its corporate guilt in these matters... to coin a word, they need to be 'conscienticised'.

11 Prophetic action

Prophecy is the only charisma mentioned in all Paul's lists and he ranks it above all others. It is one of the basic forms of the ministry and does not replace or supersede what God has said but corresponds to the prophetic work of true witness perfected in Christ in the unity of his justifying and sanctifying work. It witnesses to the atonement already accomplished in Christ and the certain hope of his community concerning the ἔσχατος towards whom it moves, viz. Jesus Christ, the goal of all history. The prophetic word points the community forward so that it

"should not only be engaged in fresh self-examination and self-amendment as ecclesia semper reformanda, but that it should be at least a length or half-length ahead of the world, instead of far behind, in its awareness of the 'signs of the times.' " (2)

The community should be ready to hear his Word again and again in a different form, a new promise and new direction so that it might make a clear decision according to the good and acceptable will of God. In giving this witness, it will come up against opposition and rejection as did the prophets of old. There may be divisions in the community and some will turn accusingly away and in the world,

"most folk, awakened as by the unusual sound of a trumpet, will be roused from the indifference with which they are prepared to accept as tolerable within limits the singing, prayer, preaching, pastoral care and diaconate of the community, and even its evangelisation and missionary work, and will find again in the community, or at least in the resolute part of it, the opponent whom they have perhaps long since suspected... the conflict between the Christian witness and the world... will become unavoidable and patent." (3)

1 ibid. 893
2 ibid. 896
3 ibid. 897

The community needs to be on its guard against forming unholy alliances as did the people of God in resistance against the prophets of old. The prophetic witness cannot be only the concern of the foolish few who proclaim the prophetic word against social injustices and receive retribution and rejection from the society in whose interests it speaks. The prophetic ministry is a gift to all Christians and the Gospel invites them all to use it.

12 Establishment of fellowship

The witness of the community which summons men to their vocation in Christ is itself an act which establishes fellowship between men corresponding to the fellowship which each one of the community enjoys with God and in which divine fellowship they are all united in the Holy Spirit of Christ, who dwells in each heart so united in community. This fellowship is the sign of the kingdom of God and calls all kinds of men and women to unite in fellowship in free thanksgiving for the one grace of God addressed to all and it calls them all to the one service offered in human freedom operating in the sphere of his lordship and grace. This Christian fellowship is unique and has no counterpart in the world outside the community but points eschatologically to the eventual fulfilment of divine-human fellowship in the whole of creation. In its provisional nature it represents the reality of the community united in Christ and as such it transcends national, racial, cultural, economic and social differences. It addresses all kinds and classes of people in the Name of Christ and summonses them in the Gospel call to enter in to the community; it invites them to be baptised to signify the beginning of their new life, to a common hearing of the Word and common participation in praise and prayer and all the ministries of the community, participating also in action by eating and drinking at the common table of the Lord Jesus Christ, for their common nurture, quickening and equipping for the work of ministry.⁽¹⁾

¹ This summary of the twelve main forms which ministry takes in its unity and multiplicity is from C.D.IV.3(2), par.72, 865-901

Chapter Four

ETHICS OF THE DOCTRINE OF RECONCILIATION

The purpose of this thesis was to seek to establish a theological basis for our understanding of the claim which the Lordship of Christ makes on his community and to attempt a statement of the appropriate Christian ethos of the community which is called and sent by the Holy Spirit to be his witnesses in all the world.

Having reached the climax of Barth's doctrine of vocation, I now attempt, on the basis of his superstructure, to outline a hypothetical structure for a doctrine of special ethics which might conceivably form part of an ecclesiology which I believe could be formulated from the whole of Barth's Dogmatics. As pointed out (supra) Barth's reconstruction of theology was not wholly new. Although his method of starting with Christology was a radically new departure, he built on Augustinian and Reformed theology. Taking into account his transfer of the third article of the creed to a central position in the whole of dogmatics, he still followed basically the pattern of the Apostolic Creed, viz. God, creation, reconciliation and the last things. He has overcome the problem of the fourth article by including sin, soteriology, pneumatology, ecclesiology and ethics all under reconciliation. Like Christology, these are written in to every phase of the doctrine in its three forms of justification, sanctification and vocation. In this way he emphasises more than any theologian before him the unity of these doctrines and the impossibility of considering any one of them in isolation from the whole of theology. This does have a corresponding adverse effect in practice for its consequence is that in order to evaluate his doctrine of sin, soteriology, pneumatology, ecclesiology or ethics one has to work through four large volumes and the fragment and in addition make many excursions into the other eight volumes of the Dogmatics, as I have done in this thesis.

To have formulated an ecclesiology would have been contradictory to his unitary plan for a complete Dogmatics with every volume an integral part of the whole. Although we do not even have a nucleus for volume V we do have clear guidelines which show the direction that his eschatology would have taken. Eschatology, also, is built into the whole of his Dogmatics which is never concerned with only the past or the present but always looks forward to the future, as well.

On the next page I have drawn up a paradigm as a suggested continuation of the paradigm on page 7 supra. From the two paradigms which, I consider, provide, together with my first three chapters, a theological basis for our understanding of the claim which the Lordship of Christ makes on his community, I can now attempt a provisional statement of an appropriate Christian ethos.



SUGGESTED CONTINUATION OF THE PARADIGM (vide supra 7)

(An attempt to build a structure for an ecclesiology based on the super-structure of C.D.IV.1,2,3 and 4)

<u>JUSTIFICATION</u>	<u>SANCTIFICATION</u>	<u>VOCATION</u>
4.3 <u>The appropriate liturgical acts of the Christian in community</u>		
The life and worship of the Christian community manifests itself in threefold acts of the community which testify that we are:		
trusting Christ through faith	loving him because he loves us	obeying him as he calls us to a living hope in him
The awakening quickening and enlightening power of the Holy Spirit overcomes the sins of the individual members which are exposed in the encounter with Christ as:		
pride and unbelief sloth and misery falsehood and evasion.		
The Holy Spirit rescues us from our manifold sins, renewing us daily and setting aside our sins as Christ restores the whole man:		
and strengthens us in faith	perfects us in love	commissions us in hope
awakening us in wonder concern commitment	building us up in prayer Bible Study service	enlightening us in spite of solitude doubt temptation

This threefold work of grace evokes this response from the individual members of the community through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit who attests and confirms the threefold Word of God, reconciling us to God and inviting us to partake of fellowship and worship in community where Christ comes to meet us in his risen glory, imparting the glory of his Presence to us.

Man's threefold ethical response marks the stages of his Christian life:

beginning:	continuing:	eschatological fulfilment:
He asks for and community gives baptism with water in the Name of the triune God...based on Christ's own baptism in Jordan; corresponding to the baptism with the Holy Spirit.	He prays continuously in all he does and with the community united in Spirit of prayer ...based on Lord's Prayer; corresponding to his prayer in Gethsemane and everlasting intercession	He partakes of bread and wine sanctified by community in Christ's name, and shared together in memorial of and thanksgiving for his life, death and resurrection...based on Last Supper; corresponding to his real Presence with his community in fullness of his glory.

This threefold liturgical work signifies: 1) indissoluble unity of the community made up of individual Christians and 2) individual Christians are each part of the elect people of God, demonstrating:

faith, in act of baptism	love, in act of prayer	hope, in act of communal meal
corresponding to his incarnation	threefold atoning work manifested in his life and death	resurrection and ascension

reflected in daily lives of the individual Christians and in life of community as a living witness to Jesus Christ, Lord of his world and his church, the witness being accomplished in the promised power of his Spirit (Acts 1:8)

and reflected in: commitment to the Servanthood of the reconciling God's priestly work.	witness to the exaltation of the Son of Man's reconciling kingly work.	endurance in assurance of resurrection to eternal life, the fulfilment of the God-Man's prophetic work.
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What I attempt here is not really a hypothesis; as Barth would say, it is no philosophical assumption; it is essentially a statement of faith based exclusively on the indications given by Barth himself. It is not the consequence of any presumptuous notion on my part that I could complete Barth's 'unfinished symphony'. Nor do I attempt within present limitations to formulate a doctrine of the church. That is a task which I think theology needs to attempt for in this ecumenical age the community is striving towards a consensus. My positive purpose in this study was to establish at least a guideline and to specifically fill the void in the guideline which is left by the incomplete fragment.

As with the first paradigm this continuation must also be read dialectically, both vertically and horizontally. We cannot intellectually conceive of more than one of these movements at one particular time but the advantage of the dialectic principle, perfected by Søren Kierkegaard, is that as our mind moves up and down and backwards and forwards with the movements of thought, all abstract independence of each moment is sublated, so that the essential moment which comes into existence at each point remains subordinated to and integrated with the whole.

In the first paradigm 4.1 Ecclesiology deals with the work of the Holy Spirit which actualises the reconciliation effected in Christ in the life of the community; 4.2 deals with the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual as part of the community, acknowledged in acts of faith, love and hope. The new section, 4.3, on the continued paradigm is the appropriate liturgical action of the Christian community. It is this liturgical work which issues in Christian ethics. The whole of this section is still only a sub-section of 4, pneumatology, for the whole of the Christian life, whether corporately or individually, is grounded in the work of the Holy Spirit. The church, the Christian community, is part of the confession of the Holy Spirit, the fourth article of the Apostles' Creed. It is the reality of the life in the Spirit which Paul describes in Romans Chapter 8; and it can never be experienced in fullness by individual Christians living in isolation but only as they live in the community to which they are bound by the Holy Spirit, and where, together with every other Christian they "groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies", together with the whole of creation. (Rom.8:23). But while we wait in faith, hope and love, we do not wait in idleness; on the contrary, we are appointed to a specific task in the kingdom which we must execute in the promised power of the Holy Spirit which continually renews and equips us for our ministry as we live our Christian life in the community and in the world.

The appropriate liturgical acts of the Christian are manifested in a threefold way in the life and worship of the community, testifying that we trust Christ through faith, love him because he loves us and obey him as he calls us to a living hope in him. This grace in which we now stand is the awakening, quickening and enlightening work of the Holy Spirit which overcomes the threefold sins of pride and unbelief, sloth and misery and falsehood and evasion of the truth which continually oppose themselves and deny our justification, sanctification and vocation which is already effected in Christ and is now being actualised in us as the Holy Spirit abides in us, rescuing us daily from our manifold sins and renewing us as he sets aside and refuses to recognise the sins of which we are made conscious in the encounter with Christ.

The Holy Spirit constantly awakens us in wonder, involves us first in concern and then in commitment to Christ, thus strengthening our faith; at the same time he perfects us in love, building us up in prayer, Bible study and service; in the unity of our faith and love he commissions us in certain hope in God's eternal purpose for the world, already fulfilled in Christ, though as yet only seen in faith, not sight; in our commissioning he enlightens us by the light of truth revealed in Christ, in spite of all that threatens to destroy our hope in a threefold way, first in our isolation and solitude in a world that will not believe, secondly in doubt which assails our hope from all directions and finally in the manifold temptations that we face in our encounter with the worldliness of men.⁽¹⁾ We can proclaim with Paul:

"Therefore since we are justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to the grace in which we now stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God." (Rom.5:1/2)

This threefold response of faith, love and hope is evoked in the individual members through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit who attests and confirms the threefold Word of God and reconciles us to God, inviting us to partake of fellowship and worship in the community where Christ comes to meet us in his risen glory, imparting to us the glory of his real presence.

Man's threefold response marks the stages of his Christian life which has a beginning in water baptism, continues until he dies being maintained in prayer and both the beginning and the continuing Christian life look forward to their eschatological fulfilment in the eternal life of which he already partakes manifested in the glorious fellowship with Christ in which he already participates in holy communion at the Lord's table.

To mark the beginning of his new life in Christ, the Christian asks

1 For elaboration of the theme of this paragraph refer to Evangelical Theology: An Introduction, passim.

for and the community administers to him water baptism in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in obedience to the baptismal command of Jesus. (Mat.28:19). This baptism is based on Christ's baptism in the Jordan river which fulfilled John's baptism unto repentance. In Christ all the things promised in John's baptism have come into being, signifying the Kingdom of God. Water baptism is a human act, an ethical response to the real sacrament in which Jesus gives of himself when he baptises the Christian with the Holy Spirit in the encounter in which he converts sinful man to God. Water baptism is a sign which corresponds to the spiritual re-birth of the Christian, corresponding to his baptism with the Holy Spirit.⁽¹⁾

In his continuing and on-going life in the Spirit, the individual Christian engages with the community of which he is an essential part, in prayer and worship and service. He does this as he is united with the community in the Spirit of prayer and cannot isolate himself from the community. At the same time his membership of the community does not automatically confer sanctification. He is sanctified in the community by the work of the Holy Spirit insofar as he actually participates in the prayer and worship of the community and does not lose his individuality in the corporate worship. The prayer of the community is offered in subordination to the Holy Spirit, for no one can confess Jesus is the Christ except by the Holy Spirit (I John 4:2) and:

"when we cry 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God...(Rom.8:15f)

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words." (Rom.8:26).

The communal prayer which directs the various practical aspects of Christian life is the Lord's Prayer in which the community and individual Christians pray in the words the Saviour taught his disciples. By engaging in the act of prayer with the community the Christian commits himself to the things he prays for, submitting his will to God's will and purpose for him. This has a horizontal extension in the words and deeds of the individual Christian in the whole of his life. This brings us to the sphere of the second form of special ethics, referred to in the Fragment.

The Lord's Prayer is a prayer for the coming of the kingdom in its fullness and, horizontally, for others. Given by the Lord himself, it forms, together with the Lord's Supper, the central act of the Christian faith. It corresponds to his own prayer of intercession in John 17, praying also that God's will be done and interceding for others; it also corresponds to his everlasting intercession

1 For this theme refer to Fragment, IV 4, passim. and to C.D.IV 1, par.63, 740-780

for us at the right hand of the Father.

The Christian's hope in Christ is signified in the eschatological fulfilment to which he looks forward but which is already actualised as he partakes of bread and wine which represent the celestial food of his body and his blood. (John 6:53f).⁽¹⁾ The community sanctifies in Christ's name the common bread and wine, which does not become transubstantiated into his body and his blood but remains the same bread and same wine without any supernatural powers. It is set aside for this holy use to signify the divine-human fellowship which is shared in the communal eating and drinking. Based on Barth's thesis that there is only one sacrament, that of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, we have to say in this context that the eating and drinking is not sacramental. What makes the Lord's Supper a holy Sacrament is the mediation by Christ himself in the power of his Holy Spirit of his real presence. When invited to come in and sup with his disciples he does come as promised. He is really present at the Communion table in the same way as he is really present individually to each Christian who enjoys unio cum Christo. What is distinctive in the Holy Communion is that he instituted this communal meal for the nurture and nourishment of his community so that they may share together in his life, death and resurrection as they gather around his table with him at the head. They do this as a threefold human act: firstly, it is a memorial of his death in the accepted reformed understanding of ἀνάμνησις; to remember Christ and his benefits is for them to be the controlling factors in a man's life; it has an active and personal connotation and reference. Secondly, it is a human offering of thanksgiving in the full sense of εὐχαριστος; a thanksgiving offered for his sacrifice of himself on the Cross as an eternal sacrifice offered once and for all and effective for all who appropriate it by faith. Thirdly, it not only looks back to his death and not only rejoices in his living presence but it looks forward with joy, corresponding to the ἀγαλλίασις of the early church; (Acts 2:46) to the promised fulfilment of our hope in Christ in eternal life in glory of which as Christians we already partake by faith. The nourishment received at the Lord's Table also has a horizontal extension in the words and deeds of the individual Christian in the whole of his life. The liturgical act is repeated frequently, not as an end in itself, but for the upbuilding and equipping of the community for service.

¹ I hold to the exegesis (and there is every indication that Barth would approve) concerning the 'celestial food' given by Athanasius in Epistle IV ad Serapionem, ch.8-23, (if it is part of the fourth letter) or (otherwise) in illud, quicumque dixerit, 1-16, published in original Greek, in Migne's Latin translation and French translation, Lebon. It was not translated into English by Shapland in his translation of Letters ad Serapionem, as he did not consider it part of the fourth epistle. We have prepared our own translation.

This threefold liturgical work signifies at every point both the indissoluble unity of the community constituted by individual Christians and the fact that the individual Christian is one of the community who are the elect people of God who demonstrate their faith in an act of baptism, their love in acts of prayer and their hope in partaking of the communal meal; this human work corresponds to the threefold atoning work of justification, sanctification and vocation of man, manifested in Christ's incarnation, life and death, and resurrection and ascension; it is reflected in the daily lives of the individual Christian and in the life of the community in their thought, word and deed which constitute them as living witnesses to Jesus Christ, who is Lord of his world and of his church, which he has constituted as his earthly-historical form of existence to be his witnesses in the world in the promised power of his Holy Spirit; (Acts 1:8) this witness is the work of ministry of the community which is reflected as a special ethos in the life of the Christian in commitment to the service of Christ in his Servanthood which is the priestly work of the reconciling God who became man for this purpose; it is also reflected in witness to the exaltation of the Son of Man to glory which is his kingly work of reconciliation; and in the unity of both the Christian's commitment and witness, his existence as a Christian is endurance in the hope of his eschatological assurance of resurrection to eternal life which is the fulfilment of the God-man's prophetic work.

This completes the explication of the dialectical theme of the second paradigm. (vide supra page 52)

APPENDIX A: Christian Love and the Lord's Prayer, and Christian Hope and the Lord's Supper.

If this chapter was, indeed, a summary of a completed C.D.IV.4, this present excursus would appear in small print, like one of Barth's famous footnotes. It is no more than an appendix which indicates the theological method adopted in formulating the hypothetical paradigm.

The first question that calls for clarification is twofold, viz.:

- 1 How does the Lord's Prayer find its place in the doctrine of reconciliation as part of the second form of Christian ethics, i.e. as man's liturgical work corresponding to the sanctifying grace received in the life of the community and becoming the guideline for various practical aspects of Christian life? (1)
- 2 How does the concept of the Christian as witness, fully expounded in par.72 under the heading The Holy Spirit and the sending of the Christian community, i.e. as an integral part of the third form of the doctrine of reconciliation, become the controlling principle of the second form of Christian ethics? (2)

1 vide C.D.IV.4, ix
2 vide C.D.IV.3(2), 610

The answer to the first question is that it is not surprising to find the Lord's Prayer elevated to this place of importance in the second form of the doctrine of reconciliation which is concerned with the sanctification of the community. Prayer is, after all, the very touchstone of the Christian life, both corporate and individual; it is the heartthrob of true Christian existence, as essential to spiritual life as breathing is to life itself. What is surprising is that it is thereby elevated to a place of equal importance to the two traditionally accepted principal sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the only two accepted by the Reformation. At first glance, it may appear that Barth is adding a third sacrament but that is not the case. He is not really making another new departure but is merely following the consequences of the one he has already made in abandoning the "sacramental" understanding of baptism,⁽¹⁾ reversing the view which he still maintained fundamentally in 1943.⁽²⁾ He took his point of departure in Christ who himself is the only true sacrament. This is not an attempt to denigrate the sacraments but represents a return to the 'high' meaning of sacrament, even higher than Aquinas. For clarification he returns to the New Testament and finds that nowhere does it use μυστήριον, translated in Latin as sacramentum, to denote baptism. In this sense it always refers to the mystery or hiddenness of an event in the world of time and space which is directly initiated and brought to pass by God alone; "a mystery to human cognition" which discloses itself to man in God's self-revelation.⁽³⁾ Sacrament, on those terms, can only mean Jesus Christ, who gives of himself in the encounter with man. Without going into a full exegesis of Barth's understanding of baptism and his rejection, on those grounds, of paedobaptism, his handling of the basis, meaning and goal of water baptism may be summed up in a few words. His interpretation combines the 'high' meaning of sacrament with the Latin meaning of a legal pledge given as security or a military oath or pledge taken by a soldier. He applies the 'high' meaning to baptism with the Holy Spirit and the Latin meaning to baptism with water. By that method baptism with water is only a sacrament in the liturgical sense but is essentially a human act and is not a sacrament in the 'high' sense, although it corresponds, as man's ethical response, to baptism with the Holy Spirit which, on his grounds, precedes the human act of baptism with water which can then only be believer's baptism. He disagrees with the notion that baptism with water automatically confers baptism with the Holy Spirit. The two together, the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of man, represent the two sides of the foundation of the Christian life; i.e. from God's side first and then from man.⁽⁴⁾

1 C.D.IV.4, Preface, x and passim.

2 ibid. 105 and Barth, K. Teaching of the Church regarding Baptism (1943) Trans. E.A. Payne, S.C.M., London 1948. passim.

3 C.D.IV.4 108f

4 ibid. passim.

In the sense that Christ IS present in the worship of his community, in the liturgical work of baptism, of prayer and at Holy Communion, though not confined or limited to be present at those times only, then it can be said that the sacrament of the Lord's presence is manifested in the community when baptism is administered, when the community prays and when they eat and drink the communal meal. But the liturgical act can never be said to automatically confer this sacramental nature in these acts. The sacrament of his presence is divine grace poured out from God's side in divine freedom. The community can only receive; and its participation in the grace thus mediated to it by Christ in his Spirit is always and essentially a human act and as such cannot be said to be sacramental in the 'high' sense, though it may be said to be sacramental in the Latin sense of an oath or commitment. It follows that if used in this sense the element of commitment and re-commitment on the part of each one who partakes of baptism, prayer and holy communion is what constitutes it a sacrament in this sense. If commitment is lacking, the baptism, prayer or communion is of no benefit to the individual concerned; but that also does not mean that Christ is not present.

It must be noted that the Fragment, dealing with the foundation of Christian existence, in baptism with the Holy Spirit and its corresponding water baptism, is based on and expanded from the concluding section of the first form of the doctrine of reconciliation, viz. justification. In that paragraph⁽¹⁾ Barth rounds off his discussion of justification with The Holy Spirit and Christian Faith, which, of course, is the consequence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit and in turn is the origin and basis for the corresponding human act of baptism with water, administered by the Christian community as a corporate act and received by the believer in a corresponding act.

It was on the basis of Barth's methodology described in the preceding paragraph that I constructed the paradigm to include, respectively, the last portion of the doctrine of sanctification⁽²⁾ with its correlating human response of prayer corresponding to the Lord's Prayer, and finally the last portion of the doctrine of vocation⁽³⁾ with its correlating human response of the holy communion or Lord's Supper, corresponding to the Last Supper.

Regarding the way in which the Lord's Prayer becomes the guideline for practical aspects of Christian life, that will be dealt with

1 C.D.IV.1, par.63, 740-780

2 C.D.IV.2, par.68, 727-840

3 C.D.IV.3(2), par.73, 902-942

after answering the second question for clarification. (vide supra page 57).

The concept of the Christian as witness is the dominant theme of the whole doctrine of vocation; the Christian is called to be a witness to Christ and he is sent in the promised power of the Spirit into the world of which he is a part and his very existence in the world as a Christian is his witness to Christ and constitutes his task of ministry. But the Christian ethics of which witness is said to be the controlling principle in its second form is not yet worked out in its third form. Throughout the dialectic of the doctrine of reconciliation in all its forms, Barth always gives us God's work first and then the corresponding response of man. Accordingly, if we work down the paradigm in the first form only (justification) we find that as a result of the reconciling work of God who became man as Servant we have the sinful man who is justified by faith received in the baptism with the Holy Spirit and has, as an act of faith, been baptised with water. The controlling principle of this form of Christian ethics is commitment; no more. The first and primary thing that his baptism asks of him, as a beginning of his Christian life, is commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Admittedly, his commitment is, secondarily, also a witness in which others may see the work of God in Christ. But the one thing required of him is that he accepts Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and subjects himself to his Lordship. His commitment does not cease with his baptism but becomes an integral part of the second way in which he is reconciled to God, viz. his sanctification. I have not been able to cover the ground of C.D.IV.2 in this thesis but its whole theme is the outworking of his continual commitment in his life in the community in which he is sanctified. His sloth and laziness is overcome as and to the extent that he is committed and converted to God's will as controlling his life.

Similarly, if we work down the paradigm in the second form only, i.e. following C.D.IV.2 we find that as a result of the reconciling work of the Son of Man who is exalted as Lord we have the sinful man who is sanctified by the love of Christ poured out in sheer, unmerited grace which he receives in his communal life, both as a result of God's answer to the prayers of the community and his own prayer, in which he perseveres because he loves the Lord Jesus Christ. In his act of love which turns him to Christ in prayer, he is required by the fellowship he enjoys with Christ to be a living witness in thought, word and deed of this love he receives from Jesus which is shed abroad as it overflows into the world. The controlling principle of this second form of Christian ethics is witness. The one thing which the love of Jesus requires of him is that he shares the love he has received with others. The essence of Christian witness is love.

As his commitment did not cease with his baptism, so also his witness does not cease with his sanctification for the obvious reason that his sanctification is not completed in this life. He only needed to be baptised once as a sign of his faith, but he has to pray unceasingly as a sign of his love. By the inner compulsion of his need to be united with Christ in prayer, prayer becomes the touchstone of his Christian life and it continues to issue in witness, all his life long.

With that we have answered the second question as to how witness, which is the whole purpose of his Christian existence and the content of the great commission, is the controlling principle of the second form of Christian ethics. It is man's ethical response to his whole Christian life.

What, then, is the Christian ethics of the third form, i.e. of Christian vocation? As the commitment of his act of faith in baptism is total commitment for the whole of his life, so also witness as an act of love is required throughout his life. In the unity of the two, commitment and witness, we can expect to find a third form of Christian ethics. Working down the paradigm in the same way we find the God-Man who in the unity of his Servanthood and Lordship reaches down to sinful man and exalts sinful man to stand at his side, justified and sanctified by grace alone, through faith and love. In his commitment and witness to his Lord the man who is thus reconciled to God rejoices in certain hope, which is his eschatological assurance, knowing that in spite of all that would contradict it, he will not perish but shall have eternal life. Looking forward to that day he comes again and again to the Lord's table where he partakes of the fullness of the living Christ in glory. The one thing his hope requires of him is that he must "endure and bear" in spite of every threat, believing in hope when there is nothing to be hoped for in the world. He must cling steadfastly to what he believes with the faith of the Psalmist who cried: "Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou dost hold my right hand. Thou dost guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards thou wilt receive me to glory". (Ps. 73:23/24)

As our own baptism which began our Christian life will only be fulfilled in glory, so, too, our life of prayer and participation in the Lord's Supper nurture and nourish us as we move towards our goal. Our Christian ethos for the whole of our life is one of commitment, witness and endurance, persevering to the end, being

"steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain."
(I. Cor. 15:58)

As we come to the end of the fourth volume of the doctrine of reconciliation the theme of the Holy Spirit and Christian hope gives a clue as to what would have formed the basis of the third form of ethics: God's work first, coming to meet us at the communal

table, our act of hope in things not seen yet hoped for, signified in the eating and drinking of the common elements which we do in faith and love and our eternal need to be drawn into fellowship with him; rising from the table, renewed and confirmed in our hope in the blessing we have received by partaking of the living Christ, we go out into the world, in new commitment, with a more powerful witness and a capacity to endure all things in the execution of our vocation.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation' (Rom.12:11/12), the Christian will stride out of the present into the future if according to the last link in the chain he continues 'instant in prayer'...he will definitely be serving the Lord, and he will do so rejoicing in hope".(1)

Before this appendix is complete, I still have to consider the way in which the Lord's Prayer becomes the guideline for practical aspects of Christian life.

Barth planned that this would form the true body of what would have been chapter 76 on prayer, dealing with God's own work and man's liturgical work in that order.⁽²⁾ Robbed of that final study, we have no more than a few pages on the Lord's Prayer in the earlier volumes but they do provide a starting point.

In the Dogmatics the fullest exposition of the Lord's Prayer, which Barth himself says is a 'compressed' one, appears within a larger section on prayer in the volume on the ethics of creation.⁽³⁾

It is important to note the first person plural, clearly denoting that prayer is the work of the community; but it is not exclusive to the community. The prayer prayed is one that prays for God's will to be done, his kingdom to come and his name to be hallowed by all mankind; being prayed by the community in the first person plural it anticipates what God will do with and for all mankind. The individual members praying do not merely represent themselves or the community but all mankind including those who do not as yet pray; those to whom the community is called to witness to the atonement; those to whom the community is sent in the power of the Holy Spirit as the appointed witnesses to Christ. When they pray they do not pray that their work will be made lighter or that they may be relieved of it; they pray in order that it should not be unfruitful; so that they may do it under the illumination of his Spirit; they pray for his blessing as they undertake the work to which they are commissioned and undertake it in all their human inadequacies and limitations. Even when the individual prays alone, he prays as one of the community and for the work of the whole community.

1 C.D.IV.3(2), par.73, 942

2 C.D.IV.4, ix

3 C.D.III.4, par.53.3, 87-115, especially 102/6

Two important elements arise from the distinction between the first three and the last three requests. Firstly, inviting us to take up the cause of God by our petitions for it, God indicates that he takes no account of our human frailty and godlessness; he does not will to be God without us but summons us to his side; he counts us as his own and understands us from this ownership. He commands us to desire and will and ask that his name may be hallowed, his kingdom come and his will be done. He does not demand our co-operation or that we take his work and make it ours, as if we could hasten the coming of his kingdom. In these three requests prayer is made for what the whole world has need of; they have a universal character. Without this participation in his work we could not belong to the "we" who pray.

In the last three petitions the community is also invited and summoned to ask God to actively participate in their own cause. Man cannot be man without God; he would be lost if God did not make his cause his own; but he does not do so as a matter of course, simply because we ask him. He does so in divine freedom and grace which is not controlled by man. Because it is grace we have to continually ask for it. Man is commanded to ask for his daily bread, for the forgiveness of sins and for preservation from temptation because they are indispensable. We may ask for God to make our cause his own because he has already done this in Jesus Christ. Only in virtue of Jesus who made our cause his own and in whom we are elected as one of his community, may we make our requests known to God. These personal requests follow the same pattern as the first because we need them in the interests of his cause which we serve. What we pray is united in the work of Jesus; it is always for God's glory and our salvation.

The next important section on the Lord's Prayer falls within the context of the first form of the doctrine of reconciliation, a part of the Holy Spirit and the upbuilding of the Christian Community, specifically concerning the order of the community.⁽¹⁾ The fact that the community does pray as a community indicates that they lay all things in his hands; they know that they are God's sinful creatures and cannot themselves accomplish the reconciliation of the world with God; they cannot hallow his name or bring in his kingdom or do his will; they can only pray in the practical act of faith and love and hope that these things should happen. The distinctive importance of the Lord's Prayer is that in it Jesus takes the disciples up with him into his own prayer, attaches himself to them and they to him.

"Because it is prayed in fellowship with the Firstbegotten, it is a spreading out of the totality of man's true need, and a reaching out for the totality of what God will be for him and give him ... But the concrete form of his relationship to it

is his own presence and lordship in its assembling for divine service, in the occurrence of confession, baptism, the Lord's Supper and prayer." (1)

A third important section on prayer has already been referred to (page 47 supra). i.e. prayer as one of the forms of ministry of the community.⁽²⁾ In this context it gets sparse treatment by Barth; he does, however, place it as first among the forms of ministry which are primarily action. It is significant that prayer is an action and not speech or thought. Apart from several other incidental references to the Lord's Prayer, that is all that Barth has given us in the Dogmatics; we can only anticipate that he was storing up a vast amount for the ethics of our sanctification.

From the paradigm I have drawn up and my exposition of it the most important thing about the Lord's Prayer and the corresponding participation in it by the community and its individual members is that it is an act of love, both as a liturgical act and as an individual act. It is based on the two great commandments of our Lord, love for God and for our fellow-man, and as such cannot be prayed egoistically. It is love of which no human is capable except as he receives the quickening power of the Holy Spirit and partakes of the fullness of the love of Jesus Christ. This love cannot be kept to himself but will spill over into the world in corresponding acts of love. In this way, praying the prayer for others in love, the Christian receives love to be shared with all mankind. All Christian ethical action will issue in acts of love; this is what makes the actions as well as the spoken words of the community the witness which it is called to be. It can only witness to Christ when its word is supported by corresponding acts of love. By this, Eusebius wrote, even the Romans knew who were Christians, because they loved one another and loved all men, seeing even in their enemies possible converts. This is how the Lord's Prayer, prayed in love which is created by the Holy Spirit, is taken up into the heart of Christ who answers the petitions by empowering the Christians who pray for those they love to go out into the world and really love all mankind; love each one whom Christ loves and to whom he sends them to be his witnesses in love.

Being sent to love all mankind by virtue of our calling, we may receive the promised power of his Spirit and be his witnesses in the world but it can only be under his lordship and guidance which we will receive when we pray provisionally for those who do not know him, yet whom he loves. The service he sends us to give to others in his name and for his sake will be our service of witness. Constantly needing to guard against serving our own autonomous will and cause, we walk a knife-edge and can only seek his guidance by praying the prayer he taught us to pray.

1 ibid., 705 -706
2 C.D.IV.3(2), par.72, 882-884

APPENDIX B: Critique of two Contemporary Ecumenical Interpretations and Applications of the Great Commission

It is hoped that this appendix, like Kierkegaard's appendices, will illuminate all that precedes. With the conclusion of appendix A, I have come to the end of my search to establish a theological basis for an ethic of reconciliation, an ethic which should lead conclusively into the Τέλος of the church, i.e. the content of the doctrine of redemption, which Barth was only able to write in eternity, bringing his Dogmatics to a fitting conclusion. But the end of the search is not the end of the task for theology but only the beginning of practical ethics. The church must again and again be renewed for the reconciliation is accomplished for her too. The great weakness of classical theology, which Barth has attempted to rectify, is that it neglects the calling of the church, concentrating only on its justification or its justification and sanctification. Consequently, the church has only been aware of the sin of pride, sometimes recognizing the sin of sloth, but at most times it has remained blissfully unaware of the third form of sin, which manifests itself in self-delusion, evading the issue, and falsehood, which can only be annulled by the true witness which exposes what was thought to be a perfect theology to be a lie which opposes the truth. Barth has illustrated this by reference to the interlocutors in Job, who thought they had a perfect theodicy. Recognition of this third form of sin was sadly lacking in the great missionary age but, as Stephen Neill wrote: "the end of the period of missions may even be the beginning of the new age of mission."⁽¹⁾

Likewise, Barth's guidelines towards a Christian ethos for the community should be the beginning of a new age in which the community not only prays for direction in their specific application of that ethos, as in the second form, but finds the fulfilment of it as God works through his faithful people who endure to the end in patience and hope, in spite of all threats which seek to undermine that hope. They can only endure by meeting again and again in prayer and fellowship, especially partaking of the highest form of fellowship with the living Lord at his table where he will equip them anew and send them again to his world on their mission.

Is the special ethic that has emerged in this study relevant and practical in the world today? That is a question of immense implications. This appendix does not presume to offer a comprehensive critique of the life and practice of the community of Christ in the world of the twentieth century. By way of example, I have merely taken some contemporary ecumenical declarations, reflecting the policy of the body concerned, and weighed them according to the

1 Neill, S. One Increasing Purpose, The Bible Reading Fellowship, London, 1969, 66

criteria which have emerged in my study, within the limits of this thesis. If possibilities for new direction emerge, the long journey I have taken through Barth's Dogmatics in a search for a possible basic Christian ethics will have been worthwhile. The premisses on which the evaluation is made are always, without special reference, the origin, basis, nature, task and goal of ministry as in Barth's Dogmatics.

What I have looked for and what the community must ever pray for is the visible sign of total commitment through faith in Jesus Christ, bold and unflinching witness in the love of Jesus Christ and quiet, patient endurance in adversity in the hope of Jesus Christ; so faith, hope and love must abide if the community is the community of Jesus Christ, and the greatest of these is love! Love must be seen in word and action; the unfailing witness to the divine and human reign of love in the world, accomplished in Christ. The community of Jesus Christ will do no more - but also no less - than speak... and act... the truth in love. (Eph.4:15) It is not easy to bring those four elements together. The community can only do it as she continues in prayer, abiding in her Lord and under his Lordship, knowing that he abides in the heart of every one who sincerely seeks to do his will. The six petitions of the Lord's Prayer, three for God's eschatological purpose and three for the immediate needs of his community, which he uses and employs to actively bring that purpose about, are to be the constant guidelines for practical ministry; not as programmes to be taken up and carried out exclusively by the community but as six specific and dynamic areas in which the community daily prays for guidance and direction and for the enabling power and grace which involves them and sends them out in the fulfilment of their part in the task.

1

The South African Council of Churches:⁽¹⁾
A Message to the People of South Africa.⁽²⁾

I must first state categorically that this is not intended as an evaluation of the S.A.C.C. and its work. Such an evaluation would involve a much more complete study than is possible here and could only be attempted on the foundations laid by this thesis if they were acceptable to the body concerned and provided it was prepared to submit itself and its work to self-examination under these criteria. Without that self-sought critique, any evaluation that I might offer, favourable or unfavourable, would achieve nothing more than adding to the great deal of confusion and misunderstand-

1 = S.A.C.C; In both examples I have presupposed a background knowledge since both the S.A.C.C. and the W.C.C. are accepted as recognised ecumenical bodies and suitable examples for this practical exercise.

2 published by S.A.C.C., June 1968, prepared by the Theological commission of the Council

ing that already exists between the member churches of the S.A.C.C. and those churches who refuse to align themselves with it. My critique is confined to this one statement purely as a practical exercise, not aimed at undermining the value of the Message but rather to evaluate it theologically on the basis of the tenets of my thesis. It would be most unfair to abstract any criticism I offer here on theological grounds and treat it in isolation, without a balancing assessment of the most valuable work undertaken by, or on behalf of, the S.A.C.C. in recent years, notably the Sprocas ⁽¹⁾ and Sprocas 2 ⁽²⁾ publications, and many other publications by the S.A.C.C. which have created a new awareness in S.Africa of the need for social change. S.Africans in general are becoming more ready to engage in self-examination and to accept that they are part of the many facets of the social and cultural traditions in S.A. and share corporately in the guilt of society for social injustices. Such a study would also have to take account of the support which this body has given by association - either directly and representatively, or indirectly by virtue of the involvement of prominent S.A.C.C. men - with the Christian Institute of S.A., the monthly magazine, ProVeritate and the work of Africa Enterprise, notably the S.A. Congress of Mission and Evangelism held in Durban in March 1973. ⁽³⁾ It would give credit for the S.A.C.C.'s contribution towards promoting changed attitudes in S.A. and the promise of a better tomorrow which Christians pray and hope for. But it would also have to take account of the mistakes made by S.A.C.C. and its tactical errors, as, for example, its blundering and bad handling of the 'conscientious objection issue' in 1974 which failed to achieve what its promoters had hoped it would and has possibly lost for S.A.C.C. some of its valuable supporters, not because of the issue but because of the premature incorrect publications by the press and continued adverse criticism. Some S.A.C.C. leaders firmly believe that the Message has itself made a positive contribution in the increased Christological focus of S.A.C.C. work since 1968. This may appear surprising in view of my critique which does not give it top marks for theology. If it has, nevertheless, achieved something, then this fact alone is sufficient to remind us of our hope in Christ and his promise that it is not our work but his that we attempt and often mess up; although, in his self-limitation, its effectiveness may be hindered because he allows our inadequate and sinful participation in his work, our failures only take place on the left hand of God's will; in spite of us, he is still at work in the whole world, not only in the wayward hearts of the elect who have heard and responded to his call; our errors might temporarily restrict the perfection of his work but cannot frustrate his

1 Study Project of Christianity in Apartheid Society
 2 Special Programme for Christian Action in Society
 3 vide Cassidy, M. Prisoners of Hope and I will Heal their Land
 Africa Enterprise, Pietermaritzburg and Lesotho, 1974

eternal purpose which will be perfected in spite of the waywardness of his children who do not always keep to his guidelines, for

"We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose (v 28) ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us (v39)" (Rom.8)

On the basis of the title page and since the Message is offered as a basis for study and action (p 7) we are justified in looking for a Christological confession which not only sets out the basis of the evangel of the Gospel message, but indicates the guiding principle of the Christian ethos accepted by the member churches.

1 What the Christian Gospel says

As a summary of the Gospel of salvation (p 2) this is very incomplete. It does not say enough and confesses the atonement too vaguely and untheologically. A document to be read by church study groups could have referred to the reconciliation which is in Christ in all its forms and offer Scriptural support, especially since it looks for an ethical response in Christian witness.

Liberation needs better theological exposition, in view of the contemporary understanding of liberation of man in the context of liberation movements with the rise of the 'third world'. It should be understood in the context of the third form of sin, in the removal of which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians are called to participate in the eschatological mission of the community in its hope in Christ. Christian liberation only comes when the truth has set us free, exposing falsehood to be a lie.

The general phrase, 'sin has been forgiven', (p 1), says far too little about the nature and forms of sin, especially in view of the tendency in the West for sin to be seen as merely pride, sometimes as sloth or lust, but seldom as falsehood.

The work of the Holy Spirit is certainly implied but needs to be more specifically mentioned. This also contributes to the nebulous nature of the confession at this point. It would have been appropriate to conclude this confession with an affirmation that the three-fold reconciling work of Christ calls Christians to total commitment through faith in Jesus Christ, bold witness in the love of Christ and patient endurance in adversity in the hope of Christ. That would indicate the direction in which we move.

2 Our Concern

The criticism of the policy of racial separation would have been more effective if offered on a clear theological basis as God's No which is said only after his gracious Yes to us in Christ. As it stands the Message takes on the nature of an apologetic which, on Barth's terms, is not necessary if we have good sound dogmatics. Barth's emphasis is always rather that we should proclaim the truth and then declare falsehood to be falsehood only in the relation in which it opposes the truth and not on any independent judgments.

Exception could be taken to the judgmental tone of the apologetic by the very people to whom the appeal should be addressed, i.e. those who, on their own theological grounds, do believe in the policy of apartheid which is being criticised in the polemic of the Message. If the Council hoped to change attitudes it should have realised that it would not do so by setting itself up as judge. The claim that "many see this policy as a permanent expression of the will of God" (p 2), needed to be qualified by explanatory reference to the root of that notion in the cold Calvinistic ascetism ⁽¹⁾ which results in the West in both R.C. and Protestant pre-occupation with justification, often to the exclusion of sanctification and calling. Often, explanation instead of cold condemnation helps to set a man in search of the truth which he will only find when he appropriates it inwardly for himself and not by only hearing it objectively. Cold condemnation can be equally as devoid of love as the cold ascetism, the condemnation of which is implied, though not explicit.

3 The Gospel's Claim

The Message is addressed to the people of S.Africa and a particular question is posed to every Christian in the country (p 6) but one cannot help asking to whom the Message is really addressed when a distinction is made between 'we' and 'they', implied in the argument. (p 4) It implies that only S.A.C.C. members live according to the Gospel and denies, by implication, the possibility of a similar motive in its opponents which, probably, is present. On the tenets of the doctrine of vocation, Christians can never be relieved of their corporate responsibility for the prevailing human conditions in which they live. They do have this inevitable tendency to range themselves on opposite sides, divided in the conflict which has the effect of divorcing both sides of the argument from the Christological basis, for Christ cannot be divided. It is a peculiar streak of pride that makes Christians always automatically consider themselves on the right side, as indicated by the sentence:

"Therefore the advocates of this policy inevitably find themselves opposed to the church if it seeks to live according to the Gospel and if it shows that God's grace has overcome our hostilities. A thorough policy of racial separation must ultimately require that the church should cease to be the church" (p4)

The fact is: they don't find themselves opposed to the church for they do not consider that what opposes them is the true church. This indicates a failure by both protagonists to see that neither is the true church. One only has to read the opinion held concerning the Message by men who hold opposite views, ⁽²⁾ to see that this kind of polemic does not succeed in changing opinions but only tends to harden attitudes.

The final statement in this paragraph, "this policy is, therefore, a form of resistance to the Holy Spirit" (p 5), is made on the

1 vide especially Institutes, Book 3

2 vide Final Report of Commission of Inquiry into Certain Organizations: The Christian Institute (1975) and relevant Hansard pages

grounds that apartheid reinforces divisions which the Holy Spirit calls the people of God to overcome. This recognises the possibility of the third form of sin in the life of the community, but it is a dangerous statement to make and needs clarification. It can only be denial of the Holy Spirit when the person who supports apartheid knows, by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, that he is resisting the Holy Spirit. If he has not, personally and subjectively, received the illumination of the Holy Spirit directing him in a particular direction and refused to take it, then he is not sinning against the Holy Spirit; but this is known only to himself and to God and no other person can accuse him of this sin. That is the work of the Holy Spirit which we only usurp in fear and trembling and at great risk. Jesus said that to see the works of God and, not only deny that they are God's work, but to attribute them to the devil, is sin against the Holy Spirit and "will not be forgiven either in this age or in the age to come". (Mat:12:24-32)⁽¹⁾ Athanasius assumed authority, on sound Christological grounds, that few Christians would dare to assume, in his condemnation of the Arians as guilty of this sin, comparable only to the Pharisees whom Jesus condemned - for the sin of the Arians was nothing less than the denial of the deity of Jesus Christ, and the attribution, by corollary, of the works of God to a creature. If the S.A.C.C. ventures to assume this sort of authority - which they seem to have done, not explicitly, but by implication - and consequently condemns all who support apartheid, it would have to lay its theological foundations more carefully than is done in the Message. Every Christian needs to be on his guard, lest in condemning another he commits a greater sin; for our hope in Christ, manifested in patient endurance, lies in the provisional redemption of his whole world and all creation, in the fullness of time; and even the Son of God was sent by God

"into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him". (John 3:17)

4 Our Task

This section is very short, no doubt justified by the intention to develop it in greater detail and work out its practical implications, (p 7) which the S.A.C.C. has endeavoured to do in subsequent years. Nevertheless, in a document with which the people of S.A. are asked to identify themselves, the task of the community should be defined more clearly as the calling and sending of individual Christians in community, as the people of God, to be Christ's witnesses in the world, in the promised power of his Holy Spirit. The concept of witness is implied and emphasised, which indicates that the S.A.C.C. is moving in the prophetic direction, the third form of ethics, but it is not clearly and explicitly stated as the task of the community.

1 I base my exegesis of the Beelzebub passage and my citation of Athanasius on Ep.IV ad Serapionem, in illud quicumque dixerit...

The greatest lack in this paragraph is the failure to mention the controlling principle of prayer, specifically the Lord's Prayer, which, according to my special ethic, should have found a place here. Throughout the document the concept of witness as constituting the essential life of the Christian in community does appear, but, especially for the purpose of study in congregations, could have been stated more categorically.

Finally, I am left not quite certain as to whether this is a message to the people of S.Africa; or a message to some Christians, appealing for their support to a statement of self-justification; or a direct polemic against those whose views on apartheid are rejected. It fails to convey the factum brutum that we are all responsible for the social injustice that it deplures, or to take cognisance of the fact that even if apartheid was to disappear overnight, attitudes and racial disharmony would not disappear until Christian hearts were put right as each individual member of the community was renewed by the Holy Spirit and responded in love, overflowing into the world as witness. It is always a mistake to speak too generally of Christian love as something that must be shown to be present - a moralistic line that is too readily taken as if love can be conjured up in the Pelagian style - without first proclaiming the truth in love in such a way that would make it clear that Christians only love because Christ first loved them and, in fact, that they only love in the love that he gives them to share, which they do not have as a natural characteristic without the indwelling Spirit of love; all of this is the work of the Holy Spirit and never man's work. To the credit of the theological commission, some of these aspects are accounted for in the Message, but not quite sharply enough. The whole crux of the matter is that we have to love those who disagree with us also and we have a pastoral charge over those who do not know. (John 21:15-19) Christ died for the whole world. It is relatively easy to speak the truth in love to those whom we love; it is most difficult to speak the truth in love to our adversaries. The theological commission took a bold stand in the Message, which has been pursued subsequently by many Christians, inspired by the Spirit of love; it reflects their own commitment and witness, and even reflects the prerequisite prayerfulness and the prophetic manifestation of endurance in hope; it recognises the third form of the doctrine of reconciliation, so often neglected, in addition to and as a combination of the first two; but that does not make it a theological statement of Christian ethics based on firm foundations or a suitable guide for Christian groups seeking through Bible study and prayer to find their ethos.

2

Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council
of Churches: (1) A Letter to the Churches (2)

As in the previous section, I offer this purely as a theological evaluation of a representative document of an ecumenical nature, as a practical application to test my thesis. I preclude myself from offering an evaluation of the W.C.C. in general or of the Bangkok Conference and its consequences; it would require a much wider study and a thesis devoted exclusively to that task. Without such a study it would be attempted at the risk of committing the dreaded third form of sin myself. Is that not what threatens our very existence as we walk the tight-rope across the world - from both sides of the cavern? Nevertheless, although I do not face that task here, the community - and especially those called to be theologians and test the church's proclamation - must face it. And we must face it only in the illumination given by the Light of Life which does shine in the darkness if and when we trust and turn to God in prayer. I am very conscious of the fact that that sin - of falsehood, self-delusion, evading the issue or even of having a perfect theology - can be committed both when we attempt a course of action and when we avoid it. This is part of the acute inner conflict which every Christian must face in prayer alone, praying unceasingly, especially on the lines of the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer - for we have no other guidelines.

Keeping that in mind, I think it is most relevant that I consider this document and try to test it by the foundations which I have proposed for a special ethic. It is particularly relevant to this study because of its focus on the third form of reconciliation, not quite exclusively but at least with great emphasis. A study of it does serve as a reminder and warning of what can happen if a Christian interprets his vocation as a calling to get on with the job of bringing in God's kingdom in power. The basis for the doctrine of vocation was the answer which Jesus gave to the Zealot-like question: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel," (Acts 1:6) Some scholars say that Jesus did not answer the question but I think that that is a subtle evasion of the issue. I think Jesus did answer it directly with a rebuke, an assertion of the Father's authority and a clear directive that, in the power of the Holy Spirit which he promised to send, the disciples - and all Christians who become his disciples - will, by their very existence as his disciples and the way they talk

1 =C.W.M.E. of the W.C.C.

2 from the C.W.M.E. Assembly, Bangkok 1973, published in International Review of Mission, Volume LXII, No 246, April 1973,
... 180- 182

and act, be his witnesses in all the world. As our study of Barth has shown, the key to understanding the implications of the command lies in our need to be dependent on Christ alone, abiding in prayer. If our words and deeds do not reflect Christ as the Lord of our life, then we can know that we are no longer living under his lordship but have excommunicated ourselves from it.

The reason why this document is so relevant is that it labels as a scandal "the bloody suppression of liberation movements" and by declaring that such suppression challenges Christians urgently to express in action the salvation of Jesus Christ it gives sanction to support and financial aid to terrorist movements which work for such liberation. That is the issue over which Christians are so deeply divided today. A year after this document was drawn up, Burgess Carr said at the All Africa Council of Churches Assembly at Lusaka that God had sanctified violence on the Cross. This has had repercussions throughout the world and is linked with the policy of the W.C.C. to support liberation movements on the tenets that they are 'just wars'. The issue over the question of when war is justified has never been resolved satisfactorily by Christendom and is not likely to be because the human element can never be eliminated from the decision. The parallel unresolved problem is the interpretation of Rom.13:1ff. There are inevitable difficulties in deciding which is the power that is "instituted by God", whose authority must not be resisted.(v.2) In the struggle for power, both sides presuppose that God is on their side, unless one side is avowedly atheistic. In the case of a struggle between a Christian and a non-Christian power, the difficulty is there in a second dimension because it is easy to be deluded by the idea that the motives are Christian when in fact there is a hidden agenda for the struggle for power. The problem of deciding which is the power 'instituted by God' is particularly acute in the case of so-called 'liberation' movements. Is it the colonial power, or a local authority or the leader of the insurrection? Is it the strongest, the one that emerges victorious, and claims to have won 'because God was on our side'? What then of Jesus' claim to have come "to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Lk.4:18), and his search for the weak, the outcast, the lost? The two sides of the coin always present themselves and we can have no clear answer. The West, partly due to Roman Catholicism's stress on justification and partly due to Calvin's exegesis of Romans 13, have had some degree of consensus. This has contributed greatly to the success of democracy and colonialism in the West. On the other hand, the East has not had the same pre-occupation with justification, to its own detriment. When East meets West in the Third World, the first area of conflict is the objection to the readiness of the West to identify democracy

with the rule of God. This is the crux of the matter. It is what cuts a deeper schism than racial, economic, social or cultural differences. This has become acute since the identification by the W.C.C. of the 'liberty of the children of God' with the 'liberation' of races 'oppressed' under colonialism and democratic powers. This Letter from Bangkok commits the assembly categorically "more fully in the struggle against everything that oppresses men and women today, not only the sin that is in them but also that is in societies".

The grounds on which it does this are:

"because of the salvation that is in Jesus Christ and which promises to all 'the glorious liberty of the children of God'". (1)

This implies that the Christian community is responsible for bringing liberation to the oppressed as if that and the liberty of the children of God were an end in itself. No mention is made of God's eternal purpose for his world, the reason for his entry into our history, reconciling the world to God in Christ. It is a claim for liberty but not a recognition that the liberation of the Christian is an interiorisation of the saving act of Christ. It implies that the liberation of oppressed peoples would be their salvation, but makes no mention of the necessity for justification and sanctification as well.

It seems to me that where the Letter misses the mark at the crucial point is that it makes a commitment to a cause and makes it a blanket commitment for all causes in that particular category but it overlooks the fact that in committing itself to the cause and the programmes to effect it, it has assumed the leadership and control and is no longer committed to subjection under Christ's leadership. It is to the credit of the Letter that it has recognised that it is the whole person whom Jesus comes to save, but it does seem in danger of thinking that he can be wholly saved simply by physical liberation, irrespective of faith, love and hope. Any community that thinks it can take it on themselves to do the liberating, on God's behalf, or at least as his equal, is in danger of falling off the tight-rope into the deep blue sea - and anyone in that position is liable to find that he is not able to float; in Kierkegaard's well-known phrase, he will not be able "to remain out upon the deep, over seventy thousand fathoms of water" (2) because he will have no faith.

This is a much shorter document than the Message. It is specifically addressed to the churches and has the nature of a confession and assertion of authority rather than an apologetic as was the

1 International Review of Mission, op cit. 181

2 vide Kierkegaard, S. Concluding Unscientific Postscript, transl. Swenson and Lowrie, Princeton Univ. Press, 1968, 182

Message. It also arises out of a different set of circumstances. Because of the long and checkered history of the Faith and Order Movement and of the W.C.C. it is almost impossible, even for the most neutral theologian, to approach any statement of the W.C.C. without any preconceived notion. Because it is the WORLD Council, it involves the whole world, in one way or another and in the events of its history we can expect to find the most concentrated illustration of confusio hominum. As long as we can hold to Barth's understanding that it is confusion of man and not fall into the temptation of labelling all that we reject as a manifestation of the Anti-Christ, giving to the devil a power he does not have, there is still hope. When we renounce that hope and fall into a habit of speaking of "we" and "they" we are on the way to both polarisation and a new kind of dualism. Writing about the confrontation between East and West, notably Russia and America, "both, though in different ways, children of old Europe," Barth asks: "Where is our justification for talking about a 'Christian West' with a summons to an intellectual, political and one day even a military crusade? What fools or hypocrites we should have to be to stoop to that!" (1)

Barth wrote that in 1949; since then the East and West have met in confrontation and/or dialogue in the Third World... and only time will tell whose child the Third World will turn out to be.

The most important points raised in the Letter are:

Fellowship and implied unanimity, although "a smaller number of Orthodox participants prevented a fuller expression of ecumenicity".

An obvious sincere commitment to Christ and a recognition of vocation, but also an obvious neglect of justification and sanctification as an essential prerequisite for those who are to be 'liberated'; human confusion is recognised.

An emphasis on the 'liberty of the children of God' which seems to identify this liberty with liberation from oppression in the world. This is a continued application of the theology of 'Cosmic Christology' which was introduced at New Delhi in 1961, when a Christology was called for "as large as the expanding cosmos of man"...

"unless the reference and power of the redemptive act included the whole of man's experience and environment, straight out to its farthest horizon, then the redemption is incomplete." (2)

The challenge to Christians to express in action the salvation of Jesus Christ, in obedience to the liberating power of Christ is made on the basis of the understanding of the 'liberation of

1 Barth, K. Against the Stream, Shorter Post-War Writings, 1946 - 1952, S.C.M., London, 1954, 141
 2 Simonson, C. The Christology of the Faith and Order Movement, E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1972, 174

man' which accepts that this cannot be complete until man acts responsibly in the existentialist sense of freedom. That is not the same as Barth's exegesis of the 'liberation of the Christian'. (vide supra 23)

The love of Christ impelling towards endurance, the search for a consensus on mission and catholicity and universality indicate a sincere attempt to fulfil the demands of vocation.

A suggested moratorium, in the hope of achieving autonomy for mission churches. This appeal for a moratorium on missions has been developed in subsequent years and was a key issue at Lusaka at the All Africa Conference in 1974.

My expressed purpose was to evaluate this as a theological statement by means of the criteria of my hypothesis. We have found commitment through faith, there is reference to the love of Christ and to witness and we also find hope and endurance indicated. But there is not sufficient emphasis on the need for constant 'instant' prayer, at every new decision, and, especially, an unequal emphasis on the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer in the tendency to lose sight of the first three.

Does that mean that this hypothesis based on Barth's theology is not a workable one? According to Simonson, Barth strongly influenced Faith and Order theology in the late 40's and 50's, not so much by his own involvement which only came in 1949, but because of his great influence on theology at that time.

"Barthian theology, if not Barth's theology, helped polarize the Christology of the Faith and Order Movement...among those who professed Barthian theology, the tendency was to ignore the whole secular realm...the secular was generally considered unimportant alongside of special revelation in Christ...No one can read Barth's speech at Amsterdam, for instance, and not understand how other men pushed his theology into a kind of other-worldliness, or if not other-worldliness, at least unworldliness. It happened. Faith and Order is evidence for it...It was entirely logical for Karl Barth to say at Amsterdam that one should begin, not with man's disorder, but with God's design...(but)...to the extent then, that one becomes convinced that man is understandable only in his relationship to, and participation in, the world, Barthian theology will seem to be otherworldly and beside the point, and that... is precisely what another group of theologians within the Faith and Order Commission did maintain".
(1)

To understand the full implications of the movement into anthropology which Barth warned against, we would have to undertake a fuller study of the history of the Faith and Order Commission, especially the debate between Barth and Niebuhr, in which we find the two opposite sides clearly expressed:

"..Barth had warned that the care of the world is not our care, that the Church must be careful lest it deceive itself into be-

1 *ibid.* 114f.

coming a kind of 'Christian Marshall plan' to the nations. Admitting that such a statement was a wholesome warning to pat moralism, Niebuhr wondered whether it did not deny the Church's prophetic function to the nations." (1)

Perhaps there is some justification in the criticism of Barth that he did not go far enough; i.e. with his emphasis on revealed theology and his insistence that anything that is dependent on man is not a source of theology. Perhaps if he had been able to complete his ethics the guidelines would have been clearer. As it is we are left with this gap between our knowledge of what God has done for us in Christ - realised eschatology- and our knowledge of what he expects us to do as the appropriate Christian response. It is true that such knowledge cannot be passed on objectively. Each Christian has to respond in accordance with the guidance he receives through prayer; but clear guidelines do help. Barth has rightly stressed the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer as adequate for covering every area of the Christian life, but not every Christian fully understands the full implications of praying those six petitions. This is perhaps the greatest deficiency in the Dogmatics. What Barth gave us on the Lord's Prayer can only be a good introduction to an ethic based on the Lord's Prayer as the controlling principle. We badly need that completion of the Fragment. We can only pray that God will raise up another Barth to finish it.

Meanwhile theology owes a debt to Barth for having discovered the importance of the prophetic function of Christ and the vocation of man as an essential third form of the doctrine of reconciliation. Faith and Order theology did not heed Barth's warnings and the doctrine of vocation has been secularised. We can only further pray that as dialogue continues between the two poles, the illumination of the Light of life will break through, dispelling the darkness and confusion of the present.

1 *ibid.* 110f.

CONCLUSION

My own conclusions have already been made clear. It only remains to collate them. Perhaps the most significant fact to emerge from this study is that, in pursuing theology, we cannot escape the need to be constantly brought back to our historical situation in the world. Because the history of the Christian community is always its history in encounter with the witness of the Holy Spirit, its task is to live the life of Christian discipleship in a way, relevant to everyday life in the world, which is at the same time grounded in the only basis and foundation of all evangelism, Jesus Christ. As members of the Christian community we are never more than servants of the Word and our sanctification in love is never completed in this life. The ministry to which we are called is one of servanthood under the controlling principle of the love which sanctifies us through prayer. Only through the daily renewal of our faith will we be empowered to reach out in love and unless we do reach out in love to friend and foe, in spite of all that threatens our witness, then our witness is not one of hope in Jesus Christ.

This study of the doctrine of vocation has emphasised that the vocation of the Christian community, sent into the world in the power of the Holy Spirit, as witnesses to Christ's reconciling work, is not to be abstracted from the doctrine of reconciliation as a whole for the simple reason that it is a unity of our justification and our sanctification and every phase of the doctrine must be considered in the light of the parallel phases in the other two doctrines. The vocation of man and his existence as a Christian cannot be divorced; that means that ethics can never become an independent doctrine. When we forget Barth's principle, i.e. first God, then man, we are on the way to a secularisation of ethics.

The re-discovery of the prophetic office of Christ leads the community on to greater hope in Christ and greater possibilities of witnessing in confidence and patient endurance to the eschatological τέλος to which we move in the assurance that human confusion is not beyond the redemption in Christ in the providentia Dei.

Christians must constantly test their witness and action by the criterion of whether it serves the divine Word or not. Barth's theology can be interpreted as supporting both pacifist and activist theologies. We need to heed the dangers of either extreme and seek the third way. The problem confronting the Christian community is one of discernment; it is a question of how to follow the Lord of history who strides ahead of us in the far country and not lose him or pass him and run ahead of him. We cannot assume control in an effort to bring to pass the things hoped for, for hope is then no longer hope in things not seen. This is where endurance comes in. We have to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to endure until all falsehood and self-delusion is overcome.

Taking the gospel into all the world means more than "to all nations" as in the direct literal interpretation of the missionary command of Matthew 28:19. It is that but it means more than that. It means into every aspect of life that needs reconciling. This is the essential difference between East and West. The Asian cannot conceive of the possibility of being a Christian and not being involved in social action. How else can you love your neighbour who is starving and oppressed by social conditions? The West does tend to have a capacity for finding Scriptural justification for a policy of laissez-faire. In the second example I took, we find social action being interpreted in the context of evangelism. Social activism and racism were both always there in W.C.C. issues, if hidden; horizontalism merely brought them into the open.

The crucial question which faces every Christian today is one of identification of roles. Can we preach reconciliation to others when not fully reconciled ourselves. We all, at one time or another, assume the role of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar while deluding ourselves that we are Job's.

Witness, i.e. speaking the truth in love, is the most difficult of all because it involves action and when active, man loves to take control. When the action involves the community in support of any cause it involves a transfer of allegiance from God's eternal purpose to an immediate purpose. Christians stand continuously at the crossroads of their own consciences. The measure of involvement can always only be the extent to which a Christian is involved pastorally in the situation where the action takes place. It calls for constant decision-making, through prayer. Only when we are able to renew our faith through recommitment and speak the truth in love, in all circumstances, is there a coming together of commitment and witness in coherence of life. It cannot be achieved by any Pelagian-style autonomy but only through prayer. Paul said the greatest of the three is love, but endurance, the third form of Christian ethics, is the crown, like the Lord's Supper that nurtures it, because it is love and faith together that make endurance possible. Without either love or faith, there can be no hope; we can have no one-sided ethic; commitment and witness together spell endurance, and without either there is no endurance. The corollary to that is that we cannot commit ourselves to Christ or witness to him without prayer which is the guiding principle for vocation; in prayer we find the power to endure. Being constantly involved in instant prayer we will always be involved in decision-making. That means that we cannot be either activist or pacifist but have to be, at the same time, both.

Is Barth relevant and is there a place for special ethics in his theology? The answer to both is in the affirmative. Nevertheless, perhaps Barth failed by with-holding ethics until it was too late.

Perhaps he should have looked forward to it earlier in his theology and given us better guidelines, indicating more than he did the ethics to which he had to come before he could consider the doctrine of redemption. The difficulty of any study of Barth is that no volume is complete in itself, being inter-dependent, and the whole is rendered deficient by the void left by its non-completion. Nevertheless, one clear conclusion emerges, viz. that there can never be an infallible working system of Christian ethics. Any Christian ethic can only work as it becomes the living reality of divine/human fellowship through life-long prayer.

Also, Barth has answered the missionary question of the interpretation of Acts 1:8. He reminds us of both our historical situation and our dependence on divine power for the love that will constitute us Christ's witnesses.

"The real church becomes visible in so far as it emerges and shines forth from its seclusion in ecclesiastical organisation, tradition and custom, in the power of the Holy Spirit...It will always and everywhere be visible only to a very few, very frightened and very joyful 'Christians' and to these only by the free grace of God...it lives as the congregation of its Lord, i.e. as the assembly of lost sinners called by him, and living by the consolation and admonition of the biblical witness to the reconciliation of the world with God, which has taken place in him... It lives in the intimate association of those who are comforted and exhorted in this way, on the basis of their common relationship to the Son of God who was born, crucified and rose again as man for all men...It lives in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, i.e., from the knowledge that the kingdom of God has come, in prayer for the revelation of his glory and therefore for the commission to tell all men that God was, is and will be for them all"

(1)

It does seem true, as Stephen Neill said, that with the end of the great missionary period the great age of mission has begun. We can no longer rest from our labours when we have interpreted Matthew 28:19 literally and applied it practically. We must move on into Acts, preceding and following, but never losing sight of Jesus Christ, praying for the power to keep us faithful in the fulfilment of our prophetic mission at his command.

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1 Against the Stream, 63, 64, 66, 69 and 71

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