

## ABSTRACT

Who Says Mission, Says Church:  
The Church-Mission Affirmation of Tambaram, 1938

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This dissertation is a historical investigation of the ecclesiology of the 1938 meeting of the International Missionary Council in Tambaram, India. The study's impetus is current characterizations of Tambaram as the pinnacle of a church-centric mission theology portrayed as primarily concerned with the numerical growth of the church as an institution under particular cultural norms rather than as an emphasis on the church as the primary agent in mission with growth of the church as a result of mission, rather than the primary aim or goal. The misrepresentation of Tambaram and its church-centrism plays out in the origin story of today's missional ecclesiology movement and also is subscribed to by other proponents of *missio Dei* mission theology. These groups differentiate themselves from church-centrism by way of theo-centrism – espousing a trinitarian foundation for mission in the missionary nature and activity of God.

Historical analysis identifies the contextual factors contributing to Tambaram's turn to the church, the core features of Tambaram's ecclesiology, and

the major dissent from Tambaram's affirmation of the church. Further analysis places Tambaram in historical relation to the IMC's Jerusalem meeting in 1928 and pre-IMC modern Protestant mission history in terms of contention over the kingdom of God concept. This analysis of Tambaram is then applied to current characterizations of church-centrism clarifying Tambaram's relation to later developments in conciliar Protestant mission history and Tambaram's (non)reception.

Four contextual factors influenced Tambaram's turn to the church and also affected the content of their affirmation of the church: a pattern of growing internationalization and parity in the history of the IMC; geo-political tensions and the threat of war; late-modern socio-cultural changes and the totalitarian claims of secular ideologies, nationalism, and non-Christian religions; and an ecclesiological turn in international Protestantism, especially the 1937 meetings of the Life and Work and Faith and Order movements. Five salient characteristics of Tambaram's latent ecclesiology are identified from textual analysis: penitence, the church called with a purpose, the witness-bearing nature of the church, community and fellowship, and the social and cultural contextualization of indigenous local churches.

The study then compares these results with current historical representations and concludes that Tambaram and church-centric mission theology are caricatured. The caricature is rejected, thereby closing off Tambaram from current conversations regarding ecclesiology, culture, and mission. In particular, this caricature and rejection anchors one of the two tributary streams missional

ecclesiology narrates in its origin story. This study suggests that missional ecclesiology needs to re-narrate that origin story for the sake of historical accuracy and theological clarity.

Who Says Mission, Says Church: The Church-Mission Affirmation of Tambaram, 1938

by

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A Dissertation

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	viii
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Abbreviations.....	x
Acknowledgments.....	xi
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Topic and Aims.....	1
Organizations and World Meetings.....	4
Positioning in the Scholarly Discussion.....	6
Other Studies.....	9
An Ecclesiological Renaissance.....	11
Method.....	12
Karl Hartenstein.....	15
Introduction to Missional Ecclesiology.....	19
Character and Concerns.....	19
Origin Story.....	26
Tambaram’s Reception.....	29
A Note on Terminology.....	32
Outline of the Project.....	35
Chapter Two: Tambaram in Context.....	37
The Meeting.....	37
Contextual Factors in Tambaram’s Turn to the Church.....	43
Growing Internationalization of IMC Meetings.....	44
Global Tensions and the Supra-National Character of the Church.....	56
Social, Political, Economic, and Cultural Flux.....	64
The Ecclesial Turn in International Protestantism.....	80
Conclusion.....	85
Chapter Three: Tambaram’s Affirmation of the Church in Mission.....	86
The Character of the Church.....	87
The Penitent Church.....	88
The Church Called for a Purpose.....	94
The Witness-Bearing Church.....	99
The Church as Community and Fellowship.....	102
The Local, Contextualized Church.....	106
Conclusion.....	121

Chapter Four: Dissent .....	125
The Kingdom of God versus the Church .....	125
Rethinking Christianity in India .....	126
E. Stanley Jones and the Totalitarian Kingdom of God.....	142
The IMC and the Kingdom of God.....	164
Nineteenth-century Progressivism.....	165
The Continental Exception.....	169
Other Factors.....	174
The Kingdom of God Movement in Japan .....	174
India Divided .....	176
Conclusion .....	176
 Chapter Five: Devaluation.....	 180
The Caricature of Church-Centrism.....	181
Devaluing Tambaram .....	188
Overvaluing Willingen and <i>missio Dei</i> .....	199
Continuity versus Discontinuity.....	203
Likenesses.....	204
Contrasts.....	210
Conclusion .....	214
 Chapter Six: Conclusion.....	 216
The Project.....	216
Tambaram’s Turn to the Church.....	218
Tambaram’s Ecclesiology .....	221
The Kingdom of God.....	224
Devaluing Tambaram, Overvaluing Willingen .....	227
Conclusion .....	230
 Appendices .....	 235
Appendix A: Special Resolutions Adopted at Tambaram.....	236
Appendix B: Additional Examples of Tambaram’s Ecclesiology .....	239
Appendix C: The Place of the Church in Evangelism .....	247
Appendix D: Tambaram’s Affirmation of the Kingdom of God.....	264
Appendix E: The Continental Exception.....	267
Appendix F: List of Members .....	271
 Bibliography .....	 289

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Karl Hartenstein (1894-1952) .....	18
Figure 2. Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah (1874-1945) .....	97
Figure 3. E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973) .....	146
Figure 4. Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975) .....	191

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Meetings of the IMC and related organizations .....	5
Table 2. The Madras Series .....	14
Table 3. Organization of Topics at Tambaram .....	42
Table 4. Books by E. Stanley Jones relevant to the Kingdom of God and Tambaram.....	148

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABCFM	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (of the WCC)
F&O or Faith and Order	World Conference on Faith and Order
FMB	Foreign Mission Board [used by a variety of organizations]
IMC or Council	International Missionary Council
IRM	International Review of Missions (after 1969, International Review of Mission)
L&W or Life and Work	Universal Christian Council for Life and Work
LFMI	Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry
LMS	London Missionary Society
NCC	National Christian Council [used by multiple countries]
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts
SVM	Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions
WAIFC or World Alliance	World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union
WSCF	World's Student Christian Federation
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### *Topic and Aims*

The topic of this study is the ecclesiology of the 1938 meeting of the International Missionary Council (IMC) held in Tambaram, Madras, India. The project's aim is two-fold. First, correction is needed in misinterpretations of Tambaram's church-centric approach to mission and characterization of the meeting as the pinnacle of church-centrism in modern Protestant mission history. Secondly, this project aims to examine the origin story of today's missional ecclesiology and missional ecclesiology's lack of engagement with Tambaram. This non-appropriation is both a result of the misinterpretation of Tambaram's church-centric mission theology and a perpetuator of that error.

A basic meaning of church-centrism in mission is emphasis on the church as the primary agent in mission with the expected result of such mission being growth of the church in the world. However, assumptions and generalizations about the church-centric label do a disservice to the historical record. One mischaracterization is that the church as the primary agent in mission has adopted the primary aim of growth of the church. That is, growth in the church is moved from result to aim or goal. This characterization is often accompanied by criticism concerning excessive regard for adding numbers to the church. Second, the label is too often understood as mission that has as its primary objective expansion of the church as an institution

under particular forms or cultural norms. Each of these more pejorative descriptors has some validity as a criticism of one or more periods of modern Protestant mission history. This study will demonstrate them as mischaracterizations, though, of Tambaram.

Tambaram's affirmation of the essential relation between church and mission occurred within a wider context of ecclesiological deliberation in conciliar Protestantism. Furthermore, within the mission purview of the IMC there was a perceived need to address the question of the relation between church and mission. Tambaram formulated a perspective on church and mission in response to that perceived need. The IMC's approach at Tambaram was contextual to their time and should not be confused with an earlier handling of the church mission dynamic marked by a conflation of the church, mission, and the kingdom of God.

Missional ecclesiology, meanwhile, is a relatively recent development that affirms the centrality of mission to the identity of the church.<sup>1</sup> The prevailing origin story of missional ecclesiology is traced back to the IMC meeting in Willingen in 1952. Contributions from earlier developments are rarely acknowledged. How is it, then, that a movement that asserts mission as essential to the nature of the church virtually ignores the IMC conference that elicited such a statement as ““Whoever says church says mission; or conversely, whoever says mission says church” from the

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<sup>1</sup> An introduction to the concerns, characteristics, and origins of missional ecclesiology is provided later in this chapter.

missiologist who later receives credit for the formulation of *missio Dei*, which that movement holds so dear?<sup>2</sup>

This project aims to address these issues by examining Tambaram's ecclesiology and the origin story of missional ecclesiology in four lines of analysis. First, the IMC's turn to the church was prompted and affected by its historical context. A careful assessment of this original context clarifies Tambaram's decision to focus on the church, reveals ways in which that context affected Tambaram's view of the church, and sets the subsequent analysis of what Tambaram actually said about the church on firmer footing. Second, the IMC's official statements of record are examined to identify the chief contours of Tambaram's ecclesiology. Other texts associated with Tambaram contribute to this analysis, like journal articles and books from before and after the meeting, officially sanctioned by the IMC or not. Third, the path followed by Tambaram in affirming the church in mission was selected in lieu of alternatives. Understanding the alternatives further informs our understanding of what the IMC meant in its statements and clarifies Tambaram's position among the preceding world mission gatherings of the modern Protestant mission era. Finally, the caricature of church-centrism and the place of Tambaram in later Protestant missiological deliberations explains the non-appropriation of Tambaram by missional ecclesiology. Mischaracterizations of Tambaram are

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<sup>2</sup> "Wer Kirche sagt, sagt Mission. Aber umgekehrt: Wer Mission sagt, sagt Kirche." Karl Hartenstein, "Was haben wir von Tambaram zu lernen?" in *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der Erde: Bericht über Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram*, ed. Martin Schlunk (Stuttgart: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 194. Jürgen Schuster, in a journal article on Hartenstein's legacy, laments, "It is surprising how soon the voices of Karl Hartenstein and his contemporaries have been forgotten in mission theology. Their concepts of mission have undergone quick and grave reinterpretations in the ecumenical movement." Jürgen Schuster, "Karl Hartenstein: Mission with a Focus on the End," *Mission Studies* 19, no. 1-2 (2002): 54.

exposed by a comparison of what Tambaram actually said with the caricature and then with key aspects of missional ecclesiology.

### *Organizations and World Meetings*

The Tambaram meeting in 1938 was only the second of the official assemblies of the International Missionary Council (IMC). Tambaram, though, is reckoned third in a key sequence that begins with the World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910 and extends to present-day gatherings of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) (see table 1).

Edinburgh enjoys monumental status for its symbolic position at the headwaters of twentieth-century Protestant mission and ecumenics. Two ways in which this status has been validated are Edinburgh's seminal character as an assembly of official delegates structured around study and consultation, and Edinburgh's heritage as the progenitor of the IMC, whose lineage traces an arc through Edinburgh's Continuation Committee to the establishment of the IMC at Lake Mohonk, New York in 1921.

Much of the emphasis on Edinburgh focuses on its heritage in ecumenics because Edinburgh was instrumental in the formation of more than just the IMC. Edinburgh is attributed with influence on the origins of the Faith and Order and Life and Work<sup>3</sup> movements. After holding several meetings as independent groups these

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<sup>3</sup> This movement is rarely identified according to what became its formal name: The Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. From its nascent stages up to its incorporation into the WCC, the movement is almost uniformly referred to as just "Life and Work."

Table 1. Meetings of the IMC and related organizations

<i>Non-Affiliated</i>		
Edinburgh, 1910		
<i>International Missionary Council</i>	<i>Life and Work</i>	<i>Faith and Order</i>
1921, Lake Mohonk (formation)	1925, Stockholm	1927, Lausanne
1928, Jerusalem	1937, Oxford	1937, Edinburgh
1938, Tambaram		
	<i>World Council of Churches</i>	
1947, Whitby	1938, Utrecht (formation)	
1952, Willingen	1948, Amsterdam	
1958, Accra	1954, Evanston	
<i>IMC/WCC Merger</i>		
1961, New Delhi		
<i>WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism</i>	<i>World Council of Churches (cont.)</i>	
1963, Mexico City	1968, Uppsala	
1972, Bangkok	1975, Nairobi	
1980, Melbourne	1983, Vancouver	
1989, San Antonio	1991, Canberra	
1996, Salvador da Bahía	1998, Harare	
2005, Athens	2006, Porto Alegre	
2010, Edinburgh	2013, Busan	

two movements agreed at a joint meeting in Utrecht 1938 to combine and constitute the WCC. After a delay caused by World War II, the first official world gathering of the WCC was held at Amsterdam in 1948. The ecumenical luster of Edinburgh is further enhanced by the integration of the IMC into the WCC New Delhi in 1961. After the merger, the WCC has continued the pattern of periodic worldwide meetings, as has the CWME (successor body to the IMC within the WCC).

Thus, Edinburgh yielded three movements following the pattern of delegate meetings focused on study and consultation that eventually recombined to form the WCC.<sup>4</sup> Together, the production and rejoining of these streams of international Protestant cooperation and consultation through periodic world gatherings is known as the conciliar tradition of twentieth-century Protestant mission and ecumenics.<sup>5</sup>

### *Positioning in the Scholarly Discussion*

The church-mission dimension of Tambaram is frequently passed over in favor of “mission and dialogue.”<sup>6</sup> This latter dimension pertains to the debate over continuity or discontinuity between Christianity and other world religions that

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<sup>4</sup> Edinburgh’s ecumenical heritage is demonstrated by William Richey Hogg in his aptly titled landmark work *Ecumenical Foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council and its Nineteenth Century Background* (New York: Harper, 1952).

<sup>5</sup> A description of the use of conciliar terminology in this study is provided later in this chapter. Additional analysis of the relation between Edinburgh 1910 and the development of the IMC up to Tambaram 1938 is provided as part of the first of the contextual factors influencing Tambaram’s turn to the church that are presented in chapter two.

<sup>6</sup> S. Mark Heim, “Mission and Dialogue: 50 Years after Tambaram,” *Christian Century* 105, no. 11 (April 6, 1988): 340. Heim uses the phrase “mission and dialogue” to denote what is generally referred to in the literature as the continuity/discontinuity debate.

ensued from Hendrik Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*.<sup>7</sup>

Kraemer wrote his book as a preparatory volume to the conference. Kraemer espoused a radical discontinuity between Christianity and other religions that caused a stir among the book's readers and at the conference. The first volume of the seven-volume Madras Series, published after the conference, is dedicated to responses to Kraemer's work.<sup>8</sup>

Sebastian Kim's focus on the church-mission dynamic when interpreting the meaning and significance of Tambaram is rare.<sup>9</sup> Kim argues that even the much-acclaimed Kraemer debate needs to be assessed within Tambaram's more fundamental framework relating to the nature of the church.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, after several sections of high quality, detailed work on theological trajectories leading up to Tambaram, virtually all of Jan Van Lin's analysis of the actual meeting focuses on Kraemer's preparatory volume, including Van Lin's twenty-two page final section of

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<sup>7</sup> Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1938).

<sup>8</sup> International Missionary Council, *The Authority of the Faith*, vol. 1, Madras Series (New York: IMC, 1939). Alfred George Hogg is one of the leading proponents of continuity identified by historians. Walter Horton reflects the majority middle that saw this dimension as an extension of the tension between a sociological, liberal missiology represented by William Hocking and Kraemer's Barthian perspective. See Alfred George Hogg, "The Christian Attitude to Non-Christian Faith" and Walter Horton, "Between Hocking and Kraemer" in *The Authority of the Faith*; and Roger Hedlund, "Perspective Five: The Hocking-Kraemer Debate" in *Roots of the Great Debate in Mission: Mission in Historical and Theological Perspective*, ed. Roger Hedlund (Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 2002), 81-96.

<sup>9</sup> Kim, a Cambridge Ph.D. and later a faculty member, has taught at seminaries in India and Korea and currently holds the Chair in Theology and Public Life in the Faculty of Education & Theology at York St. John University, York, England. Another, though less prominent voice, is Joshua Kalapati, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Madras Christian College, Tambaram, India.

<sup>10</sup> Sebastian Kim, "The Kingdom of God *versus* the Church: The Debate around the Conference of the International Missionary Council at Tambaram, Madras in 1938," in *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities*, ed. Ogbu Kalu, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 132, 136.

the chapter titled “The Missionary Conference on Non-Christian Religions.”<sup>11</sup> Kim has taken the first steps in reclaiming the church-mission dynamic of Tambaram with a chapter in an edited volume. This study complements Kim’s work by addressing that dynamic in depth.

It is also rare for more general treatments of twentieth-century Protestant mission to analyze significantly the church-mission dynamic of Tambaram and not fall into a church-centric caricature or limit themselves to the debate over continuity and discontinuity between Christianity and non-Christian religions. Timothy Yates, though, does note that the relation between Christianity and other faiths was only one of the concerns of Tambaram – sections I and V. The other major concern was “the place of evangelism in the churches” – sections III and IV.<sup>12</sup>

When the academy does address the church-mission dimension of Tambaram, the tendency is to identify Tambaram as a high-water mark in church-centric mission understood as mission aiming at the numerical expansion of the church as an institution under particular forms or cultural norms. The label has taken on a pejorative connotation from two criticisms. An older criticism is that the church-centric model was corrupted by denominationalism and sectarian impulses. To expand the church meant to plant churches on the mission field that reproduced specific forms of church after the image of the mission-sending entity, thereby producing a paternalistic mission model and stifling the expression of faith and

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<sup>11</sup> Jan Van Lin, *Shaking the Fundamentals: Religious Plurality and Ecumenical Movement* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2002), 190-211.

<sup>12</sup> Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 117-24.

community in different settings. This mode of replication has been most severely criticized as a partner to Western domination first through colonial imperialism and then, in the twentieth century, through cultural imperialism.<sup>13</sup>

A newer criticism is a development of the first, but with more emphasis on the institutional aspect than on denominationalism. In this criticism, church-centric mission is not only criticized for paternalism but is also deemed a child of Christendom by those for whom Christendom is a bankrupt concept. Left unexamined is the extent to which the much-announced demise of Christendom is actually a defeater to a tight linkage between church and mission. It would seem not, because missional ecclesiology consistently affirms that the church is missionary in its very nature. While investigation of the consequences of Christendom on the church-mission dynamic is primarily a theological project (i.e., to be taken up outside the scope of a history dissertation), the historical investigation in this study will provide a foundation for such reflection on church, mission, and the demise of Christendom.

### *Other Studies*

There are few book-length studies of the Tambaram meeting. A German text published in 2000 focuses on the positions of representatives to the conference regarding colonialism and the church.<sup>14</sup> Carl Hallencrutz's 1966 study of the

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<sup>13</sup> See, for example, David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1991), 303.

<sup>14</sup> Frieder Ludwig, *Zwischen Kolonialismuskritik und Kirchenkampf: Interaktionen afrikanischer, indischer und europäischer Christen während der Weltmissionskonferenz in Tambaram 1938* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

development of Kraemer's mission theology leading up to Tambaram focuses on the continuity/discontinuity dimension of Tambaram, as does a 1977 dissertation by James Cox on the development of A.G. Hogg's mission theology.<sup>15</sup> One Dutch-language text sets Tambaram as its ending point for a study of Protestant theology of religions (the continuity/discontinuity dimension), while a French text sets Tambaram as a starting point for a similar type of study; both texts are over thirty five years old.<sup>16</sup>

Tambaram otherwise appears in journal articles or in chapters of wider-ranging texts. These tend to be of two types: retrospectives on twentieth century mission or ecumenics, or pieces more directly focused on the conference. Retrospectives tend to tout the continuity and discontinuity dimension of Tambaram and perpetuate the reductionistic form of church-centrism (a caricature).

Of the pieces more directly concerned with Tambaram, Kim has made a start to substantively address the church-mission dimension of Tambaram. In general, studies of Kraemer, the theologian, have overshadowed scholarly engagement with Tambaram, the conference, and theological treatments have suffered from a lack of historical work in this area.

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<sup>15</sup> Carl Hallencreutz, *Kraemer Towards Tambaram: A Study in Hendrik Kraemer's Missionary Approach* (Lund: Gleerup, 1966). James Leland Cox, *The Development of A.G. Hogg's Theology in Relation to Non-Christian Faith: Its Significance for the Tambaram Meeting of the International Missionary Council, 1938* (Ph.D. diss., University of Aberdeen, 1977).

<sup>16</sup> Johannes Jacob Emile Van Lin, *Protestantse theologie der godsdiensten: van Edinburgh naar Tambaram, 1910-1938* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974). Gérard Vallée, *Mouvement œcuménique et religions non chrétiennes: un débat œcuménique sur la rencontre interreligieuse de Tambaram à Uppsala, 1938-1968* (Tournai: Desclée, 1975).

## *An Ecclesiological Renaissance*

There is further relevance to the study of the ecclesial deliberations of a world mission conference in 1938. More than just setting the record straight about what Tambaram was about, and more than just establishing that the roots of missional ecclesiology run farther back than Willingen, theological studies will benefit from looking at the fruits and process of deliberation from those in the past who have engaged similar questions.

Historical theologian Bruce McCormack once observed in a class discussion that theological inquiry tends to flow in waves around popular topics. He noted that recent waves of inquiry have focused on the Trinity, atonement, and ecclesiology.<sup>17</sup> McCormack is not alone in recognizing a sort of “ecclesiological renaissance.” In the twentieth-century, the combination of the ecumenical movement, “rapid growth of Christianity outside the West,” and the rise of “nontraditional forms of the church both in the West and elsewhere” has pushed ecclesiology to the forefront of theological inquiry.<sup>18</sup> Not the least of these inquiries is the burgeoning segment of books and essays regarding missional ecclesiology.

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<sup>17</sup> Bruce McCormack, personal communication (seminar discussion, Princeton Theological Seminary, “TH327: Readings in the Doctrine of Justification,” January 23, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 7-8. McCormack seemed, to me, to be speaking in terms of the last twenty years or so. Brad Harper and Paul Metzger echo this sentiment by acknowledging that any basic book search on ecclesiology will return plentiful results recently published. Brad Harper and Paul Metzger, *Exploring Ecclesiology: An Evangelical and Ecumenical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 13. Carl Braaten, on the other hand, takes a longer view of theological cycles and sees the twentieth century generally as “the century of the church” and, in particular, as producing “the search for a truly ecumenical doctrine of the church.” Carl Braaten, *Mother Church: Ecclesiology and Ecumenism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 1. See also, Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 246.

Missiologist Darrel Guder, a seminal voice in the missional ecclesiology movement, has suggested that often the questions that arise as topics of interest to theologians are anticipated by questions and struggles in the missionary movement.<sup>19</sup> In freeing Tambaram from the church-centric caricature this study will give new circulation to the church's reasoning at that time regarding the church-mission dynamic, thus serving as a resource to current theological inquiry, especially those in the missional ecclesiology movement.

What Torben Christensen and William Hutchison wrote about imperialist era mission bears consideration here as well:

The older missionaries and their organizers have also become, at this distance, nearly inaudible. They seem somehow out of range, and we rarely listen to them; partly because we think we know what they were saying, and because we now find much of it embarrassing. . . . [T]his slighting of the missionaries has been unwise, and our presumption that we understand their ways of thinking, simply incorrect.<sup>20</sup>

Through careful reading of the primary historical documents this study attempts to hear anew what Tambaram was saying.

### *Method*

This study is intellectual history using textual analysis as the primary method. Fortunately, primary sources abound for Tambaram. Following the pattern of earlier mission gatherings, Tambaram was preceded by official preparatory

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<sup>19</sup> Darrel Guder, "Introduction: From Missionary Movement to the Theology of Mission" (course lecture, Princeton Theological Seminary, "EC458: Ecumenical Theology of the Church's Mission," January 24, 2005). A similar sentiment is evident in Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 146.

<sup>20</sup> Torben Christensen and William Hutchison, *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era: 1880-1920* (Arhus, Denmark: Aros, 1982), 5.

studies. Two of the most important preparatory studies were Hendrik Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* and J. H. Oldham's *The Question of the Church in the World Today*.<sup>21</sup>

Following the conference, the IMC published a one-volume text of "findings and recommendations" titled *The World Mission of the Church*.<sup>22</sup> This text assembled the final, edited reports of the various working groups as ratified in plenary session at the end of the meeting. Thus, it constitutes the official statements of the IMC from the business of the meeting.<sup>23</sup> After Tambaram, the IMC also published seven volumes of IMC-sanctioned preliminary material, working papers, and reports provided before and at the meeting by delegations from around the world. This set of texts, called the Madras Series, also reproduced the official statements of the meeting that are found in *The World Mission of the Church*. The official statements were interspersed among the volumes so as to appear alongside the auxiliary

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<sup>21</sup> Joseph Houldsworth Oldham, *The Question of the Church in the World of Today* (London: Edinburgh House Press on behalf of the IMC, 1936). Oldham's work was little more than a pamphlet at thirty eight pages. Nevertheless, it provides direct insight into the IMC's turn to the church. Other preliminary studies were commissioned, including a statistical survey of Christian missions and a report on the economic basis of the church by J. Merle Davis, then director of the IMC's Department of Social and Industrial Research and Counsel. Davis's massive study was published before the meeting as *The Economic and Social Environment of the Younger Churches: The Report of the Department of Social and Industrial Research of the International Missionary Council to the Tambaram Meeting, 1938* (London: IMC, 1938) and then reproduced as volume five of the Madras Series, *The Economic Basis of the Church*. Studies on evangelism conducted by William Paton and John Mott were largely reproduced in volume three of the Madras Series, *Evangelism*, edited by W. P. William and Kenneth Scott Latourette.

<sup>22</sup> International Missionary Council, *The World Mission of the Church: Findings and Recommendations of the Meeting of the International Missionary Council, Tambaram, Madras, India, December 12th to 29th, 1938* (London; New York: IMC, 1939).

<sup>23</sup> *The World Mission of the Church* also includes a handful of other statements received by the meeting but not official statements of the whole. These statements are clearly designated as such when addressed in this study.

Table 2. The Madras Series

Volume	Title
I	The Authority of the Faith
II	The Growing Church
III	Evangelism
IV	The Life of the Church
V	The Economic Basis of the Church
VI	The Church and the State
VII	Addresses and Other Records

material in the Madras Series volumes that pertained to each corresponding official statement from the meeting.<sup>24</sup>

Tamparam was also preceded and followed by a significant number of articles, essays, and books that were not officially sanctioned or published by the IMC. Special consideration has been given to prominent mission periodicals such as *The Missionary Review of the World* and *The International Review of Missions* (IRM). The *IRM* was the official journal of the IMC and published a special double edition in July 1938 for the Tamparam meeting. Karl Hartenstein's (1894-1952) retrospective of the conference and one published by the German delegation also merit special attention.<sup>25</sup> Hartenstein also contributed to the German delegation's collective

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<sup>24</sup> Full bibliographic data for all seven volumes of the Madras Series can be found in the bibliography under the authorship of the International Missionary Council (see also, table 2). The use of these sources in this historical study is further discussed at the beginning of chapter two.

<sup>25</sup> Karl Hartenstein, *Die Weltmissionskonferenz Tamparam 1938* (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939). Martin Schlunk, *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der*

report edited by Martin Schlunk. There, Hartenstein affirmed “Whoever says church, says mission. Or conversely: whoever says mission, says church.”<sup>26</sup>

### *Karl Hartenstein*

Tambaram was Hartenstein’s first IMC world gathering, but he already had significant experience in the international missionary movement and wide influence.<sup>27</sup> Hartenstein began theological studies at the University of Tübingen after completing his *Abitur* in 1912, but his studies were interrupted when he was drafted into the German army in August 1914.<sup>28</sup> He returned to Tübingen in 1919 and completed his studies, becoming a student of Karl Heim, through whom he was introduced to Karl Barth’s *Römerbrief* and the new direction it represented in Continental theology. Hartenstein graduated in 1922 and after a short period as a lecturer at the Tübinger Stift, wed Margarete Umfrid and moved to Urach, Germany, where he served as a pastor for three years.<sup>29</sup>

In 1926, Hartenstein was appointed director of the Basel Mission and immediately faced the ongoing challenge of rebuilding the Mission in the wake of

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*Erde: Bericht über die Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram (Südindien) 1938* (Berlin: Heimatdienstverlag, 1939).

<sup>26</sup> Hartenstein, “Was haben wir von Tambaram zu lernen?” in Schlunk, 194.

<sup>27</sup> The following biographical sketch is indebted to B. D. Gibson, “Karl Hartenstein,” *International Review of Mission* 42, no. 3 (1953): 306-7; Schuster, “Karl Hartenstein”: 53-61; Gerold Schwarz, “Karl Hartenstein 1894-1952: Missions with a Focus on ‘The End,’” in *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement*, ed. Gerald Anderson, et al. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), 591-601; and Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 105.

<sup>28</sup> Hartenstein was awarded the Iron Cross twice and later given an even higher award by the Kaiser in 1918. Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 105.

<sup>29</sup> Schuster, “Karl Hartenstein”: 55.

the Great War. Early in his tenure as director, Hartenstein conducted a three-month visit to England to acquaint himself with British missions and improve his command of the English language. He then toured the mission fields of India and China building new relationships and mending ones damaged by the war.

During this period Hartenstein also joined the German Evangelical Mission Federation (Deutsche Evangelische Missionsbund) where he developed a close friendship with noted figures in modern Protestant mission history Walter Freytag (1899-1959) and Johannes Warneck (1867-1944).<sup>30</sup> In 1928, Hartenstein published one of his most noted connections with Barthian theology, a 1927 Stuttgart lecture titled “What Has the Theology of Karl Barth to Say to Mission?”<sup>31</sup> He completed his doctoral work at the University of Tübingen (1933) with the dissertation “Mission als theologisches Problem.”

Adolph Hitler’s ascension to Reich Chancellor in 1933 brought pressure on mission societies as it did churches; German mission societies were to be part of the unified Reichskirche. Hartenstein, along with Freytag and Warneck, was influential in the Deutsche Evangelische Missionsbund signing the Barmen Declaration in 1934 and aligning itself with the Confessing Church (Bekennende Kirche). In 1939, with the onset of World War II, the German and Swiss elements in the Basel Mission separated. Hartenstein resigned as director and the Germans withdrew to

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<sup>30</sup> Johannes Warneck was a German missionary to Indonesia and son of Gustav Warneck (1834-1910), pioneer of missiology as an academic discipline.

<sup>31</sup> Karl Hartenstein, *Was hat die Theologie Karl Barths der Mission zu sagen?* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1928).

Germany.<sup>32</sup> Hartenstein wrote a letter to William Paton in the aftermath of this separation, “assuring him [Paton], and through him the I.M.C., that through the trials which were bound to follow the outbreak of war, the fellowship of Tambaram would be a constant presence with him.”<sup>33</sup> Open relations between German mission societies and the rest of the world returned in 1945 with the end of the war. Hartenstein represented Germany’s Missionsrat at the IMC’s meeting in Whitby (1947) and Willingen (1952). Until his death in 1952, Hartenstein also labored for reconciliation between Swiss and German mission enterprises, a breach that extended beyond just the Basel Mission.

Hartenstein’s Barthian disposition lessened over time, but some aspects are recognizable from Tambaram to Willingen.<sup>34</sup> He was critical of “fulfillment” language in any use other than Christ. For Hartenstein, fulfillment and superiority language should not be associated with Western culture or Western Christianity in their contact with non-Christian religions.<sup>35</sup> He was also an important part of the Continentals’ advocacy of the eschatological dimension of the kingdom of God (addressed in chapter four). As early as 1932, Hartenstein was writing that the

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<sup>32</sup> This move was motivated to protect the Basel Mission and its properties on the mission fields from the grasp of the Reich. Schuster, “Karl Hartenstein”: 58.

<sup>33</sup> Gibson, “Karl Hartenstein”: 306.

<sup>34</sup> Later in his own theological development, Hartenstein sided with Emil Brunner instead of Karl Barth in their famous disagreement on the issue of nature and grace.

<sup>35</sup> Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 105.

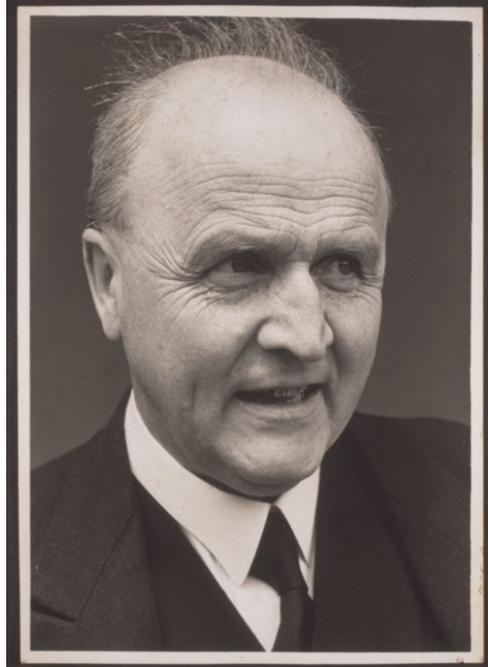


Figure 1. Karl Hartenstein (1894-1952). (“Director Hartenstein” QS-30.026.0146, courtesy of Basel Mission Archives.)

subject (the “I”) of true mission was God, and in 1934 he first used the phrase *missio Dei*, advocating that it is out of the *missio Dei* that the *missio Ecclesiae* arises.<sup>36</sup>

B. D. Gibson, a former assistant secretary of the IMC, eulogized Hartenstein in the *International Review of Missions* with memories of his personality and character. She was impressed by his visit to Britain at the beginning of his work as director of the Basel Mission. She also recalled, “He was a stimulating thinker, but more than that, he was a human being, of wide vision, single-mindedness of purpose and of great charm, whose passionate love for Christ and for his fellows shone from his face, in the smiling wrinkles round his eyes.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Schuster, “Karl Hartenstein”: 65. This latent *missio Dei* not only significantly predates Willigen 1952, it predates Tambaram.

<sup>37</sup> Gibson, “Karl Hartenstein”: 307.

## *Introduction to Missional Ecclesiology*

In addition to twentieth-century Protestant conciliar mission, missional ecclesiology represents a second set of perspectives under inquiry in this study. As a relatively new movement relative to the whole of Christian history, a basic introduction is warranted prior to more in-depth analysis in the later chapters.

### *Character and Concerns*

Missional ecclesiology affirms the centrality of mission to the identity of the church. Already there is an affinity here with Tambaram. Indeed, the origin story of missional ecclesiology is closely intertwined with the conciliar tradition of Protestant mission and ecumenics. Whereas Tambaram deliberated on mission with a church-centric affirmation, missional ecclesiology takes the church as its focus of deliberation and affirms a “missiocentric church.”<sup>38</sup>

In this view, the perspective on mission is shifted. Instead of the church sending missionaries, the church now views itself as sent by God into all the world so that the church is missionary wherever it is, including its own neighborhood.<sup>39</sup> It is no longer the church that sends, but God who sends, and God’s sending of the church is based in God’s will and activity: “We have come to see that mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather mission is the result of God’s initiative,

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<sup>38</sup> Darrell Guder, “Walking Worthily: Missional Leadership After Christendom,” *Princeton Seminary Bulletin New Series* 28, no. 3 (2007): 255.

<sup>39</sup> Craig Ott, Stephen Strauss, and Timothy Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), xviii, xxiii.

rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation."<sup>40</sup> God's mission – *missio Dei* – is the “heart of the missional church.”<sup>41</sup> God calls the church into being and sends the church as a participant in that mission.<sup>42</sup> It is only right, say missional ecclesiology, that our ecclesiology conform to this datum: “God's mission necessitates a missiological ecclesiology.”<sup>43</sup>

In making this theological move, missional ecclesiology also challenges traditional conceptions of ecclesiology as a theological sub-discipline. Ecclesiology has traditionally been structured across two foci in regard to the church: being and doing.<sup>44</sup> The question of being is one of the nature of the church. What makes the church, the church? What are the conditions for being the church (or a church) and what might one identify without which the church cannot be considered as such (*sine qua non*)? On the other hand, the question of doing focuses upon practices of the church such as worship and the sacraments, but also polity, ordination, and

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<sup>40</sup> Darrell Guder and Lois Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1998), 4.

<sup>41</sup> Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 20.

<sup>42</sup> An abiding question for a missional church (a specific congregation in a certain time and place) is, “What is God doing?” Stephen Hayner, “The Story of the Missional Church,” *Presbyterian Outlook*, <http://www.pres-outlook.com/opinion3/guest-commentary3/5451-the-story-of-the-missional-church.html> (accessed December 24, 2012).

<sup>43</sup> Guder, “Walking Worthily”: 271. Evident in these statements is *missio Dei*, which represents a shift from a Christological foundation for mission theology to a trinitarian foundation. This theological shift is a part of the history between Tambaram and the advent of missional ecclesiology. The shift itself is described further in chapter five, but it can be noted that proponents of *missio Dei* and the relocation to a trinitarian foundation often labor to arrive at theological clarity and precision in explaining the meaning and significance of a *trinitarian* foundation for mission theology or ecclesiology. Much of this difficulty appears to be inherited from the challenges of clarity and precision in articulating the doctrine of the Trinity.

<sup>44</sup> Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 14.

frequently, mission. Things in this category are traditionally seen as corollaries to the church in its nature. One of the significant contours of missional ecclesiology is the move to consider mission as integral to the nature of the church (being) and not just practice (doing).<sup>45</sup>

Prior to these assertions, though, missional ecclesiology, as a burgeoning ecclesiology, followed a familiar path starting with critique before developing constructive formulations.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, what missional ecclesiology seeks to criticize and mend, and what missional ecclesiology says that it is *not*, enhance the picture of what missional ecclesiology *is*. This is the first of four additional features of missional ecclesiology: that missional ecclesiology started with deconstruction or critique and then developed constructive statements about the church. On the constructive side of missional ecclesiology, three more features come into focus. Missional ecclesiology positions itself as non-institutional and post-Christendom, and there is a restorationist motif to missional ecclesiology.

Missional ecclesiology adopts a range of more dynamic organizational descriptors for what the church should be like. The church is described analogically as dynamic, “organic,” “fluid” or “liquid” in contrast to static, “command and

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<sup>45</sup> Late twentieth-century conciliar mission likewise espouses this change in perception regarding the church in Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (WCC), “The Church as Mission in its Very Life,” *International Review of Mission* 101, no. 1 (2012): 105-31. The theological basis for this refinement of the doctrine of the church is the doctrine of God, in whom, it is contended, there is no distinction between being and act. Relating the doctrine of the Trinity to the church and mission is also the theological impetus of *missio Dei* as described further in chapter five. For a sophisticated critique and revision of the *missio Dei* motif, see John Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans), 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Tom Sine identifies four ecclesiological streams as “new conspirators” shaping the future of the church: emerging, missional, mosaic, and monastic. Tom Sine, *The New Conspirators: Creating the Future One Mustard Seed at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 24.

control,” institutional forms.<sup>47</sup> Along with this distinction comes a distancing from an attractional model of church membership or belonging. Whereas institutional modes seek to attract members, a missional church moves outward.<sup>48</sup> Both modes may talk quantitatively, but missional ecclesiologists are explicit in separating themselves from the church growth movement associated with the work Donald McGavran (1897–1990). Missional ecclesiology seeks to break away from the “old church scorecard” of “how many, how often, how much,” and affirms that it is “not church growth in a new dress.”<sup>49</sup>

Embedded here is not just an aversion to counting noses, but also the institutional mindset of church programming. That is, missional ecclesiology struggles to avoid recipes for success and programmatic solutions even while the majority of the written works in the field of missional ecclesiology promote organizational change. Conceptually, this focus on organizational change is based in the negative aspect of missional ecclesiology’s critical project. Institutional modes that view mission as just another program among others are criticized. But missional ecclesiology’s criticism against programmatizing the mission of the church seeks to address the mindset that produces this phenomenon. Thus, missional ecclesiology employs organizational concepts while attempting to break that mold and not be about merely “doing church better.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 143, 197, 254.

<sup>48</sup> Sine, *The New Conspirators*, 20.

<sup>49</sup> McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, 3-17.

<sup>50</sup> Hayner, “The Story of the Missional Church.”

To missional ecclesiology, the programmatizing of mission is a violation of the ecclesiological standards implied by *missio Dei*. Blame for the programmatizing of mission, and indeed the misguided institutional mode of ecclesiology in general, is laid on Christendom.<sup>51</sup> The legitimatization of the church under Constantine set in motion this growing mindset of institutionalism in the Western church.<sup>52</sup> The demise of Christendom is presupposed in missional ecclesiology. The old ecclesiology is insufficient for the emergence of a new post-Christendom epoch, but the old ecclesiology is not rejected just because it does not work anymore. In missional ecclesiology, the demise of Christendom was a needed corrective to expose the bankruptcy of the Christendom ecclesiology and lay a new foundation for a truly global Christianity. Thus, it is right to refer to it as institutionalism, because it supposed a certain (Western) mode of church to be normative.

Finally, the rejection of Christendom and Christendom models of church elicits a kind of restorationist thinking to missional ecclesiology. The movement is less univocal here. Rejecting Christendom does not *require* a restorationist perspective. One can say, “That does not work anymore,” and even, “We should not have been doing it that way at that time, either,” without necessarily arguing for the restoration of a model from the past. Furthermore, missional ecclesiologists tend to be historically sensitive enough to avoid arguing for a wholesale restoration of a

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<sup>51</sup> Missional ecclesiology is not unique among current ecclesiologies in acknowledging the end of Christendom. The death of Christendom is also the common assessment in current mission history literature, for example Walls, *Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 237, 258.

<sup>52</sup> Among many others, see Guder, “Walking Worthily”: 253, 277-8.; Hayner, “The Story of the Missional Church”; Sine, *The New Conspirators*, 269-70.

pre-Constantinian model.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, the criticism against Christendom occasionally occurs with an assertion that today's post-Christendom culture presents a milieu analogous to pre-Constantinian Christianity. Like the early church, the church today finds itself as a minority with rapidly dwindling (or non-existent) social capital in a pluralistic and increasingly 'pagan' surrounding culture. In this sense, the cultural positioning of the church in the West is not so different formally from its position outside the West or the position of the church before Constantinian legitimization. Missional ecclesialogists ask, then, what can be learned from that earlier time.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, there is sensitivity to Christian tradition and dedication to the Bible as canon evident among missional ecclesialogists that also warrant this move. Questionable, though, is a restorationist trajectory that downgrades over 1,600 years of church history or dismisses it entirely. There is a latent resistance to study, understand and be influenced by, for example, the church-mission deliberations of an IMC meeting held in 1938.

We can close out this introduction to the character and concerns of missional ecclesialogy with two examples of their way of talking about mission and the church in their own words. Alan Hirsh writes:

So a working definition of missional church is a community of God's people that defines itself, and organizes its life around, its real purpose of being an

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<sup>53</sup> Sine notes that missional ecclesialogy was "birthed out of the academy" and that missional ecclesialogists resemble proponents of the emerging church movement "except that they [missional ecclesialogists] are often seminary-trained and more multiculturally focused." *The New Conspirators*, 41.

<sup>54</sup> One of the strongest examples of this looking back to pre-Constantinian Christianity is Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*. See also, Guder, "Walking Worthily": 257; Bill Reinhold, "What is the Missional Church? A Brief Introduction," Church Innovations, [http://www.churchinnovations.org/02\\_missional/mc\\_intro.html](http://www.churchinnovations.org/02_missional/mc_intro.html) (accessed December 24, 2012).

agent of God's mission to the world. In other words, the church's true and authentic organizing principle is mission. When the church is in mission, it is the true church. The church itself is not only a product of that mission but is obligated and destined to extend it by whatever means possible. The mission of God flows directly through every believer and every community of faith and adheres to Jesus. To obstruct this is to block God's purposes in and through his people.<sup>55</sup>

Here we see the prevalence of *missio Dei* and, implicitly, organizational principles that are contra-institutional. To this statement by Hirsch can be added a statement from Alan Roxburgh, M. Scott Boren, and Mark Priddy that exemplifies the restorationist overtone:

Mission is not an action or program but the essence that pervades all the church is. God calls the church to be the demonstration of what all creation is to be. Likewise, the church is the new Israel (Luke 12:32; 1 Pet. 2:9-10), called for the sake of the world. Mission is not something the church does as an activity; it is what the church *is* through the mystery of its formation and memory of its calling. The church is God's missionary people. There is no participation in Christ without participation in God's mission in the world. The church in North America to a large extent has lost this memory to the point that mission is but a single element in multifaceted, programmatic congregations serving the needs of the members. The gospel is now a religious message that meets the needs of self-actualizing individuals. But the North American church is being invited by the boundary-breaking Spirit to discover once again its nature as God's missionary people. This will mean going against the stream of most church life at this moment in time.<sup>56</sup>

These quotations round out a sketch of the character and concerns of missional ecclesiology. The deconstructive task has given way to a constructive dimension that promotes *missio Dei* and the sending of the church so that mission becomes an integral part of nature of the church, not just something the church does. To this can be added three other features that emerge from a survey of the issues and concerns

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<sup>55</sup> Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 82.

<sup>56</sup> Alan Roxburgh, M. Scott Boren, and Mark Priddy, *Introducing the Missional Church: What it is, Why it Matters, How to Become One* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 45.

of the movement: non-institutional, post-Christendom, and a moderate restorationist outlook.

### *Origin Story*

To date, writings on missional ecclesiology range from a few scholarly theological works of an introductory or investigative nature to more popular works oriented towards clergy and leaders in the Western church. These latter works – a majority among works in missional ecclesiology – seek to motivate readers to adopt a “missional outlook” and quickly turn to practical matters of institutional change. They are often comprised of some introductory part dedicated to theological rationale, a major part concerned with organizational theory and practice, and only a little bit of historical context and origins.

The prevailing origin story of “missional ecclesiology” can be divided into two basic tributary streams. The first of these streams is treated more as theological rationale than historical context. This stream covers the development of *missio Dei* mission theology and the implications of *missio Dei* for ecclesiology in both the work of the church and the nature of the church. The theological headwaters for this stream are traced back to Karl Barth (1886-1968) by way of the Barthian who developed the *missio Dei* terminology, Karl Hartenstein (1894-1952), and the IMC conference attributed with starting the move toward *missio Dei*, Willingen 1952. Even if the pejorative “church-centric” caricature of Tambaram goes unmentioned, the praise for a supposed corrective found in *missio Dei* following Willingen effectively discounts Tambaram’s contribution to the discussion. The usual line of rationale runs thus: It is Willingen that started the thought process that found

articulation in *missio Dei* and it is from there that we realized that it is not God's church that has a mission but that God's mission has a church. The message is that before this was accomplished mission was primarily about the expansion of specific, culturally-bound, institutional bodies.

The second basic tributary is attributed to missionary Lesslie Newbigin (1909-1998). When Newbigin returned to the West after a missionary career and service to the Church of South India, he encountered what he saw as a post-Christian West and pronounced the West as a (new) mission field for Christianity. Newbigin called upon the Christian church to recognize the new reality and adapt; the church needed to (re)embrace its missionary task.

One result of Newbigin's work was the organization in the 1980s of "The Gospel and Our Culture" program.<sup>57</sup> The Gospel and Our Culture was established in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and the United States. The network dwindled and dissolved in New Zealand in the 1990s while in the United Kingdom it remains "a relatively small, academic conversation."<sup>58</sup> The Gospel and Our Culture has remained the most active in North America.

Meanwhile, twentieth-century Protestant missions saw further developments in mission theology regarding the contextualization, or enculturation, of the gospel.<sup>59</sup> Newbigin's diagnosis and general prescription to the Western

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<sup>57</sup> For a succinct example of Newbigin and the Gospel and Culture programs in a telling of missional ecclesiology origins, see Brad Brisco, "History of Missional Church," Missional Church Network, <http://missionalchurchnetwork.com/history-of-missional-church/> (accessed December 24, 2012).

<sup>58</sup> Roxburgh, et al., *Introducing the Missional Church*, 9.

<sup>59</sup> Ott, et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, xxvii.

church could be isolated to the needs of a particular historical ‘moment’ and a particular region (the West) with its particular history. This new development extended Newbigin’s initial thought process. More than merely a call to embrace the missionary *task* of the church in the West, too, the question became one of the missionary *nature* of the church within the matrix of the ongoing dynamic between gospel and culture in all times and all places.<sup>60</sup>

Nourished by these streams, the Gospel and Our Culture network in the United States flourished. Thus, Newbigin’s initial contribution and more general developments in mission theology that followed combined to educe the first major work in missional ecclesiology, Darrell Guder and Lois Barrett’s *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*.<sup>61</sup> Through its roots in Protestant missions (i.e., Newbigin, the missionary and mission theologian and Guder, a missiologist, historian, and church theologian) the missional ecclesiology movement leveraged *missio Dei* concepts in its ecclesiology. Considered together, Newbigin and *missio Dei* comprise the two self-identified tributaries of the missional ecclesiology origin story.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> As an active figure in international Protestant mission and ecumenics, Newbigin was also influential in these subsequent refinements and developments.

<sup>61</sup> Darrell Guder and Lois Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998).

<sup>62</sup> Although not attributed full status as a tributary in their origin story, missional ecclesiologists make occasional reference to and recognize affinity with the statements of Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium* and *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, particularly that the church is by its very nature missionary. For example, Guder, “Walking Worthily”: 252.

### *Tambaram's Reception*

The missional ecclesiology origin story is both part of the reception of a church-centric reductionism of Tambaram and part of its perpetuation.

Retrospectives of twentieth-century mission and ecumenics are content to label Tambaram as church-centric and quickly move on to later developments. Later developments are considered more interesting because the origin story of *missio Dei*, the hot topic in missiology, is traced to Willingen 1952.

Thus, part of the process of disowning Tambaram can be attributed to Willingen. That is, portrayals of Willingen and *missio Dei* contribute to a sense of discontinuity between Willingen and earlier meetings. Norman Goodall's point that Willingen was "milestone, not terminus" was intended to keep it in continuity with what came before and look forward with continuity to future developments in mission thinking.<sup>63</sup> Perceptions shifted with the advent of *missio Dei* and its origins traced to Willingen. Goodall's milestone language does bolster the perception of Willingen as a foundation for future developments, but Willingen's reception effaces the connection between Willingen and its predecessors. Tambaram was an advance in the church's understanding of mission and the church in a rapidly changing world, but to missional ecclesiology it seems to also reflect a past deemed inconvenient or useless.

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<sup>63</sup> Norman Goodall, "Willingen – Milestone, Not Terminus," in *Missions Under the Cross: Addresses Delivered at the Enlarged Meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Willingen, in Germany, 1952; with Statements Issued by the Meeting*, ed. Norman Goodall (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1953), 9-23.

Newbigin, who attended Tambaram, was ambivalent in his reflections on the conference. While Tambaram relinquished the perspective of missions as outposts of Western Christianity scattered throughout the world, it maintained Christendom as a defining concept, envisioning a “new Christendom,” just in cultures different than those of old Christendom.<sup>64</sup> That is, the idea of a Christianized society was still hidden at the heart of the project; the advance was in recognizing that the socio-cultural component was more variable – Western culture did not have to be normative, though in practice it tended to hold that place. Today’s missional ecclesiology is committed to fashioning a viable ecclesiology for a post-Christendom world and overlooks Tambaram’s contribution as too tainted by Christendom to be relevant.

It is not the aim of this study to present Tambaram’s church-centric mission as a fully formed missional ecclesiology or deny Tambaram’s Christendom context. Nevertheless, church-centric mission as it is often interpreted is misapplied to Tambaram. While Kim carries the banner for a better treatment of what it means to call Tambaram church-centric, another chapter in the same volume uses language of “church-centric” with little qualification or clarity, even while taking strides toward a more contextual understanding of the interplay of internationalization and indigenization in the missionary enterprise of the 1920s and 30s.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Heim, “Mission and Dialogue”: 341. Indeed, Heim notes that Newbigin considered Tambaram a “crucial turning point.”

<sup>65</sup> Dana Robert, “The First Globalization? The Internationalization of the Protestant Missionary Movement Between the World Wars,” in *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities*, ed. Ogbu Kalu (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 93-130.

The Tambaram documents reveal two general options for articulating the relation of church to mission: mission expressed through a kingdom of God motif and the church-centric affirmation that Tambaram ultimately espoused. A third force, while not at the forefront at Tambaram, influenced Tambaram's position: the trajectories of the Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry and the Inquiry's 1932 final report, *Re-thinking Missions* by William Ernest Hocking (1873-1966).

The imperialistic version of church-centric mission was already 'off the table.' Rather than perpetuate that narrow vision of the church-mission relationship, Tambaram affirmed an integral relation between church and mission that was chastened by the errors of the past and informed by the voice of the younger churches. In short, Tambaram's "church-centric mission" is closer to "missional church" than has previously been considered.

Tambaram rethought the relationship between church and mission in a way that addressed the narrow version of church-centric mission. Unfortunately, some fault in the misrepresentation of Tambaram lies with the reception of a landmark work in missiology: David Bosch's *Transforming Missions*. Bosch inadvertently created a false dichotomy between *missio Dei* and church-centric missiology.

Bosch hails the development of *missio Dei* as a crucial advance in mission thinking.

Mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate (cf LWF 1988:6-10). Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is the fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 392.

But then Bosch puts this in too stark a contrast with all that came before Willingen 1952: “The recognition that mission is God’s mission represents a crucial breakthrough in respect of the preceding centuries (van ‘t Hof 1972:177). It is inconceivable that we could again revert to a narrow, ecclesiocentric view of mission.”<sup>67</sup> As will become evident, there is no such absolute break between the church-centric affirmations of Tambaram and the development of *missio Dei* after Willingen.

Newbigin, a participant at Tambaram, at Willingen, and a leader in the conciliar tradition for years after, drew a different contrast. Newbigin contrasted the church-centric viewpoint of Tambaram with later developments that follow a Dutch school of thought led by Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975). While Bosch does address the Dutch school in his work, his suggestion of radical discontinuity between church-centric mission and *missio Dei* remains problematic.

#### *A Note on Terminology*

Regarding Tambaram and its context, this study makes frequent reference to individuals and organizations in a broader “conciliar” tradition. Regarding missional ecclesiology, frequent reference is made to the “West” and “Western church.” These terms are used in a general way, primarily for issues of style. Nevertheless it is proper to clarify what these terms mean in this study. This study follows the succinct and helpful definitions put forward by Craig Ott., Stephen Strauss, and Timothy Tennent in *Encountering Theology of Mission*.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 393.

In modern Protestant missions, a tradition coalesced around the practice of large gatherings for consultation. This practice pre-dated Edinburgh 1910, continued through the career of the IMC and continues as a practice of the World Council of Churches and its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. Conciliar, borrowing the historical use of the term council to denote gatherings of churches, is “a reference to churches, denominations, and mission organizations associated with the World Council of Churches (WCC, est. 1948) and other ecumenical councils preceding it dating back to Edinburgh 1910. Various conferences and commissions of the WCC, such as the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, have shaped conciliar theology of mission (see [www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org)).”<sup>68</sup> This study is mostly concerned with predecessors to the World Council of Churches such as Life and Work, Faith and Order, and especially, the IMC, which became the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) upon merger with the WCC in 1961.

One must be careful not to make assumptions regarding the theology represented by the conciliar tradition. The conciliar designation is frequently used in contrast with the more theologically conservative Lausanne Movement, whose roots are in the International Congress on World Evangelization held at Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974. The Lausanne Movement was, in part, motivated by dissatisfaction with trends and trajectories in conciliar missions at the time. The concern was that evangelism was being sacrificed by overemphasis on humanitarian efforts: uplift over conversion. The Lausanne tradition has in the last generation

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<sup>68</sup> Ott, et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, xvi.

experienced a rapprochement with the conciliar tradition regarding the humanitarian and social justice concerns of Christian mission, even while the conciliar tradition has come to acknowledge the Lausanne Movement's evangelical concerns.

The dynamic between the conciliar and Lausanne traditions should be engaged with care regarding each tradition's theology. The conciliar tradition should not be assumed to represent Protestant liberalism over against an evangelical Lausanne tradition. Furthermore, the scope of this study predates the conciliar-Lausanne dynamic by more than thirty-five years. In the context of this study, "conciliar" is intended to be more descriptive of constituency and participation in a certain line of historical organizations and meetings rather than specify any theological disposition of its constituents.

When "West" and "Western church" are used, the terms refer to "cultural, intellectual, and social influences of European origin."<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, "today Western culture is often (though not exclusively) associated with individualism, modernization, industrialization, free-market capitalism, and Enlightenment philosophy. The Western church is generally understood as the churches of Europe and people of European descent, particularly in North America."<sup>70</sup> This terminology comes into play more prevalently when addressing the origins and concerns of missional ecclesiology. One could conceivably use this term in reference to the historical missionary enterprise in terms of the culture and place from whence

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., xvii.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

missionaries tended to come. This sort of geographical designation of “sending” and “receiving” lands was something undergoing revision by the time of Tambaram. Tambaram elected to use the more culturally neutral designations of “older” and “younger” churches. Following this sensitivity, reference to the “West” and “Western churches” is minimized in this study when looking at Tambaram; it is used with regard to people or viewpoints when it is an appropriate designation of a geographically or culturally identifiable subgroup in comparison or contrast with another group.

### *Outline of the Project*

Each of the four following chapters is dedicated to one of the four lines of analysis that make up this project. Chapter two describes the background and historical context of the Tambaram meeting in regard to the IMC’s turn to the church at Tambaram. This background information includes relevant history of the IMC, international Protestantism’s turn to the church in 1937-38, and the geopolitical context with perceptions of that context evident in the primary texts and influencing Tambaram’s thoughts about the church. Chapter three documents what Tambaram said about the church. Five characteristics of the church emerge as key contours to Tambaram’s ecclesiology. Chapter four examines the most significant line of dissent from Tambaram’s affirmation of the church, dissent which advocated for the kingdom of God in lieu of the church for the focus of Tambaram’s work. Additionally, the role of the kingdom of God concept in modern Protestant mission history provides a lens for understanding the dissent and, as it turns out, for identifying the real threat feared behind the caricature of church-centrism.

Those three chapters work together to get an accurate representation of Tambaram. Chapter five then applies that work toward the second aim of this project. The caricature of church-centrism in current literature is examined more closely and then compared to Tambaram's ecclesiology. The caricature of church-centrism serves as a foil for later figures and their particular ecclesiological concerns. In this process, Tambaram is devalued and Willingen is overvalued, along with the development of *missio Dei* theology that Willingen is credited with initiating. Chapter six concludes the project with a recapitulation of the discoveries and conclusions of each line of analysis.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Tambaram in Context

#### *The Meeting*

The International Missionary Council's 1938 meeting was held in Tambaram, a suburb of Madras, India, December 12-29. Madras, now known as Chennai, is a city on the eastern coast of the Indian peninsula on the Bay of Bengal and is the capital of the present-day state of Tamil Nadu in southeastern India.<sup>1</sup> The actual meeting site in Tambaram was seventeen miles southwest of Madras at the new campus of Madras Christian College. Founded in 1837 by Church of Scotland missionaries, the college had just moved from George Town to Tambaram in 1937, a move which promoted the development of Tambaram as part of the burgeoning Madras metropolitan area.<sup>2</sup>

The leadership of the IMC began planning three years prior to the meeting. Tambaram followed the general pattern of earlier Protestant mission meetings with commissioned preparatory work. The most influential of Tambaram's official preparatory volumes was Hendrik Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. J. Merle Davis, then director of the IMC's Department of Social and Industrial Research and Counsel, produced a volume of "special studies on the

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to Indian independence, Madras was the capital of Madras province under British rule. After Indian independence, Madras became the capital of Madras state. The state was renamed Tamil Nadu in 1969, and the city renamed Chennai in 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Today Tambaram and George Town are essentially districts of the city of Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

economic basis of the Church with reference specially to rural needs and conditions.”<sup>3</sup> J. H. Oldham wrote a thirty two-page pamphlet, *The Question of the Church in the World Today* and William Paton (1886-1943) wrote “The Churches in Council: Oxford Edinburgh Hangchow” for the July 1937 number of the *International Review of Missions*, which article was quickly republished as a fourteen-page pamphlet.<sup>4</sup> These short works set the tone for the intentional turn toward ecclesiology at Tambaram.

John Mott and Paton also produced separate volumes on evangelism.<sup>5</sup> Paton’s volume was largely reproduced in volume three of the Madras Series, a seven-volume set published by the IMC after the conference (see table 2). A compendium of Mott’s work was produced in chapter four of that volume. Other official IMC preparatory materials included a special “double number” issue of the IRM in July 1938 and an “elaborate Statistical Survey of Christian Missions, covering the whole world and dealing for the first time with indigenous Churches as well as Missions.”<sup>6</sup>

The IMC reached out to participants: “A pamphlet of questions, based upon letters of advice from all parts of the world, was sent to each delegate long in

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<sup>3</sup> William Paton, *Studies in Evangelism* (London: IMC, 1938), 6. For Davis’s volumes, see chapter one, footnote seventeen.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Houldsworth Oldham, *The Question of the Church in the World of Today* (London: Edinburgh House Press on behalf of the IMC, 1936). William Paton, “The Churches in Council: Oxford Edinburgh Hangchow,” *International Review of Mission* 26, no. 3 (1937): 297-308. As is evident in the title, this work was published when the meeting was scheduled to occur in Hangchow, China, prior to the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in late 1937 and the move to Tambaram.

<sup>5</sup> John Mott, *Evangelism for the World Today, As Interpreted by Christian Leaders Throughout the World* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1938). William Paton, *Studies in Evangelism* (London: IMC, 1938).

<sup>6</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 8.

advance, in order that individual and group thought and study might be directed to them.”<sup>7</sup> Delegate-sending organizations also prepared their own contributions to the work of the meeting. Tambaram’s final report recognized these contributions: “In addition to all this there were a large number of papers, articles and studies produced in the different countries for the instruction of their own delegates and the extension of interest among their church members. Of these some were made available for group discussions at Tambaram.”<sup>8</sup>

Of particular historical interest is the reproduction of key pieces of this material in the Madras Series. Of the reams of preliminary materials produced worldwide for Tambaram, the IMC self-selected the materials relevant to and influential upon its thinking and published them. Thus the Madras Series provides, in seven volumes, a review of the preparatory work, deliberation, and final pronouncements of the Tambaram meeting.

The meeting consisted of 471 delegates from sixty nine different countries or territories.<sup>9</sup> This international representation, which included sixty female delegates, made Tambaram “the most ethnically and gender-diverse international Christian gathering to date.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 5. See Appendix F.

<sup>10</sup> Dana Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 66. Robert adds that “China, the biggest mission field of the era, sent forty-nine official delegates led by a woman, the first Chinese president of Ginling College, Wu Yi-fang (d. 1985). African delegates traveled together by ship and developed a common consciousness of their own strength and unity.”

At the meeting, delegates were assigned to groups ranging in size from fifty to seventy participants with one group assigned to each of the topics scheduled for the meeting (see table 3).<sup>11</sup> There was more time dedicated to group work and less to plenary sessions than at previous meetings. Plenary sessions were scheduled for each group's initial report. Group work happened between plenary sessions to draft final forms of their reports and recommendations for plenary consideration at the end of the conference. The final plenary sessions, "in what had inevitably to be an atmosphere of some tension and pressure," are where the conference "accepted and commended the reports as amended to the favorable consideration of missionary and Church bodies all over the world."<sup>12</sup>

Another notable characteristic of the meeting was its worship life and prayerful spirit. Meeting chairperson John Mott and the secretaries of all the study groups met over the weekend preceding the meeting for "prayer and conference."<sup>13</sup> The meeting was opened on the evening of December 12 and the whole of the next day was dedicated solely to guided meditation and prayer. In his closing address, Mott mentioned his own appreciation for the "Quiet Day" and each morning's "united worship."<sup>14</sup> The IMC's Jerusalem 1928 meeting had set a powerful precedent with its locale and its scheduled occurrence over the Easter holiday. Tambaram

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<sup>11</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 9.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>14</sup> John Mott, "Supreme Obligation of the Tambaram Delegates," in IMC, *Addresses and Other Records*, vol. 7, Madras Series, 159.

followed this example in its scheduled occurrence over the Christmas holiday and a commitment to establishing a worshipful demeanor to the meeting.<sup>15</sup>

The central theme selected for the meeting was “the upbuilding of the younger churches as a part of the historical universal Christian community.”<sup>16</sup> The meeting was organized into five divisions subdivided into varying numbers of subsections and eight special groups on specific topics (see table 3). This was the template for the formation and assignment of the groups to which delegates were assigned as part of their participation in the meeting.

The official statements of the meeting were published in a single volume, *The World Mission of the Church*, introduced in chapter one. These were also parsed out and reproduced alongside supporting documents in the various volumes of the Madras Series. For example, the fourth volume, *The Life of the Church*, is a valuable resource because it places self-selected preliminary materials alongside notes on the deliberations and the final, official statements from “the sections dealing with the Inner Life of the Church (VII); the Indigenous Ministry of the Church (VIII); Christian Education and the Christian Ministry of Health and Healing (IX); the Place, Function and Training of the Future Missionary (X); an Adequate Program for Christian Literature (XI); and Cooperation and Unity (XVI).”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. In a similar appreciation for the worshipful spirit of the meeting, Karl Hartenstein dedicated an early section of his Tambaram report to “the liturgical life of the conference” (das liturgische Leben der Konferenz) in *Die Weltmissionskonferenz Tambaram 1938* (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 6-8.

<sup>16</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 6.

<sup>17</sup> IMC, *The Life of Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series (New York: IMC, 1939), v. The final, official statements ratified in plenary session (along with a handful of other resolutions) constitute the one-volume “findings and recommendations” text *The World Mission of the Church*.

Table 3. Organization of topics at Tambaram

Topical Outline of Divisions and Sections	Designation in Documents
1. Faith	
a. The Faith by which the Church Lives	Section I
b. The Church – Its Nature and Function	Section II
2. Witness	
a. The Unfinished Evangelistic Task	Section III
b. The Place of the Church in Evangelism	Section IV
c. The Witness of the Church in Relation to Non-Christian Religions	Section V
d. The Witness of the Church: Practical Questions of Method and Policy	Section VI
3. Life and Work	
a. The Inner Life of the Church	Section VII
b. The Indigenous Ministry of the Church, Both Ordained and Lay	Section VIII
c. Christian Education	Section IX-A
d. The Christian Ministry of Health and Healing	Section IX-B
e. The Place, Function and Training of the Future Missionary	Section X
f. An Adequate Program for Christian Literature	Section XI
4. Environment	
a. The Economic Basis of the Church	Section XII
b. The Church and the Changing Social and Economic Order	Section XIII
c. The Church and the International Order	Section XIV
d. The Church and the State	Section XV
5. Co-operation and Unity	Section XVI
Special Groups	
a. Africa	Special Group I
b. Latin America	Special Group II
c. The Christian Forces and the Pacific Basin	Special Group III
d. Muslim Lands	Special Group IV
e. The Younger and Older Churches	Special Group V
f. The Church and Rural Problems	Special Group VI
g. Urban Problems	Special Group VII
h. Women’s Work	Special Group VIII

These, then, are the basic facts that sketch out the meeting of the IMC at Tambaram in 1938 and the IMC-sanctioned sources from which Tambaram's ecclesiology can be inferred. More details will appear as the investigation into Tambaram's ecclesiology unfolds because other aspects of the conference emerge as relevant to Tambaram's ecclesiological bent. Regarding the turn to the church itself, though, there are four contextual factors that influenced the ecclesiological turn and the affirmation of the church in mission that emerged from Tambaram.

### *Contextual Factors in Tambaram's Turn to the Church*

First, the birth and development of the IMC produced an internationalization that steadily realized parity of voice for indigenous Christianity. Through these voices the IMC became more sensitive to questions of culture, and these questions helped propel reflection on what it means to be the church. Two further contextual factors – geopolitical conflict and cultural change – prompted the IMC to leverage the concept of the church as an alternative claimant on the lives of persons and people groups.<sup>18</sup> Whereas at Jerusalem in 1928 the great threat identified was secularism and the answer was Jesus,<sup>19</sup> by 1938 the great threat was ideologies that had developed a new level of organizational sophistication and totalizing claims on

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<sup>18</sup> For an identification of these forces from a historian contemporary to those times, see Kenneth Scott Latourette, *Advance through Storm: A.D. 1914 and After with Concluding Generalizations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970 [originally published in 1945]), 8-9.

<sup>19</sup> This characterization is widely reported in retrospectives of the world mission conferences. For an example of primary source evidence that this was the understanding of the IMC, see John Mott, "At Edinburgh, Jerusalem and Madras," *International Review of Mission* 27, no. 3 (July 1938): 306.

human life.<sup>20</sup> While it was the gospel of Christ that the IMC affirmed as the remedy for the ills of modern life, the church emerged as something more akin to the non-Christian alternative systems, both religious and socio-political, as representing the Christian faith's claim on life and loyalty. Finally, there was a simpler contextual factor contributing to the IMC's decision to deliberate on the church. The IMC meeting in Tambaram was part of a turn to ecclesiology in international Protestantism. This gave moment to the ecclesiological contribution associated with the first contextual factor (internationalization with parity) and placed the church in the forefront of the IMC's thought, making it an enticing recourse when facing geopolitical unrest and the totalizing claims of modern ideologies.

#### *Growing Internationalization of IMC Meetings*

The theme of "the upbuilding of the younger churches as a part of the historical universal Christian community"<sup>21</sup> was a reflection of a growing international parity among the constituent bodies of the IMC since Edinburgh 1910. Whereas Edinburgh operated within a presupposed "geographical dichotomy" between the so-called West (hemispherically West and North) and the East (East and South),<sup>22</sup> by the time of Tambaram, strides had been achieved in parity. At

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<sup>20</sup> Tambaram stood at the leading edge of recognizing this new landscape. Twenty three years later, secular ideology as a claimant on life remained a relevant part of the landscape when considering the relation between Christianity and other faiths. Stephen Neill put it alongside the world religions (Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and primitive religions). *Christian Faith and Other Faiths: The Christian Dialogue with Other Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970 [1961]).

<sup>21</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 6.

<sup>22</sup> Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (WCC), "The Church as Mission in its Very Life," *International Review of Mission* 101, no. 1 (2012): 108; Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 7-17, 50.

Edinburgh, a mere eighteen out of 1,215 official delegates were from outside the West, with a “virtual absence of Africa.”<sup>23</sup> At Jerusalem 1928, the number of official delegates was intentionally restricted to 250. Of those, fifty were “nationals.”<sup>24</sup> Parity in representation was achieved at Tambaram.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Tambaram was not only the first time that younger and older churches had parity in representation but also, in the retrospection of John Mott, “parity as to initiative, sense of responsibility, leadership, and participation,” which Mott interpreted as the younger churches “coming into their own.”<sup>26</sup> This growing authority of indigenous churches outside the West can be traced from Edinburgh to Tambaram and the increased non-Western influence contributed to the ecclesiology of Tambaram.

The path from Edinburgh to Tambaram is marked by iterative, reciprocal influences between what at the time of Edinburgh was regarded as the “receiving” and “sending” aspects of the missionary enterprise. This process pushed organizational expressions of the international missionary enterprise beyond geographical presuppositions that can be represented abstractly by the concepts of

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<sup>23</sup> John Mott, “Present Possibilities of Co-Operation in the Mission Field,” *International Review of Mission* 3, no. 2 (1914): 91, 97.

<sup>24</sup> Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 66.

<sup>25</sup> In a pre-conference journal article, Mott celebrated that the percentage of delegates from the lands of the younger churches was one percent at Edinburgh, improved to twenty-five percent at Jerusalem and would be fifty percent at Tambaram. Mott, “At Edinburgh, Jerusalem and Madras”: 303, 313.

<sup>26</sup> John Mott, *Five Decades and a Forward View* (New York; London: Harper, 1939), 100.

“center” and “margin.” What were “sending” and “receiving” lands at Edinburgh<sup>27</sup> became styled as “older” and “younger” churches by Tambaram. And, as will be shown, a result of this growing sensitivity was articulations at Tambaram supporting the importance of indigenous churches. Through iterative, reciprocal influences described here, what started as center and margin worked toward effacing that very distinction.

A second concept must be added to that of iterative, reciprocal influences between the center and margin in order to trace the dynamic in place among the constituents of the IMC at Tambaram. Foundational to the organizational model of the IMC was what Mott called the federative principle. “Federative” describes that mode of connection that exceeds mere cooperation and yet is not organic union. Federative connection is marked by official, representative constituent bodies that do not abandon their independent identities and autonomy. The federative principle played an integral role in the formation of the IMC; it was the medium through which iterative, reciprocal influence was expressed after Edinburgh.

Edinburgh’s planners had before them multiple missionary conferences from which to learn.<sup>28</sup> There were two potential model conferences conducted in the West: the “Centenary Conference” of foreign missions held in London in 1888 and the Ecumenical Missionary Conference held in New York in 1900. But the style at these gatherings was not the style followed by Edinburgh; those meetings were

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<sup>27</sup> Edinburgh did also include language of “infant churches.” Andrew Walls, “From Christendom to World Christianity: Missions and the Demographic Transformation of the Church,” *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* New Series 22, no. 3 (2001): 315-6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*:311-2.

characterized in the words of one planner as “educational and inspirational,”<sup>29</sup> a style intended for wide appeal. Rather, the planners of Edinburgh took recourse to an alternative stream of precursors, conferences from outside the West.

Interestingly, Edinburgh’s Anglo-American planners envisioned a conference different than their own London and New York gatherings, one in which emphasis would be placed on “study and consultation by the leaders of the foreign missionary forces of the world concerning the large and most vital questions of missionary opportunity and policy.”<sup>30</sup> As early as the executive committee’s February 1908 planning meeting in Edinburgh, both the Foreign Missions Conference of North America and a British subcommittee for planning Edinburgh had highlighted a distinction between “the New York 1900 model of an open ‘demonstration conference,’ designed to impress and enthuse the Christian public, and the model of a ‘consultative conference’ of authorized delegates, as exemplified by the fourth Indian Decennial Missionary Conference held in Madras in 1902 and the Shanghai Missionary Conference of 1907.”<sup>31</sup> Both planning groups endorsed the representative, consultative model for Edinburgh.

Other conferences held outside the West were influential. The third South Indian Missionary Conference of 1900, held in Madras, set the model of preparatory materials preceding a consultative conference.<sup>32</sup> It was also Madras 1900 that

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<sup>29</sup> Stanley, *World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, 25.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-7.

<sup>32</sup> Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations*, 27.

“consisted for the first time of *official* delegates and developed the conference procedures which ten years later were used at Edinburgh.”<sup>33</sup> These procedures were then refined at the Madras meeting in 1902. The Edinburgh planners also adopted the plan of parallel programming to supplement the official proceedings from a 1907 conference of the World’s Student Christian Federation (WSCF) in Tokyo.

Thus, the most striking characteristics that make up Edinburgh’s seminal character – a consultative conference, official delegates, preparatory materials produced by committees, and a parallel program for wider appeal – are evident in earlier conferences conducted outside the West. While these conferences were dominated by Western mission personnel, the proving ground for these ingredients was “out there,” in the world. What was seminal about Edinburgh’s character was not the characteristics themselves (they were not new), but their convergence at Edinburgh. These successful characteristics were brought to bear at a “home” missionary conference from their proving grounds at Madras 1900, Madras 1902, Shanghai 1907, and Tokyo 1907. This set a pattern for future gatherings of the IMC, Life and Work, Faith and Order, and the WCC. More importantly, it initiated the process of iterative, reciprocal influence in the IMC that shaped the focus of the IMC meeting in 1938.

To this structure is added the singular importance of John Mott. Mott was instrumental in the planning of Edinburgh, served as chairman of the meeting, and

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<sup>33</sup> Hans-Ruedi Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement, 1895-1961* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1966), 127.

served the Continuation Committee through extensive travel. Furthermore, Mott leveraged his personal world-wide network of Christian leaders and benefactors and his organizational experience with the international Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and WSCF.

Mott was committed to the federative principle and the integrity it afforded to indigenous Christianity. Reflecting on the origins and development of the WSCF, Mott wrote:

In the early part of the year 1894, the writer [Mott] was seized with the conviction that the time had at last arrived when a world-wide union of Christian students might be achieved. . . He decided to adopt a different plan from that which had been followed hitherto. . . . The thought occurred to him that instead of attempting to organize the Christian students under any one name and according to any one plan or organization, it would be better to encourage the Christian students in each country to develop national Christian movements of their own, adapted in name, organization and activity to their own particular genius and character, and then link these together in some simple and yet effective Federation."<sup>34</sup>

This was Mott's federative principle along with a complementary commitment to indigenous identity. The federative principle shaped Mott's understanding of Christian statesmanship with which he served these student organizations and, later, the missionary movement.

Mott's travels in the service of the Continuation Committee promoted reciprocal influence upon a federative foundation. In May 1911, the Continuation Committee requested that Mott devote a considerable portion of his time to visiting the mission field, "acquainting missionaries and native leaders with the work and

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<sup>34</sup> John Mott, *The World's Student Christian Federation: Origin Achievements Forecast* (n.p.: World's Student Christian Federation, 1920), 3-4; quoted in Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement*, 67.

plans of the Continuation Committee, studying how missionary bodies on the field and this Committee may be brought into most mutually helpful relations.”<sup>35</sup>

Mott’s response to this request was a series of twenty-one conferences held from October 1912 to May 1913 and known collectively as the Continuation Committee Conferences in Asia.<sup>36</sup> Eighteen of the twenty-one conferences were held at the regional level, while India, China and Japan each had capstone national conferences which received delegates from their various regional gatherings. The tour encompassed India, Ceylon, Burma, Singapore, China, Manchuria, Korea and Japan. The conferences were organized along the lines of Edinburgh with preparatory committees addressing “a syllabus of important questions” prepared by Mott in consultation with mission leaders, missionaries and native leaders.<sup>37</sup>

A pattern of new or reconstituted committees sprang up at every provincial and national conference. Whether titled “Standing” (Ceylon), “Continuation” (Japan), “Interim” (Western India), “Federal” (South India, China, Manchuria), “National” (India), or “Advisory” (Korea), these committees arrayed themselves as federative counterparts to the Edinburgh Continuation Committee. Their creation and the tasks with which they were charged were seen as a continuation of the “Edinburgh spirit.” These bodies were charged to interface with the Edinburgh Continuation Committee, with their provincial and national counterparts, and with governments,

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<sup>35</sup> John Mott, *The Continuation Committee Conferences in Asia, 1912-1913: A Brief Account of the Conferences Together with their Findings and Lists of Members* (New York: Chairman of the Continuation Committee, 1913), 9-10.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

and to convene conferences, and take on collective tasks such as research and consultation on education, missionary training, Christian literature, and church leadership.<sup>38</sup> In fact, the federative principle made such strides that one American magazine characterized the change inaugurated by the conferences as a change in missions “from guerilla warfare to organized campaign.”<sup>39</sup>

So pleased were they at the success of these conferences that the Continuation Committee extended a renewed request to their chairman at their November 1913 meeting at The Hague.<sup>40</sup> This charge included maintaining relationships between the Continuation Committee and the representative bodies already formed and the organization of further conferences, especially in Africa and the Near East.<sup>41</sup> Mott again responded, but in a more limited scale because of the onset of World War I.

That November 1913 meeting of the Continuation Committee at The Hague was, in effect, its last. Only a shadow of the Continuation Committee brought forth the IMC at Lake Mohonk in 1921. In the interim those leaders were consumed in the

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<sup>38</sup> Mott, “Present Possibilities of Co-Operation in the Mission Field”: 209-24.

<sup>39</sup> Charles Hopkins, *John R. Mott, 1865-1955: A Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 404.

<sup>40</sup> This meeting at The Hague is frequently noted in the history of the IMC for the “Hague principle” articulated as the Committee looked toward the creation of an international representative missionary body. The core of this principle was that the only bodies entitled to determine policy were home boards, missions, and the churches concerned. Two corollaries followed from this. First, the Continuation Committee affirmed that it was not organically related to nor responsible for the federative bodies with which it was in connection. Second, the new international, representative organization they envisioned would be made up only of churches, missionary societies, and boards – those bodies that had authority to make policy – while the federative organization at the international level would not be a policy-making body.

<sup>41</sup> John Mott, *The International Missionary Council*, vol. 5, *Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott* (New York: Association Press, 1947), 177-8; see also Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations*, 161n67; Hopkins, *John R. Mott*, 405-7.

war work of their parent organizations and in the Emergency Committee that arose to address what amounted to a fracturing of the “center” of the missionary enterprise during World War I.

The “center” may have fractured, but the margins held. For a tense and threatening season, leadership devolved to bodies such as the China Continuation Committee and the National Missionary Council of India.<sup>42</sup> They cared for orphaned missions in their own lands, promoted cooperation, and served as funnels for whatever financial assistance could be mustered from the West.<sup>43</sup> The significance of the federative principle and reciprocal influence is borne out in the fact that the “spirit of Edinburgh” survived.

The iterative aspect of reciprocal influence commenced after World War I. After the formation of the IMC in 1921 there came another wave of travel, communication and formation. Mott himself, between the spring of 1923 and the summer of 1926 embarked on multiple tours and trips to specific meetings and conferences on behalf of his various organizations in the student movement and for the IMC. These included an eleven-week tour in 1922 of Japan, Korea and China; a circuit in 1924 of Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and Jerusalem; and a “Pacific Basin Tour” in 1925-26 that included Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations*, 167.

<sup>43</sup> Hopkins, *John R. Mott*, 447; Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement*, 139.

<sup>44</sup> Hopkins, *John R. Mott*, 604; Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations*, 647-58.

The 1922 Asian tour was a parallel to the earlier Continuation Committee conferences of 1912-13. This new tour did not consist of so-called “Mott conferences,” but rather conferences conducted by the various federative bodies operating out of their own energy and indigenous leadership.<sup>45</sup> And the outcomes are striking in terms of the federative principle and the relation of center to margin. What emerged was a pattern of reconstituted or newly formed organizational expressions as National Christian Councils. For example, the China Continuation Committee, in May 1922, replaced itself with a National Christian Council of China on the same basis as the IMC, to which it became affiliated.<sup>46</sup> Likewise, later in that year, the Japan Continuation Committee set up a permanent successor as a corresponding body to the IMC: the Japan National Christian Council.<sup>47</sup> India, Korea and other Asian countries would follow with only slight variations after 1922.<sup>48</sup> Another iterative wave of organization occurred after Jerusalem 1928 with international travel by Mott from November 1928 to June 1929 and again in 1935.

Writing in the 1939, Mott broke the development of international missionary cooperation into three stages: “The second stage embraced the years between the Edinburgh conference and the meeting of the International Missionary Council at Jerusalem in 1928 – the period which had as its distinctive characteristic the creation and development in many parts of the world of national and international

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<sup>45</sup> Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement*, 140-1.

<sup>46</sup> Hopkins, *John R. Mott*, 609-10; Stanley, *World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, 311. This Council became the Church of Christ in China in 1927.

<sup>47</sup> Hopkins, *John R. Mott*, 611.

<sup>48</sup> Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement*, 140-1, 179-80.

agencies, or councils.”<sup>49</sup> At the time of Edinburgh, there were a handful of cooperative organizations such as the London Secretaries Association (in operation since 1819), but only two federative mission bodies existed: the *Auschluss* of Germany (1885) and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America (1893).<sup>50</sup> By 1939, according to Mott, there were twenty six constituent federative bodies in the IMC, equally proportioned between the areas traditionally understood as “sending” and “receiving” lands, and with as many as ten more, by Mott’s estimation, in development.<sup>51</sup> Thus could Mott claim, “One of the greatest services rendered under the auspices of the original Continuation Committee, and even more of the International Missionary Council. . . has been the planting and development of various National Christian Councils.”<sup>52</sup>

The IMC at Tambaram looked back upon Jerusalem and noted that a key difference from Edinburgh was “considerably larger representation of what had come to be called ‘the younger churches’ than had been brought together at any previous gathering.”<sup>53</sup> Of the 231 participants from fifty nations at Jerusalem, 25% were from the younger churches with forty two participants from Asia representing

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<sup>49</sup> John Mott, *Cooperation and the World Mission* (New York: IMC, 1935), 10-1.

<sup>50</sup> This latter organization was also known as the Annual Conference of the Foreign Mission Boards of the United States and Canada. Mott, *Five Decades and a Forward View*, 54-5; Stanley, *World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, 281-2.

<sup>51</sup> Mott, *Cooperation and the World Mission*, 17-8; Mott, *Five Decades and a Forward View*, 54-5; IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 5.

<sup>52</sup> Mott, *Five Decades and a Forward View*, 54.

<sup>53</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 5.

not western missionary societies, but rather Asian national Christian councils.<sup>54</sup> The IMC regarded this positively and promoted further development along these lines:

It was, therefore, not in any way surprising that when the time came for another world meeting to be held it should be still more largely representative of the 'younger churches.' Both the conditions in which the worldwide work of the whole Church was being carried on, and the history and principles of the International Missionary Council, made it appear right and natural that there should now be held a meeting in an Eastern land, to which could come with the least expenditure of time and money adequate delegations from the 'younger churches.' Only in such a meeting, roughly equal in representation of East and West, of 'older' and 'younger' – such designations are all inaccurate and incomplete but must nevertheless be used – could there be a world consultation upon the task of the Church such as the times urgently demanded.<sup>55</sup>

China, Japan, and India had all submitted "strong invitations."<sup>56</sup> Kowloon was selected at a Committee of the Council meeting in Northfield, Massachusetts, 1935, in part because it was deemed a safe part of British Hong Kong. Ironically, this meant that the meeting intended to affirm the younger churches would take place in a locale symbolic of western colonialism. In 1936, the Chinese National Christian Council proposed and the IMC accepted an alternative site at Hangchow.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement*, 154. Jan Van Lin, *Shaking the Fundamentals: Religious Plurality and Ecumenical Movement* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2002), 158-9.

<sup>55</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 5-6. Karl Hartenstein noted that the way Edinburgh and Jerusalem talked of missions and churches, sending and receiving, Western and Eastern, was "almost obsolete, or at least very meaningless" at Tambaram. Karl Hartenstein, "Was haben wir von Tambaram zu lernen?" in *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der Erde: Bericht über Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram*, ed. Martin Schlunk (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 195.

<sup>56</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 6.

<sup>57</sup> Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement*, 181.

## *Global Tensions and the Supra-National Character of the Church*

Nevertheless, having overcome this inadvertent insensitivity, Tambaram was almost the meeting that was not. Having already shifted the proposed site from Kowloon to Hangchow, the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) “made it wholly impossible to contemplate the holding of an international meeting in China.”<sup>58</sup> At an Ad Interim meeting in New York, 1937, the question was whether or not to cancel the whole thing. The planners decided to accept the invitation of the National Christian Council of India to hold the meeting at Madras Christian College, which had recently relocated to Tambaram.

Even after this third location was selected, the conference was to proceed under the shadow of existing international conflict and the threat of more war. Sensitive to the fault lines exposed by World War I, the IMC found itself again in a position where international conflict threatened international cooperation in mission and, indeed, the Christian witness itself.

We are met under circumstances which burden our hearts with the suffering of the world. Nations about us are in the throes of war or under its shadow of fear. We are awed by the solemnity of the hour. We are moved to deep penitence as we reflect on our personal and corporate responsibility for this situation. We are condemned by our lack of faith and courage, our disunity and ineffectiveness.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the introduction to Tambaram’s report on “The Church and the International Order” acknowledged the geo-political context while also reflecting a penitence that

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<sup>58</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 6. In December 1937-January 1938, the Japanese Imperial Army invaded Nanking, China, where they murdered roughly 200,000 Chinese and raped at least 20,000 women. Fifteen American missionaries refused to be evacuated, and created a safety zone to protect Chinese civilians during the “Rape of Nanking.” Robert, *Christian Mission*, 106.

<sup>59</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 115.

is one of the salient characteristics of Tambaram's ecclesiology (discussed in chapter three).

Tensions between China and Japan had been escalating since 1931 when two rogue Japanese army colonels staged a bombing near a Japanese railway in Manchuria as a pretext for invasion. The Japanese established a puppet state, Manchukuo, and in the ensuing years continued imperialist expansion of their claims in China. In early July 1937, a multi-day incident at Marco Polo Bridge near Peking went unresolved and now marks the beginning of full, open war between the powers in the Second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>60</sup>

There were numerous other hotspots on the minds of Tambaram delegates in addition to the Sino-Japanese War. Spain had been embroiled in Civil War since July 1936. Three months after Tambaram the nationalists had won and a fascist regime was established under Francisco Franco (1892-1975). 1936-39 saw a multi-phased Arab Revolt against British colonial rule under the Palestinian Mandate. The revolt was fueled, in part, by opposition to Jewish immigration which had burgeoned since 1933. The revolt was eventually suppressed violently by British and Palestinian Mandate authorities.

The Indian independence movement was another source of tension. The movement had found new impetus since the early 1920s and would be a continuing

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<sup>60</sup> The infamous "Rape of Nanking" occurred December 1937-January 1938, when Japanese forces seized the then-capital of China. The Second Sino-Japanese War eventually merged with the wider conflict of World War II, especially after the United States declared war against the Japanese following the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941.

concern until Indian independence in 1947.<sup>61</sup> A major point of intersection between Indian independence and Tambaram was the role of nationalism. Because the movement was primarily peaceful, the tension was felt more in terms of ideology than the threat of widespread conflict and violence.

Fascism's intense nationalism and totalitarianism were of concern ideologically, but its militarism made it a more significant concern in the context of world conflict. Fascism had burgeoned in the 1930s. Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) had risen to power, achieving the chancellorship in January 1933, with an increasingly strident and bellicose appeal to German nationalism and vilification of the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>62</sup> Hungary and Romania had seen the ascendance of fascist parties in 1932 and 1933, respectively, while France, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Yugoslavia, Brazil, and Chile all faced fascist-related upheavals of varying degrees of violence from 1934-38. Although, fascism had risen earlier in Italy (since the 1920s and gaining rule in 1922) the years leading up to Tambaram were significant. Changing political tides regarding the invasion of Ethiopia by Italy in 1935 aligned Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) and Hitler, exacerbating concerns over a looming world war.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Colonial tensions were also reported from West Africa. IMC, *The Growing Church*, vol. 2, Madras Series, 9.

<sup>62</sup> Of particular ecclesiological interest was the ascendance of the "German Christians." This was the state-approved church in Nazi Germany that was placed under the control of Reichsbischof Ludwig Müller (1883-1945) by Hitler in April 1933. Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 49.

<sup>63</sup> In his report on Tambaram, Hartenstein provided a virtual litany of world unrest in terms of the challenge posed to the churches and to humanity. He called it "The hour of great temptation" (Dei Stunde der grossen Bersuchung) in reference to Revelation 3:10, "Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to

Tambaram employed a range of rhetorical options in facing this context of geo-political conflict. One of these was to implore a Christian response from individual believers. The meeting report asserted, "Especially in situations of open conflict the maintenance of the Christian standard of righteousness, justice and mercy becomes at once more urgent and more difficult. This standard is outside and above any purely national interest, and Christians must apply it to themselves, to their own groups and nations, more rigorously than to others."<sup>64</sup> This is an appeal to Christianity as shared belief that assumes sufficient uniformity in that belief so that the Christian response would serve as a leavening agent in the world. Similarly, Tambaram looked specifically at the situation with regard to the individual missionary.

World-wide conflict and stress intensify the problems of the missionary. Clearly he must identify himself with the best aspirations and interests of the people he serves, in all things seeking their welfare. At the same time he must be ever mindful of the world-wide fellowship he represents, and of the common citizenship of all Christians in the Kingdom of God. He must be unswerving in his devotion to the Christian standards of truth and right. . . . At all times the true missionary is a messenger of Christ and an exponent of His suffering love.<sup>65</sup>

Here, too, the appeal is to transcendence of Christian conviction over other claims on an individual's loyalty.

Another rhetorical option was more fraught with tension at a practical level. This option was for the IMC to explicitly take a stance. The pronouncements of the

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test the inhabitants of the earth" (NRSV). Karl Hartenstein, *Die Weltmissionskonferenz Tambaram 1938* (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 4, see also 11.

<sup>64</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 116.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

Council, though, were restrained. What they were willing to state explicitly was confined to an appeal to the assumed uniformity of Christian belief.

We condemn the effort to impose the will of one people upon another by force, and especially the invasion of the recognized territory of one people by the armed forces of another. Responsibility for aggression and oppression must be borne by all who derive profit therefrom. Individual Christians and Christian organizations should in this respect carefully examine their sources of income and means of livelihood.<sup>66</sup>

Christianity commits one to justice, and “justice requires the elimination of the domination of one people by another.”<sup>67</sup> Likewise, “God has made all peoples of one blood. No race can therefore disregard the rights and interests of other races.”<sup>68</sup> The stance the IMC felt it could take was to spell out those aspects of Christian belief that they recognized as uniform enough – because, in their estimation, without them one’s Christianity was false – to draw a clear conclusion.

The IMC was more circumspect about naming names and thus alienating part of its constituency. This was not just an act of self-serving diplomacy. The IMC was carefully preserving the distinction it professed between national identity and something supra-national: “The times in which we met lent a great gravity to the deliberations. Germans and French, Indians and British, Chinese and Japanese, Northern and Southern Americans, were all able to enter into a supra-national fellowship which was not of their own making, and to see their national problems in the light of that fellowship.”<sup>69</sup> To explicitly condemn Japan, for example, would

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 11-2.

endanger the fellowship between Japanese and Chinese delegates. Furthermore, such a condemnation would likely hinder the Christian message in Japan and endanger Japanese Christians.

In the minds of many delegates, this nuanced approach to specific crises needed to be explicit; an explanation was necessary. The final report did so: “During the discussion of the report of Section XIV [The Church and the International Order] it became apparent that a considerable number of delegates would be unwilling to approve of the report without any explanation of the omission of any definite reference to the acute situations in different parts of the globe.”<sup>70</sup> A special resolution was adopted and appended to the Tambaram report explaining that “while several of our reports express our convictions regarding international conflict and its causes, we are unwilling that words of ours, which cost us nothing, should aggravate the problems and hazards of our fellow-Christians.”<sup>71</sup> A second special resolution was jointly proposed by the delegates of China and Japan. That resolution, too, was a carefully worded call to Christian leavening.<sup>72</sup>

Tambaram, though, did go further than mere appeal to Christian belief. Tambaram appealed to the church as an embodiment of the supra-national aspect of Christianity.

In this time when brute force stalks the earth, the Church is summoned to bear courageous and unflinching witness to the nations that the base purposes of men, whether of individuals or of groups, cannot prevail against the will of the Holy and Compassionate God. It is commissioned to warn

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> The complete text of these two special resolutions is reproduced in Appendix A.

mankind of the judgment which shall assuredly overtake a civilization which will not turn and repent. It is under obligation to speak fearlessly against aggression, brutality, persecution and all wanton destruction of human life and torturing of human souls.<sup>73</sup>

Tambaram invoked the church universal as an entity, though abstract, that was more than the sum of its parts. That is, the emphasis was not on the church as some sort of trans-national organization, but rather more as a movement that bears responsibility.

What the Council could not bring itself to declare in formal resolution found expression nonetheless. Some speakers said aloud what did not find its way into the IMC's written statements. Paton warned against a "now fashionable" dialectic approach,

that is, the preservation within us of the tension between that which is eternal and that which is temporal; between that relative good which we can aim at and perchance achieve here and now, and the perfect ideal of life which always transcends it; between the recognition of the practical exigencies of life and a sinful society and the continual duty lying upon Christians and upon the Church to witness to the loving will of God.<sup>74</sup>

The danger was that such an approach "may come to nothing more than a pompous name for moral lethargy" and provide an excuse for "armchair passivism."<sup>75</sup> Some situations called for a clear word of condemnation..

Addressing a plenary session, C. F. Garbett, Anglican bishop of Winchester, spoke on "Church and State." In times of tension between church and state it was still necessary for the church to criticize and resist the state.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>74</sup> William Paton, "The Church and the World Community," in IMC, *Addresses and Other Records*, vol. 7, Madras Series (New York; London: IMC, 1939), 118.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

With all its desire to be loyal to the State and its constitution there come times when the Church must do its utmost to stand in the way of the State and to call upon it in God's name to desist from the evil it is perpetrating. It must do this in the case of a war which is clearly aggressive. The Church of a country would be cowardly and unfaithful if it did not condemn a State which cruelly persecuted a minority in its midst, not because of any crime it had committed nor because it was a danger to its existence, but either on account of the religious convictions of its members or because they belonged to a race of which our Lord and His apostles were members.<sup>76</sup>

His references would not have been missed by participants at Tambaram. He was calling on the church to take a stand on the Second Sino-Japanese War and German persecution of Jews. George Sloan, a mission representative from Palestine, dedicated his entire address to the "Relation of the Christian Church to the Jewish Problem." In it he decried anti-Semitism not only in Germany, but "sweeping the world."<sup>77</sup>

Let no one think that this is a domestic matter for those principally concerned. It is a matter which concerns the Christian Church as a whole and every Christian in every land. For this present wave of anti-Semitism is not only an attack upon the Jewish people, it is not only a negative thing in being a denial of the teachings of Christ, it has become a cloak for the forces of Antichrist and is a veiled attack upon our Lord and His Gospel.<sup>78</sup>

Sloan was aware of the tension of naming names. He struggled that he could not adequately paint the picture of what was actually happening in the world: "[I]t is impossible for me to do this without referring to a certain specific situation in a specific country represented here before me. Even if by a careful process of circumlocution I were to avoid mentioning the actual name, you would all of you

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<sup>76</sup> C. F. Garbett, "Church and State," in *Addresses and Other Records*, vol. 7, Madras Series (New York; London: IMC, 1939), 109.

<sup>77</sup> George Sloan, "Relation of the Christian Church to the Jewish Problem," in *Addresses and Other Records*, vol. 7, Madras Series (New York; London: IMC, 1939), 95.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

know what country I meant.”<sup>79</sup> Sloan fervently appealed that influence be wielded and succor offered to refugees. He told his audience, “Never in all her tragic history has Jewry been in deeper distress. Never has Christendom had such an opportunity of showing to Jewry what God’s love in Christ really means.”<sup>80</sup>

Thus, in the face of international conflict Tambaram took recourse to the church alongside appeals to a universal Christian conviction. The role played by the concept of the church in addressing this situation was measured against the risk of alienation in the ranks of the IMC and endangering the Christian mission and actual Christians. While the appeal to the concept of the church was balanced with appeal to Christian conviction, both were based upon a supra-national characteristic.<sup>81</sup> The appeal to the church took a more prominent place, though, when another contextual factor is considered alongside war and the threat of war.

### *Social, Political, Economic, and Cultural Flux*

The IMC perceived that they were in a changed and rapidly changing world. This awareness prompted theological introspection regarding mission.<sup>82</sup> In this introspection, the church took a prominent place as the IMC considered the intersection of Christianity and modernity.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>81</sup> The supra-national character of the church also intersected with the growing international parity and a sense of reciprocity among branches of the church. IMC, *The Church and the State*, vol. 6, Madras Series (New York; London: IMC, 1939), 40-1.

<sup>82</sup> Mark Laing, “The Church is the Mission: Integrating the IMC with the WCC,” *International Review of Mission* 100, no. 2 (2011): 216-7.

Division IV of Tambaram's program was dedicated to the study of the environment of the church. This included study of the economic basis of the church, the relation of the church to the social and economic order, the relation of the church to the international order, and the church and the state (study sections XII-XV). The reports coming out of the Council's work in these areas are especially fruitful for understanding the prevailing perception about the worldwide context in which mission was conducted.

Not only were these "perilous days,"<sup>83</sup> the IMC was sensitive to "disintegration under the pressure of modern life."<sup>84</sup> While dis-integration in the church and in the worldwide mission enterprise were of concern, the dis-integration about which they were most concerned was more personal:<sup>85</sup>

Confusion and change are fundamental features of the existing situation in the world. We have to recognize however that behind this appearance there is the deeper fact that the dominating social and economic order throughout the world has been organized in such a way that it is difficult for man with his fellow men to realize the Christian meaning of community where stewardship of natural resources and the worth of each individual can be realized.<sup>86</sup>

Individual life and community were being subjected to deleterious forces counter to the gospel.

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<sup>83</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 29.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>85</sup> Outside of quoted material this study follows a convention of adding a hyphen to distinguish the loss of integration socially or culturally as it is meant here from the more common meaning of "disintegration": to destroy or reduce to nothingness. Witness also, "busy-ness" instead of "business," or Scott Bullard's *Re-membering the Body: The Lord's Supper and Ecclesial Unity in the Free Church Traditions* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

No place was this more intensely felt than by the working group tasked with assessing the status of the Christian home. Concern over the pressures of urbanization, industrialization and political influence were brought to Tambaram from the preparatory work conducted in the delegates' home countries.<sup>87</sup> Population drift to mines and industrial centers in Africa was producing "grass widows."<sup>88</sup> Young people were "adapting themselves to a new kind of life and throwing off the moral and religious practices of the home," including the "specially grievous" problem of illicit unions.<sup>89</sup> China sought the creation of "first-class teaching materials" directed toward the background of Chinese home life and "the problems confronting the modern home in China and in other parts of the world."<sup>90</sup>

But the delegates did more than lament and summon more effort. They dug deeper, behind the symptoms, to understand the contours of modern life that threatened human flourishing. This greater task was anticipated and promoted by Paton prior to the meeting.

We face something far more serious than that 'secularism' to which the Jerusalem meeting pointed in its famous Message. There has been on the one hand a progressive disintegration of society, of moral ideals and of authority of every kind; much of life has become impersonal and nothing is more terrifying to the average man than the sense that he is in the grip of impersonal forces that can neither be understood nor controlled.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> IMC, *Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 25; IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 59.

<sup>88</sup> IMC, *Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 46. While in some contexts "grass widow" has been a term of opprobrium connoting promiscuity, the meaning in this context is women whose husbands are away from their rural homes having pursued employment in industrial centers.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-8.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>91</sup> Paton, "The Churches in Council: Oxford Edinburgh Hangchow": 8. As is evident from the title to this often overlooked article, it was written prior to the location change from Hangchow, China, to Tambaram, India.

Paton identified individual autonomy as the dominant social idea of the western world, but recognized it as “an atomizing and mechanizing notion.”<sup>92</sup> Modernity’s own attempts to neutralize this acid eating away at humanity was a crucial part of the problem.

Here is the characteristic feature of our modern day, that in the place of the dethroned gods, and to stay the flood of disintegrating tendencies, there have been called in new gods, of race or class or nation. To these gods men look to save them; round these governing ideas is being built up authority anew; in the service of these gods men find again the satisfaction of irrational self-giving that had been denied to them in the only world they knew.

Paton promoted the church as an agent in response to the dis-integrating forces of modernity. He asked if there existed a Christian response to this cultural situation. The response need not be popular or “chime” with what people would like to hear.<sup>93</sup> What mattered was that “a living Church should have a living word of God to deliver.”<sup>94</sup>

The report on the church and the changing social and economic order (Section XIII) delved into the contours of the modern predicament and enumerated four. The first is an apt expression of the issues underlying the concern voiced by the nations regarding the Christian home. The report acknowledged a “breaking up of the old order through the introduction of new social values in family, class, tribal and national relationships.”<sup>95</sup> This erosion was exacerbated by urbanization,

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 105.

industrialization, and secularization, promoting “rebellion against accepted moral sanctions, and the loss of responsibility for one’s neighbor.”<sup>96</sup> Second, economics were changing. The modern era introduced “an individualistic economy as over against the communal system” along with commercialization in agriculture; increased dependence on an outside, world economy; decay in arts and crafts and traditional occupations; and competitive rather than cooperative industrialization “often involving imperialistic domination.”<sup>97</sup> A noted concomitant to this economic shift was an increase in government purview: “governments everywhere assume increasing responsibilities in the economic sphere.”<sup>98</sup> Third was the “introduction of political, social and educational legislation unadapted to the needs and conditions of the people” along with the “persistence of racial and color discrimination.”<sup>99</sup> Finally, they perceived that the utility of science had been limited or even converted “into an agent of destruction instead of beneficence” by capitalistic exploitation, political dominance and religious prejudice.”<sup>100</sup> Indeed, standing after the shock of total warfare in World War I but not yet witness to the new ravages of war to come, they noted that if moral progress did not keep pace with scientific (i.e. technological) advance, catastrophe and disaster were coming. Additionally, even with modernization occurring throughout the developing world, disparity still existed

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

“between the standard of living introduced by the representatives of western civilization and what is possible within the circumstances of the local community.”<sup>101</sup>

This deeper level of analysis was also anticipated by the preparatory work of the meeting. Kraemer was commissioned to write his volume on Christianity and Non-Christian religions for the second division of work set for the conference, “The Witness of the Church” (sections III-V). The task was to “state the fundamental position of the Christian Church as a witness-bearing body in the modern world, relating this to different conflicting views of the attitude to be taken by Christians towards other faiths, and dealing in detail with the evangelistic approach to the great non-Christian faiths.”<sup>102</sup> Kraemer accepted the call despite recognizing it as an “impossible task,” in part because it was a time “when the whole life of the world is in process of revolutionary transition and stupendous crisis.”<sup>103</sup>

Not only did Kraemer feel the cultural flux of the age, he sought penetration into understanding it: “Different interpretations of this are possible, and are given. Undoubtedly only a deeply prophetic spirit is in some measure adequate to penetrate into the real background of our present confusion and turmoil.”<sup>104</sup> Thus Kraemer chose to set the tone for his investigation of the relation between

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 105-6.

<sup>102</sup> Kraemer, *Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, vii, quoting the Minutes of the Ad Interim Committee of the IMC, Old Jordans, 1936.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Kraemer, *Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, 1.

Christianity and other world religions with a first chapter titled “A World in Transition,” which examined a world in cultural flux.<sup>105</sup>

Kraemer recognized two “seemingly contradictory facts” emerging from the cultural change sweeping the world.<sup>106</sup> On the one hand, there was the sense of a new global community. He averred, “Knowingly or unknowingly, everybody is forced to think and live in terms of the world. . . . There is no sphere of life in which the different peoples all over the world are not interrelated to each other.”<sup>107</sup> Within this globalism there was an “irresistible impact of Western patterns of life” contributing to “uniformity of life” by way of a trend toward “a similar pattern and standard.”<sup>108</sup> Kraemer did not deny the tenacity of older cultural foundations, but sought to identify a “new superstructure,” which “moves with irresistible force towards uniformity and conformity.”<sup>109</sup> On the other hand, there were forces working toward disunity. To Kraemer, this disunity was the more profound, because it was a dissolution within the human soul: “Although man has, through science and creative criticism, immensely progressed in the mastery of life by the organization of all human activity, the inner structure of his life has been imperceptibly but

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<sup>105</sup> The title to Kraemer’s work, *The Christian Message in a non-Christian World*, is a reminder that his work should not be too narrowly interpreted along the lines of the continuity and discontinuity between Christianity and other religions. Kraemer wrote of Christianity in a world that was non-Christian not only in terms of other religions, but also with its ideologies, secular totalitarianism, and cultural upheaval.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

steadily undermined by forces of disruption and dissolution.”<sup>110</sup> Despite a growing world unity, “the spirit of exclusiveness and self-sufficiency is as dominant a note of the human mind as ever.”<sup>111</sup>

The tension between unity and disunity produced a counterintuitive phenomenon. Totalitarian systems, with “determined and titanic efforts” seek to overcome “the forces of disruption and dissolution.”<sup>112</sup> But in doing so, the totalizing claims of these systems made them “the most fruitful sources of disunity,” because the “self-same masterful capacity of modern man to organize and order life in the present situation serves only to intensify disorder, enmity and destruction.”<sup>113</sup> An increasingly globalizing world actually increased “self-consciousness” at regional and local levels and “fostered a spirit of aggressiveness.”<sup>114</sup>

As a result, a deeper apparent contradiction emerges. To Kraemer, the outstanding character of the time was “the complete disappearance of all absolutes, and the victorious but dreadful dominion of the spirit and attitude of relativism” while at the same time “literally wallowing in pseudo-absolutes.”<sup>115</sup> Each totalizing system offers a sort of gospel to answer the crisis of the human soul and modern

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 5. Totalitarian systems are not just dictatorships or autocratic rule. Oldham characterized totalitarian systems as seeking to “employ all the agencies at its command to shape the outlook and determine the attitudes of all its citizens and to direct and control the whole of their life from the cradle to the grave.” Joseph Oldham, *The Question of the Church in the World of Today* (London: Edinburgh House Press on behalf of the IMC, 1936), 6.

<sup>113</sup> Kraemer, *Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, 5.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

life.<sup>116</sup> These pseudo-gospels tended to be shaped by western cultural history. They traded in a currency minted during the Enlightenment that became the standard exchange of modernity. These ideas included “self-confidence,” “emancipation of the spirit,” “rationalism,” “man’s autonomy,” “tolerance,” and “individualism.”<sup>117</sup> The proliferation of absolute claims by states and ideologies bred relativism so that “religion has become irrelevant in modern life, because God has become irrelevant.”<sup>118</sup> In the modern age, humanity had “annihilated God” and “the inveterate god-maker, creates new gods or makes himself god.”<sup>119</sup> Thus, the perception of radical cultural change impinged upon Tambaram’s deliberations, not just on the dynamic of church and mission, but also on the debate regarding Christianity and other world religions sparked by Kraemer’s work.<sup>120</sup>

At Tambaram, what Kraemer had called new absolutes were characterized as new paganisms. The meeting’s final report put Kraemer’s view in relation to the IMC’s previous world gathering: “At the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1928, it seemed evident that the chief challenge to the

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 8. Addressing the meeting, Paton characterized it, “We are caught in the interlocking of rival righteousnesses.” Paton, “The Church and the World Community,” in IMC, *Addresses and Other Records*, vol. 7, Madras Series, 120. Writing prior to the meeting, Mott called these “pseudo-religions.” Mott, “At Edinburgh, Jerusalem and Madras”: 313.

<sup>117</sup> Kraemer, *Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, 9-11.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>120</sup> It is noteworthy that the ecclesiological aspect of Kraemer’s volume is often overlooked. The whole inquiry has an ecclesiological *inclusio*: the final section of chapter one is “The Crisis of the Church,” chapter two, “Wither Missions,” opens with discussion of criticisms of the church in the modern world, and the work concludes its final chapter, “The Christian Mission in Relation to Its Environment,” with two sections titled “The Nature of the Church” and “The Church in Relation to Its Environment.” Note the parallel between the chapter title and the final section title. “The Christian Mission” and “The Church” are thus linked.

Christian faith came from a godless secularism which was eating away the foundations of all religious faith. The outstanding event of the last ten years has been the rise of the 'new paganism' – new faiths with new gods."<sup>121</sup> These new paganisms were then enumerated: nationalism, Communism, scientific skepticism, and non-Christian religions.<sup>122</sup> Not just the latter, all were seen to be claiming a sort of religious devotion from their adherents.

In conference addresses, Chinese delegate T. Z. Koo noted that totalitarian states raised nationalism to the "nth degree,"<sup>123</sup> while Garbett averred that nationalism was on the rise in the modern era as nations gained in consciousness of themselves, their history, and their civilization.<sup>124</sup> To Garbett, a concomitant phenomenon with this revolution in conception was an extension of its control over every department of life:

It no longer confines itself to the preservation of order and the protection of life and property. It has taken over functions which once belonged to the Church or to private enterprise. It controls its citizens from the cradle to the grave. It provides them with many of the necessities of life. Its statute books are multiplied with the passing of new laws. At every point it interferes with the individual.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 17.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-20.

<sup>123</sup> T. Z. Koo, "The Church and the International Order," in *Addresses and Other Records*, vol. 7, Madras Series (New York; London: IMC, 1939), 75.

<sup>124</sup> Garbett, "Church and State," 105-6.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* 106.

These totalizing claims of the state escalated tensions regarding the Christian's loyalty.<sup>126</sup>

Communism as "an economic program for social reconstruction" was recognized to have affinity with "the social message of Christianity." Nevertheless, Communism as a Marxist materialist philosophy represented a religious challenge because of the claims it made on personhood and its disregard for the sacred.<sup>127</sup> Closely related was the category of nationalism.<sup>128</sup> Here, there were two primary concerns. First, nationalism had "a tendency to control all the religious feelings of a nation, and to make the genius of a nation or race the object of its worship."<sup>129</sup> Second, this anthropological bent spawned resistance to the missionary endeavor: "It is claimed that each great religion is adequate to meet the special needs of its own people, and that missionaries and their efforts are examples of imperialism."<sup>130</sup>

Finally, there were non-Christian religious responses to dis-integration under the pressures of modern life. In a "strange new world" where older moral authorities were weakened, the major world religions were themselves undergoing reform and rehabilitation to meet the challenges of modern life.<sup>131</sup> If not the older

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<sup>126</sup> See also, "The Setting of the Subject," chapter one of *The Church and the State*, where the modern national state was deemed "the highest current expression of the manipulation of large masses of men." IMC, *The Church and the State*, vol. 6, Madras Series, 2.

<sup>127</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 18-9.

<sup>128</sup> While Communism was singled out, it was also identified as the example par excellence of new paganism in a nationalistic system. *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

religions, there was the ever growing possibility of new religious movements. The Council noted that new cults “respond to certain basic human needs such as a passion for life in itself and a better way of living, an aspiration for contact with the mysterious and the spirits of the departed, a desire for cosmic oneness, as well as an impulse and longing to escape from the drabness and fear created by the evils of the modern world.”<sup>132</sup> Religions new and old were stepping into the void worn away by the acids of modernity.

At one level, the IMC’s attention to the various responses to the dis-integration of modernity reflects a Western, spiritual marketplace perspective. At a deeper level, though, what the IMC was assessing was ideological claims claiming to fulfill a universal, spiritual need. Non-religious ideologies and non-Christian religions alike were false claimants over against the Gospel: “It is He and He alone whom we have to offer to a lost world.”<sup>133</sup>

As with the contextual issue of war and geo-politics, a supra-national common Christian conviction was the first level of response. The pressures of modernity directly impinged upon presumably universal Christian standards. The delegates sensed a growing tension between Christian social conscience and unjust social orders. The supra-national character of Christianity moved to the fore as the Council went deeper from enumerating the contours of modernity to diagnosis of the ideological forces at work.

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 47.

Additionally, the Council turned to the concept of the church as the medium through which not only the deleterious effects of modernity could be countered, but also the entity needed to place a counterclaim on humanity in opposition to ideologies and non-Christian religions. Like the government staking greater claim in the realm of economics, the IMC noted that social philosophies were capturing “the imagination of youth more readily than the Church with its lack of social guidance.” The ideological tension produced a “conflict of loyalties between patriotism and religion or the pseudo-absolutes of race, class and nation and the ultimate absolute of God.”<sup>134</sup> Addressing the conference, Garbett was true to the topic upon which he was commissioned to speak, “Church and State,” and couched his comments in terms of loyalty to the state or the loyalty of the church to its master.

In turning to the church, the Council did not become blind to its primary purview. There were statements made specifically regarding the impact of this ideological challenge on the missionary endeavor. Everything in the training of future missionaries needed to be reconsidered in light of the current global and cultural situation: “The basic call to missionary service remains what it has always been, the inner compulsion of Christ, giving birth to an irresistible sense of mission, but the present condition of the world and the present stage of development within the churches require a restatement of the function and training of the future missionary.”<sup>135</sup> While these cultural changes were promoting nationalism and a post-colonial world scene, the younger churches nevertheless, “exposed to the

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 83.

disintegrating influences of contemporary life and confronting unprecedented opportunities,” were pleading for more missionaries to face the situation.

But the primary mode by which Tambaram approached challenges of modernity was not primarily missionary, it was supranational and ecclesiological. The Jerusalem meeting of the IMC, in 1928, had taken strides in recognizing secular civilization as a significant challenge to Christianity and in promoting the full partnership between the older and younger churches.<sup>136</sup> Tambaram reaffirmed the challenge of secular civilization, but also recognized ideologies and their quasi-religious encroachment. The meeting turned to the universal church as crucial to the Christian response: “The Church must either make its impact upon the secular world of to-day and win it for Christ, or the secular world will increasingly encroach upon the spiritual life of the Church, blunting its witness and dimming its vision.”<sup>137</sup> There must be something about Christianity that stands as an alternate claimant on life. To Tambaram, that thing was the universal church. The Council sounded a note of “urgency and insistence” to the church because the church lives “in perilous days and the Church cannot stand still; it dare not retreat, yet advance is only possible as the whole Church unites in a new Fellowship of the Spirit to evangelize the world.”<sup>138</sup>

Taking recourse to the church in the face of modern ideologies did not just emerge at Tambaram in December. This instrumental approach to the church was

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<sup>136</sup> Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement*, 157, 160.

<sup>137</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 28.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

anticipated by preconference texts. In the Near East group's talking points on Christian education, they clearly invoked the church as something more desirable than mere individual witness.

If the Christian Church is to meet the tremendous challenge made to her through the present world situation, it can only be through consecrated men and women manifesting in their ordinary everyday living the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not merely as individuals, but in full consciousness and open acknowledgment of their membership in the community of the Church, the blessed company of all faithful people.<sup>139</sup>

Likewise, Paton saw the encroachment of the state through the eyes of the church: "From the point of view of the Church, the state is trying to be a sort of Church – at least to lay down principles about the meaning of life which belong to God and His service."<sup>140</sup> Paton observed, "The other day the Führer told the German nation that the Reich would educate the young and the Church should not."<sup>141</sup> The Council concurred with Paton's concern, recognizing that the state was not offering a value-neutral education.

But there are some countries, in which the State is extending its control over education not simply to ensure its expansion and efficiency, but because it wishes to use it to mold the life, thought and character of its citizens so as to propagate the special doctrines which the State desires to exalt. Such a policy at its best must involve a cramping of the free spirit of its people; at its worst it will create a temper which must close the mind and heart to those influences which it is the hope of the Church to promote in its own children throughout the world. Against the effects of such a policy the Church must strive to guard its own children in every possible way.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> IMC, *Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 122.

<sup>140</sup> Paton, "The Churches in Council: Oxford Edinburgh Hangchow": 12.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>142</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 77.

The field of education was, to the participants of the IMC meeting in Tambaram, one of the primary examples of the state's growing claims on people's identities and loyalties. The totalizing encroachment of states and their ideologies was assessed within a framework that saw the church as the alternative claimant.

Yet another voice testifies to the appeal of the times to the universal church as an entity over against the claims of modern ideologies. In April 1934, Lesslie Newbigin, to whom today's missional ecclesiologists look as a founding father, had a hand in the report of a commission of the Student Christian Movement. A statement on international peace was appended to the SCM findings. That statement, too, looked to the universal church.

Like the Communist worker for peace, who recognizes the social cost of peace, and who also sees in the Soviet republic an adumbration of the new world to which he is looking, we have also, faintly adumbrated yet real and unquestionable, a foretaste of the new world for which we look: it is the Church. The Church is deeply divided by barriers of belief, of race and of class: nevertheless it is in a real, if partial sense, a supra-national centre of unity and loyalty. This unity does not consist in similarity of opinion, of programme or of temperament: it is the unity born of God's act of love in Christ received and answered in its members. Apart from that relationship to God there is no Church and therefore no kind of unity. But where it exists there is a bond which can bind together men and women of vastly different belief and practice, race and class.<sup>143</sup>

Reflecting upon this statement in 1985, Newbigin commented: "These were brave words. They were surprising then. They read strangely now. But they were an early adumbration of that ecumenical vision which would be captured later at the Tambaram Conference and in Temple's famous phrase about 'the great new fact of

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<sup>143</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda: An Autobiography* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1985), 34-5.

our time,' and in the missiology of the 1950s."<sup>144</sup> That is, the SCM's 1934 assertion of the supra-national unity of the church was at one level an "adumbration" akin to Communist ideology and at another level was itself an anticipation of the ecclesiological reflection and affirmation to follow, specifically at Tambaram.

### *The Ecclesial Turn in International Protestantism*

A fourth contextual factor in Tambaram's affirmation of the church in mission was that the IMC recognized they were part of a wider ecclesiological turn in Protestantism.<sup>145</sup> In a pre-conference essay, Paton observed that "the present days are beholding an effort on the part of the Church, in nearly all its branches, to clear its mind and to gird itself for action, such as certainly has not been known within modern times."<sup>146</sup> There was a growing emphasis on ecclesiology beyond the IMC; other organizations and large-scale gatherings were turning to the question of the church within their respective areas of interest. Paton specifically pointed to the

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid. At William Temple's (1881-1944) enthronement as the bishop of Canterbury in 1942, he commented in his address that the worldwide fellowship of Christians stemming from the world mission enterprise was "the great new fact of our era." His statement is emblematic of the contribution of mission to the twentieth-century ecumenical movement. Newbigin's 1985 reflection on the SCM statement demonstrates that in his estimation, the statement's ecclesiological assertion is inexorably linked to ecumenics, the twentieth-century ecumenical movement, and to the mission movement as the ecumenical movement's primary tributary. William Temple's "great new fact of our era" address was put in print: William Temple, *The Church Looks Forward* (New York: Macmillan, 1944), 2-4.

<sup>145</sup> Weber provides evidence beyond the three major meetings mentioned here. He notes that "important symptoms" of the turn to ecclesiology in twentieth-century Protestantism "were, for instance, the meeting at Tranquebar in 1919 and the subsequent struggle for church unity in South India, the Shanghai Conference of 1922 on the Chinese Church, the beginning work of the Faith and Order, the need felt at Jerusalem 1928 to shift from a mission-centred to a church-centred approach, the theology of Karl Barth (*Kirchliche Dogmatik!*) and its impact on Tambaram 1938, the plans for a World Council of *Churches* just before the war and the various church struggles during the Second World War." Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement*, 57n2.

<sup>146</sup> Paton, "The Churches in Council: Oxford Edinburgh Hangchow": 3.

1937 Oxford meeting of Life and Work and the 1937 Edinburgh meeting of Faith and Order.<sup>147</sup>

Including the IMC's meeting in Tambaram, Paton considered these to be "three gatherings of a truly momentous character."<sup>148</sup> All three meetings were to focus on the church from their various purviews. Yet to Paton, the themes arising from the respective interests of the three organizations "dovetail together."<sup>149</sup> Indicative of the centrality of the church to be affirmed at Tambaram, Paton further averred that turning to the church lay close to "the heart of the world's need."<sup>150</sup>

It is not by accident nor by careless overlapping with the subject-matter of another gathering that the Christians who gather at Oxford and Hangchow to look together at the Christian task in a day of utter perplexity and need are going to focus their attention upon the church.

Why this concentration of attention on the Church? It is because the Church, if we consider its true nature, the charter and essential doctrine that should rule its life, lies at the heart of things."<sup>151</sup>

The church represents "not a mere accommodation to the *status quo* but instinct with transforming power," the church "believes that both men and the world can be changed," and the church is "of supreme relevance to the world."<sup>152</sup>

The impetus for a church-themed conference came as early as 1934 when an Ad Interim Committee at Salisbury received strong urging that the next world

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<sup>147</sup> In his reflection on the ecclesial turn in the late 1930s, John Mott added the World Conference of Christian Youth at Amsterdam, July 1939. Mott, *Five Decades and a Forward View*, 97.

<sup>148</sup> Paton, "The Churches in Council: Oxford Edinburgh Hangchow": 4. As previously noted, this article was published prior to the meeting's relocation to Tambaram.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Paton, "The Churches in Council: Oxford Edinburgh Hangchow": 6-7.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 7.

meeting concentrate on the “on-going Christian community.”<sup>153</sup> The final wording of the central theme became “the upbuilding of the younger churches as a part of the historic universal Christian community.”<sup>154</sup>

The Council was sensitive to a potential misunderstanding of the meeting’s church-centric theme.

Though for some an emphasis upon the Church was at first taken to mean an emphasis upon ecclesiasticism, and voices were raised in reminder that the Church existed for the Kingdom, there was no disposition to accept the view that the Christian religion is to be thought of as general ideas, still less that the Christian enterprise throughout the world can be conceived as an effort maintained by the older Christian West. It was common ground to all that the faith, the witness and the life of the living Church all over the world lie at the very heart of the whole Christian mission.<sup>155</sup>

The caricature arose nonetheless, in part, because of the historical developments traced in chapter five of this study.

The IMC further recognized that their gathering would come “into the same stream of thought” as the Faith and Order and Life and Work meetings.<sup>156</sup> Yet they also recognized that the aims of the IMC gathering would be fundamentally different. While the central theme of each was the Church, the others were primarily concerned with the older churches. Additionally, for Faith and Order “the discussions dealt with matters definitely ecclesiastical – creed, ministry, sacrament – but always with the mission of the universal Church in mind.”<sup>157</sup> The overlap with

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<sup>153</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 6.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

Life and Work was greater as that meeting addressed “the distinctive life and mission and message of the Church” in relation to modernity’s challenges and “pseudo-religious allegiances”<sup>158</sup> – what Kraemer called pseudo-absolutes and have been characterized here as totalizing claims. The distinctive nature of the IMC meeting was a function of the organization’s birth and growth; theirs was the most diverse of the meetings in “race and nation.”<sup>159</sup> Furthermore, the IMC would follow the ecclesiological theme, but within their own purview. Life and Work lacked engagement with worldwide Christianity and indigenous Christianity. Hans Reudi-Weber notes with astonishment that “not one of the preparatory papers written for Oxford deals with the situation in the East or is written by an Asian author.”<sup>160</sup> Life and Work was “almost exclusively Western in outlook and range of operations.”<sup>161</sup> Likewise, Faith and Order was for the most part also restricted in its thinking to the so-called Christian world and older churches and severely lacked in non-Western representation.<sup>162</sup> In contrast, Mott noted in retrospect, “While the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences brought together a larger number of ecclesiastical scholars,

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid. The IMC also drew a contrast between their contribution to the question of church-state relations and that of Life and Work’s Oxford meeting, which had as its theme “Church, Community, and State.” IMC, *The Church and the State*, vol. 6, Madras Series, 6-11.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement*, 199-200. Weber further comments in the same place that Oxford’s “outstanding and for Asia highly relevant achievements became fruitful for the East only through the Tambaram Conference one year later, and only there, within the framework of the IMC, could Asia make its real contributions to the studies of Life and Work.”

<sup>161</sup> Nils Ehrenström, “Movements for International Friendship and Life and Work, 1925-1948,” in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948*, ed. Ruth Rouse and Steven Neill, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 595.

<sup>162</sup> Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement*, 214-7.

the Madras Meeting had represented in its membership more knowledge and experience in the actual work of the Christian Church throughout the world than has ever before been assembled.”<sup>163</sup>

The contributions of India and China were especially lauded in the published working papers in volume four of the Madras Series (regarding Sections VII-XI and XVI). India had “issued a large number of study booklets before the meeting for discussion throughout the country” and such discussion produced statements recorded in several sections’ discussion points.<sup>164</sup> Likewise, the Chinese delegation “brought with them to the Madras meeting considered statements on the subjects proposed for discussion.”<sup>165</sup> This is noteworthy not merely because non-Western delegations had something to contribute, but that their voice influenced the deliberations and pronouncements of the Council.

The official findings and recommendations of the Council in *The World Mission of the Church* epitomized Tambaram’s unique contribution:

Though less rich in ecclesiastical scholarship than the Oxford and Edinburgh meetings, the Tambaram meeting contained within its membership more knowledge of the actual work of the Christian Church throughout the world than has ever been assembled and the findings should be read as the work of men and women who believe, with great and detailed knowledge, that these things which they say ought to be said, and that these plans which they put forward are needed, timely and feasible.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Mott, *Five Decades and a Forward View*, 100.

<sup>164</sup> IMC, *Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 8.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>166</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 10.

### *Conclusion*

These four contextual factors of growing internationalization, geopolitical tensions and conflict, sociocultural flux, and the wider turn to ecclesiology in international Protestantism stimulated the IMC's ecclesiological thought. Although these factors do not directly entail a theological affirmation of the church in mission, they contributed to the centrality of the church in the deliberations of the meeting. Indigenous voices challenged any narrow, Westernized vision of what it means to be the church. Geopolitical conflict and cultural flux prompted appeals to the church to fulfill a certain role over against modern ideologies. This reveals some key contours to the IMC's ecclesiology like its emphasis on the supranational nature of the church and its recourse to the church as an alternative sociocultural organization to the claims on loyalty and identity made by other features of modernity. Finally, the IMC perceived itself as in stride with other international Protestant organizations in its turn to ecclesiology. We now turn to a fuller analysis of Tambaram's ecclesiology and its affirmation of the role of the church in mission.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Tamaram's Affirmation of the Church in Mission

The context of the IMC's Tamaram meeting provides a starting point for understanding Tamaram's affirmation of the church in mission. Two of the four contextual factors (international Protestantism's turn to the church and growing parity for younger churches in the development of the IMC) led the IMC to consider the church as the focus of their meeting. The other two contextual factors provide more specificity. Geo-political instability and cultural flux prompted Tamaram to assign the church a greater role over against an array of ideological systems. The church remained an arbiter of meaning, an instrument of evangelism, and an alternative claimant upon the life and loyalty of Christians. These concepts held true from a time when the main threat to the gospel envisioned by the IMC was non-Christian religions and, later, secularism.<sup>1</sup> Tamaram recognized new "-isms" that were not religions, per se, but made similar claims regarding meaning and loyalty. Furthermore, these cultural, political, and economic forces were coalescing into totalitarian systems – totalitarian not merely in terms of political despotism, but totalitarian in the breadth of their claim on human life. Thus the church in its supra-national character received added emphasis from Tamaram.

It is within this matrix that Tamaram expressed the content of its ecclesiology. A careful reading of Tamaram's documents reveals this content, but

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<sup>1</sup> The IMC's Jerusalem meeting in 1928 recognized secularism as the next great threat.

not merely in terms of prominent words and phrases. First, the IMC had a penchant for providing rationale (theological and conceptual) for their practical recommendations. This drive for consistency between praxis and principle produced sections of text that give insight into the IMC's thinking. Second, the wider semantic field gives clues to the significance of particular ideas. One can surmise that a concept permeated the IMC's ecclesiology because that idea and manner of speaking of the church is used in places where that particular idea is not the primary topic. For example, if a text on India contains words and phrases associated with population density that appear even when population density is not the immediate topic (i.e., economy, religious landscape, geography), one can surmise the fixity and importance of the idea of population density in the writer's thinking on the topic of India. Similarly, the grammatical modifiers (adjectives, adverbs, phrases and clauses) that accompany the weighty style of pronouncement prose can be a resource for historical understanding. This method of assessing Tambaram's ecclesiology reveals several salient characteristics of Tambaram's ecclesiology to be explored here.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Character of the Church*

Ecclesiology is traditionally structured across two foci in regard to the church: being and doing.<sup>3</sup> The IMC, though, was not engaged in systematically

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<sup>2</sup> Likewise, aspects of Tambaram's ecclesiology related to the contextual factors addressed in chapter two will be evident in quoted passages in this chapter where those factors (international parity, geo-political climate, cultural flux, and other Protestant organizations) are not the main idea being addressed.

<sup>3</sup> Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 14.

articulating an ecclesiology; their statements are not explicitly structured along these lines. Nevertheless, the prevalent themes of their ecclesiology roughly fall along these lines when one considers how the statements are oriented temporally rather than categorically. That is, Tambaram's reflection on characteristics of the church tended more to be framed with reference to the time at hand or the church in all times and places. These roughly correspond to the ecclesiological poles of doing and being respectively, though the Council did not clearly delimit those categories.

### *The Penitent Church*

The most temporally conditioned characteristic of the church is its penitence. The IMC considered the present moment in light of the past and recognized its past failures: "We are not unmindful of the faults and mistakes which have crept into some of the evangelistic work of the churches and missions and have proved obstacles to the spread of the Gospel of Christ and to its genuine acceptance by many."<sup>4</sup> Such mission work, maladapted to "the fundamental characteristics" of the people, produced "superficial results."<sup>5</sup> While not directly an affirmation of the church in mission, expressions of contrition run counter to the caricature of church-centric mission as primarily concerned with numerical expansion of the church as an institution under particular forms or cultural norms. Indeed, the faults of the past

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<sup>4</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 38

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Also noteworthy, is this statement's sensitivity to indigenous culture and the contextualization of the church, another aspect of Tambaram's ecclesiology.

were framed as succumbing to “the danger of seeking to extend the Church numerically without due regard to the full meaning and end of evangelism.”<sup>6</sup>

Tambaram also expressed contrition over cultural imperialism and the identification of Christianity with Western civilization.

The Christian Church must bow in shame as it contemplates the greed, racial arrogance and callousness toward personality that mar the civilization in which it has been set, and that have even penetrated within its own walls. The civilization that has been sent from the West to the East and to Africa alongside the Gospel places grievous stumbling blocks in the path of the Kingdom. From its earliest days Christianity has moved into Asia and Africa as well as westward. It is not to be confused with any one civilization.<sup>7</sup>

Not only is the IMC’s sensitivity to culture evident in their thoughts about changes in their cultural context, it is also exhibited here in their expression of penitence.

In the German delegation’s report, Walter Freytag’s impressions of the meeting included a sense of failure on the part of missions in their relationship with the younger churches. The goal may have been to work toward independent local churches (die selbständige einheimische Kirche) but missionary leadership had been “patronizing” (Bevormundung), resulting in the “sometimes stormy development of the constitutional independence of the young churches.”<sup>8</sup>

The penitence of the church as a feature of Tambaram’s ecclesiology passes muster when weighed across the semantic field of the conference’s official

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>8</sup> Original: “manchmal stürmischer Entwicklung die verfassungsmässige Selbständigkeit der jungen Kirchen“ Walter Freytag, “Von Geheimnis der Kirch,” in *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der Erde: Bericht über Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram*, ed. Martin Schlunk (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 46.

statements. There is no section of the texts dedicated to the penitence of the church. Rather, this characteristic is interjected among multiple topics.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to evangelism and culture, the IMC addressed penitence in regard to finances. The “vast disparity in wealth between sending and receiving countries” bred a system of continuous subsidies that fostered “condescension” and “domination or control” on one side and abdication of fiscal responsibility on the other: “The evils of this system are now widely recognized by both younger and older churches and readjustments are being effected.”<sup>10</sup>

Often, penitence for the past was companion to contemplation of the current context. For example, the IMC confessed the church’s failure in the realm of international politics. As noted in chapter two, Tambaram’s official documents avoided explicit condemnations. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to see the global political context behind the IMC’s contrition: “How often have concern for its own material interests, and too close connection with the state or with the existing social order, reduced the Church to cowardly silence or rendered its testimony suspect in the ears of those to whom it is addressed!”<sup>11</sup> Between the German Confessing

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<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Karl Hartenstein’s report on Tambaram contains no section on the penitence of the church, but in fifteen pages penitence language appears associated with four distinct topics. Karl Hartenstein, *Die Weltmissionskonferenz Tambaram 1938* (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 4-5, 12, 13, 15.

<sup>10</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 101.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 118. Similarly, William Paton, in his address to the meeting titled “The Church and the World Community,” saw that the church could not be an alternative to modern ideologies if it failed in this regard: “There is no surer way by which the Church as a whole, or any single part of the Church, can more quickly lose its distinctively Christian witness and purpose than by seeking to copy the methods of world powers.” IMC, *Addresses and Other Records*, vol. 7, Madras Series, 117.

Church and rising tensions in the British colonies,<sup>12</sup> there was ample impetus to admit to political co-option in the church's recent past.

The lines become blurred between past, present and future in other of Tambaram's ecclesiological statements, and thus the lines also become blurred between the ecclesiological categories of doing and being. Failures of the past impinged upon the present: "In many parts of the world there is tension between the Church and the State, and there are numerous indications that this tension is more likely to increase than to diminish. It is our conviction that the Church itself, by its weakness, its failures and its mistakes, is partly responsible for the present crises."<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, penitence was not viewed as just some momentary act. The IMC called upon its members to "search diligently their own hearts and lives for the things in themselves that make the World of God of none effect" and, furthermore, to take the call to repentance back to the churches, "an earnest call to face frankly the hindrances to the spread of the Gospel that arise out of the life of the churches themselves."<sup>14</sup> Repentance was deemed crucial to responding faithfully to the present situation:

But first we must come in penitence to the feet of God. In the presence of these disasters and forebodings, we see the judgment of God's righteousness upon our society; but we see also His judgment upon our churches – so enmeshed in the world that they dare not speak God's full word of truth unafraid, so divided that they cannot speak that word with full power, so

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<sup>12</sup> Tensions were felt not just in India, but Africa, as well. IMC, *The Growing Church*, vol. 2, Madras Series, 9.

<sup>13</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 123.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-9.

sullied by pettiness and worldliness that the face of Christ cannot be clearly discerned in them, or His power go forth through them for redemption. We must come too in deep humility, knowing that no merely human deed or word of ours will suffice to meet humanity's need.<sup>15</sup>

Unless cleansed and renewed by God, the church would be unfit to be an instrument of God in the world.<sup>16</sup>

The statements of the conference continue the extension of repentance beyond an isolated act. The church does not just repent, it is penitent. Penitence is a part of the ongoing character of the church. The potential of failure will always be there, so the church "must always be on its guard lest it surrender to Caesar the things that belong to God" and it must "struggle persistently" against worldliness.<sup>17</sup> This vigilance is warranted but not relied upon in the IMC's ecclesiology. While striving against the potential for failure, failure was recognized as an ongoing reality. The IMC prescribed continual penitence in order to "experience constant renewal in the Holy Spirit" if the church was to fulfill its God-given task as "herald, exemplar and builder of the kingdom of God."<sup>18</sup> The church always has the need to repent, but holds on to the "assurance of pardon and renewal."<sup>19</sup>

Although the penitence of the church is not an affirmation of the role of the church in mission, it is a salient feature of Tambaram's ecclesiology. The scope of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 123, 22.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 23. Freytag paraphrased this section of the Tambaram report in his chapter of the German delegation's report after the meeting. Freytag, "Vom Geheimnis der Kirch," 51-2.

<sup>19</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 109.

these and other statements is noteworthy. The IMC is expressing repentance on behalf of the whole church, not just the missionary enterprise. Thus, penitence is a part of Tambaram's ecclesiology, not just its missiology. Furthermore, the fact that this attribute of the church is not contained to the mission enterprise yet receives such coverage in the documents is evidence of the tightness of the link between church and mission at Tambaram. The IMC felt confident enough, as a missionary council, to confess on behalf of the church universal and call the whole church to repentance and renewal because of the conceptual union they maintained between church and mission. This is the church-centric tenor of Tambaram at work, yet that church-centric bent is tempered against the prevailing caricature by sensitivity to culture and the frank admission of past failures.

The remaining four features of Tambaram's ecclesiology are more directly related to the church and mission. Like the penitence of the church, they emerge from the wider semantic field because of their repetition and because these concepts are invoked across multiple topics. They are: the church is called to a purpose or task; that purpose is bearing witness; the church is a community or fellowship; and while the church is supra-national and the missionary task "is the task primarily of the whole Church for the whole world,"<sup>20</sup> church and mission are fundamentally local and contextualized.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 31.

## *The Church Called for a Purpose*

Tambaram emphasized the called aspect of the church (*ecclesia*) more than the sent aspect (*apostolos*) that has gained more traction in Protestant mission circles since the advent of *missio Dei*. Nevertheless, the calling of the church is linked in Tambaram's ecclesiology to a continuation of the work of Christ. Christ proclaimed "in His own person the message of God."<sup>21</sup> The Holy Spirit continues to carry forth God's word and the fruit "like a seed buried in the soil" is the *ecclesia*, summoned and obedient to his call.<sup>22</sup> While lamenting a trend "both in the East and in the West, especially among the younger generation" of eschewing membership in the church, the Council said that "in spite of its past and present failure to live up to its divine mission, the Church is and remains the fellowship to which our Lord has given His promises, and through which He carries forward His purpose for mankind."<sup>23</sup>

The language employed tends to follow the historically traditional concept of the institution of the church by Jesus. The church is tasked with fulfilling "the unfinished evangelistic task."<sup>24</sup> The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) is a foundational biblical text in this view: "The world mission of the Church began with the command of Christ to make disciples of all nations, and it is inherent in the very

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<sup>21</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Young people's "drift" away from the church is specifically mentioned as a concern in a memorandum from London circulated in Africa prior to the meeting. B. D. Gibson, *The Church in the World of To-Day: International Missionary Council Meeting at Hangchow 1938* ([London]: typewritten memorandum, 1937), 4.

<sup>23</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 23.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 28.

nature of Christianity.”<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Tambaram interprets the commission as placed upon the church and all Christians. All Christians, “standing in humility with their fellow men under God’s judgment,” are under “divine compulsion” to proclaim the gospel.<sup>26</sup> The “continual development of fresh adaptation of method” is itself traced back to “the perpetual compulsion” to preach the gospel.<sup>27</sup> Methods may be historically mutable, but there is a fundamental ecclesiological link between “obedience” to Christ and “obligation” to mission.<sup>28</sup>

This distinctive tone can be traced, in part, to Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah (1874-1945). Azariah was the Bishop of Dornakal, India, which consisted of two non-contiguous regions inside the larger diocese of Madras,<sup>29</sup> and is widely noted for his criticism of paternalism in his “Give us Friends” address at Edinburgh 1910.

Azariah was born to Christian parents of humble background in a small village of South India.<sup>30</sup> Educated in Christian mission schools like his father and his future wife, Anbu Mariammal Samuel (wed in 1898), Azariah eventually attended Madras Christian College and studied mathematics (1893-1895). Azariah never

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 40, 47.

<sup>29</sup> The ecclesiastical diocese of Madras should not be confused with the political division of India also known as Madras. The two were not coextensive. Susan Harper, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma: Bishop V. S. Azariah and the Travails of Christianity in British India* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), xviii-xx [maps].

<sup>30</sup> The biographical sketch of Azariah recounted here is indebted to Carol Graham, “V. S. Azariah 1874-1945: Exponent of Indigenous Mission and Church Unity,” in *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement*, ed. Gerald Anderson, et al. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), 324-9; and Harper, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma*, 1-90.

completed his final examination for the bachelor's degree because of illness. He had opportunity to reschedule that final mathematics examination, but life in Madras had produced a wider worldview and opportunity. He had accepted a position as secretary to the YMCA of South India.

As early as 1902, Azariah felt the conviction to fervently pray for and work toward a wholly indigenous Christian mission in India. His advocacy for Indian self-evangelization led to the National Missionary Society in India (est. 1905) and a friendship with the bishop of Madras, Henry Whitehead. Whitehead found his large diocese hard to manage, sought an assistant bishop, and was firmly committed to that bishop being an Indian national. Together, Azariah and Whitehead started an experiment in a small district called Dornakal where they converted a disused brewery into a chapel. Originally a lay evangelist not affiliated with the Anglican Church, Azariah's ordination to the Anglican priesthood followed in 1909. To the rest of the worldwide Protestant mission enterprise, Azariah burst onto the scene with his famous address at Edinburgh 1910. By 1912 the obstacles to a diocese of Dornakal had been overcome. Azariah was consecrated the first native bishop of India's Anglican Church and he remained its only native bishop until his death in 1945. His work for the unification of the church in South India made Azariah a pioneer in world ecumenism. Azariah never saw the fruition of his efforts in this regard, the formation of the Church of South India in 1947.



Figure 2. Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah (1874-1945), ca. 1912 (“Portrait of Bishop V. S. Azariah” LANT-08-12, courtesy of Springfield College, Babson Library, Archives and Special Collections.)

For Tambaram, Azariah was chairperson of Section IV on “The Place of the Church in Evangelism.” In an essay written prior to the conference and reprinted in the Madras series afterward, Azariah accentuated the IMC’s contribution to ecclesiological thought in this regard.

That the Church is the divine society created by God for the continuation in the world of the work that Jesus Christ began through His life, death and resurrection is a truth that has not yet received universal recognition. Even such an august body as the Conference on Faith and Order that met in Edinburgh in 1937 did not quite appreciate this important aspect of the *raison d’être* of the Church. “The fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man is to be realized in the children of His adoption.” “The Church is the body of Christ, whose members derive their life and oneness from their one living Head” – are very inadequate definitions of what the Church is.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, “The Place of the Church in Evangelism,” in IMC, *Evangelism*, vol. 3, Madras Series, 30.

Rather, the church is “the divinely appointed instrument of evangelism to the world.”<sup>32</sup>

Although Tambaram favors language of calling over sending, the call of the faithful into the church is not without purpose.<sup>33</sup> When calling is accentuated more than sending, there can be a tendency to view the church in more insular and institutional modes like worship, fellowship, and edification. The IMC remained true to its name and purview, though. The purpose of the call was for the continuation of Christ’s work.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the language coming out of Tambaram implied an apostolic aspect.<sup>35</sup>

The church called for a purpose is more significant than it might seem at first. Despite their emphasis on the church, Tambaram was not producing a formal ecclesiology. The meeting’s statements lack a feature commonly found in articulations of the doctrine of the church. Marks of the true church are notably absent as a primary topic of discussion like one might find in Reformation ecclesiology or the denominationalism of the Protestant confessional age and in the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 31. Likewise, in his address to the meeting Azariah stated, “The Church continued where Jesus left off at his death.” Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, “The Church and Its Mission,” in IMC, *Addresses and Other Records*, vol. 7, Madras Series, 38.

<sup>33</sup> While Tambaram is mainly concerned with the church called for a purpose, missional ecclesiology tends to emphasize called *and* sent (the apostolic nature of the church).

<sup>34</sup> While the language reflects a divine mission, the basis of the mission is more Christological than Trinitarian. There is formal similarity between the two, but with different recourse to theological loci. This distinction helps place Tambaram in relation to missional ecclesiology for purposes of continuity/discontinuity described in chapter five.

<sup>35</sup> See also, Karl Hartenstein, “Was haben wir von Tambaram zu lernen?” in *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der Erde: Bericht über Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram*, ed. Martin Schlunk (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 194.

nineteenth century (see chapter four).<sup>36</sup> Also absent from the IMC documents are ecclesiological shibboleths regarding scripture (for example, the nature of biblical inspiration), polity, ordination, or modes of baptism.<sup>37</sup> The church's call and purpose were more defining features of the church.

### *The Witness-Bearing Church*

A significant portion of Tambaram's further articulation on this purposeful call emphasized evangelism. There were, after all, conference study sections dedicated to evangelism (III and IV), and the third volume of the Madras Series was devoted to the topic. But the study sections on evangelism were part of the larger division of the meeting titled "Witness" (see table 3). "Witness-bearing" is the appropriate term for this aspect of Tambaram's ecclesiology, subsuming both evangelism and all other activities of the church into mission.

A majority of Tambaram's concern with the witness-bearing task of the church pertains to "the responsibility of transmitting the Gospel from one generation to another, of preserving its purity, and of proclaiming it to all creatures."<sup>38</sup> This is the basic meaning of evangelism in Tambaram's lexicon. At

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<sup>36</sup> Protestant confessionalism is generally assigned to the early modern era or late Reformation period from the late sixteenth century into the seventeenth century with the likes of the Synod of Dort (1618). One exception to this general tenor of the Tambaram documents is A. R. Wentz's address to the meeting, "The New Testament Conception of the Church," in IMC, *Addresses and Other Records*, vol. 7, Madras Series, 31-2. Wentz loosely structured his address along the historic creedal marks of the church: 1) Christian, 2) holy, 3) apostolic, 4) catholic, 5) one.

<sup>37</sup> There are occasional hints of pride in polity and tradition, though. See page 114n84. Furthermore, even though Tambaram is virtually silent on polity and ordination as definitive aspects of the church, the dissent coming out of India from the Rethinking Group contains veiled references to struggles with Western church judicatories over polity and ordination in the process of church union in South India (see chapter four).

<sup>38</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 24.

times, there is an apparent equivocation of evangelism with the overarching concept of the mission of the church. For example, a brief section in volume four of the Madras Series notes, "Education and evangelism are not the same thing. Education is the particular instrument which the educator uses in the performance of his Christian witness. Nevertheless it is important to consider Christian education in relation to its place in the total evangelistic work of the Church."<sup>39</sup> It would seem there is conflation of "Christian witness" and "the overall evangelistic work of the Church." Furthermore, the language of Christian witness is applied at the individual level; the educator has a Christian witness, the church has overall evangelistic work. But the act of integrating Christian education is itself an expansion of the term evangelism beyond its basic definition.

In volume three of the Madras Series one of the chapters reported the results of a pre-Tambaram survey on the meaning of the term evangelism. The starting point was proclamation of the gospel (the basic meaning), but the meaning was often expanded to incorporate a wider range of activities.<sup>40</sup> This pre-conference tendency was reflected in language of the "active and witness-bearing character" of the church in the resulting documents of the conference.<sup>41</sup> In his essay on evangelism, Azariah counted the "charitable works" of the church as part of its effective "corporate witness" by "life and works."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> IMC, *The Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 126.

<sup>40</sup> IMC, *Evangelism*, vol. 3, Madras Series, 45-57.

<sup>41</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 22.

<sup>42</sup> Azariah, "The Place of the Church in Evangelism," IMC, *Evangelism*, vol. 3, Madras Series, 37, 38.

The sentiment noted above regarding Christian education was reportedly held “by Christian educators in all parts of the world who believe that education has its necessary place in the total uttering of the Gospel and witnessing to it which is the Church’s task.”<sup>43</sup> The meeting’s official findings echoed this: “Christian education should then be seen more clearly for what it is, an integral part of the whole great enterprise of the Church’s witness.”<sup>44</sup>

This language of the “church’s witness” can help clear some of the potential confusion stemming from the frequency of the term “evangelism” elsewhere in the documents. At times, Tambaram seems to come very close to equating mission with evangelism as it affirms the integral relationship between church and mission. For example, much of the language of integration between church and mission can be found in the sections on evangelism. Nevertheless, the report of the conference contains many other sections, including worship, ordination, preparation of church leaders and missionaries, the role of leadership and laity in the church’s mission, Christian literature, ministries of health and healing, missionary training, economics, church-state relations, and economics. In all these areas, and more, the Council sees the mission of the church as vitally concerned. In the breadth of this treatment one sees beyond a mere equivocation of mission and evangelism and gets a better sense of the affirmation of mission as the church’s overall witness

In short, all activities of the church were relatable to its witness, including its mundane engagements with the culture: “The Christian community should manifest

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<sup>43</sup> IMC, *The Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 133.

<sup>44</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 76.

the redeeming love of Christ in its daily economic enterprises and occupations.”<sup>45</sup>

Thus, the retrospective introduction to volume three of the Madras Series noted, “The entire scheme of study, preparation and discussion at Madras centered in the conception of the witnessing Church.”<sup>46</sup>

### *The Church as Community and Fellowship*

Crucial to the witness-bearing call, activities, and character of the church was its community. The preliminary materials on Christian education prepared by the Near East group continued the theme described above of integrating Christian education into the witness-bearing of the church. Moreover, their response to a series of survey questions about the role of Christian education in preparation for membership in the church delayed consideration of Christian education at all and instead affirmed the importance of Christian community.<sup>47</sup>

The Church, the Body of Christ, has been ordained by Him to be the instrument in the building up of the kingdom of God.

Today, as never before perhaps in history, the challenge is being given to the Christian Church to witness to the world of the meaning of the Christian Faith and the power of her Risen Lord.

The witness of the corporate body depends upon the character and witness of its individual members, equally the adequate witness of the individual depends upon fellowship in the Body.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 102, see also, 36.

<sup>46</sup> IMC, *Evangelism*, vol. 3, Madras Series, vii.

<sup>47</sup> The Near East delegation referred to “Bulgaria, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Transjordan, Algeria, Egypt and the Northern Sudan.” IMC, *The Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 85.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 86-7. The response continues with seven enumerated theses under the heading “Some ways in which the Christian Church is called upon to manifest Christ to the world today.”

Similarly, longtime missionary to India from the London Missionary Society, Godfrey Phillips, declared every missionary endeavor “fruitful” insofar as it brings about “close and enduring contact with a vital Christian,” adding that the individual impression is “enormously strengthened by the corporate influence of the Church” in worship, witness and service. Phillips added that “the Church, as the transformed community, offers more permanent and impressive testimony than even the single transfigured life.”<sup>49</sup> The church was not just the springboard for witness: equipping, financing, supporting. The church’s very nature as community and fellowship serves as witness.<sup>50</sup>

Language to this effect was used in writings prior to Tambaram and in address to the assembly.<sup>51</sup> The conference’s final report reflected the important status assigned Christian community by setting it alongside proclamation of the gospel: “The primary appeal of the Church must ever be through the preaching of the Word and the demonstration of its fellowship.”<sup>52</sup>

As noted earlier, Tambaram lamented over “many who are not convinced of the relevance of the Church to the life of the Christian and the spread of the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 133-4.

<sup>50</sup> Recognizing the fallibility of the church in this area strengthens the call for repentance and especially on the ongoing attitude of penitence espoused in Tambaram’s ecclesiology.

<sup>51</sup> Joseph Houldsworth Oldham, *The Question of the Church in the World of Today* (London: Edinburgh House Press on behalf of the IMC, 1936), 12, 18. T. Z. Koo said, “To all who are struggling to realize human brotherhood in a world where disruptive nationalism, brutal militarism and aggressive imperialism make such brotherhood seem unreal, the ecumenical Church offers not only an ideal of brotherhood to be realized at some time in the distant future, but the fact of brotherhood already realized in men united not by their aspiration but by the love of God.” T. Z. Koo, “The Church and the International Order,” in IMC, *Addresses and Other Records*, vol. 7, Madras Series, 74.

<sup>52</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 118.

Gospel.”<sup>53</sup> The issue was about more than just getting numbers into the church. In the face of criticism of proselytism in India, D. G. Moses’s essay, circulated by the National Christian Council of India in preparation for the meeting, took a nuanced approach. Moses criticized a view that evangelization should not attempt to induce membership in a church or other organized fellowship, claiming it to be an “artificial separation between loyalty to Jesus and membership in a church.”<sup>54</sup> Moses doubted if “personal loyalty to Jesus as Lord and Master can be given without that allegiance naturally developing and expressing itself in a fellowship, of whatever form, of such disciples.” Nevertheless, Moses made a point to avow that the “purpose in evangelization is not to add members to the church.”<sup>55</sup> Evangelization made disciples. That discipleship, in turn, connected one to other disciples in fellowship. That fellowship constitutes “church.”<sup>56</sup>

This organic conception of the church creates the nexus of the individual, the call to witness, and the church. Those who “desire to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord, but do not join in the fellowship of the organized church” not only miss out on the privilege of Christian community, but also shun Christian duty.<sup>57</sup> That duty is witness to the world: “The call of Christ for service in the world comes to all Christians. It arises directly from the true conception of the nature of the Church and

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>54</sup> IMC, *The Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 79.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Similar sentiment is reflected in Freytag’s post-Tambaram report. Freytag, “Vom Geheimnis der Kirch,” 50.

<sup>57</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 23.

of its task in the world. Membership in it should for each and all entail the responsibility of sharing the Church's Christlike ministry."<sup>58</sup> The documents never precisely and consistently establish the logical priorities of this intersection of individual, duty, and church. The call to witness (including evangelization and service) appears to come both to the individual and the church. The responsibility appears to be considered inherent to Christianity when it comes to the individual but inherent to the church, as well. Membership in the church entails the responsibility, but at the same time the responsibility appears to come to the individual independent of the church and, furthermore, entails membership in the church.

It remains unclear how these pieces connect. Does Christian faith entail both membership in the church and the responsibility to witness? If so, is that or can that be a theological basis for claiming an inherent witness-bearing nature of the church? Is there another place theologically to source an inherent witness-bearing nature for the church? If so, what then is the relationship between the individual Christian responsibility to witness and the responsibility strongly implied in the Tambaram documents to church membership? The Tambaram documents do not provide systematic answers to such theological inquiry. Hence, this historical groundwork and the aim of re-asserting Tambaram's potential in current ecclesiological investigations. One begins by seeing *that* Tambaram held a particular constellation of convictions about the character of the church while identifying the contextual forces at work in shaping that position, preparing the way for theological inquiry.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 71.

The church is penitent, called, tasked to bear witness, and is an organic community or fellowship. These aspects of Tambaram's ecclesiology are evident in one of the conference's most vigorous affirmations of the church in mission.

It is the Church and the Church alone which can carry the responsibility of transmitting the Gospel from one generation to another, of preserving its purity, and of proclaiming it to all creatures. It is the Church and the Church alone which can witness to the reality that man belongs to God in Christ with a higher right than that of any earthly institution which may claim his supreme allegiance. It is within the Church and the Church alone that the fellowship of God's people receive together the gifts which He offers to His children in Word and Sacrament.

We may and we should doubt whether the Churches as they are do truly express the mind of Christ, but we may never doubt that Christ has a will for His Church, and that His promises to it hold good.<sup>59</sup>

While the contextual factors delineated in chapter two of this study provided the inclination toward the church, the affirmation of the church in mission reflects an ecclesiology marked by divine call for comprehensive witness to the world by a penitent community of faith as a continuation of Christ's work.

### *The Local, Contextualized Church*

The final characteristic of Tambaram's ecclesiology requires longer analysis because it is more complex and appears most widely in the texts. More sustained analysis is also required because Tambaram's emphasis on the local, contextualized church is a contribution to the development of the principles of indigenization and enculturation in the modern Protestant missionary movement. Dana Robert traces this development at a macro level to the period between the two world wars, while Wolfgang Günther notes that Tambaram provides the "first stirrings of the keyword

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 24. Two excerpts from the final report that coalesce the various characteristics of Tambaram's ecclesiology are available in Appendix B.

‘indigenization,’ which was to dominate the whole phase of de-colonization.”<sup>60</sup> What dominated the Salvador 1996 meeting of WCC’s Commission on World Mission and Evangelism<sup>61</sup> pertained to the dynamic of *gospel* and culture.<sup>62</sup> Enculturation began, though, between the wars with indigenization and contextualization, and in its nascent form pertained to the dynamic of *church* and culture.

A look at the link between this characteristic and the church as a fellowship and community of faith will serve as transition to this multifaceted feature of Tambaram’s ecclesiology. The presentation of the gospel “should be made effective by the witness of the local church as a household of God.”<sup>63</sup> This was a “salt of the earth” approach that demonstrated (i.e. witnessed) to non-Christians the true nature of community and commended the Christian faith.<sup>64</sup>

Emphasis on the mission of the local churches was more than just an exhortation from the older churches for growth and maturity in the younger churches. The local churches were deemed integral to the God-given mission of the church.

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<sup>60</sup> Dana Robert, “The First Globalization? The Internationalization of the Protestant Missionary Movement Between the World Wars,” in *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities*, ed. Ogbu Kalu (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 93-130; Wolfgang Günther, “The History and Significance of the World Mission Conferences in the 20th Century,” *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 367 (2003): 527. Hans-Ruedi Weber traces the question of indigenization to the 1928 meeting of the IMC in Jerusalem. *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement, 1895-1961* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1966), 145.

<sup>61</sup> The CWME is the successor body (within the WCC) to the IMC after the merger of the IMC and the WCC in 1948, see table 1.

<sup>62</sup> Jacques Matthey, “Salvador among the World Mission Conferences of this Century.” *International Review of Mission* 86, no. 340/341 (1997).

<sup>63</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 46.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

The Church's evangelistic enterprise derives directly from the congregation or local church. When its corporate worship and the life of its members glow with the presence of God, the company becomes creative. Pastoral and evangelistic gifts are developed among the members of the congregation, and leaders are discovered and contributed to the Church at large. The congregation's love and zeal find expression in definite efforts to bring Christ to the man outside the brotherhood, efforts in which every member should be enlisted and actively engaged.<sup>65</sup>

Affirming that the central task of the church is the Great Commission (Matthew 23:19-20), Tambaram added that the "place where this task is centered is the local church or congregation."<sup>66</sup> Living congregations – alive through worship, proclamation and hearing of the Word, administration of the sacraments, prayer and intercession – were seen the primary agents of mission. Tambaram expressed hope that the church in each country would be the primary factor in accomplishing the evangelistic task in that country.<sup>67</sup> In fact, Azariah averred that each country's evangelistic task could "ultimately be accomplished by that church and that church alone, and not by anyone else – except in so far as those others are its helpers."<sup>68</sup>

Consistency with this principle prompted Tambaram to assert the authority of the indigenous churches in mission ventures: "the employment of evangelists and the direction and control of their activities should be in the hands of the church on the field, and not exclusively in those of a missionary or mission council."<sup>69</sup> Likewise,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 36. Here, too, is evident the affirmation that witness-bearing is a responsibility of the whole church and every member of the universal church.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>67</sup> Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 121.

<sup>68</sup> IMC, *Evangelism*, vol. 3, Madras Series, 39.

<sup>69</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 37.

in all evangelistic activity missionaries should regard themselves “as the agent and instrument of the indigenous church,” closely identifying themselves with the indigenous church.<sup>70</sup>

This is more than an assertion merely on the authority of indigenous church leadership. Tambaram took a principled stance on the place of the local church as a community of faith in mission and affirmed the place of mission in the life of the local church.

There is a disposition to regard evangelism unduly as the function of the mission, regardless of whether the mission is separate from or merged within the church. Perhaps the most common grave danger in all systems of relationship is that evangelism be regarded as the function of ministers and other employed agents of church and mission, and not of the whole community of Christian people. The function of the mission in evangelism is to draw out and support the witness of the church locally and to assist the church in extending that witness to adjacent areas.<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, the way this stance is taken in Tambaram’s documents confirms the indigenous, contextualized church and mission as a pillar of Tambaram’s ecclesiology. The affirmation is not derived from the priesthood of all believers or congregational polity, nor is the affirmation marked by the anti-institutionalism and resistance to hierarchical authority that often accompany a post-Christendom worldview.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid. The Council says elsewhere: “Where an indigenous church exists, it is not advisable for a non-indigenous mission to press on into outlying areas independently or related to the church only as employer of certain of its members. The better way is for the indigenous church to extend into the areas concerned, assisted by such resources as the mission may be able to provide in a working partnership.” Ibid., 51.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 50. Also evident in this section of the Tambaram report is that the whole church bears “the obligation to bear witness to Christ,” not just professional clergy and missionaries. Ibid., 53.

The way the term “mission” is used in this example is noteworthy. After Willigen 1952, there was a successful crusade to drop the ‘s’ from “missions” and adopt the term “mission” as an adjustment in accord with the development of the *missio Dei* concept: it is all one mission, God’s mission.<sup>72</sup> Here at Tambaram, though, the use of the singular “mission” is different. The use of the singular specifies a specific undertaking in a localized setting, any particular program of witness. Such endeavor could be organizationally affiliated with the indigenous church or not. In the latter case, the mission would be affiliated with an outside organization like a missionary agency. Likewise, regardless of organizational affiliation, the personnel working for the mission may be outsiders (missionaries) or indigenous. Both options are in play: indigenous personnel working on a missionary agency project or foreign missionaries working on a project of the indigenous church. The point, then, is not about outsiders versus insiders or organizational affiliation as such. The statement is about the conceptual relation between mission and church. The two belong to each other at the local level.

These considerations evoke the dynamic between the church universal and the local church. Further evidence of Tambaram’s affirmation of the local church comes when the topic under consideration is not strictly mission, and not local. For example, when deliberating over the church (in a universal sense) and the international order, Tambaram remembers the local churches: “The problem of the

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<sup>72</sup> For example, the CWME changed the name of its official journal from *International Review of Missions* to *International Review of Mission* in April, 1969. William Crane, “Dropping the S,” *International Review of Mission* 58, no. 230 (April, 1969): 141-4. Philip Potter, “From Missions to Mission,” *International Review of Mission* 76, no. 302 (1987): 155-72.

Church and the international order is rightly approached in the spirit and fellowship of the oecumenical Church. But it is equally true that the insights thus gained can only be embodied in the life of men as the local and regional churches throughout the world seek in thought, prayer and acts the true way of witness in their respective circumstances."<sup>73</sup> The IMC was careful not to emphasize the local church at the expense the universal church. They were, after all, conducting a world mission conference. But neither did the IMC affirm the universal church at the expense of the local. Tambaram affirmed both.

In doing so, two contextual factors were harmonized. On one hand, there was the parity amid plurality that marked the development of the IMC and the developing strength of indigenous churches. These were real churches with real challenges *in situ* and a real seat at the table in Tambaram. On the other hand, the profound cultural changes of the age and the current geo-political climate prompted recourse to the supra-national character of the church. The particular and the universal church shared prominence in Tambaram's ecclesiology.

Mission belonged to both aspects of the church. The responsibility belonged to all Christians everywhere.<sup>74</sup>

[W]e seek first of all to make clear the principle that this is the task primarily of the whole Church for the whole world. We do not look forward to a time when the older churches can shed their responsibilities to the younger. On the contrary, we see the growing universal church accepting the position that always each branch of the Church must be at the service of all other branches. . . . Responsibility, therefore, cannot be laid down by the older churches because the younger churches are rising to their task. . . .The task in

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<sup>73</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 121-2.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

this new day must be undertaken by a partnership between the older and the younger churches, by a pooling of all resources and by co-operation by all Christians.<sup>75</sup>

In fact, this envisioned partnership between all branches of the church meant a reciprocity of influence with hopes that “representatives of the younger churches can by their witness revive and extend the spirit of evangelism in the older churches.”<sup>76</sup>

The dynamic between the church as universal and local reveals another important facet of this characteristic of Tambaram’s ecclesiology: contextualization. Here, too, reciprocity was expected. Churches growing up among non-Christian religions and cultures needed to be “firmly rooted” in the Christian tradition and the universal Church, but they should also be rooted in their native soil. To strike that balance “is a great and exacting spiritual task in the fulfilling of which a young church can bring a rich contribution of its own to the Church Universal.”<sup>77</sup>

Rather than something to be feared or condemned, Tambaram acknowledged and embraced the reality of the contextualized, local church. Converts to Christianity would still be connected to their community and culture; a radical break could not be assumed.<sup>78</sup> This is an acknowledgment of the reality. But Tambaram recognized

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 51. Volume six of the Madras series notes: “If the missionary from the West is the apostle of supranationalism, this is none the less true of the missionary from the East. One of the most interesting results of the Madras meeting is the definite formulation of such a double conception of the missionary task. . . Missionaries from the younger churches are already making a contribution to the religious life of the West which will certainly grow.” IMC, *The Church and the State*, vol. 6, Madras Series, 40-1.

<sup>77</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 45.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

that “there are valuable cultural elements which ought to be preserved and integrated into the life of the new Christian community from its very beginning.”<sup>79</sup>

This is the embrace.

The main conclusions of *Christian Mass Movements in India*,<sup>80</sup> a widely read and well-received report of a study conducted from 1930 to 1933, were epitomized in volume three of the Madras Series. The author, J. Waskom Pickett (1890-1981), was a Methodist missionary to India, and was elected bishop by the Indian Methodist Church after serving twenty five years as a missionary.<sup>81</sup> Among the “failures observed” in *Christian Mass Movements in India* was local churches that had “followed closely the polity and organization forms of the mother churches across the seas, instead of evolving systems of government and forms of organization more suitable to their needs.”<sup>82</sup> Tambaram expected missions to create churches, but rather than merely replicating institutional forms, the structure and governance were malleable to the local context. Not only was the contextualization of the church acceptable, it was a goal.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Jarrell Waskom Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements in India, a Study with Recommendations* (New York; Cincinnati: Abingdon Press, 1933).

<sup>81</sup> Pickett was personally recruited to service in India by a friend from his youth: E. Stanley Jones. Pickett served as bishop for twenty one years, until his retirement in 1956. He was a highly respected expatriate after Indian independence in 1947 and his pioneering work using social science research in the field of Christian mission was profoundly influential on Donald McGavran, third-generation Disciples of Christ missionary to India and originator of the Church Growth Movement. John Seamands, “J. Waskom Pickett 1890-1981: Social Activist and Evangelist of the Masses,” in *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement*, ed. Gerald Anderson et al. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), 348-9, 352; George Hunter III, “Donald A. McGavran 1897-1990: Standing at the Sunrise of Missions,” in *Mission Legacies*, ed. Gerald Anderson et al., 516; Arthur McPhee, “Bishop J. Waskom Pickett’s Rethinking on 1930s Missions in India,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 19, no. 3 (July 1, 2002): 31-2, 35.

<sup>82</sup> IMC, *Evangelism*, vol. 3, Madras Series, 65.

Volume two of the Madras series was devoted to “showing how the living Church grows in every part of the earth,” and how the younger churches were “rooted in the lives of the people.”<sup>83</sup> The volume is comprised of reports on the development of indigenous churches among the mission fields of the past. The overwhelming tone of the reports is that the polity and organizational structure of these churches was not prescribed by the mission, but rather fashioned according to the cultural context and needs of the people.<sup>84</sup> For example, Charles Crane reported adaptation (and mistakes)<sup>85</sup> in the organization of the church in the Kasai district of the Congo: “The local church in connection with the Presbyterian Mission is not strictly a Presbyterian Church, nor is it the desire of the Presbyterian Mission that its native organization should be anything else than a part of the *Église du Christ au Congo*. . . . Efforts have been made from the start to create an indigenous and not a foreign organization.”<sup>86</sup> The Lutheran mission in Madagascar reported that the native church there was “presbyterian-synodical,”<sup>87</sup> and Japan reported “a most honorable record in seeking to make Christianity an indigenous movement” with

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<sup>83</sup> IMC, *The Growing Church*, vol. 2, Madras Series, v, 246.

<sup>84</sup> The only discrepancies from this tendency are two Methodist reports that may be too attached to what J. W. Burton, reporting from Fiji, called “the genius of Methodism.” E. W. Thompson’s report on the Gold Coast carried a tone that celebrated uniformity of Methodist organization and seemed to lament deviations. *Ibid.*, 1-2, 15, 17.

<sup>85</sup> Crane asserts, “No church on earth has ever attained a perfect organization, and not even an approximately perfect one will be reached without trial and error.” *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 17. See also, a six-page memorandum from London circulated in Africa prior to the meeting soliciting comment and reports prior to the meeting: Gibson, *The Church in the World of To-Day*, 5.

<sup>87</sup> IMC, *The Growing Church*, vol. 2, Madras Series, 48.

“simpler forms of faith and constitutional government.”<sup>88</sup> Although Iran was originally divided north and south under a comity agreement between Presbyterians and the Anglican Church Missionary Society, growing communication and the ecumenical experience of Madras itself was propelling a vision toward “one independent Irani Church,” in which neither mission society sought to dictate the resulting organizational principles.<sup>89</sup> The Church of Christ in China formed in 1927 as an indigenous expression of church from the work of sixteen missionary societies in order to counter resistance to Christianity as a “foreign religion.”<sup>90</sup> Even the venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel emphasized that the polity and structure of the Borneo church was mutable because the Society “aims rather at seeking to help a local church to mold and build up its own life, worship and witness.”<sup>91</sup>

But contextualization extended into more aspects of the indigenous church than just its polity and organization. As with the other characteristics of Tambaram’s ecclesiology, language of the local, contextualized church shows up in the midst of diverse topics. For example, conference preparatory documents and the meeting’s final report both assert in general terms that medical ministries are an

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 127, 137.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 62-3.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 246; Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China, “Historical Prospective,” <http://www.hkcccc.org/Eng/1main.php> (accessed July 31, 2014).

<sup>91</sup> IMC, *The Growing Church*, vol. 2, Madras Series, 100.

integral part of the witness of the church to the world.<sup>92</sup> In the final report, this general affirmation was followed immediately by a statement that “the ministry of health and healing should, from the outset, be integrated in the life of the *indigenous* churches.”<sup>93</sup> This statement reflects a commitment to the local church; then comes the emphasis on contextualization: “The Christian medical ministry must be fully identified with the life and thought of each country. . . . The whole scheme of Christian medical service should be adapted to the life of families within and without the church and of the entire community.”<sup>94</sup> This contextualization included even the architecture of hospitals “in keeping with national heritage and sentiment.”<sup>95</sup>

Architecture was also a consideration in the contextualization of the worship life of the local church. Both the National Christian Council of India and the Congo Protestant Council called for an indigenized worship, explicitly including architecture, alongside their advocacy for indigenized mission and evangelism.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, Tambaram’s final report recognized the need for “a literature not

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<sup>92</sup> IMC, *The Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 168-9. IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 79-82.

<sup>93</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 79. Emphasis mine.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>96</sup> IMC, *The Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 12, 14.

borrowed from the West, but rooted in the racial and cultural backgrounds and the environment of the people among whom the work is to be done.”<sup>97</sup>

In their introduction to the final report, IMC executives John Mott, William Paton, and Abbe Warnshuis noted:

The concrete reality of the life of the younger churches was vividly suggested by the two exhibits, one of Christian literature and the other of Christian art and architecture, which were open to delegates throughout the conference. Beyond their immediate and most important purpose, these exhibits made it possible to visualize much of the detailed services undertaken by the churches and their living relation to the different national heritages within which they were set.<sup>98</sup>

Here again, the growing parity between older and younger churches in the IMC promoted a sensitivity to culture. The result was that contextualization became a salient characteristic of Tambaram’s ecclesiology.

So far, the examples pertain to the contextualization of the church. Although the dynamic of gospel and culture – the contextualization of Christianity itself – did not reach the forefront of conciliar Protestant missiology for another two decades, there are hints of it at Tambaram. As each study section (VII-XI)<sup>99</sup> of the division studying the life and work of the church took up its topic, contextualization was invoked. This is evident in the preceding comments on witness, medical mission, literature, worship and architecture. The meeting never produced a distinction between contextualization of the church and contextualization of Christianity, but in

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<sup>97</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 91. B. D. Gibson’s pre-Tambaram memorandum to Africa repeatedly commented on existing examples and solicited more reports of indigenous worship and literature. Gibson, *The Church in the World of To-Day*, 2-4.

<sup>98</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 11.

<sup>99</sup> See table 3.

some areas the type of contextualization discussed is the latter more than the former.

India's preparatory materials on the Christian home professed a tension between Christianity and Indian culture: "How can the gifts of the Indian cultural heritage be assimilated by the Christian home, and Indian traditions be permeated and uplifted by the spirit of Christ?"<sup>100</sup> They sought a "new synthesis of cultures" with "careful guidance, not from foreign missionaries but from wise and thoughtful Christians of India."<sup>101</sup> When India called for indigenized worship and architecture under the study section on the inner life of the church, they approached a contextualization of not just the church, but the gospel itself.

In order to present the message of Christianity in thought-forms familiar to Indian minds, to order its worship in Indian modes, and to devise methods of vitalizing and propagating it suited to the Indian temperament and genius, it is necessary that attempts should be made to utilize the cultural heritage of India. Such an adaptation of Christianity may also lead to a fuller understanding of the personality and mind of Jesus.<sup>102</sup>

The point of connection between contextualized church and contextualized gospel is mission. Worship and architecture are part of the inner life of the church. In Tambaram's ecclesiology, so is mission, because it is an inherent part of what it means to be the church. If the life of the church is contextualized, then the church's mission is contextualized. But mission is not contained to the inner life of the church. The church's outer life is likewise contextualized. The church's witness-bearing through proclamation and service is all contextualized. Another way to

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<sup>100</sup> IMC, *The Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 35.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 35, 36.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 11. Also evident here is the reciprocity seen in other statements.

accentuate this local, contextual emphasis is to restate it using the distinction between talking about the church in general and the churches as instantiations of the church in particular settings: the *churches'* entire witness through proclamation and service are contextualized.

A weak version of contextualization is possible, one that is predominantly practical. In such a view, to contextualize mission is to focus on what works in a given situation. For example, the complex and diverse challenges of church-state relations in various situations made “general solutions impossible, and leave the initiative in action to local Christians.”<sup>103</sup> Tambaram, though, went beyond that mark. In professing a necessary contextualization of church and mission, the IMC began the process of acknowledging a contextualization of the gospel itself.

India led the way toward contextualized Christianity (beyond just contextualized churches) in the preparatory documents. In the official report, Tambaram, too, took steps in this direction by affirming that the proclamation of the gospel is contextualized. For example, the final report asserted, “It is not sufficient to present the Christian truth in terms that satisfy western theologians alone, but the Gospel has to be proclaimed in terms and modes of expression that make its challenge intelligible in actual life situations. Adaptation in this meaning of the word is a natural and essential method of approach to the mind and heart of the non-Christian.”<sup>104</sup> After the statement, the IMC is quick to add that the adaptation must

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<sup>103</sup> IMC, *The Church and the State*, vol. 6, Madras Series, 5. Notable, though, is the expectation that the experience of a particular branch of the church will instruct and encourage others because “reciprocal fellowship is supplanting unilateral leadership.”

<sup>104</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 44.

not “impair the integrity of the entire Gospel of Christ,”<sup>105</sup> but this caveat does not nullify the need for contextualization. The caveat points to a tension that would occupy future deliberations over the dynamic of gospel, culture, and the link between the universal church (in time as well as space) and the local church. That is, the universal church in terms of cultural diversity and historical tradition helps mediate the process of contextualization.<sup>106</sup>

At Tambaram, the historically, geographically and culturally diverse universal church was also the source of evidence that contextualization is worthy of embrace.

We find in the New Testament the first small beginnings of what in the next century, especially in Alexandria, developed into Greek Christianity. Later followed Latin Christianity and other forms, which reflected in part their cultural environments. So to-day African, Chinese, Indian, Japanese and other indigenous expressions of the Christian religion are taking shape. There may indeed be forms which do not truly represent the Gospel. Nevertheless, it is not in principle wrong or illegitimate that there should be, as interpretations of the one Gospel, many forms of Christianity.<sup>107</sup>

The challenge identified for the younger churches was to navigate between two potential errors: becoming so tied to the forms of older churches that the church cannot become indigenous, or an “undue deference to the spirit of the times” that

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> This was not intended, though, as a disguise for continued paternalism by the older churches: “The fact that the Christian Church is a supranational body does not mean that its moral authority as a whole should be commanded in favor of any one section of it on the occasion of any controversy. This would presuppose that the conscience of the whole Church had been consulted before any local steps had been taken, and this is not only physically impossible, but generally unpractical.” IMC, *The Church and the State*, vol. 6, Madras Series, 43.

<sup>107</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 25.

prevents the younger church from recognizing incompatibilities with the universal Church in time and space.<sup>108</sup>

Tamparam linked mission and church. Their affirmation of the local, contextualized church entailed that the link between church and mission applied to both the universal church and the local church. To affirm local, contextualized church meant affirming local, contextualized mission, as well. Thus, while Tamparam's primary concern was church and mission, a third element began entering the matrix: culture. The IMC's contextual sensitivity to cultural change in the modern world helped it along. Although contextualization of the gospel (rather than the church, per se) would not become the primary focus of the conciliar mission movement for some time, Tamparam's steps in this direction demonstrate an ecclesiology significantly more sophisticated and humble than a caricature of Western imperialism, paternalism, and carbon-copy institutionalism.<sup>109</sup>

### *Conclusion*

There is no question that Tamparam focused on the church. The church-centric label applies, provided it is rightly understood in light of Tamparam's actual statements. Because Tamparam did not set down a structured theological statement on the doctrine of the church, we must turn to the documents' manner of reference to the church. The prevalence of certain concepts provides a first order of evidence

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> This is in stark contrast to the claim that a union between Christianity and Western civilizations prevailed and exerted its influence on mission thinking from Jerusalem 1928 through Tamparam 1938 in Metropolitan Coorilos Geevarghese, "Towards and Beyond Edinburgh 2010: A Historical Survey of Ecumenical Missiological Developments since 1910," *International Review of Mission* 99, no. 1 (2010): 9.

toward describing Tambaram's ecclesiology. Further support is garnered when those high-profile concepts also make inroads into other areas of concern. For example, once the integral place of medical ministries is affirmed in the witness of the church, the Tambaram report reiterates that affirmation with explicit reference to the indigenous church and promotes medical ministry contextualization. The occurrences of indigenizing and contextualizing language and witness-bearing language in one of the section on medical missions strengthens the case for those two ideas as core features of Tambaram's ecclesiology.

Using this method of analysis, five characteristics emerge as underlying principles of the meeting's ecclesiology. First, the church is penitent and chastened by its past failures. Those failures impinge upon the current climate and the church must go forward with an abiding sense of penitence and humility into the future. Second, the church is called. But the church is called to be more than just *ecclesia* understood from the Latin as an assembly or gathering. The church's call is with a purpose; the call comes with a task. That task is the third principal characteristic of Tambaram's ecclesiology. The church is called to bear witness as a continuation of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Witness bearing includes more than evangelism. The whole breadth of activities of the church are deemed part of its witness. This includes ministries of service like medicine and education. While there are voices in the preparatory materials that seem to interpret these as platforms for evangelism, the prevailing attitude in the preparatory documents and the tenor of the official statements integrates these categories into the overall witness (mission) of the church.

Also integrated (and deemed integral) to the church's witness is the fourth characteristic. The church is a community or fellowship. This aspect of the church is part of its witness and also propels the church's witness. In the community of faith, including its inner life of worship and sacraments, individuals are equipped to carry out the responsibility of mission. The responsibility is both inherent to Christianity itself and inherent to the nature of the church. Nowhere, though, does Tambaram approach equating the church and Christianity. Rather, they leave the logical relationship between individual, church, and mission obligation unspecified. The impression is one of an organic fellowship of believers, not held together by like-mindedness as much as by call and mandate gladly obeyed.<sup>110</sup>

Finally, the fifth core characteristic of Tambaram's ecclesiology was its emphasis on the local, contextualized church. With the exception, perhaps of penitence, what Tambaram said about the nature of the church was not reserved for the church in theory, the church universal.<sup>111</sup> What mattered as much to the delegates of the IMC was the church on the ground. Growing international parity in the IMC and the declared intent at Tambaram toward "the upbuilding of the younger churches as a part of the historic universal Christian community"<sup>112</sup> put the

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<sup>110</sup> The absence of like-mindedness as a prerequisite for the church is consistent with Tambaram's overall lack of other litmus tests for the church.

<sup>111</sup> The documents do not refer to particular instances in local settings of the need for repentance. There is a middle ground, though, in which penitence is implied as needed for actual instances that have marred relationships and hindered mission in the past. The call for penitence is universally sounded, but the expectation is that penitence is not generic and universal. Penitence comes out of reflection on particular circumstances and situations. The most prevalent scenario implied throughout the texts is failure on the part of the older churches in their relation to indigenous Christians and the younger churches.

<sup>112</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 6.

indigenous churches at the forefront of Tambaram's thinking. Indigenous church meant indigenous mission. That linkage prevented a reduction of contextualization to mere practicality where contextualization is positive because more successful.

Contextualization included the intersection with culture. Already sensitive to issues of culture worldwide, Tambaram embraced the contextualization of the local church in its local milieu. While this move may produce error (for which the church would again be called to penitence), contextualization was not illegitimate. Christian history bore this out. Furthermore, Tambaram's embrace of the contextualized church pointed the way toward contextualization of Christianity in general.

Yes, Tambaram was church-centric. One can also see that church-centric was understood with an aim to create churches. But evidence available in the preparatory materials and the official pronouncements of the meeting suggests a higher level of sophistication regarding the church and culture than the caricature of church-centrism allows.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> These findings are applied to the caricature of church-centrism in chapter five.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Dissent

#### *The Kingdom of God versus the Church*

Sebastian Kim seeks to expand the understanding of Tambaram beyond its most noted facet, the debate over continuity between Christianity and non-Christian religions that was sparked by Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. Kim demonstrates that the debate was conducted "in the light of concerns raised by the ecclesiological problem of the mission situation in the younger churches and that this was largely prompted by the problems of the churches in India."<sup>1</sup> His is an examination of Tambaram with eyes on the Indian context. As the title to his study suggests, the ecclesiological problem took shape in terms of the kingdom of God versus the church.

This chapter complements Kim's work with a look at the major voices of dissent to Tambaram's affirmation of the church in mission and confirms his "kingdom of God versus the church" framework. This story is told, though, with an eye toward how that dissent played out from the IMC's perspective. In addition to the contextual factors propelling the Council toward a conference on the church and then to the articulation of church-centric mission (see chapter two), the history of

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<sup>1</sup> Sebastian Kim, "The Kingdom of God *versus* the Church: The Debate around the Conference of the International Missionary Council at Tambaram, Madras in 1938," in *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities*, ed. Ogbu Kalu, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 131-3.

the IMC and the longer history of modern Protestant missions established a trajectory for how they would handle the kingdom of God dissent.

### *Rethinking Christianity in India*

A significant voice of dissent from Tambaram's emphasis on the church emerged before the meeting was held and was released in book form during the first week of the meeting. Christian leaders in India published their concerns and criticisms in *Rethinking Christianity in India*, edited by D. M. Devasahayam and A. N. Sudarisanam.<sup>2</sup> The book was penned by a cadre of middle- to high- social status Indian Christians that came to be known as the Rethinking Group, and into the late twentieth century as the Rethinking Forum.

Based in the south, the group started in Bangalore as a club with annual intellectual retreats featuring paper presentations and discussion groups about Christianity and Indian Christian community. They had intellectual roots dating back to late nineteenth-century advocates of indigenized Hindu Christianity. The distinction between Indian Christianity (more generic) and Hindu Christianity matters here. The authors of *Rethinking Christianity* were higher caste Indians that viewed Hindu tradition as a valuable part of their heritage and sought to prevent exclusion of Christians from the wider Hindu society and culture of India.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> NB: Most libraries and shared catalog systems (e.g. WorldCat.org) attribute editorship to G. V. Job, author of the introductory chapter (i.e., Job, G. V. *Rethinking* . . .). The attribution at the end of the preface to the actual volume, though, reads, "D. M. Devasahayam, Hon. Secretary, Bangalore Conference Continuation[,] and A. N. Sudarisanam, Editors. Madras 17<sup>th</sup> December 1938." Sudarisanam was also the publisher. D. M. Devasahayam and A. N. Sudarisanam, eds., *Rethinking Christianity in India* (Madras: Sudarisanam, 1938), iv.

<sup>3</sup> Sebastian Kim, "The Identity and Mission of the Church in the Asian Contexts of Communal Conflict, Poverty and Injustice," paper presented at the Wisdom in Mission Consultation, Wickham,

The Rethinking Group was also drawing upon the wider character of Indian Christianity over time: India had an established disposition toward indigenous leadership and autonomy.<sup>4</sup> Recent decades had seen indigenizing efforts by foreign missionaries and local Christians. For example, as editor of *The Indian Witness* from 1920-29 J. Waskom Pickett promoted a less paternalistic attitude by Westerners and indigenous forms of church organization, worship, and music.<sup>5</sup> Pickett also lauded the spirit of Indian Christians. He thought they displayed a tendency to ask questions about why things were the way they were in the church and less inclined to accept organizations and forms of expressing the Christian message as “sancrosant.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Mott thought that the cultural and spiritual sophistications of India was apropos for the reflection and consultation of the Tambaram meeting. Mott admired India as an ancient land and culture, both a “mission country and home to an ancient branch of Christianity.” India was also “home to one-fifth of the world’s population” and was also the largest of any of the “younger churches.”<sup>7</sup>

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England, May 13-14, 2003(Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, Henry Martyn Center. [http://henrymartyn.dns-systems.net/media/documents/Commissioned Papers/The Identity and Mission of the Church in the Asian Contexts of.pdf](http://henrymartyn.dns-systems.net/media/documents/Commissioned%20Papers/The%20Identity%20and%20Mission%20of%20the%20Church%20in%20the%20Asian%20Contexts%20of.pdf) (accessed February 7, 2011)), 19; Kim, “The Kingdom of God *versus* the Church,” 145.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *Advance through Storm: A.D. 1914 and After with Concluding Generalizations*, A History of the Expansion of Christianity, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970 [1945]), 48-9.

<sup>5</sup> Pickett, introduced in chapter three, was author of the influential *Christian Mass Movements in India* and, along with J. Merle Davis of the IMC’s Department of Social and Industrial Research and Counsel, was a pioneer of the robust use of social science survey methods in international mission.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur McPhee, “Bishop J. Waskom Pickett’s Rethinking on 1930s Missions in India,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 19, no. 3 (July 2002): 34.

<sup>7</sup> John Mott, *Five Decades and a Forward View* (New York; London: Harper, 1939), 101-2. Mott visited Pickett in 1928 and suggested a thorough social science survey of “mass movements,” for which India had become noteworthy. The social sciences in general and the social survey in particular (combination of direct observation, interviews, onsite data gathering, and questionnaires)

While *Rethinking Christianity in India* has been characterized as a response to Kraemer's preparatory volume *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*,<sup>8</sup> it was primarily concerned with contemporary debates over mass conversion, proselytism, and the challenge of integrating Christian communities and India's Hindu society.<sup>9</sup> *Rethinking Christianity in India* did contain a fifty four-page critical review of Kraemer's book as an appendix. As such, the review was distinctly separate from the other material in the book. One further suspects that it was a late addendum, or at least intentionally distinct material, because the pagination of the volume restarts with the review.<sup>10</sup> The authors were more interested in continuity of life for Indian Christians in a Hindu context.

A significant issue of integrating Indian Christianity and the wider Hindu culture was the politicization of conversion.<sup>11</sup> In the Indian social context, conversion to Christianity meant conversion to Christian community. The West also thought in terms of conversion to Christian community, but in a different way. In the West, conversion to Christian community had a normative marker of affiliation: joining the church. The authors of *Rethinking Christianity in India* argued that it was not the same in India.<sup>12</sup> To refer to a religious community in India was to refer to a

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were burgeoning disciplines in the United States at the time. Pickett began his work in November, 1930. McPhee, "Bishop J. Waskom Pickett's Rethinking on 1930s Missions in India": 34-5.

<sup>8</sup> McPhee, "Bishop J. Waskom Pickett's Rethinking on 1930s Missions in India": 32.

<sup>9</sup> Kim, "The Identity and Mission of the Church in the Asian Contexts," 18.

<sup>10</sup> The review, which would normally commence on page 269, is labeled as pages one to fifty four.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.,17

<sup>12</sup> Kim, "The Kingdom of God versus the Church," 146.

societal unit that the state recognized as a political whole.<sup>13</sup> To have members in a religious community had political meaning such that “the missionary is regarded as a man-snatcher rather than a soul winner.”<sup>14</sup> Not only had this fueled nationalistic resistance and resentment – further complicating evangelism – but “the battle for numbers robs evangelism of its spiritual flavor.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, foreign missionaries with their Western ideals of the societal clout of the church (inherited from Christendom) became “more and more engrossed with the Church which has become the organ of society,” to the detriment of truly “reaching into the depths of Hinduism.”<sup>16</sup>

This concern over Indian Christianity in a Hindu culture and society forms the foundation for what the Rethinking Group says about the church-mission dynamic in their work. The two chapters of *Rethinking Christianity in India* dealing specifically with the church were written by two recognized leaders of the Rethinking Group: Pandipeddi Chenchiah (1886–1959) and Vengal Chakkarai (1880-1958).<sup>17</sup> Chenchiah was a delegate to the IMC meetings in Jerusalem (1928)

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<sup>13</sup> Vengal Chakkarai, “The Church,” in *Rethinking Christianity in India*, ed. D. M. Devasahayam and A. N. Sudarisanam (Madras: Sudarisanam, 1938), 113. This would have ramifications under the India’s system of legislative representation with “reservations” by social community. The Christians were recognized under the reservations system by British Prime Minister Ramsay McDonald’s Communal Award of 1934.

<sup>14</sup> Pandipeddi Chenchiah, “Appendix. The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World: An Indian View of Dr. Kraemer’s Exposition,” in *Rethinking Christianity in India*, ed. D. M. Devasahayam and A. N. Sudarisanam (Madras: Sudarisanam, 1938), 45.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>17</sup> Hans-Ruedi Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement, 1895-1961* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1966), 152-3. The two were also founders of the Madras Christo Samaj.

and Tambaram. The opening chapter, "The Christian Movement in India" by G. V. Job, also provides insight into how the Rethinking Group's focus on Indian Christianity in a Hindu culture prompted strong opinions concerning the church and the kingdom of God. If mission was to have a "model and goal" based in ecclesiology, as hinted at in the lead up to Tambaram, then the church in relation to mission needed to be a uniquely Indian church with myriad differences from Western church structures, or Indian Christianity needed to reject any form of "church" because of the concept's baggage and adopt a kingdom of God motif.<sup>18</sup>

Chenchiah began by questioning the church as the topic of the Tambaram conference at all and then proceeded to reject what he considered a preoccupation with the church. He contended that the primary point of interest of the meeting should be the kingdom of God.

The Church has gathered round it greater and stormier controversies than its Master. In all probability, the Lord himself has a controversy with it. . . . We should like to ask in all humility, hoping to get an answer, by what right Christendom has all but jettisoned the Kingdom of God which occupies so central a place in the message of Jesus and substituted in its place the Church of which the Master said so little and the disciples talk so much. We would be grateful for guidance whether the new Christian communities should not eject the intruder and rethink Christianity in terms of the Universe of God.<sup>19</sup>

But Chenchiah steps back from advocating the abolition of the church. He maintains the focus of the Rethinking Group, seeking to explain how an Indian Christian reacts

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<sup>18</sup> Kim, "The Identity and Mission of the Church in the Asian Contexts," 18.

<sup>19</sup> Pandipeddi Chenchiah, "The Church and the Indian Christian," in *Rethinking Christianity in India*, ed. D. M. Devasahayam and A. N. Sudarisanam (Madras: Sudarisanam, 1938), 81-2, 89-90.

to the institution of the church “from a background largely contributed [to] by intuitions, inhibitions, insights of his ancestral faith – Hinduism.”<sup>20</sup>

Chenchiah accepted divine institution of the church through Jesus, but refused to accept what he deemed was the modern Protestant equivalent of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, that outside the church there was no salvation.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the issue for the “Hindu mind” was the nature of the church as a socio-religious institution.

He [Jesus] doubtless promised to be present where two or three of his disciples assembled in his name and to grant whatever they may agree to ask. He commanded them to go and preach. But none of these sayings had any institutional implications.

Indeed in the world of ideas in which our Lord moved and expected his followers to move, there was no place for a Church.<sup>22</sup>

While Hindus may be institutional in society, they are “highly individual in religious life,” and in Hindu culture the religious life of a person should not be ruled by a “single central institution.”<sup>23</sup> The Hindu mind saw the Western conception of church doing this, and to the Hindu Christian it was substituting itself for Christ.<sup>24</sup>

Chenchiah further contended that “those who seek to realize the vision of our Lord, need no Church, high or low.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 84-5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 86, 87. There is an affinity between Chenchiah’s comments and Tambaram’s general cultural assessment regarding totalitarianism. Chenchiah writes, “Theory and practice in the West tend towards the setting up of an absolute authority over the citizen. In theory, the State has absolute dominion over the subject.”

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 100.

At most, an Indian church in Hindu culture can be “a useful human institution for the threefold purpose of worship, fellowship, and propagation,” but it will not command “the same high value as in the West.”<sup>26</sup> If an alternate concept were to be chosen from Hindu culture for a true socio-religious nucleus it would be the Ashram, with a spiritual focus in that setting of “the Holy Spirit, the mystery of rebirth, the recovery of the power of resurrection, the discovery of eternal life, the experience of being in Christ and Christ being in us.”<sup>27</sup>

In the other chapter dedicated to the church, Chakkarai was consistent with Chenniah. Like Chenniah, he positioned his chapter in terms of Indian Christians with Hindu heritage in a Hindu culture and pointed to Ashrams as the natural model for the Indian equivalent to the church.<sup>28</sup> Chakkarai also remarked on the West’s proclivity for totalitarian institutions and how that makes the institutional nature of the Western church maladaptive for Indian (Hindu) Christianity: “The church cannot be here an institution, but it can be an inspiration; it cannot be a constitution, but it can be and ought to be a city on a hill.”<sup>29</sup>

Like Chenniah, Chakkarai asserted that Christian revelation is “not wedded” to institutional structures, “for such belong to human needs and can be served in various ways. What is more relevant, they have risen out of the historical setting of

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>28</sup> Chakkarai, “The Church,” 101-2, 115, 121.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 120.

the Western churches and cannot set themselves as the only institutions that can serve Christians in India.”<sup>30</sup>

An additional problem with this Western taint was that “the non-Christian critic” saw with “painful acuteness” that Christian missions in India are outposts of Western imperialism.<sup>31</sup> The Rethinking Group sought to “unseat the deep-rooted notion that Christianity is identical with or is best manifested by Western civilization.”<sup>32</sup>

Chakkarai reflected on Hindu culture “with a hoary past as old as ancient Israel,” but unlike the ancient Israel that is gone, Hindu culture remaining “in undiminished vigour.”<sup>33</sup> Chakkarai concluded:

That Western church organizations are the only possible things, cannot be admitted. They are the products of other aims and circumstances. In the absence of any instructions of the Lord, the Indian mind, when it is free, as it is not free, will fashion forms for the maintenance and spread of Christianity, as the Lord directs in accordance with its natural genius. While it may absorb some elements from the West it will transform them.<sup>34</sup>

Here, at least, is a point of harmony with the Tambaram meeting’s affirmation of indigenization and contextualization.

A point of difference is that Chakkarai interprets Western ecclesiology (or ecclesiasticism in his estimation) as causative of its own “quagmire.”

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 114.

Everywhere, at Lausanne, Edinburgh and Lambeth, the church looms large. . . . In all these conferences, the Western religious mind is seeking a way out of the quagmire into which the churches have fallen. Besides, we cannot help thinking that in the history of Western Christianity, concentration on the church idea is in proportion to the lack of real faith in the Lord. When the divine idea of unity in Him – and where else can it be found – fades away, the human idea of church unity takes its place. . . a unity composed of dogmas and institutions.<sup>35</sup>

While the IMC had turned to thinking about the church as a way out of a quagmire, Chakkarai contended that exceeding servitude to conceptions of the church is what had produced the quagmire. Yet, Chakkarai does not precisely explain what constitutes the quagmire in which the church finds itself. In addition to the criticisms described so far, Chakkarai emphasizes two other problems of the Western church.

First, a Feuerbachian subjectivism had invaded the Church. Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) contended that Christianity, and God, are mere externalizations of human needs and longings. Chakkarai charged that the Western church had fallen into this error, producing a “subtle humanism” in the Western church: “The Lord is a mere idea, the age-long product of the Church’s efforts, behind which she rules. This is not even theocracy but *anthropocracy*.”<sup>36</sup>

Second, the Western church had been co-opted by socio-political forces in an “unholy alliance.” Chakkarai wrote of an impression in India among Christians and non-Christians alike “that the churches, popes, archbishops and bishops are not custodians of the Lord’s *dharma* but camp followers of worldly statesmen.” This was

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 106-7.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 107. Emphasis in the original.

“*scandalam magnum.*”<sup>37</sup> The Church’s “impotence” in witnessing against predatory warfare received specific mention. The church was no longer the body of Christ, but rather “the body of the national mind, that is, of the politicians who guide national policies,” and the church had failed in this regard specifically in the cases of Germany, Italy, and Japan.<sup>38</sup>

Even before Chenchiah and Chakkarai’s chapters dedicated to the church, G. V. Job’s introductory chapter to *Rethinking Christianity in India* criticized Western ecclesiology as denominationalism, institutionalism, and sacerdotalism. The drive for converts without understanding the need for integration of Indian Christianity with the cultural function of community had pushed Indian churches to the “margin of self-support.” For example, where a community might support seven churches “and also take care of its widows and orphans, and carry on some independent piece of evangelistic work or support a few rural congregations” the community struggled to support twenty two churches, could not care for the needy and was “unable to seize opportunities for service.”<sup>39</sup>

Job blamed this situation on missionary drive “for the glory of denominationalism but not for the maintenance of the fundamentals of the Christian faith.”<sup>40</sup> In perhaps a thinly veiled jab at Western obstructionism during Indian attempts for church union, Job bemoaned sacerdotalism in the “divided churches of

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 110-1.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>39</sup> G. V. Job, “The Christian Movement in India,” in *Rethinking Christianity in India*, ed. D. M. Devasahayam and A. N. Sudarisanam (Madras: Sudarisanam, 1938), 11.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

the West.” The path toward church union that would become the Church of South India in 1947 began in 1928. To Indian advocates, Western judicatories had put obstacles in the path toward union over the issues of ordination, apostolic succession, and polity (specifically the variance between episcopal and non-episcopal structures among the churches seeking union).

Contrary to Tambaram’s affirmation of the church and mission together, Job’s reading of the Indian experience prompted him to keep mission and church separate. Here, despite Chenchiah and Chakkarai’s denial of “church” as an appropriate category for Indian Christian community, Job works in terms of mission as a phalanx of an outside entity and church as the indigenous expression of Christian community in situ. As such, the Indian church should not be pushed to take over the institutional work of the missions as some might expect under the three-self doctrine.<sup>41</sup>

Even if they were able to do so, the question is should they do so. Missionary institutions are not the creation of the overflowing life and peculiar genius of Indian Christians. When the Indian Church seeks to express its life, it may not express itself in these forms of service. The Indian Church should not be led into these established channels of service. It may soon wake up to find that new avenues of service better suited to its spirit and resources and better adapted to the new situation have been thus effectually closed.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The three-self formula was developed independently by Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and Henry Venn (1796-1873) of the Church Missionary Society. The formula became a sort of mission doctrine. In short, the formula establishes that the aim of missions is to create churches that are self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. Karl Hartenstein asserted after the meeting that the three-self “old formulas” are “no longer sufficient.” (Die alten Formeln von Selbsterhaltung, Selbstverwaltung und Selbstausbreitung genügen nicht mehr.) Karl Hartenstein, “Was haben wir von Tambaram zu lernen?” in *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der Erde: Bericht über Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram*, ed. Martin Schlunk (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 195-6. Vedanayah Samuel Azariah also expressed criticism of the self-supporting aspect of three-self doctrine. See Appendix C, §III.3.

<sup>42</sup> Job, “The Christian Movement in India,” 32-3.

As with Chakkarai, Job's criticism has produced a statement in harmony with Tambaram's sensitivity toward indigenization and contextualization.<sup>43</sup>

The dissent voiced in *Rethinking Christianity in India* is an interesting mix of criticism based on experience (historical and realistic) and reaction to (and often rejection of) Western principles (ahistorical and idealistic). While the latter is mainly couched in resistance to imposition of Western categories as normative, there is an undercurrent of repudiation because the reality did not live up to the ideal.

Robert Schreiter addresses the tension between reality and ideal when assessing twentieth-century mission and does so in conversation with the landmark text of David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*.<sup>44</sup> Bosch appropriated the language of paradigms and paradigm shifts from Thomas Kuhn as an organizing principle for understanding the history of mission and what he believed to be emerging in the late twentieth-century.<sup>45</sup> Schreiter elects to move away from language of paradigms in accord with its "loss of cachet" in science. Not only has popular usage diluted the term, further assessment of Kuhn's work over five decades shows paradigms to be "rarely as self-enclosed" and not as likely for a new paradigm to "utterly efface" the

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<sup>43</sup> Tambaram also acknowledged the type of criticism coming from the Rethinking Group regarding imperialism: "It is the Gospel of Christ which we are to give to others, and not our own particular form of Christianity. Often, especially in countries where there are 'younger churches,' we hear Christianity and the Christian Church criticized as being importations from foreign lands or agents of western imperialism." IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 25.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Schreiter, "Reconciliation as a Model of Mission," in *Landmark Essays in Mission and World Christianity*, edited by Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009), 66.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

old. Thus, Schreiter opts for “models” of mission as “a more modest word” and one that better reflects the tension between models *of* and models *for*.<sup>46</sup>

The distinction between the models *of* and models *for* is important. One person may call their formulation a model, but it is a model in terms of theory, ideal, or intellectually consistent networks of ideas. This is a model *for*, for example a model for mission (how mission ought to be thought about and done). Another person might formulate a descriptive representation, still in the world of ideas, built up through inference and analysis of artifacts and accounts (like a historian). This more phenomenological construct might still be called a model, but it is a model *of*.

This tension between the phenomenon and the ideal runs through *Rethinking Christianity in India*. Strong criticism of the past bleeds over into the rejection of principles. For example, this tension can be seen when Chakkarai sees preoccupation with the church as indicative of theoretical flaws that have produced a quagmire while the IMC senses a quagmire that propels them to more carefully and fully reason out their ecclesiology.<sup>47</sup> The history of modern mission is shot through with the tension between ideals and how things really were in practice.

A similar tension hovers over this study of the official pronouncements of the IMC gathered at a world missionary conference. The scope of this study is to

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<sup>46</sup> Schreiter, “Reconciliation as a Model of Mission,” 66. I concur with Schreiter that despite the limits of Bosch’s use of paradigm language, his work firmly established on evidence that “there have been different operative models of mission in the church’s history.”

It should be added, though, that in his discussion of the paradigm principle, Bosch repeatedly warns that new paradigms do not abruptly displace the old and that old paradigms seldom disappear completely. David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis, 1991), 181-9.

<sup>47</sup> This is not to say that the principals should, therefore, be accepted as normative, only that a more complete rationale for the rejection of principles is warranted.

produce a model of the IMC's ecclesiology coming out of Tambaram. This study should not be mistaken for a model of how, or whether or not, that ecclesiology was operative in practice. That is because the aim of this study is to be of service to theological reflection on the church and, in particular, missional ecclesiology. As such, it is a historical reclamation offering a more complete model of Tambaram's ecclesiology than previously afforded to that meeting.

*Rethinking Christianity in India* helps (somewhat ironically) by showing that Tambaram did not usher in a new era of theological problems related to the church and mission only to be corrected by *missio Dei* after Willigen. Non-western observers could attest to plenty of those problems before Tambaram.

Newbiggin sensed some of the same problems in his early days as a missionary in India. He quotes from his diary in his autobiography. He was "horrified" by the relation between missionaries and the people: "There seems to be no question of getting alongside them and sharing their troubles and helping them spiritually. . . . We drive up like lords in a car. . . then carry on a sort of inspection, finding all the faults we can, putting everyone through their paces. They all sort of stand at attention and say 'Sir.'" It's *awful*.<sup>48</sup> The diary entry comes from 1936. As he reflected on it in 1985, Newbiggin added that the missionaries also were not entrusting Indian leaders with responsibility. In his diary (1936) he had wondered

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<sup>48</sup> Lesslie Newbiggin, *Unfinished Agenda: An Autobiography* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1985), 41. Emphasis in original.

what the real priority was: development of people or “the efficient running of the machine.”<sup>49</sup>

Karl Hartenstein was also aware of tensions between principles and practice. The movement towards union in the churches of South India was an indictment against the “vast number of denominations” and rightfully prompted Tambaram to express repentance and shame that divisions in Christianity were the impetus for “scorn and derision” (Spott und Hohn) from non-Christians.<sup>50</sup> Earlier in the report Hartenstein called it “denominational fragmentation of Christ’s church.”<sup>51</sup> Later he added that there was an abiding expression of “hot, burning desire for church unity and becoming visible community.”<sup>52</sup> For Hartenstein, the turn to the church was warranted. Disunity was a scandal such that Tambaram was facing “immense church history decisions.”<sup>53</sup>

Likewise, Walter Freytag commented on questions and challenges from India, China, and Japan about the meaning of the church in their situations. The

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 42. Mark Laing credits Newbigin’s continued dissatisfaction with the contradiction between principles and practice in fuelling developments in his theology of mission. *From Crisis to Creation: Lesslie Newbigin and the Reinvention of Christian Mission* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 16-9.

<sup>50</sup> “Die JungenKirchen werden den Weg zueinander finden und quer durch die unübersehbare Fülle der Denominationen zusammenkommen.” Karl Hartenstein, *Die Weltmissionskonferenz Tambaram 1938* (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 12.

<sup>51</sup> Original: “denominatonelle Zersplitterung der Kirche Christi.” Ibid., 4.

<sup>52</sup> “Fast immer sprach der heisse, brennende Wille zur kirchlichen Einigung und sichtbar werdenden Gemeinschaft.” The desire to overcome the “fragmented church” (zersplitterte Kirche) was one of Hartenstein’s four summary impressions of Tambaram. Ibid., 13, 15-6. Hartenstein provided a chapter on the issue in the German delegation’s collective report. Karl Hartenstein, “Union der Kirchen?” in *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der Erde: Bericht über Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram*, ed. Martin Schlunk (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 160-8.

<sup>53</sup> Original: “unübersehbaren kirchengeschichtlichen Entscheidungen.” Ibid.

validity and efficacy of taking recourse to the church in the climate of ideologies was also an issue. Under the increasing pressure of political Islam and secular forces, the Christian of the Near East asks, “Must we really call to the church and what is the Church?”<sup>54</sup> Freytag attributed these challenges from the younger churches not to Tambaram’s turn to the church, but rather to the past failures of mission in relationship to the local churches and sectarian divisions. Those failures engendered a natural “inhibition” (eine Hemmung) regarding the church and even questioning the need for its existence as an organization (der Notwendigkeit ihrer Existenz als Organisation).<sup>55</sup> When intellectual rigor was applied to this questioning of the church as an organization in discussion with a Chinese delegate,<sup>56</sup> the clarification reached was consistent with the dissent of the Rethinking Group. The problem was not the church, per se, but whether the Western organization was “necessary for us”; the Kirchlichkeit of the West was unsustainable for the East.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, in addition to the contextual factors that were urging the IMC toward the church, the IMC perceived historical discord between ideals and practice in the missionary enterprise that also called for rethinking of the church-mission dynamic. The IMC was likely sincere in avowing that it thought about the church because the

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<sup>54</sup> “Müssen wir wirklich zur Kirche rufen und was ist den Kirche?” Walter Freytag, “Von Geheimnis der Kirche,” in *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der Erde: Bericht über Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram*, ed. Martin Schlunk (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 47.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> That is, investigating the sentiment beyond “a priori denial” (von vornherein festliegenden Verneinung). Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> “Wir sehen nicht, dass die Kirche nicht notwendig wäre für uns, Aber wir fragen, ob die westliche Organisation, in der wir sie kennen, notwendig für uns ist.” Ibid., 48.

church-mission dynamic needed thinking about, than the charge that they were wantonly crafting an idol out of the church.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, while Tambaram's affirmation of the church in mission might be problematic for the Rethinking Group to the extent that it failed to correct for Western institutionalism or other ideological failings in practice, Tambaram's affirmation of indigenization and contextualization was in harmony with the Rethinking Group.

### *E. Stanley Jones and the Totalitarian Kingdom of God*

Similar dissent to that of *Rethinking Christianity in India* came from E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973), famous missionary to India.<sup>59</sup> Jones attended the Tambaram meeting as a co-opted delegate; he was recorded as a "general evangelist for educated non-Christians in India"<sup>60</sup> – Indians of education and social status like those of the Rethinking Group. By the time of the Tambaram meeting Jones had developed the conviction that the kingdom of God was the key to Christianity. His dedication to the kingdom of God concept determined his criticism of Tambaram's affirmation of the church in mission.

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<sup>58</sup> This leaves the charge that wrong thinking about the church contributed to the problems in the first place unaddressed and ready for further study by both theological and historical method.

<sup>59</sup> The "E" stands for Eli, which he did not use, always preferring to be called Stanley. Stephen Graham, *Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Mission: The Life and Work of E. Stanley Jones* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 21.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 166. Other notable figures attending as co-opted delegates included Alfred George Hogg, Toyohiko Kagawa, Hendrik Kraemer, Kenneth Scott Latourette, and Stephen Neill. Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, frequently listed and cited merely as "The Bishop of Dornakal," attended as a fraternal delegate from Faith and Order, as did Willem Visser't Hooft. IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 165-6. See Appendix F.

Jones went to India as a Methodist missionary in 1907 after graduating with his bachelor's degree from Asbury College (Wilmore, Kentucky) in 1906.<sup>61</sup> He initially served as pastor of the English-language Methodist Episcopal Church in Lucknow. He later served in Sitapur as a Methodist district superintendent where he wed colleague Mabel Lossing in 1911. Additionally, Jones served as a representative of the Methodist Publishing House and, with his wife, ran a local boys' school. Also during these early years of missionary service to India Jones began evangelistic travel in India in addition to his duties as pastor.

Within a few years Jones was on the verge of burnout, suffering both mentally and physically. He was sent back to America to recuperate and returned to India in 1917. During this second tour he began work among middle- and upper-class Indians, what could be considered the intelligentsia. His exposure to upper-class Indian criticism of Great Britain and to Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) propelled his own theological reflection on politics and society. This reflection started Jones's development toward what his biographer calls the "totalitarian kingdom of God."<sup>62</sup>

The first step in this development was sensitivity to Indian Christianity's challenge to Western cultural and religious imperialism. In 1925, he published his landmark work *The Christ of the Indian Road* in which he argued "moral and

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<sup>61</sup> For a full-length biography of Jones's life, consult Graham, *Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Mission*, previously cited.

<sup>62</sup> Stephen Graham, *The Totalitarian Kingdom of God: The Political Philosophy of E. Stanley Jones* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998).

spiritual equivalence between Indian and Western Christianity.”<sup>63</sup> The book became a bestseller, eventually reaching over one million copies in circulation.<sup>64</sup> In all, Jones published twenty eight books ranging from theological commentary and criticism on social issues and missions to collections of daily devotions. He was also a frequent contributor to *The Christian Century* periodical. By the 1930s, Jones reputation afforded him an international audience as he travelled and spoke throughout Asia and the Near East.

Jones returned to America a second time in 1925 on extended furlough. In 1928 he was elected a bishop of the Methodist General Conference but resigned the appointment the next day (before consecration as bishop) to follow his “inner voice” and continue his evangelistic work in India. In 1930 his missionary appointment was recorded as “evangelist-at-large for India and the world.”<sup>65</sup>

Jones established his first Christian Ashram in 1930 at Sat Tal (“seven lakes”) in the Himalayan foothills of North India. The concept grew into an international Christian Ashram movement that continues today. In the years before WWII, Jones traveled extensively. He even took on an unofficial, self-appointed diplomatic role trying to prevent war between America and Japan.<sup>66</sup> In 1964, at the age of eighty,

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<sup>63</sup> Graham, *Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Mission*, 12. Jones later published a sequel titled *Along the Indian Road* (1939) and a third in the series, *The Christ of the American Road* (1944). See table 4.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>66</sup> During the war Jones could not get approval from the British to return to India, leaving him separated from his wife, daughter, and adopted country. Ibid., 13.

*Time* magazine claimed that only Billy Graham could currently rival Jones's international reputation as a Christian leader.<sup>67</sup>

In the 1920s, Gandhi's nonviolent non-cooperation "challenged Jones to disentangle Christ from the often unchristian beliefs and practices of Western Christianity."<sup>68</sup> At this time, Jones was convening "Round Table" conferences for interreligious discussion.<sup>69</sup> Jones became convinced that God was using "irregular channels" in India for the dissemination of the gospel.<sup>70</sup> Then Jones gained firsthand exposure to communism when he traveled to the Soviet Union in 1934. The trip solidified his read on secular ideologies and Jones became convinced that the kingdom of God was the answer to secular totalitarianisms.<sup>71</sup> Jones penned *Christ's Alternative to Communism* in 1935 and it was the beginning of a long journey of advocacy for the kingdom of God as the cornerstone of Christianity.

Marxism, according to Jones, boasts that it unifies theory and practice in a universal law. Can Christianity demonstrate that it is the true unifying, universal system? Jones responded affirmatively, but the church had failed to do so because they had "built up vast theories apart from practice."<sup>72</sup> The kingdom of God is the aspect of Christianity that unifies theory and practice.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>68</sup> Graham, *Totalitarian Kingdom of God*, 54.

<sup>69</sup> Hence the title to his 1928 book *Christ at the Round Table*.

<sup>70</sup> Graham, *Totalitarian Kingdom of God*, 5-6, 10, 52-3.

<sup>71</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *A Song of Ascents: A Spiritual Autobiography* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 148. Stephen Graham, *Totalitarian Kingdom of God*, 9.

<sup>72</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *Christ's Alternative to Communism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1935), 269.



Figure 3. E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973). (Courtesy of the family of E. Stanley Jones and the E. Stanley Jones Foundation.)

Indicative of his sensitivity to ideologies is the story Jones tells in *Along the Indian Road* about his first sermon.<sup>73</sup> After three weeks of preparing “to be God’s lawyer and argue His case well,” he faltered and went blank when entering a section of his sermon intended to address “indifferentism.” Jones’s legal metaphor is especially fitting because prior to becoming a preacher Jones worked at a law library in the Baltimore courthouse and had been pursuing education in law with aspirations to become an attorney.<sup>74</sup> Jones relates how he was awakened by an “inner voice” to preach as God’s witness rather than as God’s lawyer.<sup>75</sup> But Jones’s

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<sup>73</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *Along the Indian Road* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1939), 19-22.

<sup>74</sup> Graham, *Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Mission*, 23.

<sup>75</sup> Jones would use this phrase at various times of his life, for example when he resigned his bishopric prior to consecration in order to evangelize India.

purpose for telling the story at that place in *Along the Indian Road* is not the inner voice, it is that word “indifferentism.” In his sermon, Jones intended to make a distinction between indifferentism and mere indifference. Indifference may be a problem, but Jones was more concerned with “indifference built up into a philosophical system and taken as a way of life, as a method of meeting life, or as the dictionary puts it, ‘systematic indifference, reasoned disregard.’”<sup>76</sup>

Jones’s advocacy for the kingdom of God became more forceful and more comprehensive in 1937 with *The Choice Before Us*. Communism continued to be a target, but Jones also took on fascism and Nazism.<sup>77</sup> Like the IMC, Jones was reading the cultural condition of the age: “The world is hungry for something, for something so universal that it takes in every human relationship and gives purpose and meaning to the whole, and something so intimate that it takes in one’s own personal need and meets it with redemption and power by which to live.”<sup>78</sup> Fascism does grasp a truth in the “demand of the human heart for a central all-controlling authority.”<sup>79</sup> But in a fascist state, religion “must get under or get out” because “Christianity can only live in a Fascist or Nazi State in a dechristianized form, for Christianity is utterly totalitarian. The Kingdom of God demands a total obedience to

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<sup>76</sup> Although he does not provide the date of this event, it very likely occurred near the time when Jones was licensed as a lay preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church at Memorial Church in Baltimore, February 12, 1903. Graham, *Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Mission*, 23.

<sup>77</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *The Choice Before Us* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1937), 13.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

Table 4. Books by E. Stanley Jones relevant to the Kingdom of God and Tambaram

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<i>The Christ of the Indian Road</i>	1925
<i>Christ at the Round Table</i>	1928
<i>Christ's Alternative to Communism</i>	1935
<i>The Choice Before Us</i>	1937
<i>Along the Indian Road</i>	1939
<i>Is the Kingdom of God Realism?</i>	1940
<i>The Christ of the American Road</i>	1944

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God.”<sup>80</sup> The same reasoning is applied to all secular, ideological totalitarian states: “The totalitarian State asks man to cease obeying a totalitarian God only that it may induce him to bow to a totalitarian State.”<sup>81</sup> Secular, totalitarian ideologies put nation (fascism), class (communism), or race (Nazism) as the highest value, making that thing the absolute to which all other things are relative.

There is significant similarity between Jones and the IMC in their mutual reading of modernity and secular ideologies. Where the IMC invoked the transnationality of the church, Jones invoked the kingdom of God. For Jones, the

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 87. Stephen Graham traces the first “totalitarian” references to the kingdom of God to *Is the Kingdom of God Realism?* (1940). Graham, *Totalitarian Kingdom of God*, 9. While Jones never employs the exact phrase “totalitarian kingdom of God” in *The Choice Before Us* (1937) he does make the claim: “The Kingdom of God emphasis puts together the social and the personal and makes them one – two sides of one whole. If the Kingdom of God is totalitarian – and it is – then it must take in the whole of life – and life is both social and personal.” Jones, *The Choice Before Us*, 167, see also, 15, 19, 218.

<sup>81</sup> Jones, *The Choice Before Us*, 103.

kingdom of God was the only true source of unity among people and nations.<sup>82</sup> It represented a radically different social order and a new way of thinking of the socio-political term “nation.”<sup>83</sup>

In *The Choice Before Us* Jones titled one chapter “The Christian Society of Pentecost.” Jones consistently used the term “Christian society” in the book instead of “church,” which is conspicuously absent. The church does not receive direct attention until 220 pages into the 235-page text. There, Jones declares woe upon the church “too busy taking care of its own health.” Furthermore, the church must “lay aside the mentality of wanting people to sign on the dotted line of doctrinal belief before we work with them.”<sup>84</sup>

This avoidance of the term “church” is also evident in G. V. Job’s opening essay in *Rethinking Christianity in India*. Job explicitly contrasts the phrases “the Indian Church” and “the Indian Christian community,” preferring the latter even though it is a “clumsy alternative.”<sup>85</sup> One can also hear echoes of Jones in the Rethinking Group’s invocation of Jesus’ life and message. Jones contrasts the church and the kingdom of God as Jesus’ own model for the gospel: the kingdom of God was “central, formative, all-important.”<sup>86</sup> Even accepting that Jesus instituted the church,

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<sup>82</sup> Graham, *Totalitarian Kingdom of God*, 149.

<sup>83</sup> Jones, *The Choice Before Us*, 29.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>85</sup> Job, “The Christian Movement in India,” 16.

<sup>86</sup> Jones, *The Choice Before Us*, 20.

Jones contends he never expected of it to be the claimant on lives that the kingdom of God is.

By the time he wrote *Is the Kingdom of God Realism?* Jones's conception of the kingdom of God was fully developed as the "totalitarian kingdom of God."<sup>87</sup> In it he revisited the three main secular ideologies of before: communism, fascism, and Nazism. Jones also tackled the challenge that the kingdom of God was purely idealistic and was not a functional concept for real world relations between people and nations.<sup>88</sup> Jones had already argued against a "spiritualization" of the kingdom of God in *The Choice Before Us*, quipping that "spiritualization is the first refuge of the skeptical mind."<sup>89</sup> He had also argued there that the kingdom of God is both gradual (i.e., immanent) and apocalyptic (i.e., eschatological).<sup>90</sup> The kingdom of God had definite social dimensions. In fact, the kingdom of God was necessary if Christianity was to have anything to say (or do) socially: "It is possible to be religious without the Kingdom of God content and framework – we can make religion communion with God apart from any social reconstruction – but if we desire social reconstruction as well, then the Kingdom is inevitable."<sup>91</sup> Jones

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<sup>87</sup> The use of "totalitarian" should not be construed to mean that Jones's ideas originated in political philosophy. As the development of the concept reveals, this is a theological development to which Jones applies language that fits what he believes are its socio-political ramifications.

<sup>88</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *Is the Kingdom of God Realism?* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1940), 5-16.

<sup>89</sup> Jones, *The Choice Before Us*, 36.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 42, 136-9.

<sup>91</sup> Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, 110.

reasserted those positions in 1940, arguing that kingdom of God principles were a viable mode of living.

Between *The Choice Before Us* and *Is the Kingdom of God Realism?* Jones had written his sequel to *The Christ of the Indian Road* (see table 4). Taken together, along with an autobiographical essay written for the *Christian Century*,<sup>92</sup> one can get a broad view of Jones's conception of the kingdom of God.<sup>93</sup> In addition to the features already described, there are four other salient characteristics of Jones's mature kingdom of God conception.

First, the kingdom of God presented viable principles for living because it was the basis of the cosmic order created by God. The kingdom of God was akin to a law of nature; like gravity, operating contrary to that law can lead to dire consequences. Living contrary to the kingdom of God produced disharmony, suffering, and strife at both individual and societal levels. The kingdom of God penetrates into the very nature of reality to its foundation, the creator God.<sup>94</sup> Looking at the immanent (here and now) aspect of the kingdom of God, its laws and the laws of the kingdom of heaven are the same; that, for Jones, was the true meaning of the keys in Matthew 16.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> E. Stanley Jones, "The Christ of the Kingdom: Fifteenth Article in the Series 'How My Mind Has Changed in This Decade,'" *Christian Century* 56, no. 18 (May 3, 1939): 571-3.

<sup>93</sup> See also in its entirety, Graham, *The Totalitarian Kingdom of God: The Political Philosophy of E. Stanley Jones*, previously cited.

<sup>94</sup> Graham, *Totalitarian Kingdom of God*, 61. See also, Jones, *Is the Kingdom of God Realism?*, 63-6, 208, 224-5.

<sup>95</sup> Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, 112.

Second, through the mystery of the Incarnation, the kingdom of God is both the supreme order and the supreme person, Jesus Christ.<sup>96</sup> This may have wider theological implications for Jones's project, but it impinged on the question of the church in one particular way. Jones considered the church a "relativism," not the absolute.<sup>97</sup> That much would be uncontroversial with the thought of the IMC. Jones alleged, though, that the IMC's focus on the church was an elevation of the church from relativism to absolute and that the kingdom of God was the absolute that was being displaced by this move: "The Kingdom of God is not related to something higher than itself – it is the Absolute."<sup>98</sup> Considering his overall orthodoxy, Jones makes sense out of this statement by wrapping up the kingdom of God and the person of Christ in one package. Jones essentially carried the *communicatio idiomatum* a step further and infused the kingdom of God with the absoluteness of the deity by way of the bridge between humanity and divinity in the person of Jesus.

Third, Jones did not target just communism, fascism, and Nazism. The rise of totalitarian ideologies was part of a "deteriorating world situation,"<sup>99</sup> but the West had also failed to live according to the kingdom of God. Jones condemned the injustices of capitalism and plutocracy. His awakening to non-Western Christianity in the 1920s equipped him to identify the point of failure in the West – what he called "compartmentalization." At times, Jones seems to mean by this the atomizing

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<sup>96</sup> Jones, *The Choice Before Us*, 45-9, 76; Jones, *Is the Kingdom of God Realism?*, 54-8.

<sup>97</sup> Jones, *Is the Kingdom of God Realism?*, 63.

<sup>98</sup> Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, 169.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

effects of modernity associated with individualism and the dis-integration of society. At other times the term seems closer to its common meaning: the separation of life into insular categories such as sacred and secular.

Christianity had succumbed to the compartmentalization of modernity and not recognized its totalitarian claims enough. Christianity had faltered in its evangelism to India, because the endeavor was attempted by the so-called Christian West. Western Christianity was ill-equipped for the needs of the day: "Europe has failed to take Christianity as her way of life because Christianity was too compartmentalized. It did not make a total demand upon the total life. Men became tired of their own way and wanted something that would command them. Nazism, Fascism, and Communism make that total demand, and hence their acceptance by self-weary individuals."<sup>100</sup> In this aspect, Christianity had not demanded enough. Jones also asserts that, counterintuitively, Christianity had also demanded too much.

It called on human nature to deny itself without human nature seeing the results of that denial here and now in this life. In other words, it called for denial now and reward here-after in heaven. The denial was real and obvious, the reward not so real or obvious. The other systems called for denial here and now and offered rewards here and now. And they got the response. Christianity to get response must make a totalitarian demand and must show that the demand brings forth its results – the best results – in human living here and now. When its demand is totalitarian and its demonstration is here and now, it will be listened to and followed.<sup>101</sup>

Secular ideologies (-isms) are an attempt, in Jones' accounting, to bring back a unity of life that has become compartmentalized. Consistent with the first of these four features of Jones's thought, this unity of life is written into the reality of God's

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 144-5.

creation. The kingdom of God works holistically just as do ideologies, but they are only pretenders.

Finally, Jones considered the quest for the reclamation of the kingdom of God concept in Christianity to be itself a revelation from God.<sup>102</sup> Indeed, it is difficult to understate the position the kingdom of God came to hold in Jones's life and work. Jones embraced the claim of others that he was "obsessed" with the kingdom of God.<sup>103</sup> In terms of his personal Christian faith, it was all-consuming.

This obsession fuelled his criticism of the church and the affirmation of the church that occurred at Tambaram, even though he did not consider himself disloyal to the church: "The best life of the Kingdom is contained in the Church. But I know the limitations of even my mother. Where we make a relative thing into an absolute thing there is idolatry."<sup>104</sup> Also evident here is the move that Jones makes in absolutizing the kingdom of God and relativizing the church. He writes that to the extent that he might seem disloyal to the church he is "disloyal to the Church which is disloyal to the Kingdom of God by becoming an end in itself."<sup>105</sup>

The IMC meeting at Tambaram drew strong criticism from Jones, first in an article for the *Christian Century* and later in his post-Tambaram books. The

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<sup>102</sup> Graham, *Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Mission*, 242.

<sup>103</sup> Jones, *The Choice Before Us*, 17, 19. Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, 178.

<sup>104</sup> Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, 179

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

controversy became sharply worded in the periodical when noted Tambaram delegate Henry Van Dusen penned a reply, which earned a rejoinder from Jones.<sup>106</sup>

In the opening salvo, Jones's first level of criticism was that Tambaram put the church where the kingdom of God should be as a central concept: "The Kingdom is absolute; the church is relative. The Kingdom is the end; the church a means to that end."<sup>107</sup> This might be expected from Jones's overall commitment to the kingdom of God and what has already be seen regarding the link Jones uses between the kingdom of God and the person of Christ. But Jones joined this criticism with insinuations that the conference preached the church, not Christ and his kingdom, and that Tambaram rejected the kingdom of God outright.

Such insinuations are even harsher than they may initially seem when one considers the depth of faith and level of commitment represented by over 450 leaders of Protestant world missions and evangelism gathered at Tambaram. Hyperbole of that sort impugns their personal faith. Tell this sort of people that they are preaching a non-gospel and you have attacked a core aspect of their self-identity.

Van Dusen addressed both of these insinuations in his response. He accused Jones of reading and then quoting out of context. For example, the section about which Jones complained that the church was mentioned hundreds of times and the

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<sup>106</sup> E. Stanley Jones, "Where Madras Missed Its Way," *Christian Century* 56, no. 11 (March 15, 1939): 351-2. Henry Van Dusen, "What Stanley Jones Missed at Madras." *Christian Century* 56, no. 13 (March 29, 1939): 410-2. E. Stanley Jones, "What I Missed at Madras," *Christian Century* 56, no. 22 (May 31, 1939): 704-8. Most of Jones's criticism from the two articles would find fuller treatment in *Along the Indian Road*, described later in this chapter.

<sup>107</sup> Jones, "Where Madras Missed Its Way": 352.

kingdom of God only twice is the Section I chapter on “The Faith by which the Church Lives.” Van Dusen explained that the chapter in question was not intended to be taken as what Tambaram considered to be the whole of the Christian message.

By writing that Tambaram “looked out and saw the Kingdom and the church at the door, opened the door to the lesser and more obvious, the church, and left the Kingdom at the door,” Jones had implicitly set up a false dichotomy.<sup>108</sup> Van Dusen countered that it was not “either-or” but rather “both-and.”<sup>109</sup> The kingdom of God remained central in terms of the Christian faith and message, but the conference was about the church. Furthermore, the church was deemed central in terms of instrumentality when proclaiming that message “in the period immediately ahead” because of totalitarian ideologies and the current cultural crisis in modernity. This was a reading of the cultural situation on which the IMC and Jones generally agreed.

Van Dusen also contended that Jones’s interpretation of the kingdom of God was socio-political and tantamount to “a new social order,” which was actually contrary to scholarly consensus. While the scholarship of the day admitted to multivalence in the meaning of the kingdom of God, they *did* have consensus on one thing: that Jesus was not attempting a socio-political project.

In his rejoinder, Jones returned “unscathed, unrepentant and unchanged except at one point.”<sup>110</sup> Jones backed away from his characterization that Tambaram had overtly rejected the kingdom of God. But his emendation was a backhanded

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Van Dusen, “What Stanley Jones Missed at Madras”: 410.

<sup>110</sup> Jones, “What I Missed at Madras”: 704.

concession. His original characterization was “overstated” because Tambaram “made no such deliberate choice.” It had merely been swept along by the “fundamental preoccupation” with the church that was the basis of the conference on the heels of Oxford (Life and Work) and Edinburgh (Faith and Order).<sup>111</sup>

Jones denied the charge that he was preaching the kingdom of God as a new social order. Jones actually had presented the kingdom of God as a “social order” in *The Choice Before Us*, but the disagreement was more an issue of semantics.<sup>112</sup> It would not be hard for Jones to counter the charge with the larger body of his advocacy for the kingdom of God. Changes in the social order were a consequence of social and personal life ordered by the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of God was much greater than just a new social order.

To make his point about the deficiencies of focusing on the church instead of the kingdom of God, Jones also challenged Van Dusen:

Stand before an intelligent non-Christian audience in India and begin from a church-centric position and work out and see how far you get. In a few minutes you will be floundering. For the church is deeply suspect in India as bound up with communalism, imperialism and the old order. But begin with the Kingdom of God and work out to all the problems of life and you have a message that cuts through everything with incisiveness.<sup>113</sup>

This challenge, though, accentuates that while Van Dusen drew a distinction between the Christian message and focus on the church as instrument, Jones interpreted church-centrism as putting the church at the center of the Christian message itself.

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<sup>111</sup> It would seem the Tambaram delegates were not malevolent, merely foolish.

<sup>112</sup> Jones, *The Choice Before Us*, 29.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 705.

The rest of Jones's relevant criticisms about Tambaram were refined into his most extended treatment of Tambaram, which appeared in *Along the Indian Road* (1939). With "no real grip of the Kingdom of God," Madras lacked an image of Christ significant enough to make a claim on one's total life. Leading into his criticism of Tambaram, Jones had interpreted Kraemer's preparatory book:

In season and out of season the book insists that we must not be caught in relativisms, we must confront the world with an absolute. That absolute was the Absolute God. He [God] interprets Himself through Jesus Christ. So far, so good. I agree. But here a jump was made in the thought of the Conference. From the Absolute, God, they jumped to the Church as the working thought of the Conference. But the Church is a relativism.<sup>114</sup>

Jones thought Tambaram looked to the church to do work it could not do and should not be asked to do, which resulted in "floundering" in relativisms.<sup>115</sup>

Jones blamed the church-centric focus of Tambaram for what he claimed was a total lack of interest about the meeting in India after it concluded.<sup>116</sup> He considered the kingdom of God motif more fitting for India and its deep, historical sense of communalism than Western individualism, which had tainted Christianity and the church. The kingdom of God would have been a "master-key" for the church worldwide, but Tambaram failed to embrace it so that the "Church is still fumbling with all kinds of keys, ranging all the way from a narrow individualistic salvation to a Humanistic Socialism, and everything in between."<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, 165-6.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 164-5.

Tambaram's lack of prophetic voice regarding "persecution and national aggression" was also a subject of Jones's criticism.<sup>118</sup> The IMC had succumbed to the impulse to preserve fellowship because the church had become an end unto itself at the expense of the kingdom of God. Jones's criticism and *Rethinking Christianity in India* are parallel here: Tambaram made the church into an idol and the Western churches had been co-opted by socio-political forces. In the latter accusation Jones differed slightly in that he saw the Council's failure to speak the prophetic word in the socio-political realm as a result of the idolizing of the church (through the mechanism of preserving the fellowship). But even here, the implications are the same: errant thinking about the church contributes to Christianity's problems in the world.

Jones drew a distinction that when Tambaram announced that it had discovered the church they had really only discovered "the world-wide ecumenical body."<sup>119</sup> Such a discovery is "splendid," but not big enough, "not for this hour – or any hour. . . . What was needed was an all-embracing conception that was truly totalitarian to face all the lesser so-called totalitarians with a pre-emptory demand: Submit."<sup>120</sup> For Jones, this is something the church can never say in and of itself.

As with his response to Van Dusen, Jones blamed the pattern set by the other two conferences on the church held in 1937: Life and Work in Oxford, and Faith and Order in Edinburgh. The meeting was "started out on a church-centric groove and

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>119</sup> Jones is alluding to a press release "wired out" from Tambaram saying "Madras discovers the church." Jones, "Where Madras Missed Its Way": 351.

<sup>120</sup> Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, 170.

could not get out of it.”<sup>121</sup> According to Jones, it was only after his criticism that in the final reports the Council “sprinkled in the phrase, ‘the Kingdom of God,’ here and there,” but that the original proposals were bereft of the concept.<sup>122</sup> Jones felt that essentially the kingdom of God was “an afterthought” to the conference.<sup>123</sup>

Jones may have had valid concern about church-centrism, but even his biographer notes: “His accusation that the conference at Tambaram was unaware of this distinction and simply identified any and all Christian churches with the kingdom of God was at least exaggerated and was probably not based on a thorough and objective examination of what actually happened at the conference.”<sup>124</sup>

Tambaram came on the heels of a long bout of travelling and at a time of intense pressure, fatigue, and near burnout.<sup>125</sup>

Ralph Eugene Diffendorfer (1879-1951), Jones’s friend and fellow delegate to Tambaram, wrote to Jones after reading the galley proofs of *Along the Indian Road*. In the letter, Diffendorfer voiced concern over Jones’s critique and even commented that he had reviewed his copies of not the final reports, but rather the draft pamphlets circulated to the participants at the meeting. He believed Tambaram had “the correct view as to the relation of the Church to the Kingdom, and there is plenty

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>124</sup> Graham, *Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Mission*, 251.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 241-3.

of emphasis in these reports on the Kingdom of God conception.”<sup>126</sup> Diffendorfer went on to intimate that Jones’s sharpness of tone and misreading of Tambaram was at least partly attributable to overwork and exhaustion, encouraging Jones to take some time off.

A similar response was penned in March as a letter to the editor of the *Christian Century* after Jones’s initial article criticizing Tambaram and Van Dusen’s response to it in April, 1939 (but before Jones’s final rejoinder in May). Appearing in the correspondence section of the issue, Walter Horton’s (1895-1966) letter received a provocative headline from the journal’s editors: “Walter Horton Pleads ‘Not Guilty!’” With his own memories of the conference “so utterly at variance with Stanley Jones’ interpretation,” Horton, too, went back to the documents to see if “I and all the other delegates had unknowingly flouted God and His kingdom in an unholy enthusiasm for the church. . . . When Stanley Jones bawls me out, I always feel impelled to cast my eyes inward and watch myself sharply.”<sup>127</sup> After reading and reflection Horton deemed Jones’s accusation baseless. In a rather long-winded parenthetical to his progression of thoughts in the letter he replies:

(It seems to me, Brother Stanley, that you went off at half-cock this time. You came to the conference quite late, fresh from writing and preaching on the great theme of the Kingdom of God, and you were shocked to find us discussing the church – which was the subject we were called to discuss, and a good subject, if viewed rightly, as you will yourself admit. You warned us from the rostrum that the church must always hold herself subordinate to the Kingdom of God, and we agreed. We supposed that we had implied this in everything we had said, but lest there should be any doubt about it, we added

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<sup>126</sup> Ralph Eugene Diffendorfer, letter to E. Stanley Jones, November 9, 1939, quoted in Graham, *Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Mission*, 252.

<sup>127</sup> Walter Marshall Horton, letter to the editor, *Christian Century* 56, no. 16 (April 19, 1939): 517-8.

a paragraph here and a phrase there to make it doubly clear. If you had been with us for the previous two weeks and sensed something of the spirit in which we labored, I doubt if you would say today that when we listened to your earnest speech and made in response more extensive alterations than it is ordinarily possible to make in any collective document so late in the game, we were merely “putting the Kingdom into a paragraph,” or adding a meaningless “flourish.”<sup>128</sup>

Jones was indeed over a week late to the conference that ran December 12-29. Van Dusen had also pointed this out in his response to Jones’s first article.<sup>129</sup> Jones incorporated an admission of and response to that fact in *Along the Indian Road*.

It is likely that Diffendorfer and Horton have the better read on the meeting. Analysis of the features and tenor of Tambaram’s statements regarding the church (chapter three) does not support the charge that the meeting had made an idol of the church.<sup>130</sup> Likewise, a close reading of the documents validates Van Dusen’s point regarding the context and scope of the various reports.

Despite his contested view of the meeting, Jones’s advocacy of the kingdom of God has multiple parallels with the IMC’s thinking at the time. In addition to their mutual reading of culture and ideologies, Jones and the IMC also agree on the importance of repentance. In his earliest steps toward the kingdom of God motif Jones was awakened to Christianity locked up in Western norms.<sup>131</sup> This allowed

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Van Dusen’s understanding is that a “precariously close connection between boat and plane in England failed” producing almost a week-long delay. Van Dusen, “What Stanley Jones Missed at Madras”: 410.

<sup>130</sup> See also, Appendix D, which provides a reproduction of one of the more extended treatments of the kingdom of God in Tambaram’s final report.

<sup>131</sup> Graham, *Totalitarian Kingdom of God*, 5-6, 52-54, 107, 110.

him to turn a critical eye upon Western capitalism and “compartmentalization” with the same acuity as his criticism of secular ideologies. Conversion from all brands of ideology entailed repentance and realignment to the kingdom of God. This included repentance among the churches.<sup>132</sup>

Penitence was also required in cases of social justice because the kingdom of God affected both personal renovation and relationships (interpersonal and societal). For example, in late 1937 Jones added another “-ism” to communism, fascism, and Nazism: “military imperialism.”<sup>133</sup> Jones responded to Japan’s invasion of China, which was the event that forced the relocation of the IMC meeting to India. After an open letter to the Japanese people expectedly elicited no change, Jones called for an economic boycott in an open letter to the Christians of Great Britain and America.<sup>134</sup>

Jones faced criticism that a boycott caused the suffering of innocent Japanese citizens. In his rationale for the legitimacy of boycott Jones drew upon his knowledge of boycott in the Indian context (and Gandhi’s response to analogous criticism). The boycotters were not the ones causing the suffering, but rather the forces in power whose actions had prompted the boycott. But Jones also coupled the

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<sup>132</sup> Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, 96.

<sup>133</sup> Graham, *Ordinary Man, Extraordinary Mission*, 241.

<sup>134</sup> E. Stanley Jones, “An Open Letter to the People of Japan,” *Christian Century* 54, no. 37 (September 15, 1937): 1131-3; “An Open Letter to the Christian People of America and Great Britain,” *Christian Century* 54, no. 45 (November 10, 1937): 1386-8.

call to boycott with a call to repentance for personal and systemic complicity in enabling Japan's aggression and military imperialism.<sup>135</sup>

Finally, Jones's work in opposition to Western cultural imperialism and his interreligious and interdenominational work (Round Table Conferences, Christian Ashrams, and originally embodied in *The Christ of the Indian Road*)<sup>136</sup> provide another point of contact between Jones and Tambaram. Along with its penitence for past failures, Tambaram displayed a sensitivity to culture that affirmed indigenization and contextualization. This might ring well in Jones's ears; it did not, though, outweigh his dissatisfaction with Tambaram. Jones believed the meeting's emphasis on the church was an adulteration of the Christian message. He remained unconvinced that the kingdom of God bore enough significance in the collective thought of the IMC and that the church was held in perspective at Tambaram as an instrument instead of an idol.

### *The IMC and the Kingdom of God*

One of the reasons advocacy for the kingdom of God from the Rethinking Group and Jones did not gain traction at Tambaram is that it seemed to approach the issue with a sense of either/or. Protestant missions in the modern era had already passed through a phase of sorting out a too-facile identification between the kingdom of God and the church. Subsequently, the IMC at the time of Tambaram was

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<sup>135</sup> The episode unfolds in the pages of the *Christian Century* with three more submissions from Jones in addition to the two open letters. E. Stanley Jones, "Apply Gandhi's Method to Japan!" *Christian Century* 55, no. 3 (January 19, 1938): 75-6; "Apply the Gandhi Method to Japan!" *Christian Century* 56, no. 6 (February 8, 1939): 184-5; "The Only Door to Peace: An Open Letter to the Japanese People and the Christians of the World," *Christian Century* 55, no. 7 (February 16, 1938): 203-4.

<sup>136</sup> Graham, *Totalitarian Kingdom of God*, 5.

dealing with an aspect of that contention over the kingdom of God in which they established an attitude of both/and. The contemporary debate in the IMC pertained to the immanent versus eschatological facets of the kingdom of God, not the issue of the kingdom of God in its relation to the church, but the IMC's approach to the immanent-eschatological and the church-kingdom dynamics was the same: both/and.

### *Nineteenth-century Progressivism*

The first of these phases of Protestant coming-to-terms with the kingdom of God predated the formation of the IMC, but it is perhaps better to note that it predated the First World War. Nineteenth-century Western imperialism coupled with a sense of Western (Christian) cultural superiority produced “less and less tension between working for God’s kingdom and for the interests of the empire.”<sup>137</sup> An Enlightenment “doctrine of progress” infused Protestant mission with a sense of optimism.<sup>138</sup> Churches tended to view “God as benevolent Creator, humans as intrinsically capable of moral improvement, and the kingdom of God as the crown of the steady progression of Christianity.”<sup>139</sup> This was a more anthropocentric foundation for mission. The object of missions had an anthropocentric referent: heathens capable of being civilized and Christianized. Likewise, the mission was in

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<sup>137</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 282. Bosch examines these developments with depth and insight under his “modern Enlightenment paradigm.” *Ibid.*, 182, 281-351.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 356. Bosch contends that this Enlightenment progressivist doctrine bears significant responsibility in the rise of colonial expansion and imperialism in the first place, conceiving it as a civilizing force in the world.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 334.

the hands of human agents. Western mission theology tended to stand on the belief that the future of the world and of God's cause depended on them.<sup>140</sup> With "enthusiasm for conquering the world" and an unspoken assumption of Western civilization's superiority, this progressivist period was dominated by what William Hutchison calls "civilizing missions."<sup>141</sup>

Three other features accompanied this progressivist model. First, the gospel became instrumental.<sup>142</sup> This distinction parallels the terms of disagreement between Jones and Van Dusen. Jones accused Tambaram of preaching the church instead of the gospel (of the kingdom of God). Van Dusen countered that the church was not the message, it was an instrument – the best instrument and one that was needed at that particular time. Under nineteenth-century progressivism, not the church but the gospel itself was treated as a "tool" for producing human progress alongside science, technology, and industry.<sup>143</sup> Within the Christian lexicon, this human progress was baptized as the kingdom of God.

Second, there was a resurgence of Protestant confessionalism in mission. William Carey is credited with a missions awakening in Great Britain with his *Enquiry* (1792).<sup>144</sup> That same year the Baptist Missionary Society was established

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> William Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 93, 94, 102-3, 111.

<sup>142</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 335.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 336.

<sup>144</sup> William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (Leicester: Ann Ireland, et al., 1792).

and the Church Missionary Society (Anglican) in 1799. Neither society was “exclusivist or confessionalist,” and there followed approximately four decades of non-confessional mission.<sup>145</sup> Protestant confessionalism revived in response to mid-nineteenth-century rationalism and liberalism.<sup>146</sup> The Protestant mission enterprise underwent a period of denominationalism with a concomitant decline in nondenominational or pandenominational mission societies.<sup>147</sup> Distinctly confessional churches were planted on the mission field as Protestant denominations began to infuse the kingdom of God concept with the distinctives of their confessional tradition.<sup>148</sup> The churches were essentially seeing in themselves the kingdom of God and the kingdom of God was little more than expansion through the planting of confessional churches.<sup>149</sup>

Third, commencing with the reawakening of mission in the British mind attributed to Carey, the worldwide Protestant mission enterprise became steadily more North Atlantic (Anglo-American) in tenor.<sup>150</sup> In a reciprocal reinforcement of assumptions, the Enlightenment doctrine of progress melded with Anglo-American

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<sup>145</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 330.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 330. The first phase of Protestant confessionalism is generally assigned to the early modern era or late Reformation period from the late sixteenth century and the seventeenth century.

<sup>147</sup> Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 95.

<sup>148</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 330-1.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

<sup>150</sup> Andrew Walls has been instrumental in reminding historians of Christianity that the modern mission era did not begin with Carey's *Enquiry*. Continental Pietists, especially the Moravians, and others in Europe were mission conscious much earlier. Indeed, those modern missionary endeavors were part of the impetus for Carey's *Enquiry* – to motivate his own people toward mission. Andrew Walls, “The Protestant Missionary Awakening in Its European Context,” in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 194-214.

pragmatism, and especially with American activism and industriousness.<sup>151</sup> With this shift began a growing discomfort among Europeans, especially the Germans, with Anglo-American optimism and pragmatic zeal.<sup>152</sup>

Optimism pervaded Protestant missions. Bosch summarizes this phenomenon well:

The foundational Enlightenment belief in the assured victory of progress was perhaps more explicitly recognizable in the Christian missionary enterprise than any other element of the age. There was a widespread and practically unchallengeable confidence in the ability of Western Christians to offer a cure-all for the ills of the world and guarantee progress to all – whether through the spread of “knowledge” or of “the gospel.”<sup>153</sup>

This optimism was enshrined perhaps most notably in Arthur Pierson’s (1837-1911) “watchword” phrase, “The evangelization of the world in this generation.”<sup>154</sup> The watchword was adopted by the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) in 1889, was used as the title for an influential book penned by John Mott (1900), and was still full of cachet at Edinburgh 1910, which Mott chaired.<sup>155</sup>

Chastening came in the form of a world war that discredited the authority and supposed superiority of Western Christian society. World War I “shattered

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<sup>151</sup> For more on this character of American missions, which is widely accepted in the literature, see Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 222-31.

<sup>152</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 336. Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 32. Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 93.

<sup>153</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Missions*, 342-3.

<sup>154</sup> Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 118-9.

<sup>155</sup> John Mott, *The Evangelization of the World in this Generation* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1900). Timothy Yates characterizes 1900-10 as the pinnacle of this social progress motif in Protestant missionary history. Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 10.

hopes and complacencies.”<sup>156</sup> Spurred by the failures of liberal theology in the context of WWI, Karl Barth’s (1886-1968) “theology of crisis” began chipping away at the liberal theological tradition.<sup>157</sup> Protestant mission ebullience was toppled.

While the church-centric caricature of Tambaram implies naivety about Christendom, progressivism, and culture, by the time of Tambaram the progressivist model and this particular conception of the kingdom of God had already run its course in German-speaking Protestant circles. *Kulturprotestantismus* and *Kultur-Mission* had been wed to colonialism, pre-Hitler Reich thought and *Volkideologie*.<sup>158</sup> Through Barthians such as Kraemer and Hartenstein, Continentals in the IMC had rejected nineteenth-century progressivist understandings of Christianity and mission during the interwar period and were influencing others.<sup>159</sup>

### *The Continental Exception*

This inaugurated a new phase of contention over the kingdom of God concept, this time within the historical stream of the IMC. American activism seemingly sought to reinject a defunct model into this scene of chastened progressivism with the Laymen’s Foreign Mission Inquiry (LFMI), inaugurated in 1930, and its final report *Re-thinking Missions* (1932).<sup>160</sup> But before the LFMI

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<sup>156</sup> Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 125.

<sup>157</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 350.

<sup>158</sup> Michael Stroope, “Eschatological Mission: Its Reality and Possibility in the Theology of Karl Barth and its Influence on Modern Mission Theology” (Ph.D. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1985), 4-11.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 158. William Ernest Hocking, *Re-Thinking Missions: A Laymen’s Inquiry After One Hundred Years* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932).

embodied the Americans' perpetuation of nineteenth-century progressivism, there was the 1928 IMC meeting in Jerusalem.

A fault line formed at Jerusalem over the proper understanding and articulation of the kingdom of God concept. This fault line transected the liberal-conservative spectrum; in terms of factions, it was the Anglo-Americans and the Continentals.<sup>161</sup> Continental conservatives (especially the Germans and Scandinavians) were wary of language and motives that trended toward building or establishing the kingdom of God on earth, especially through human agency.<sup>162</sup> They advocated an eschatological understanding of the kingdom of God to counter the "aggressively activist" Americans.<sup>163</sup> The Jerusalem meeting is noted for taking a comprehensive approach, trying to hold together the two perspectives.<sup>164</sup> Thus, before Tambaram and before *Rethinking Christianity in India*, the IMC had already resolved to approach the kingdom of God in a balanced, both/and way.

Between Jerusalem and Tambaram, the LFMI changed the terms of the debate. Here was typical American activism, but also what looked to be a retooling of nineteenth-century progressivism. *Re-thinking Missions* espoused a Christianity like other religions, arising from humanity's search for truth rather than the "self-

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<sup>161</sup> Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 68.

<sup>162</sup> Dana Robert, "The First Globalization? The Internationalization of the Protestant Missionary Movement Between the World Wars," in *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities*, ed. Ogbu Kalu (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 100; Tomas Shivute, *The Theology of Mission and Evangelism in the International Missionary Council from Edinburgh to New Delhi* (Helsinki: Finnish Society for Missiology and Ecumenics, 1980), 50, 55.

<sup>163</sup> Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 129. Shivute, *The Theology of Mission and Evangelism in the IMC*, 50, 55. On the development of tensions between Continentals and America, see Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 125-38.

<sup>164</sup> Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 68, 70.

revelation of God in Christ.”<sup>165</sup> Not only was this an untenable anthropocentrism for the likes of Kraemer and other Barthians – essentially the same faction resistant to American activism’s emphasis on the immanent aspect of the kingdom of God – it was unacceptable to other conservative groups still represented in the IMC: fundamentalists and faith missions like the China Inland Mission.<sup>166</sup>

This anthropocentric aspect of the LFMI is the major reason why Kraemer’s preparatory volume became a launching pad for debate over continuity between Christianity and non-Christian religions. The basis of continuity argued by most proponents of that position was humanity’s search for truth.<sup>167</sup> Kraemer, though, rejected that position as progressivism and activism combined. He called the LFMI report “an effort to present the missionary cause as the expression of the responsibility of the West towards the emergence of a new Eastern world by making its spiritual contribution in the shape of Christian service.”<sup>168</sup> Kraemer further contested the LFMI’s “this-worldly idealism” and the implication that the kingdom of God could be the direct object of human labor.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Latourette, *Advance through Storm*, 53-4.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-4. The LFMI had been particularly harsh on more theologically conservative and evangelistic mission endeavors in China.

<sup>167</sup> The title to Kraemer’s work can be too narrowly interpreted by emphasis on the continuity debate that ensued. As the title suggests, it is not just about Christianity and other religions; it is about the Christian message in a non-Christian world. Kraemer is not just reading the world situation as regards non-Christian religions, he is also reading the world in terms of ideologies and totalitarianism, as discussed in chapter two.

<sup>168</sup> Kraemer, *Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, 36.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 48. For more on the response to the LFMI in Kraemer’s work, see Joe Thomas, “Continuity, Discontinuity, and the Finality of Christ: A Theological Essay on the Thought of Lesslie Newbigin and Hendrik Kraemer,” *Dharma Deepika* 13, no. 1 (January-June, 2009): 29-31.

The conflation of the kingdom of God, the church, and Western civilization may have been mortally wounded in the Great War, but it held on into the interwar years through the LFMI. The result was the continuity/discontinuity debate and a new phase of contention over the kingdom of God. By now, though, the full-fledged progressivist conflation of the kingdom of God and the expansion of Western Christianity and churches was dead. The anthropocentrism espoused by the LFMI was the real kernel of contention. Anthropocentrism as regards the object of mission gave fuel to the continuity debate. Horton, the same delegate who responded to Jones's criticism of Tambaram in a letter to the editor of the *Christian Century*, deftly captured the scene in the title of his contribution to the volume of the Madras Series dedicated to Kraemer's text: "Between Hocking and Kraemer."<sup>170</sup>

Anthropocentrism as regards the agency and motive of mission fueled the debate over the kingdom of God as it had been focused at Jerusalem before the LFMI entered the scene: on the eschatological versus the immanent aspects of the kingdom. The immanent interpretation of the kingdom was highly unlikely to take sole possession of the IMC's articulation of the kingdom of God. The discrediting of progressivism and Barthian shifts already underway would take their toll. The Movement for World Christianity, which sought to promote the principles of *Re-thinking Missions*, was established in 1934 and died out in 1939. Historian Kenneth Scott Latourette noted, "It had a following among some liberal intellectuals, but the brevity of its career testified to the lack of enthusiasm for it among the rank

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<sup>170</sup> Walter Marshall Horton, "Between Hocking and Kraemer," in IMC, *The Authority of the Faith*, vol. 1, Madras Series, 137-49.

and file of those from whom most of the financial support for the Protestant missionary enterprise was derived.”<sup>171</sup>

But if the progressivist kingdom of God would not hold sway at Tambaram, neither would the conservative, eschatological interpretation. The IMC entered Tambaram having set their trajectory at Jerusalem. They would still try to hold together the eschatological and the immanent aspects of the kingdom of God.

Continental misgivings reached a crescendo at Tambaram in the form of statement taking exception to some of the language used in the reports. The German delegation felt themselves “bound by conscience to point to some vital principles of the Gospel, which must be emphasized in contrast with certain passages in the reports of some sections.”<sup>172</sup> What followed were three items, naming specific statements from various sections of the final reports and countering with an assertion the eschatological interpretation of the kingdom of God (see Appendix E).

In both his initial *Christian Century* critique and in *Along the Indian Road*, Jones made note of the German statement. He praised Tambaram for “bringing together differing theologies and outlooks, particularly the European and the American,” but “Continental theology would take no correction and issued its own separate statement.”<sup>173</sup> To Jones, the Continental exception failed to acknowledge that there is a here and now “gradualism” to the kingdom of God, that both

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<sup>171</sup> Latourette, *Advance through Storm*, 52.

<sup>172</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 150. See also, Hartenstein, *Weltmissionskonferenz Tambaram*, 11-2.

<sup>173</sup> Jones, “Where Madras Missed Its Way”: 351.

eschatology and gradualism are “legitimate parts” of the biblical account of the kingdom of God.<sup>174</sup>

Jones was critical of the Continental exception because he, like the IMC, wanted a both/and treatment of the two conceptual aspects of the kingdom of God. The IMC also handled the Rethinking Group’s pre-conference advocacy of the kingdom of God and Jones’s advocacy during the conference with a both/and approach: both kingdom and church. But to this, Jones took exception.<sup>175</sup>

### *Other Factors*

#### *The Kingdom of God Movement in Japan*

Another factor weighed against advocacy of the kingdom of God in lieu of the church. From 1930 to 1934 Japanese Christians rallied around the kingdom of God concept as an impetus for evangelism.<sup>176</sup> Akira Ebisawa, General Secretary of the

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<sup>174</sup> Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, 178.

<sup>175</sup> This history of contention over the kingdom of God in the IMC also provides context to a verbal exchange in Tambaram at which Jones rails in his articles and in *Along the Indian Road*. When he pressed the issue of the kingdom of God during the conference, Jones received the response that the kingdom of God was too difficult to define. Jones considered it a “devastating reply” that Jesus’ central message should be “too hazy” to be usable. The person who gave this response to Jones at the conference was Van Dusen, also the primary author of the section of the report that Jones most castigates. To his credit, Van Dusen’s response is more sensible when one considers the difficulty in precisely articulating the kingdom of God in the midst of differing opinions. Van Dusen pointed this out in his response to Jones’s initial article. While Jones might have countered that the church is an equally troublesome thing to define, he stayed with his original line of criticism that the church had been absolutized when it is the kingdom of God that is the absolute.

In his post-Tambaram report, Hartenstein made note of the level of contention (tiefgehende Kämpfe) over sections one and two and the articulation of the “message” of the meeting. Hartenstein, *Weltmissionskonferenz Tambaram*, 9. See also, Karl Hartenstein, “Der Kampf um die Botschaft,” in *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der Erde: Bericht über Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram*, ed. Martin Schlunk (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 37-45.

<sup>176</sup> The name most associated with Japan’s Kingdom of God Movement is that of its well-known founder, Toyohiko Kagawa (1888-1960). Kagawa attended the Tambaram meeting as a “co-opted member,” spoke to the meeting on “The Meaning of the Cross,” and wrote an essay “Occupational Evangelism” published in the Madras Series. IMC, *Addresses and Other Records*, vol. 7,

National Christian Council in Japan, provided a report for the Tambaram meeting outlining the Kingdom of God Movement in Japan and including assessments and criticisms. The report was deemed important and relevant enough to be selected for publication in the Madras Series.<sup>177</sup>

At its outset, the Kingdom of God Movement established four basic principles. The Movement was to be “Church-centric,” be “Christ-centric,” “give local autonomy,” and be organized “interdenominationally.”<sup>178</sup> Ebisawa credited these principles for the successes of the movement. Nevertheless, after the Movement came to a close in December, 1934, indigenous leaders assessed that the Movement had not been church-centric enough. The Madras Series included this comment on the Kingdom of God Movement in Japan: “It had been felt that one of the principal defects of the Kingdom of God Movement had been its lack of sufficiently close connection with the denominational life of the Christians in Japan. As the leaders of the Japanese churches began to make plans for the future they determined that, if possible, any future movement should be more closely integrated with the churches as such.”<sup>179</sup> This statement is not drawn from any quoted report, but rather is added information and interpretation from the unnamed editor of the section on Japan.

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Madras Series, 21-5; *Evangelism*, vol. 3, Madras Series, 357-62. Hans-Ruedi Weber provides a brief overview of Kagawa’s ecclesiology in *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement*, 192-7. See also, Toyohiko Kagawa, “Three Main Objectives of the Kingdom of God Movement,” *International Review of Mission* 20, no. 79 (July 1931): 333-44.

<sup>177</sup> IMC, *Evangelism*, vol. 3, Madras Series, 176-81.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-7.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

The comment serves as a kind of midrash on the thought of the Council: the kingdom of God and the church belong together, not as alternatives one to the other.

### *India Divided*

Sebastian Kim implies that the Rethinking Group's interest in integrating Indian Christian community with Hindu culture is associated with their social status. He further suggests that the Rethinking Group's criticism should be held in contrast with the criticism of lower caste Indian Christians against higher castes in the Indian Church. They inveighed against the perpetuation of prejudice and oppression based on caste in the Indian church and, rather than suggesting the kingdom of God or some other alternative to the church, pushed for the Indian church to reform to properly reflect the values of the gospel.<sup>180</sup> The Rethinking Group also did not speak for another segment of Indian Christianity, one that held the church in high regard. This segment counted among its leaders the widely respected and influential Bishop of Dornakal, Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah.<sup>181</sup> A divided Indian voice likely lessened the persuasive power of the Rethinking Group.

### *Conclusion*

The Rethinking Group and E. Stanley Jones expressed strong criticism of Tambaram's focus on the church. Making their case prior to the assembly, the

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<sup>180</sup> Kim, "The Identity and Mission of the Church in the Asian Contexts," 20; Kim, "The Kingdom of God *versus* the Church," 145.

<sup>181</sup> Kim, "The Kingdom of God *versus* the Church," 135. Azariah was, though, a strong advocate for indigenous Indian Christianity. Susan Harper, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma: Bishop V.S. Azariah and the Travails of Christianity in British India* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 3.

Rethinking Group did not directly address church-centric mission theology or Tambaram's ecclesiology. They drew upon their experience of cultural and religious imperialism and voiced a critique of Western church forms and the transmission of those forms in mission as normative for Christian community. They interpreted the meeting's focus on the church as indicative of an ecclesiasticism that was consistent with the sacerdotalism and denominationalism they already perceived in Western Christianity.

This constellation of problems with Western thinking about the church was an obstacle to the integration of Indian Christianity and India's Hindu culture and societal structure. This integration was sought because of the importance of Hindu identity and heritage to higher caste Indians, but it also contained a practical side. The Rethinking Group contended that Christianity could never really succeed in Hindu culture without this integration, which meant radical transformation and retooling of the concept of Christian community.

E. Stanley Jones's advocacy for the kingdom of God also contained this practical element, but the soul of his critique was found in his self-admitted obsession with the kingdom of God as the key to true Christianity. While Jones was also critical of the IMC's decision to focus on the church at Tambaram, that criticism stemmed from his assessment that the meeting had elevated the church to an absolute, the position he reserved for his conception of the kingdom of God. Analysis of Tambaram's ecclesiology (chapter three) and the testimony of those who responded to Jones attest that Tambaram did not idolize the church. Jones contended that Tambaram essentially presented the church as the gospel.

Jones's criticism must be weighed not only in regard to his detractors' refutations and his state of mind at the time. For both Jones and the Rethinking Group, a major part of their criticism could be understood as a charge akin to the conflation of the church and the kingdom of God like nineteenth-century progressivism. The Rethinking Group said that the West thinks its ecclesiology is normative and yet subscribes to a denominationalism that belies the elevation of the church beyond its station as if it is equivalent to God's kingdom. Even Jones's charge that one was swapped for the other can be understood in terms of equivocation and conflation in a sort of errant algebraic substitution.

To the majority of the IMC, this idea of the church elevated to kingdom status was a historical issue already settled. At the same time, there was ongoing contention over the kingdom of God concept within the IMC since before Jerusalem. A tension between Continental and Anglo-American modes of thinking about mission had been developing since the pinnacle of nineteenth-century progressivism at Edinburgh 1910. American activism remained after nineteenth-century progressivism's demise and the variance between modes of thinking about mission became localized in the concept of the kingdom of God. Since Jerusalem 1928, the IMC had practiced a both/and approach regarding the two major aspects of the kingdom of God.

There was little possibility that Jones's kingdom of God concept would hold sway at Tambaram to Jones's liking because the kingdom of God was already the focal point of ongoing internecine struggle. Jones predicted that "this Church emphasis of the Conference will run out and show its inadequacy in a few years, and

then we shall have another conference to rediscover the Kingdom.”<sup>182</sup> Whitby 1947 did return to the question of the kingdom of God, which is partial validation of Jones’s prediction. But Whitby was not a reversal of course from Tambaram, and for reasons discussed in chapter five, neither was Willingen 1952. The kingdom of God concept did move out of the role it played in Jerusalem and Tambaram and into a new theological role post-Willingen as a bridge from the doctrine of God to ecclesiology.

Regardless of the kingdom of God concept being the focal point of contention, the IMC gathered at Tambaram with the explicit intent to consider the church. They had ample cause to do so. Not only were there contextual factors at work, the Rethinking Group’s criticism of mission history in India is indicative of problems in the relationship between church and mission. The church-mission dynamic needed attention. The IMC would have found it very difficult indeed to dispense with their focus on the church as it seemed the Rethinking Group and Jones wanted, but the weight of evidence shows that they did not categorically abandon the kingdom of God either.

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<sup>182</sup> Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, 179.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Devaluation

The topic of this historical study was prompted by an interest in missional ecclesiology and its origin story. There is an apparent contradiction between Karl Hartenstein's encapsulation of Tambaram, "Whoever says church says mission; or conversely, whoever says mission says church,"<sup>1</sup> and the subsequent portrayal of Tambaram as the pinnacle of church-centric mission rejected by means of the *missio Dei* mission theology that followed Willingen 1952.

Despite the sophistication of Tambaram's ecclesiology, the meeting has been devalued and a caricature evolved. The normal stock and trade of missional ecclesiologists and *missio Dei* proponents is to decry the errors of Tambaram's church-centrism.<sup>2</sup> This chapter presents a closer look at the caricature of church-centrism, challenges the caricature as portrayed alongside a common overvaluation of Willingen and *missio Dei*, and provides suggestions for reassessing the continuity between Tambaram and missional ecclesiology.

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<sup>1</sup> "Wer Kirche sagt, sagt Mission. Aber umgekehrt: Wer Mission sagt, sagt Kirche." Karl Hartenstein "Was haben wir von Tambaram zu lernen?" in *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der Erde: Bericht über Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram*, ed. Martin Schlunk (Stuttgart; Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag, 1939), 194.

<sup>2</sup> Ed Stetzer is a rare instance of an advocate of missional ecclesiology who in a brief blog essay: (1) does not vilify Tambaram, but rather gives it guarded positive regard at the *beginning* of missional ecclesiology's origins, and (2) makes reference to the contributions of three historical figures that are also addressed in this study (E. Stanley Jones, Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk, and Lesslie Newbigin). Ed Stetzer, "Seeing Missional in 3D-- A First Draft." *Christianity Today*, October 3, 2011, accessed January 12, 2015, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2011/october/seeing-missional-in-3d--first-draft.html>.

### *The Caricature of Church-Centrism*

Church-centric was not originally a pejorative term. John Mott praised Tambaram's "Church-centric policy" in 1939. For him, Tambaram was doing critical work to answer the question, "How may the Church be made truly the Body of Christ in organization, in polity, in witness, in service, and in relationships of all its parts?"<sup>3</sup> The term started bending under the weight of negative connotations around the time of Willingen 1952. Criticism of church-centric mission leading up to Willingen made the topic a source of debate at Willingen. With the ascendance of *missio Dei* after Willingen, the caricature of church-centrism took hold. Before exploring the dynamic between Tambaram and Willingen, though, the caricature challenged by the results of this study warrants a closer look.

Two types of errors tend to accompany the caricature. First, Tambaram is misrepresented as saying things or holding principles that are not there upon closer inspection of the meeting's documents. Second, positions that are part of Tambaram's record are not acknowledged as such. This latter error usually pertains to something that is positively regarded by the person subscribing to the caricature but the positive attribute is attributed elsewhere.

Today, the negative portrayals of church-centrism vary in intensity. A typical, moderately caricatured approach can be seen in Charles Van Engen's "The Uniqueness of Christ in Mission Theology." Van Engen is a prominent figure in missional ecclesiology. In his book, he presents a typology of three ways to consider the relation of Christianity to other religions: pluralist, inclusivist, and exclusivist.

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<sup>3</sup> John Mott, *Five Decades and a Forward View* (New York; London: Harper, 1939), 110.

Van Engen further labels the exclusivist position “an ecclesiocentric paradigm” and summarizes its chief characteristics in a twenty-item list:

1. Starting point: the church as the ark of salvation
2. Absolutism regarding personal allegiance to Jesus Christ *in the church* (a rather medieval, institutional understanding of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*)
3. Prior choice: salvation only in the (my) institutional church
4. Concern that all non-Christians become Christians in the church
5. Understanding of Romans 5:12-19: “in Adam” all sinned
6. Strong verticalist orientation
7. All religious systems and cultures outside the church regarded as sinful (religious coexistence is possible only as people become Christian and part of the institutional church)
8. Heavy emphasis on theology of the fall and sin
9. Pessimism about culture/faith
10. Bible regarded as God’s inspired revelation proclaimed through the church
11. Strong concern about uniqueness of Christ
12. Strong emphasis on conversion and transformation in and through Jesus Christ (and the church)
13. Personal relationship with Jesus a necessity
14. Holy Spirit predominately mediated in word, worship, sacrament
15. Great optimism about the church – ecclesiocentric focus
16. Overemphasis on kingdom of darkness; not much about the demonic
17. Ultimately a triumphalistic, dominating, self-serving approach
18. Success among folk religions
19. Lack of success among world religions
20. Mission defined as rescuing people out of sinful cultures into the church.<sup>4</sup>

Several of the entries have little direct bearing on ecclesiology and mission (5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 16). Others seem to just have the church tacked on at the end or are essentially self-evident to a church-centric model (4, 10, 12, 14, 15). Most importantly, Tambaram is unlike several of the items in the list. Other items would

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Van Engen, “The Uniqueness of Christ in Mission Theology,” in *Landmark Essays in Mission and World Christianity*, ed. Robert Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009), 165-6.

need further explanation regarding the extent to which they might apply to

Tambaram or not. The candidates for this subset include:

1. Starting point: the church as the ark of salvation
2. Absolutism regarding personal allegiance to Jesus Christ *in the church* (a rather medieval, institutional understanding of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*)
3. Prior choice: salvation only in the (my) institutional church
7. All religious systems and cultures outside the church regarded as sinful (religious coexistence is possible only as people become Christian and part of the institutional church)
9. Pessimism about culture/faith
17. Ultimately a triumphalistic, dominating, self-serving approach
18. Success among folk religions
19. Lack of success among world religions
20. Mission defined as rescuing people out of sinful cultures into the church.<sup>5</sup>

Tambaram does not make claims that outside the church there is no salvation (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*) and is significantly more sensitive and open to culture than the church-centrism presented by Van Engen. This version of church-centrism resembles nineteenth-century progressivism more than it does Tambaram.

Similarly, Wilbert Shenk contrasts the new paradigm of mission with all of mission history preceding it: "From the beginning of the Christian movement, and particularly during the modern period, when intercultural contacts were increasing rapidly, the missionary attitude was to treat culture as a problem to be solved."<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, analysis of the Tambaram documents shows that culture *per se* was not fundamentally seen as a problem to be solved. There were problems and challenges in the rapid and significant cultural changes occurring throughout the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Wilbert Shenk, "Recasting Theology of Mission: Impulses from the Non-Western World," in *Landmark Essays in Mission and World Christianity*, ed. Robert Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009), 122.

world, but culture itself was not automatically the problem. Rather, the evidence shows a sophisticated awareness of culture as the framework in which the church lives and works.

Shenk's *Changing Frontiers of Mission* is particularly egregious in its caricature of church-centrism. Surveying the theological "frontier" of the early twenty-first-century mission theology, Shenk characterizes church-centrism as "a deformed understanding of the nature and purpose of the church."<sup>7</sup> According to Shenk, church-centrism prioritizes church over mission, which reflects a separation of the two that "cannot be defended on biblical or theological grounds."<sup>8</sup> He continues: "The New Testament defines the *raison d'être* of the church to be missionary witness to the world, thus at one stroke sharply focusing its purpose while subsuming all other functions under mission."<sup>9</sup> Reminiscent of the Rethinking Group and E. Stanley Jones, Shenk decries institutionalism, or said theologically, idolatry, surrounding the church.<sup>10</sup> In a move exemplary of the caricature dynamic, Shenk blames Christendom and lauds the corrective of *missio Dei*: "To be authentic, mission must be thoroughly theocentric."<sup>11</sup> Later in the text, Shenk discusses

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<sup>7</sup> Wilbert Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 7.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 7, 15. Christendom is a substantive difference between missional ecclesiology, current Protestant conciliar missions, and Tambaram. There is no denying that Tambaram, for all its sensitivity to culture, operated within a Christendom framework. The contrast, with examples from Tambaram's documents, will be discussed below.

Shenk's comment on theocentrism as the only authentic approach to mission is particularly unsettling from someone with his recognized expertise and academic pedigree; it is presented as a truism.

Kraemer, his work, and the relationship between Christianity and non-Christian religions with no mention of Tambaram at all.<sup>12</sup> While there are differences between what Shenk espouses and Tambaram, they are not so stark that one cannot see affinity between Shenk's *raison d'être* comment and Tambaram's witness-bearing church or Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah's exposition of the role of the church in evangelism.

Another recurrent feature of the caricature is that church-centric mission is overly concerned with adding numbers to the church, that it is solely or primarily about church growth. The Rethinking Group's criticism demonstrates that this was an ongoing concern at the time of Tambaram. But rather than further enabling this practice, Tambaram recognized it as a failure of the church for which repentance was called.

Emphasis on church growth is a sensitive subject for missional ecclesiologists because they found themselves in an ecclesiological landscape that included advocates of seeker-sensitive church, the emerging/emergent stream of ecclesiology, and other voices with varying levels of resemblance to missional ecclesiology.<sup>13</sup> Missional ecclesiology criticizes many, but not all, of its contemporaries as perpetuating an obsession with the numbers. In attempts to reinvigorate the church in post-Christendom contexts missional ecclesiology's rivals still fall prey to the practice of measuring success in terms of "how many, how often,

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 172-3.

<sup>13</sup> Tom Sine analyzes four of these burgeoning approaches to Christian community. *The New Conspirators: Creating the Future One Mustard Seed at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008).

how much.”<sup>14</sup> The blame for emphasis on the numbers in current, North American ecclesiology is generally attributed to a corporatized church model more than denominational exclusivity. In the latter half of the twentieth century, the intensity of denominational allegiances lessened while at the same time strategies of management and a general numbers-equals-success mentality increased its hold on North American church life.

A slightly older target of the growth-by-numbers criticism is the Church Growth Movement associated with Donald McGavran (1897-1990). McGavran was a third generation Disciples of Christ missionary to India and became a student of J. Waskom Pickett’s sociological methods. McGavran coupled sociology with a metric for success based on numerical growth. Newbigin was critical of this approach to mission.<sup>15</sup> Missional ecclesiology has since mounted resistance to growth-by-numbers ecclesiology in general, and to McGavran’s Church Growth Movement in particular.<sup>16</sup> When growth-by-numbers is added to the church-centric caricature, missional ecclesiology’s aversion to Tambaram increases.

Finally, the church-centric caricature is sometimes subtly and perhaps inadvertently perpetuated. Mark Laing, more a Newbigin scholar than a missional ecclesiology advocate, has focused his investigations on the integration of the

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<sup>14</sup> Reggie McNeal calls this the typical “church scorecard.” Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), xvii.

<sup>15</sup> Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 218.

<sup>16</sup> For an explicit distancing of missional ecclesiology from both the general and particular approaches to growth by numbers, see Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 82. See also, C. René Padilla, “The Unity of the Church and the Homogenous Unit Principle,” in *Landmark Essays in Mission and World Christianity*, ed. Robert Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009), 73-92.

International Missionary Council and World Council of Churches. Talks toward integration began in committees as early as 1952, and the integration was completed in a joint meeting at New Delhi 1961. Laing, writing about an event well after Tambaram, states, "Integration of the IMC with WCC was always understood to mean more than an administrative union, but also as a sign that the church *is* the mission. Recovering this relationship between mission and the church implied that the prior ecclesiology was defective, incomplete or distorted."<sup>17</sup> Laing refers to this as a "theological breakthrough," but it is difficult to see how this assertion about the integration is so different than Tambaram's affirmation of the church in mission. In contrast, Hans-Ruedi Weber did not succumb to the hard line of demarcation drawn after Tambaram when he was writing in 1966:

The basic reasons for this organizational integration [between WCC and IMC] were the theological rediscoveries of the missionary nature of the Church and therefore of the interdependence between evangelism and missions, and between the witness, service and unity of the Church. These theological discoveries which marked the Tambaram Conference in 1938 were carried over into the WCC and there developed further.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, an important aspect of Tambaram that is considered laudatory today is erased from the meeting and re-attributed somewhere else in the history of Protestant missions, leaving Tambaram assessed negatively on the basis of inaccurate representations of church-centrism.

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<sup>17</sup> Mark Laing, "The Church is the Mission: Integrating the IMC with the WCC," *International Review of Mission* 100, no. 2 (2011): 225.

<sup>18</sup> Hans-Ruedi Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement, 1895-1961* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1966), 230.

## *Devaluing Tambaram*

As with Laing, David Bosch's landmark work can also contribute to the devaluing of Tambaram in a subtle and perhaps inadvertent way.<sup>19</sup> Citing Bosch, Augusto Rodríguez says of Willingen:

By 1952 at the Willingen congress of the International Missionary Council (IMC), the debate continued with the assumption that the emphasis of mission was centered in the church. It is at Willingen that a new approach to mission emerges, considering now the church neither as the center, nor as the objective of mission, but as one and the same in the *Missio Dei*. The mission of God is the mission of the church and the mission of the church is the mission of God. The church is the mission, and because the church is everywhere, missionary headquarters are everywhere.<sup>20</sup>

This statement draws a valid contrast and correctly captures the major change that was made in mission theology – locating the theological foundation for mission in the Trinity. The statement has two weaknesses, though.

First, the development is presented as if the theological foundation of mission was formerly located in the church. Craig Van Gelder rightly recognizes that the theological foundation for mission leading into Willingen was not located in ecclesiology, but rather Christology: “What became known as the *missio Dei* in the aftermath of Willingen in 1952 shifted the theological foundations for mission from a high Christology to a trinitarian perspective. This perspective was primarily related to the Augustinian tradition of understanding God as it was retranslated by

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<sup>19</sup> An example of Bosch's stark contrast between Willingen and what preceded it can be found in chapter one.

<sup>20</sup> Augusto Rodríguez, *Paradigms of the Church in Mission: A Historical Survey of the Church's Self-Understanding of being the Church and of Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 67. Rodríguez cites David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1991), 369-71.

Karl Barth into the twentieth century.”<sup>21</sup> The affirmation of the church that occurred at Tambaram was still a second-order theological move in terms of the foundation of mission itself. Ecclesiology was a derivative of the person and work of Christ.<sup>22</sup>

The second weakness in Rodríguez’s statement is that while drawing a contrast between church-centrism and Willingen he affirms on the Willingen side of the ledger a church-mission connection that is very close to that of Tambaram. That affirmation goes from very close to identical in Rodríguez’s next paragraph, in which he again cites Bosch.

In the New Apostolic Paradigm the church is missionary in nature. There is no mission without the church and no church without mission. The church commissions and is commissioned. The missionary nature of the church is evidenced by how the church glorifies God in worship, community, and witness; where the ministry is decentralized among the members of the body and where the church intentionally involves itself in bringing the gospel to the community it serves.<sup>23</sup>

As with Laing, Tambaram is divested of its contribution, which is re-attributed to later developments.

Rodríguez is correct in asserting that Willingen was conceived as a continuation of the church-centric thought of Tambaram. Willingen sought to continue the work of Tambaram in choosing as its theme “The Missionary Obligation of the Church.” Likewise, Norman Goodall’s opening address titled “Willingen – Milestone, not Terminus” stressed continuity with what had come

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<sup>21</sup> Craig Van Gelder, *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 9.

<sup>22</sup> After the trinitarian relocation performed by *missio Dei*, ecclesiology was a derivative of the doctrine of God, as described later this chapter.

<sup>23</sup> Rodríguez, *Paradigms of the Church in Mission*, 68, citing Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 373.

before. But neither was Willingen to be a finishing point, saying that they had figured it all out; Goodall also expressed an expectation of continuity with developments still to come.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, alongside the caricature of Tambaram is a caricature of Willingen, which is looked to as the great meeting that finally got it right, or at least started the ball rolling, in disavowing church-centric mission.<sup>25</sup>

In a 1962 unpublished manuscript, Newbigin traced the trajectories coming into Willingen. Edinburgh had one conception of the kingdom of God, Jerusalem another, but “the Tambaram Meeting marked the beginning of an exceedingly necessary and fruitful period during which missionary thinking was, to use the oft repeated phrase, church-centric.”<sup>26</sup> Newbigin goes on to say, “Willingen held strong criticism for and debate about church centrism.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Norman Goodall, “Willingen – Milestone, Not Terminus,” in *Missions Under the Cross: Addresses Delivered at the Enlarged Meeting of the Committee of the International Missionary Council at Willingen, in Germany, 1952; with Statements Issued by the Meeting*, ed. Norman Goodall (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1953), 9-23.

<sup>25</sup> Proponents of *missio Dei* are invariably careful to acknowledge that the actual formulation “*missio Dei*” occurs nowhere in the Willingen documents. Willingen is credited with the discovery that is later articulated through the work of Hartenstein, who epitomized Tambaram in a statement seemingly forgotten.

<sup>26</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, “The Mission of the Triune God,” unpublished manuscript, 1962, <http://www.newbigin.net/assets/pdf/62mtg.pdf> (accessed November 20, 2012), 8. Contrast this positive regard for Tambaram (“exceedingly necessary and fruitful”) with Laing’s characterization that Newbigin abandoned church-centrism because of its inadequacies and thereby arrived at a trinitarian foundation for mission. Mark Laing, *From Crisis to Creation: Lesslie Newbigin and the Reinvention of Christian Mission* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 59. While it is true that Newbigin eventually espoused the trinitarian foundation of mission as an improvement in mission theology and that after a church-centric phase Newbigin recognized potential problems in a church-centric approach to mission, the contrast being drawn by Laing is too stark. Newbigin is more measured in his approach to the post-Tambaram developments, as will presently be demonstrated in this chapter.

<sup>27</sup> Newbigin, “The Mission of the Triune God,” 8.

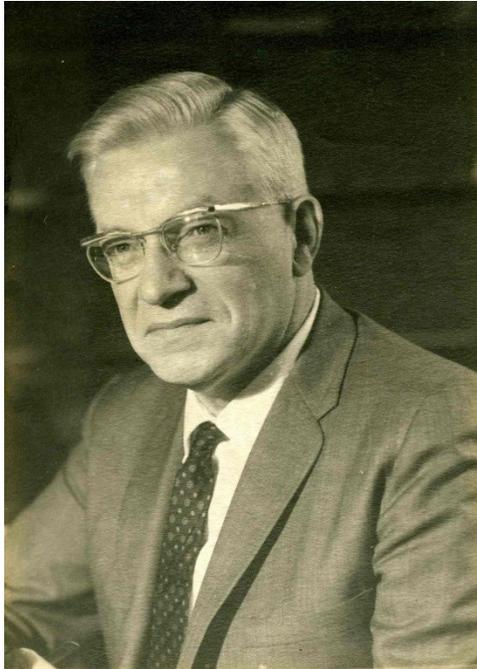


Figure 4: Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975). (“Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk Image,” courtesy of Burke Library Archives, Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York.)

Willingen was polarized between a majority that maintained the Tambaram model and Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk (1912-1975) and Paul Lehmann (1906-1994) advocating a shift from church-centric mission to speaking more of “God’s work in the secular world, in the political, cultural and scientific movements of the time.”<sup>28</sup> Hoekendijk challenged church-centric thinking, calling the church an “illegitimate center” that was “bound to go astray.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda: An Autobiography* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1985), 133, quoted in Laing, “The Church is the Mission”: 222. See also, Laing, *From Crisis to Creation*, 62.

<sup>29</sup> Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk, “The Church in Missionary Thinking,” *International Review of Mission* 41, no. 163 (July 1952): 332. For a summary of Hoekendijk’s fuller project (shalom) and influence, see L. A. Hoedemaker, “The Legacy of J C Hoekendijk,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 19, no. 4 (October 1995): 166-70. For primary texts, start with Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, ed. L. A. Hoedemaker and Pieter Tijmes, trans. Isaac Rotternberg (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966).

Hoekendijk grew up in western Java where his father was a missionary. He had hopes of becoming a missionary himself, entering the missionary school in Oegstgeest, the Netherlands, at eighteen. He studied theology at the State University of Utrecht (1936-41) hoping to return to Indonesia as a missionary after finishing his dissertation, but the onset of World War II interrupted those plans. Hoekendijk helped Jewish children as part of the Dutch resistance and for part of the war provided pastoral care to refugees in Geneva. In 1945, Hoekendijk made it to Indonesia, but his missionary career was cut short by severe health problems and he returned to the Netherlands in 1946. Hoekendijk finished his dissertation, "Church and *Volk* in German Missiology," in 1948.<sup>30</sup>

Hoekendijk's translator called him a "troubler of Israel" that deserved a hearing, making reference to what he perceived was a prophetic nature to Hoekendijk's criticism of the church.<sup>31</sup> Likewise, the editors of that English translation of Hoekendijk's work hoped that his broader system of thought would gain wider exposure than the "few sensational articles" for which he was then known.<sup>32</sup> One such sensational article was a 1952 essay written as a preparatory paper for the IMC's world gathering in Willingen: "The Church in Missionary Thinking." That essay is the source of Hoekendijk's often quoted opinion that the church is an illegitimate center that is bound to go astray.

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<sup>30</sup> The biographical details of this paragraph are gleaned from L. A. Hoedemaker, "The Legacy of J C Hoekendijk," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 19, no. 4 (October 1995): 166.

<sup>31</sup> Isaac Rottenberg, "Translator's Note," in Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), 5.

<sup>32</sup> L. A. Hoedemaker and Pieter Tijmes, "Foreword," in Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, 7.

Hoekendijk's campaign against church-centrism grew to become the ascendant movement within Protestant conciliar mission by 1960. At the 1960 Strasbourg meeting of the World's Student Christian Federation, Karl Barth himself, along with his allies Willem Visser 't Hooft, Lesslie Newbigin, and Daniel Thambyrajah Niles (prominent Asian Christian leader from Ceylon) were very coolly received and treated with hostile questioning and challenges. The participants were motivated by Hoekendijk's desacralization of the church and mission, which blended well with a burgeoning anti-institutional attitude of the time.<sup>33</sup> By 1960, Hoekendijk's emphasis on God's work in the world had commandeered *missio Dei* from what had been a God-Church-World relationship to just God-World.<sup>34</sup> According to Hoekendijk, the kingdom of God and the world belong together and "the church has no fixed place in this context, it *happens* insofar as it actually proclaims the Kingdom to the world."<sup>35</sup> Whereas it was formerly thought that the apostolate was a function of the church –the church sends missionaries – Hoekendijk sought to define the church as a function of the apostolate – the church sent.

Hoekendijk's nascent program at the time of Willingen reached movement status by 1960 and dominated the discussion at the World Council of Churches gather in Uppsala 1968. But Hoekendijk had given strong voice to his concerns over church-centric mission even earlier than 1952. In a 1950 article titled "The Call to

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<sup>33</sup> Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 163.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>35</sup> Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, 41-2.

Evangelism,”<sup>36</sup> Hoekendijk lamented that the “missionary pioneer” had become a rarity and that younger, indigenous churches reaching their second generation were becoming established, immobile, and so institutionalized that they had become moribund.

Hoekendijk was also already proclaiming the death of Christendom and decrying the “intimate relation” and “coordination” of Christendom and the church:

To put it bluntly: the call to evangelism is often little else than a call to restore “Christendom,” the *Corpus Christianum*, as a solid, well-integrated cultural complex, directed and dominated by the church. And the sense of urgency is often nothing but a nervous feeling of insecurity, with the established church endangered; a flurried activity to save the remnants of a time now irrevocably past.

These are some of the undisclosed motives. In fact, the word “evangelize” often means a Biblical camouflage of what should rightly be called the reconquest of ecclesiastical influence. Hence this undue respect for statistics and this insatiable ecclesiastical hunger for ever more areas of life.<sup>37</sup>

Hoekendijk heard the death rattle of Christendom and interpreted it as a renewed call to evangelism but this time with the social props of the past removed. To him, the bankruptcy of evangelism predicated on a call to restore or extend Christendom had been exposed.<sup>38</sup>

Hoekendijk’s model offered *shalom* as a motif for understanding the aim of God’s activity in the world as he railed against church-centrism.

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<sup>36</sup> Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk, “The Call to Evangelism,” *International Review of Mission* 39, no. 2 (April 1950): 162-75.

<sup>37</sup> Hoekendijk, “The Call to Evangelism”: 163. It seems that Hoekendijk rarely decided not “to put it bluntly.”

<sup>38</sup> John Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 67-8.

The world has almost ceased to be the *world* and is now conceived of as a sort of ecclesiastical training-ground. The kingdom is either confined within the bounds of the Church or else it has become something like an eschatological lightning on the far horizon. The end of the earth and the end of time, these two *eschata* towards which the Mission is proceeding, are likely to become strangely identical. As soon as we get ready to move forward to these ends we see in both instances one and the same goal: the Church.<sup>39</sup>

Hoekendijk had sensed how the kingdom of God had functioned as the focal point for contention over two approaches to mission, but he read church-centrism in both sides of that dynamic, seeing the two kingdom of God emphases as two sides of the same ecclesiological coin.

Newbigin was more balanced in his approach; the heart of the matter was not merely about choosing church-centric mission or rejecting it. According to Newbigin, the church-centric model leaves one wrestling with how God's work in the world relates to the work of the church: "How shall we understand what God is doing in the events of our time?"<sup>40</sup> The main danger of church-centrism is when the work of God is simply identified with "the progress of the Church in mission and unities."<sup>41</sup> But one must also avoid "the opposite error" of identifying the movements of secular history with the work of God, as if the church's "relevance" is

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<sup>39</sup> Hoekendijk, "The Church in Missionary Thinking": 324.

<sup>40</sup> Newbigin, "The Mission of the Triune God," 8-9.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 9. See also, Paul Weston, "Ecclesiology in Eschatological Perspective: Newbigin's Understanding of the Missionary Church," in *Theology in Missionary Perspective: Lesslie Newbigin's Legacy*, ed. Mark Laing and Paul Weston (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 75.

only a function of how and how much it relates to those movements. “That way lies sheer paganism,” Newbigin warned.<sup>42</sup>

Basically, Willigen was working with Tambaram not against it. Willigen’s unique contribution was toward a Trinitarian foundation of mission theology not fully formulated as *missio Dei* until after the meeting. The trinitarian turn represented by *missio Dei* is, according to Newbigin, the attempt to answer the question of relating the church – missionary in its very nature (affirmed at Tambaram) – to God’s work in the world.<sup>43</sup> Newbigin does not look at Tambaram as the dead-end for a certain line of thinking and Willigen as the corrective and new starting point.<sup>44</sup>

One can add to the stream of developments in mission theology that there was an IMC world mission gathering between Tambaram and Willigen. Whitby 1947 is noted for the contribution of “partnership in obedience” and once again focusing on the kingdom of God.<sup>45</sup> The kingdom of God motif was passed over as an option for articulating the church-mission dynamic at Tambaram. The contention over the kingdom of God extending from Jerusalem to Tambaram should not be

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<sup>42</sup> Newbigin, “The Mission of the Triune God,” 10. After about a decade, Hoekendijk’s position had reached ascendance in Protestant conciliar mission circles. Bosch calls this development in mission theology the “secular sixties.” Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 326, 356. A question for further consideration is the way in which Hoekendijk’s project affected appropriation and modification of *missio Dei* by the conciliar Protestant missionary enterprise during that time and missional ecclesiology later.

<sup>43</sup> Newbigin, “The Mission of the Triune God,” 12.

<sup>44</sup> See also, Weston, “Ecclesiology in Eschatological Perspective,” 77-8.

<sup>45</sup> Craig Van Gelder, “Missiology and the Missional Church in Context,” in *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry*, ed. Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 28.

confused with the role played by the kingdom of God motif from Whitby on past Willingen. At Jerusalem and Tambaram the kingdom of God was the focal point of contention between Continental and Anglo-American approaches to mission. Afterward, and especially with the emergence of *missio Dei*, the kingdom of God became a bridge concept between the trinitarian foundation of mission and the work of mission in the world both with and without the church's involvement.

Critical to this early conception of the *missio Dei* was its connection to the theme of the *kingdom of God* as announced by Jesus. God has a mission in the world that looks toward the whole of created existence, and the church participates in this mission by living into and announcing the redemptive reign of God in Christ (the kingdom of God). This framework keeps a strong Christology tied to the larger horizon of God's redemptive activity within the broader context of the world, and it keeps an understanding of the gospel as being for the sake of the world.<sup>46</sup>

The kingdom of God motif thus ties Christology back into the trinitarian foundation with Jesus as inaugurator, proclaimer, leader, and exemplar for God's mission to the world.

Furthermore, missional ecclesiology forges another link between Christology and *missio Dei*. The incarnation, emphasized as God's self-revelation in Christ, creates this link and the incarnation serves as a model for the genesis, ongoing identity, and witness-bearing activity of the church as a community called and sent to the world, even unto death.<sup>47</sup> These linkages serve to keep the entire complicated theology of mission together.

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<sup>46</sup> Van Gelder, "Missiology and the Missional Church in Context," 21. Note the consistency of this statement with Van Gelder's analysis above that the shift was not from ecclesiology to Trinity, but from Christology to Trinity, see page 189n21.

<sup>47</sup> Regarding the incarnational emphasis of missional ecclesiology, start with Darrell Guder, *The Incarnation and the Church's Witness* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999). Additionally, see Scott Frederickson, "The Missional Congregation in Context," in *The Missional*

One should notice in this description of the development of *missio Dei*, though, that Willigen and *missio Dei* do not remove ecclesiology from the realm of mission theology. The trinitarian relocation of the foundation of mission theology was a reordering, not an elimination of ecclesiology's place in mission theology. *Missio Dei* affirms a trinitarian starting point and *then* one thinks of ecclesiology in terms of that theocentric foundation. For example, missional ecclesiology starts with the *missio Dei* and then uses the incarnation and the kingdom of God as links from the doctrine of God to their ecclesiology. The divine institution of the church is no longer primarily articulated in terms of Jesus' words and work as they were at Tambaram, but is instead a derivative of the doctrine of God.<sup>48</sup>

Missional ecclesiology seeks to avoid the potential errors of church-centrism while still strongly affirming the church and that the church is missionary in its very nature. At stake is missional ecclesiology mistakenly being perceived as subscribing to a contradiction (both affirming and eschewing the church), or worse, being susceptible to the charge that its affirmation of the church falls into theological error akin to conflating the church, the kingdom of God, and God's work in the world.

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*Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry*, ed. Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 50-2; Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 33-46; Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 127-47. This emphasis on the incarnation corresponds to missional ecclesiology's criticism of institutionalism and the churches overly concerned with their own maintenance, social clout, or survival.

<sup>48</sup> For missional ecclesiology's subscription to the trinitarian foundation of mission see Darrell Guder and Lois Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998), 4; Craig Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 86-88; Van Gelder, *Missional Church in Context*, 10, 27, 46-50.

### *Overvaluing Willingen and missio Dei*

Those are the stakes theologically. The result is that Tambaram is not the only IMC meeting misrepresented; there is a subtle misrepresentation of Willingen and *missio Dei*, too. For example, “The Church as Mission in its Very Life: Toward Common Witness to Christ and Visible Unity” is a study text produced by the Working Group on Mission and Ecclesiology of the World Council of Churches’ (WCC) Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). The document does correctly ascribe certain affirmations to the development of *missio Dei*. The text rightly credits *missio Dei* with the realization that “it is not the Church that has a mission, and mission is not a project of expanding of churches, but the Church is an embodiment of God’s mission in this world.”<sup>49</sup>

At the same time, though, the missionary nature of the church is affirmed with the implication that this, too, is a contribution of *missio Dei* theology. The CWME’s abstract on the document places *missio Dei* between two affirmations of the missionary nature of the church: “The text argues that theologically it is impossible to separate Church and mission. The *missio Dei* concept, which affirms the priority of the triune God’s sending activity, continues to provide the fundamental basis for both, an ecumenical missiology and an ecclesiology from a mission point of view.”<sup>50</sup> Similarly, the document asserts that “the missionary intention of God is the *raison d’être* of the Church,”<sup>51</sup> and in the same paragraph asserts that “it is impossible to

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<sup>49</sup> Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (WCC), “The Church as Mission in its Very Life,” *International Review of Mission* 101, no. 1 (April 2012): 130 §74.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 115 §32.

separate the nature and the mission of the Church. The Church is ‘missionary by her very nature.’”<sup>52</sup> The first assertion (*raison d’être*) is a frequently used epitome of *missio Dei*; the second assertion is not attributable as a development from *missio Dei* because it was there at Tambaram.

Indeed, one of the strongest and most frequent affirmations of *missio Dei*-dominated Protestant conciliar mission (and missional ecclesiology) is that the church is missionary in its very nature, but with the implication that this affirmation was a result of *missio Dei*. Appropriation of this central affirmation of Tambaram while subscribing to a version of history that repudiates church-centric mission theology demonstrates the distance between the caricature of church-centrism and what actually came out of Tambaram.<sup>53</sup> Deprived of this contribution, the church-centric label is left meaning something more akin to nineteenth-century progressivism and paternalistic institutionalism, which are specters exorcised by the document’s repudiation of mission as “a project of expanding of churches.”<sup>54</sup>

There are other likenesses between the CWME’s study text and the ecclesiology of Tambaram. The text follows *missio Dei* thinking by using the kingdom of God as the link between church and the trinitarian foundation of mission. Then that link is invoked when espousing certain characteristics of the church.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> As previously noted, Newbigin acknowledged this contribution of Tambaram. Newbigin, “The Mission of the Triune God,” 8.

<sup>54</sup> CWME (WCC), “The Church as Mission in its Very Life”: 130 §74.

The Church in its visible manifestations is a sign, as well as an instrument, of communion with God and of the unity of all. This communion or *koinonia* has a triple relational dimension: communion with the triune God, the communion of the Church, and communion among human beings, and indeed, with the whole created world. Thus, the Church's mission to the world in *koinonia* becomes a testimony to Christ.<sup>55</sup>

The instrumentality of the church, its fellowship (*koinonia*), and that fellowship's extension into the witness-bearing function of the church are all reminiscent of Tambaram's ecclesiology. But Tambaram did not have *missio Dei* or therefore feel the need to link ecclesiology to the Trinity by way of the kingdom of God in order to say these things about the church. Willigen and the right mixture of *missio Dei* with the kingdom of God did not suddenly enable these theological formulations.

Finally, the *missio Dei* origin story is problematic because of its theological claims. *Missio Dei* is presented as the preventative for an inherent, fatal flaw in church-centric mission along the lines of Hoekendijk's "bound to go astray."<sup>56</sup> The assumption is that interpreting the church as the kingdom of God is not a potential problem with church-centrism; it is a certainty.

Newbigin's interpretation is more accurate. He explained that the need was to maintain a distinction between the church and God's work in mission to the world without succumbing to error on either side.<sup>57</sup> Conflation of the church and kingdom is one error; church-centrism does carry this danger. Over emphasis on the signs of the times as a determining factor in the church's involvement in the triune

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 114 §30.

<sup>56</sup> Hoekendijk, "The Church in Missionary Thinking": 332.

<sup>57</sup> Newbigin, "The Mission of the Triune God," 10, 12; Michael Stroope, "Eschatological Mission: Its Reality and Possibility in the Theology of Karl Barth and its Influence on Modern Mission Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1985), 207.

God's mission is the other; *missio Dei* carries this danger.<sup>58</sup> The claim is that *missio Dei* provides protection from the church-centric error. But *missio Dei* is not just an exchange of one theological danger for another. While *missio Dei* bears its own potential theological error, it does not negate the potential church-centric error.

Thinking of "protagonists" is one way to explain how confidence in *missio Dei* is misplaced. In church-centric mission "the church is the main protagonist of mission."<sup>59</sup> *Missio Dei* changed the protagonist by relocating the foundation of mission theology to the Trinity, but historical theologian John Flett has brought together lines of criticism to point out that *missio Dei*'s supposed strength is also its greatest weakness.<sup>60</sup> *Missio Dei* only gives God a sort of "prevenient initiative" as a "theocentric preface" to mission that is still essentially church-centric or anthropocentric in practice.<sup>61</sup> The result is the mission equivalent to the God of Deism. God withdraws after initiating the mission, leaving the task to the church or missiologists reading the signs of the times to pronounce oracles on where God is on mission. Thus, *missio Dei* bears the same potential problem of anthropocentrism as *not* placing mission theology on a trinitarian base – the risk of "investing authority in historical accident and human capacity."<sup>62</sup> At the same time *missio Dei* does not

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<sup>58</sup> This is the trajectory that reached ascendance post-Willingen in opposition to a more measured understanding of the church and mission continued by Lesslie Newbigin and Barthians, who fell out of favor. Hoekendijk became the central figure in this signs-of-the-times approach.

<sup>59</sup> Carlos Cardoza-Orlandi and Justo González, *To all Nations from all Nations: A History of the Christian Missionary Movement* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), 5.

<sup>60</sup> Flett, *The Witness of God*, 5, 9.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

provide the sought for protection from the potential theological error of church-centrism either.<sup>63</sup> One can still fall into error on either side of the question of relating God's work in the church to God's work in the world.

Overvaluing Willigen and *missio Dei* carries its own problems in addition to reinforcement and perpetuation of the caricature of church-centrism and the devaluing of Tambaram. Of primary concern in this study is the caricature and devaluation because they present a historical account of radical discontinuity between Tambaram and missional ecclesiology that is historically suspect.

### *Continuity versus Discontinuity*

The question of continuity and discontinuity was a theological question at Tambaram: What is the relation between Christianity and non-Christian religions? This study has set the stage for another continuity and discontinuity debate, one over historical continuity from Tambaram to missional ecclesiology. Some of the work has been done here, but the focus has been to first reclaim an accurate historical portrayal of Tambaram's ecclesiology.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Flett's critical assessment of *missio Dei* gives a new twist to Stephen Neill's frequently quoted riposte, "If everything is mission, nothing is mission." Stephen Neill, *Creative Tension* (London: Edinburgh House, 1959), 81. If everything is mission, anything could be mission; even historical developments that would otherwise be reprehensible can conceivably be baptized.

<sup>64</sup> An example of work that has already been done on affinity and continuity from a historical theology perspective is Joe Thomas's journal article comparing Newbigin and Kraemer on "the theme of God's revelation in Jesus Christ in relation to the non-Christian religions, with a particular focus on the question of the 'continuity/discontinuity' debate." Joe Thomas, "Continuity, Discontinuity, and the Finality of Christ: A Theological Essay on the Thought of Lesslie Newbigin and Hendrik Kraemer," *Dharma Deepika* 13, no. 1 (January/June 2009): 25.

## *Likenesses*

Nevertheless, along with setting the record straight regarding the ecclesiology of Tambaram, this study has uncovered likenesses with missional ecclesiology. Foremost among these is the missionary nature of the church, an affirmation shared by Tambaram, missional ecclesiology, and twenty-first century Protestant conciliar mission theology. Other areas of likeness are evident.

First, Tambaram's ecclesiology articulated a sense of the church being called for a purpose similar to what is found in missional ecclesiology. But Tambaram lacked a direct match to missional ecclesiology's emphasis on the church called *and sent*. In Tambaram's ecclesiology the divine institution of the church was primarily linked with the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). The Great Commission is not without apostolic language. After all, the instruction is to "go" and mission is there in the name given to the passage. Nevertheless, Tambaram gives no special attention to the apostolic aspect in terms of the church. The apostolic aspect of the Great Commission is applied more at the individual level. Notably, though, the individualized sense of the commission is more than the personal call of the missionary; Tambaram insisted every individual Christian has a duty to evangelism and mission. Notably, though, when missional ecclesiology emphasizes the apostolic function of the church, it does not primarily turn to the sending language of the Great Commission. Rather, missional ecclesiology attributes the emphasis on the apostolic nature of the church to the relocation of the foundation of mission into the

Trinity that was accomplished by *missio Dei*.<sup>65</sup> It is God's mission and God sends the church on mission.

Second, although not a direct match for missional ecclesiology's emphasis on the incarnation as a model for the church, Tambaram did recognize that the church was called to bear witness even at its own peril. The churches' practical aims in handling situations of persecution were to seek relief from imposed disabilities and to remedy valid causes while maintaining obedience to the witness-bearing duty of the church. The church was charged:

in all its relations with government, and in all its decisions, to bear witness to its complete, ultimate loyalty to God, and to show forth the spirit of Christ even if it involves suffering or martyrdom. It is quite possible that the Church will give its most spiritual witness in those circumstances, when even its minimum rights are denied, and will reveal by the way of the Cross the power of suffering and redeeming love. That the Church, if it is to be faithful to its Master, will be called upon increasingly in the coming days to suffer for its convictions, as it takes its stand against the unreasonable demands of the State, is a deduction from several converging lines of evidence.<sup>66</sup>

Tambaram saw that the church was in perilous times and that in several parts of the world churches faced death both in terms of individual Christians and the churches themselves. Tambaram's Great Commission motif of continuing Christ's work could also take on an incarnational tone: "In His ministry our Lord recognized, moreover, a divine compulsion to vindicate God's good name, 'I must work the works of Him that sent me.' The Church exists to continue the work Christ began."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> This is the area of missional ecclesiology that also acknowledges affinity with Vatican II's emphasis on the apostolic nature of the church.

<sup>66</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 126.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

Also at this point in their report, Tambaram expressed another area of affinity with missional ecclesiology by affirming the comprehensive nature of witness-bearing, specifically ministries of health and healing. The “Great Physician” identified himself with the need and suffering of the world and “the Church will follow Him in methods of service that express His mission.”<sup>68</sup>

Reciprocity among the churches of the world was a hallmark of the IMC’s early phases of development and influenced Tambaram’s turn to the church. Tambaram’s ecclesiology reflected this reciprocity with references to the contribution of the younger churches to revitalize the older churches.<sup>69</sup> The likeness can be found in Newbigin, who admits “we need the witness of the whole ecumenical family if we are to be authentic witnesses of Christ to our own culture.”<sup>70</sup>

Writing specifically about African Christianity, Newbigin continues:

We need their witness to correct ours, as indeed they need ours to correct theirs. At this moment our need is greater, for they have been far more aware of the dangers of syncretism, of an illegitimate alliance with false elements in their culture, than we have been. But whether it is we or they, we imperatively need one another if we are to be the faithful witnesses of Christ in our many different cultures.<sup>71</sup>

Tambaram stands at the historical forefront of this expression of humility and recognition in Protestant mission circles; Newbigin is farther downstream. Given

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid. For an example of missional ecclesiology’s interpretation of mission as bearing witness, see Darrell Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 49-70.

<sup>69</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 51.

<sup>70</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 146.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 147.

Newbigin's significance in both Protestant conciliar mission history and the origins of missional ecclesiology, this likeness especially suggests a historical continuity that merits investigation.

Another area of affinity is nearly as prevalent in missional ecclesiology as the affirmation of the missionary nature of the church. Missional ecclesiology, like Tambaram, asserts that the missional identity of the church is expressed in local, enculturated settings. Either might have written that the mission of the church "must be seen in its right setting as the task of the churches."<sup>72</sup> The omitted phrase "missionaries should be their co-operators and partners" makes it clearer that this is a statement from Tambaram. Likewise, reference to the incarnation makes Guder easier to recognize despite the overall similarity to Tambaram: "Regardless of the actual shape and name adopted, the local congregation is the basic unit of Christian witness if we understand witness incarnationally. The gospel is always to be embodied by the people of God in a particular place."<sup>73</sup>

Tambaram's emphasis on the local and contextual differed from later developments because Tambaram thought in terms of the enculturation of the *church*. Protestant conciliar mission would later come to affirm the enculturation of the gospel itself, a development that involved Newbigin and was carried over into missional ecclesiology. Interestingly, missional ecclesiology completes the circle

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<sup>72</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 32. Notice the distinction within the Tambaram report; it shifts from talking about the church to talking about the churches. The plural is an indicator that the focus is not on the universal church, but rather the instances of the universal church in the world.

<sup>73</sup> Guder, *Continuing Conversion of the Church*, 148. See also, Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 76-94; Van Gelder, *Missional Church in Context*, especially Scott Frederickson, "The Missional Congregation in Context," in that volume, 44-64.

with statements such as, “Just as the gospel is inherently translatable to every cultural context, so also the church is inherently translatable in some way.”<sup>74</sup>

Tambaram’s enculturation of the church set the stage for tackling the enculturation of the gospel, which then serves as missional ecclesiology’s rationale for asserting the enculturation of the church.

The likenesses between Tambaram, *missio Dei* mission theology and missional ecclesiology can extend beyond just content to a kind of formal similarity. There is a resemblance in the way things are approached even if the content does not match. As with the preceding example on contextualization, Tambaram and missional ecclesiology can sound alike and have a similar style about them.<sup>75</sup>

In its affirmation that the church is missionary in its very nature and that the focus of that missionary nature is the local, contextualized church, missional ecclesiology contests a tendency for mission to be thought of as something churches do as one of their programs, a supported ministry detached from the life of the congregation. Mission should not be considered merely as something that goes on out there in the world at a physical and conceptual distance from the congregation. Part of Tambaram’s broad conception of witness-bearing was a similar impulse to recognize what were otherwise considered auxiliary activities of witness as part of an integrated whole.

In this movement, religious education is not so much thought of as taking place in a formal school more or less dissociated from the rest of the activities of the local church, as it is the organization of the entire program of

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<sup>74</sup> Van Gelder, *Ministry of the Missional Church*, 62.

<sup>75</sup> Many of the preceding examples of content similarity also bear formal likeness.

the church upon the basis of the educational process. In this way preaching, evangelism, missions, finance and administration all are profoundly affected by the educational ideal, as is the more formal program of traditional religious education in the Sunday school. This does not mean, of course, that formal instruction in religion through groups and classes shall be discontinued, but that the entire work of the church shall be educationalized.<sup>76</sup>

One might argue that this statement from the Tambaram work papers on Christian education is asking too much of Christian education, to make it the integrative center of the entire work of the church. Nevertheless, the formal similarity is there. It takes little effort to substitute missional language for the Christian education language and arrive at a sound description of missional ecclesiology. A missional ecclesiologist would say that in their movement, mission is not thought of as taking place on the mission field more or less dissociated from the local church; the entire program of the church is organized on the basis of the missional practices; all aspects of the church are profoundly affected by the missional ideal.

Another formal likeness emerges from when Jones charged that Tambaram had made the church into the Christian message. Van Dusen countered, "Madras nowhere said that our message is the church. It attempts to redefine the Christian message in all its fullness and truth, with insistent and repeated stress upon the Kingdom at the appropriate places. And then it says that for the demonstration of this message to our world, *not merely in speech but in act*, the church is under God, the principal and indispensable instrument."<sup>77</sup> In a statement intended to repudiate

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<sup>76</sup> IMC, *The Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 157.

<sup>77</sup> Van Dusen, "What Stanley Jones Missed at Madras," *Christian Century* 56, no. 13 (March 29, 1939): 410. Emphasis in original.

“ecclesiocentric” mission, a foundational text in missional ecclesiology says, “In particular, we have begun to see that the church of Jesus Christ is not the purpose or goal of the gospel, but rather its instrument and witness.”<sup>78</sup> The form of the argument in making a distinction between gospel and instrument is the same.

Again raising the specter of church-centrism, the missional ecclesiology text repudiates handling the kingdom of God in primarily in its immanent aspect.<sup>79</sup> Talk of building the kingdom of God or bringing it about, or growing, extending, expanding the kingdom of God on earth raises red flags for missional ecclesiologists. Their Barthian ancestry resists this as anthropocentrism. Missional ecclesiology leans toward the Continentals on this point, but the voice of Tambaram shares the same formal resistance to a solely or even primarily immanent conception of the kingdom of God.

### *Contrasts*

The earlier use of Tambaram’s own words to contradict the caricature of church-centrism may combine with the likenesses suggested so far and leave the wrong impression. Tambaram and missional ecclesiology are significantly different. Tambaram may be not guilty of certain charges, but missional ecclesiology and other proponents of *missio Dei* have concerns that are relevant to Tambaram.

The most significant of these differences is Christendom. Tambaram manifests a Christendom mindset, Christendom that missional ecclesiology has

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<sup>78</sup> Guder and Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, 5.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

buried with little mourning. Thus, while there is likeness with missional ecclesiology in the affirmation of mission “inherent in the very nature of Christianity,” there is also a Christendom model that is in contrast. After affirming that mission is inherent in the very nature of Christianity, the statement continues:

To-day the Church to a greater degree than formerly stands in a missionary relationship to the whole world. For the Gospel has been preached to the uttermost parts of the earth, and the Church has been established in practically every nation. But the churches everywhere, whether young or old, are in a world that is not in any true sense Christian. In no land is the cause won.<sup>80</sup>

Elsewhere in the final report, Tambaram expects that “the Church must, as the fellowship of Christ, speak, act, work and pray for a Christian society.”<sup>81</sup> Likewise, writing in preparation for the meeting John Reisner asserted that “The function of the Church in relation to the community is to Christianize all of it – all its people, all its activities, all its influences.”<sup>82</sup>

When assessing Tambaram’s ecclesiology, the semantic range of certain concepts came under consideration. A concept, when used in sections of text where that concept is not the topic under consideration, gains more weight for consideration as a core concept in the IMC’s thought. The same holds true for Christendom, which is evident even when the topic is Christian education.

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<sup>80</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 40.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>82</sup> John Reisner, “The Church and the Community” in *The Church Faces the World: Studies in Preparation for the Madras Conference of the International Missionary Council*, ed. Samuel McCrea Cavert (New York: Round Table Press, 1939), 58.

Earl Herbert Cressy, secretary of China Christian Education Association, reported that Christian schools accounted for one tenth of higher education students and one tenth of middle school students in China.

It must be clear that these students have not all become Christians, but they have all been changed. They have learned something of Christianity, most of them have come to respect it and most of them have adopted many Christian ideals and react in a Christian way to many situations. When it is considered that approximately one-tenth of the educated class have been thus influenced by Christian schools, it may be that these schools will turn out to be the most important factor in making China a Christian country.<sup>83</sup>

Christian educators were working to support courses in religion while still satisfying increased state regulations pushing secular curricula. These efforts gave promise to Cressy that “these schools will become increasingly important factors in the Christianizing of the educated leadership of the country.”<sup>84</sup> Christendom permeates the Madras Series, especially the volumes on the growing church, the life of the church, and church and state (see table 2).<sup>85</sup>

Missional ecclesiology is uniformly suspicious of anything coming out of a Christendom mindset because missional ecclesiology uniformly subscribes to a post-Christendom view of the world.<sup>86</sup> The potential error that accompanies this

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<sup>83</sup> IMC, *The Life of the Church*, vol. 4, Madras Series, 137.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>85</sup> Elsewhere in volume four’s section on Christian education it is asserted that viewing all religions as the same fails to understand Christianity as a historical religion “permeated through and through by the belief that the purposes of God are made manifest in human history.” Therefore, the working paper proposes, “it would follow that history should occupy a central place in the curriculum of a Christian college. Only minds that have been trained by a proper study of history to see the significance of the concrete event and the individual personality can do justice to the real nature of a historical religion. Only the study of history can make men appreciate the exclusiveness of truth.” *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>86</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 8-9, 12-5; Darrell Guder, “Walking Worthily: Missional Leadership After Christendom,” *Princeton Seminary Bulletin New Series*

hermeneutic of suspicion is the categorical rejection of contributions that come from the Christendom historical epoch. Neither Christendom nor church-centrism prevented Tambaram from affirming several of the same things affirmed by post-Christendom missional ecclesiology.

To its credit, the discourse in missional ecclesiology that devalues Tambaram is more about church-centrism and less about Christendom.<sup>87</sup> The issue with Christendom is more frequently invoked by missional ecclesiology in terms of North Atlantic Christianity. Christendom is blamed for Western churches' institutionalism, programmatizing mission (mission as a program of the church among many), an attractational model (centripetal instead of centrifugal), and a corporate mentality (churches as denominational franchises and vendors of religious services).<sup>88</sup> The IMC, while recognizing the decline of Christianity in the West, chose to "concentrate our attention" on the evangelistic task "in non-Christian lands."<sup>89</sup> Conversely, while acknowledging that everywhere is a mission field, Protestant conciliar mission

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28, no. 3 (2007); Guder and Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, 3; Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 50-1, 59-63.

<sup>87</sup> The weaknesses of the rejection based on church-centrism have already been addressed.

<sup>88</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 18-9, 41-2; Guder and Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, 83-5; Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 42-5, 77, 109-12, 129-31; McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, xvii, 49-53; Bill Reinhold, "What is the Missional Church? A Brief Introduction," [http://www.churchinnovations.org/02\\_missional/mc\\_intro.html](http://www.churchinnovations.org/02_missional/mc_intro.html) (accessed December 24, 2012), 4; Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church*, 72-86; Craig Van Gelder, *The Missional Church and Denominations: Helping Congregations Develop a Missional Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 17-42, 85-90; Van Gelder, *Missional Church in Context*, 142. For a sound discussion of Christendom and post-Christendom's post-institutionalization, see Rodríguez, *Paradigms of the Church in Mission*, 31-44, 80.

<sup>89</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 29.

embodied now in the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism has continued to focus on the "thereness" of mission.<sup>90</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Despite their contrasts, the affinities between Tambaram and missional ecclesiology serve two important functions in this study. First, they demonstrate that what is rejected under the name of church-centrism is a caricature. Either Tambaram represents church-centrism and the term needs to be better handled or church-centrism continues to mean something more like anthropocentrism, activism, institutionalism, and nineteenth-century progressivism, which scarcely applies to Tambaram.

In the former case, the mishandling of church-centrism has devalued Tambaram while overvaluing *missio Dei* as the definitive solution to a poorly defined problem. The problem is poorly defined by lacking a clear and precise articulation of the threat being countered (progressivism, etc.) and in the assumption that church-centrism contains inherent and necessary theological error instead of potential error. The supposed solution, too, is not without its problems. *Missio Dei* provides no assurance of protection from the potential theological errors posed by anthropocentrism and church-centrism. There likely are theological grounds for the superiority of trinitarian mission theology over anthropocentric and church-centric foundations, but the historical problems highlighted in this study confuse the

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<sup>90</sup> Laing, *From Crisis to Creation*, 39.

issue.<sup>91</sup> The historical problems are an obstacle to both clarity of theological argumentation in favor of *missio Dei* and openness to the contributions Tambaram may make to theological inquiry into church, mission, and culture.

Second, the affinities between Tambaram and missional ecclesiology, along with bridge figures between Protestant conciliar missions and missional ecclesiology such as Lesslie Newbigin and Darrell Guder, are circumstantial evidence in a case for historical continuity between the two. The historical analog to the maxim, “correlation does not imply causation,” applies here. The case is circumstantial at this point, but it is a strong case. Further study is warranted to complete the picture of historical continuity between Tambaram, developments in mission theology since Tambaram, and missional ecclesiology.

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<sup>91</sup> An oft-stated frustration with the trinitarian turn marked by *missio Dei* is the overall lack of precision and clarity regarding the theological meaning and significance of the move. In its nascent phase, the articulation was such that the relocation of the foundation of mission theology was more like a shift from a Christocentric to a patricentric foundation for mission theology than a shift to a fully formulated trinitarian foundation. Even as late as 1963, Lesslie Newbigin’s *Trinitarian Faith and Today’s Mission* consisted of seventy eight pages in which the chapter on the “relevance of trinitarian doctrine” was four pages long and argued primarily for the validity and importance of the doctrine of the Trinity in Christian history as the main rationale for the “necessity of a trinitarian starting point” and the deficiency of a more Christocentric approach.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusion

#### *The Project*

The aims of this study have been historical: to set the record straight regarding Tambaram's church-centrism and to suggest correction to one of the two tributaries in the origin story of missional ecclesiology. The two objectives are related. Tambaram's church-centric approach has been burdened with a caricature that stems from a desire by proponents of later developments in mission theology to emphasize their own distinctiveness. They fashion the caricature in such a way as to create distance between the caricature and the later developments they espouse.

There are two interrelated developments that perpetuate the caricature of the church-centric mission theology that actually came out of Tambaram: missional ecclesiology and the *missio Dei* mission theology that is currently in ascendance in Protestant conciliar mission circles. The two are related. Missional ecclesiology subscribes to *missio Dei* mission theology and the Protestant conciliar tradition acknowledges missional ecclesiology's diagnosis of the death of Christendom and that the West is also a mission field.

Missional ecclesiology narrates two interrelated streams of origin. The aspect of their origin pertaining to Lesslie Newbigin is well established.<sup>1</sup> Because Newbigin

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<sup>1</sup> For an example of the Newbigin origin story, see Craig Van Gelder, *The Missional Church and Denominations: Helping Congregations Develop a Missional Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 2-4.

was also an influential figure in Protestant conciliar mission circles, he serves as a bridge figure for the interrelatedness of missional ecclesiology and Protestant conciliar mission. His contributions regarding the neo-paganism of the West and the enculturation of the gospel (developed further by Gospel and Our Culture programs) influenced both missional ecclesiology and Protestant conciliar mission. Missional ecclesiology, though, has focused these guiding lights on the condition of the church in North American contexts through the success and vitality of the Gospel and Our Culture network in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Missional ecclesiology's other origin stream is of direct interest to this project because it is there that the caricature of Tambaram plays out. Missional ecclesiology tends to devalue and reject Tambaram as the pinnacle of a caricatured church-centric mission theology. The story claims that church-centrism receives much needed correction from the development of *missio Dei* theology following Willingen. By giving a truer picture of Tambaram's church-centrism, this study suggests that missional ecclesiology rethink this aspect of its origin story.

Four lines of analysis have clarified Tambaram's ecclesiology and church-centrism. First was an examination of the contextual factors related to Tambaram's turn to the church. Second, the semantic field of Tambaram's official documents was analyzed to identify key characteristics of Tambaram's ecclesiology. Third, Tambaram was resituated in the history of modern Protestant mission regarding Tambaram's dissenters, the kingdom of God and nineteenth-century progressivism.

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<sup>2</sup> Missional ecclesiology also draws adherents and contributors to the conversation from a United Kingdom strain that includes New Zealand and Australia.

Fourth, the caricature was investigated more thoroughly using documents that devalue church-centrism, which also overvalue Willingen and the development of *missio Dei*. The extent to which Tambaram's actual ecclesiology appears to be like that of missional ecclesiology not only confirms the caricature but also suggests that the historical continuity between Tambaram and missional ecclesiology should now be investigated and clarified.

### *Tambaram's Turn to the Church*

Several historical factors provided the context in which the IMC chose to turn its attention to the church. The assumed spiritual authority and cultural superiority of the West had received a shocking blow from the Great War, and the world was once again on the verge of multi-national war. Secularism, the primary threat recognized at Jerusalem 1928, had been eclipsed by totalitarian ideologies, which were contributing to the bellicose state of international politics. Meanwhile, nationalism increased in the developing world and resisted imperialism and colonialism of all types (political, cultural, religious). This nationalistic resistance extended to Christian evangelism, and coincided with an increased resistance to Christianity evident in native religions. Yet the younger churches were growing in maturity and had reached parity of representation and fullness of voice in the IMC. Meanwhile, other international Protestant groups were reading the signs of the times and electing to contemplate the church within their own purviews. This constellation of forces can be categorized into four contextual factors that not only pointed the IMC toward the church, but also influenced the resulting content of their statements regarding the church.

First, Tambaram's stated theme of "the upbuilding of the younger churches as a part of the historical universal Christian community" was an intentional move to repudiate the paternalism of the past, move beyond a dichotomy between sending and receiving in mission, and acknowledge the place that the younger churches deserved in Protestant mission discourse. Since its conception, the IMC had benefited from the leadership of Mott both in his practical efforts and his "federative principle" for organizing the IMC. Mott's extensive travels helped propel phases of reciprocal influence and organizational development that brought the younger churches into the forefront of IMC thinking.

Second, global tensions and the threat of war also contributed to the turn to the church. International conflict became a practical matter for the IMC when Japan invaded China and the planned site for the meeting was moved from Hangchow to Tambaram. Other world hotspots loomed in the minds of the delegates. Tambaram's response on this front was a call on all Christians to exercise commonly held aspects of Christianity like justice and peacemaking. This call for Christian leavening of the global political environment drew upon the supra-national character of the faith, but Tambaram also drew upon the supra-national character of the church. The appeal to the church was not a call for loyalty to a trans-national organization. The appeal remained more abstract. Nevertheless, in a disunited world full of conflict, the church was an entity that could focus and embody the aspects of Christianity the world so direly needed.

Third, the IMC perceived a world in transition socially, economically, politically, and culturally. Social structures were undergoing dis-integration; human

flourishing was in peril. The IMC's planning committee called it a time "when the whole life of the world is in process of revolutionary transition and stupendous crisis."<sup>3</sup> One major division of inquiry in the plan for the meeting, titled "Environment," was comprised of working sections XII-XV examining the church in relation to economics, the social order, the international order, and the state. With working groups under these topics, it was highly likely Tambaram would have much to say about the changing world scene, and these were not the only working sections to address issues of changing worldviews. Tambaram went deeper than just recognition and lament. The IMC read global culture and saw totalitarianism in secular ideologies. As with the threat of global conflict, Tambaram invoked the church as an embodiment of Christian principles. But the IMC went farther in this case. The IMC turned to the concept of the church as a supra-national alternative to the ideologies making totalitarian claims on human life.

Finally, the IMC was joining a wider turn to the church by two other international Protestant organizations: Life and Work and Faith and Order. In 1937, Life and Work met in Oxford, Faith and Order met in Edinburgh. At both meetings, the topic was the church. This is not to suggest that the IMC was merely following the lead of these other two organizations. The planning process was more complex than that. On the one hand, the IMC started formulating plans for a church-themed conference as early as 1934. On the other hand, there was significant overlap in personnel across all three Protestant bodies. Mott considered Tambaram a valuable

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<sup>3</sup> Kraemer, *Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, vii, quoting the Minutes of the Ad Interim Committee of the IMC, Old Jordans, 1936.

and unique part of this turn to the church because it had parity of representation from the older and younger churches and thus had “more knowledge and experience in the actual work of the Christian Church throughout the world than has ever before been assembled.”<sup>4</sup>

### *Tamaram's Ecclesiology*

Tamaram did not create an explicit statement of its ecclesiology. The Council had not set out to do that sort of work. Nevertheless, analysis of the prevalent, recurring concepts and the importation of key ideas into areas where that idea is not the primary point of discourse revealed five core components to Tamaram's ecclesiology.

First, the church is repentant for past failures. Tamaram acknowledged mission work of the past as frequently flawed and expressed contrition over past emphasis on extending the church numerically, racial arrogance, financial mishandling, condescension, and domination or control. The documents also admitted that the church's failures in the past contributed to the churches' problems in their current situation. While careful to not be overtly contentious in their official documents, there were thinly veiled references to the German Church's complicity with Hitler.<sup>5</sup> Tamaram enjoined the church to also maintain an ongoing disposition of penitence because as a human institution, there would be failures. Also

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<sup>4</sup> John Mott, *Five Decades and a Forward View* (New York; London: Harper, 1939), 100.

<sup>5</sup> The Council's reticence to make explicit condemnations in their official documents (so as to not alienate the fellowship of the Council or exacerbate conditions for Christians living under persecution or impairment) did not extend to speeches and addresses, which did contain explicit references regarding the church's failure to exercise a unified prophetic voice in situations like Germany.

noteworthy is that while the IMC expressed repentance for past failures in the realm of mission, they did not stop there. A significant reason penitence and repentance qualify as a feature of Tambaram's ecclesiology is because the Council was contrite and repentant on behalf of the church universal.

Second, the church was called to a purpose. The foundation for this characteristic of the church was a combination of the near universal acceptance that Jesus instituted the church as an instrument for the continuation of his ministry and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).<sup>6</sup> Tambaram linked obedience to Christ with obligation to mission. While that linkage applied to all Christians, the divine institution of the church made it the primary collective instrument of continuing the work of Jesus.

Third, bearing witness was the purpose to which the church was called. Witness-bearing pertained to evangelism, but also included the full breadth of the church's "corporate witness" in "life and works."<sup>7</sup> Even its more mundane interactions with the world in economic exchange should reflect this purpose. Thus, Tambaram voiced an aspiration that the church's activities be fully integrated under the schema of bearing witness.

Fourth, the nature of the church as a fellowship or community was emphasized at Tambaram. The real and visible community of Christians was

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<sup>6</sup> One of the ways David Bosch analyzes the mind of various paradigms in mission is through the prevalence of specific biblical texts. The Great Commission looms large in missionary discourse in "the wake of the Enlightenment" from Carey in 1792 into the first half of the twentieth century. David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis, 1991), 339-41.

<sup>7</sup> Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, "The Place of the Church in Evangelism," in IMC, *Evangelism*, vol. 3, Madras Series, 37, 38.

expected to also serve as witness to the gospel. The final report even affirmed a two-fold “primary appeal of the Church”: preaching of the Word and demonstration of fellowship.<sup>8</sup> Because of its importance in the witness-bearing of the church, Tambaram emphasized the importance that not only did all Christians bear a responsibility to mission, they also bore a responsibility of membership in Christian community.

Finally, Tambaram emphasized the importance of the local, contextualized church. Everything affirmed about the church in the other four characteristics of Tambaram’s ecclesiology was applicable to the local, contextualized church in all settings. Moreover, the church’s ministry and community must be local and contextualized for the church to fulfill its divine call to bear witness to the world as a penitent community in continuation of Christ’s work. Tambaram therefore affirmed indigenous leadership and the authority of the indigenous church in fashioning its own forms of ministry, worship, community, and mission. The Great Commission was the epitome of the church’s task and that task was centered in the local church with the hope (and even expectation) that the indigenous church would be the primary factor in bearing witness in its country. Tambaram went beyond mere acknowledgement of the contextualization of the church for practical reasons (efficacy in evangelism), Tambaram embraced it in principle.

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<sup>8</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 118.

## *The Kingdom of God*

Tambaram's turn to the church and subsequent affirmation of the church in mission were not unanimously supported. Dissent focused on the kingdom of God. Analyzing this dissent and the trajectory of the kingdom of God concept in modern Protestant mission history further clarifies Tambaram's affirmation of the church and establishes an important framework for investigating the relations between Tambaram, the caricature of Tambaram, and the rejection of the caricature in the origin story of missional ecclesiology.

India's Rethinking Group and E. Stanley Jones voiced disapproval of the IMC's turn to the church. For Jones, this protest was part of an overall censure regarding Tambaram elevating the church from a relative to an absolute and displacing the true absolute, the kingdom of God. Both sources of critique amounted to charges of ecclesiasticism that had spawned idolatry.

Jones's reproach was inked in the pages of the *Christian Century* periodical and then his book *Along the Indian Road*. In both cases, people who were at the meeting disagreed with Jones's portrayal. Walter Horton; Henry Van Dusen, his sparring partner at the conference and in the periodical; and Ralph Eugene Diffendorfer, a friend who read the galley proofs for the book, all countered Jones's portrayal of the meeting.

Jones strenuously argued for his conception of the kingdom of God while at the meeting. Advocacy for the kingdom of God even made it into Tabaram's final report.

Though for some an emphasis upon the Church was at first taken to mean an emphasis upon ecclesiasticism, and voices were raised in reminder that the

Church existed for the Kingdom, there was no disposition to accept the view that the Christian religion is to be thought of as general ideas, still less that the Christian enterprise throughout the world can be conceived as an effort maintained by the older Christian West. It was common ground to all that the faith, the witness and the life of the living Church all over the world lie at the very heart of the whole Christian mission.<sup>9</sup>

The dissent of the Rethinking Group and Jones was duly noted; changes were made to the documents to better express the importance of the kingdom of God concept to the Christian message while maintaining emphasis on the instrumentality of the church.<sup>10</sup>

Tamaram considered the church to be a crucial instrument – a supra-national socio-cultural entity – for Christianity to counter the totalitarian claims of secular ideologies. The meeting took the path of affirming both the kingdom of God and the church, though the church received more ink. For Jones, this amounted to the kingdom of God being treated by Tamaram as an afterthought.

There were historical factors dampening the power of the kingdom of God dissent. The kingdom of God concept already had its own trajectory in the history of modern Protestant mission and within the history of the IMC. Nineteenth-century progressivism, wed to Anglo-American activism, had engendered a conflation of the kingdom of God and human progress and then with the expansion of churches. Nineteenth-century progressivism, the assumption of Western cultural and religious superiority, and overall progressivist optimism were severely chastened by World War I. Meanwhile, Continental theology, never so ebullient as the Anglo-Americans,

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<sup>9</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 7.

<sup>10</sup> This was a distinction Van Dusen also drew in his response to Jones's initial critique in the *Christian Century*.

developed an antagonism toward the Anglo-American style of thought and action, in part under the influence of Barthian theology.

By the time of the IMC world meeting in Jerusalem 1928, the kingdom of God concept had become the focal point for expressing the two competing approaches to mission.<sup>11</sup> The Continentals espoused a more eschatological interpretation of the kingdom of God, the Anglo-Americans a more immanent interpretation. The IMC at Jerusalem adopted a both/and approach to try and hold things together.

The Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry, formed in 1930, issued its report *Re-thinking Mission* in 1932.<sup>12</sup> The report was reminiscent of nineteenth-century progressivism, activism, and optimism. Thus, the kingdom of God remained a focal point for the expression of differences at Tambaram.<sup>13</sup> The IMC again approached the kingdom of God with affirmation of both the eschatological and immanent aspects, to which the Continentals took exception. Thus embroiled in an ongoing contention over eschatological and immanent interpretations, the kingdom of God concept was ill-suited to become the focal point for the terms of another debate.

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<sup>11</sup> Newbigin contrasted the kingdom of God concepts at Edinburgh and Jerusalem in a way consistent with this interpretation. Lesslie Newbigin, "The Mission of the Triune God," unpublished manuscript, 1962, <http://www.newbigin.net/assets/pdf/62mtg.pdf> (accessed November 20, 2012), 8.

<sup>12</sup> In the literature of the time, this report was variously known also as the Laymen's Report or the Hocking Report, after its chief author and chairperson of the LFMI's Commission of Appraisal, William Ernest Hocking. Technically, the report came out under the auspices of the Commission of Appraisal.

<sup>13</sup> The other focal point that formed between these two approaches to mission became the debate over continuity and discontinuity between Christianity and non-Christian religions that has traditionally dominated the secondary literature addressing Tambaram. To my knowledge, this study is the first to espouse that the forces stirred up by the LFMI were funneled into two focal points at Tambaram. The issue of progressivism and its concomitant activism and optimism was re-funneled into contention over the kingdom of God. The report also espoused an anthropocentric interpretation of religion, including Christianity. The issue of anthropocentric foundations to religion and, derivatively, mission was funneled into the continuity/discontinuity debate.

The career of the kingdom of God concept from Edinburgh to Tambaram also helps explain some of the caricature at work in the origin story of missional ecclesiology. Church as the goal of mission became the primary meaning of “church-centric” in the caricature. Moreover, the connotation was more toward *churches* as the goal of mission, emphasizing the establishment of churches rather than the concept of the universal church. With that meaning, the danger being guarded against by the caricature is a resurrection of nineteenth-century progressivism and its minions institutionalism, anthropocentric activism, and optimism. Those were not in Tambaram’s affirmation of the church. Nevertheless, missional ecclesiology touts its improvement from “church-centric” to “kingdom-focused,”<sup>14</sup> and condemns Christendom’s “institutional idolatry” supposedly manifest in church-centrism.<sup>15</sup> So it is to the origin story of missional ecclesiology and the caricature of church-centrism that the study turned.

#### *Devaluing Tambaram, Overvaluing Willingen*

Between Tambaram and Willingen, 1938 to 1952, church-centric was a neutral term. Analysis of recent voices confirms three defining things about the caricature. First, the portrayal of church-centrism is consistent with the foregoing analysis on the kingdom of God concept. The perceived threat of church-centrism is something more like nineteenth-century progressivism than it is like what Tambaram actually said. Second, the caricature of church-centrism is accompanied

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<sup>14</sup> Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 42-5.

<sup>15</sup> Van Gelder, *Missional Church and Denominations*, 64-6.

by a portrayal of mission history in which there is a fundamental turning point associated with Willingen and the development of *missio Dei* mission theology. This version of mission history paints with broad strokes. What came before Willingen was flawed and *missio Dei* is the much-needed corrective. Third, it is a short step from the caricature of establishing churches as the goal of mission to an overall obsession with the numbers. While this was a recognized problem at the time of Tambaram, it was repudiated there, not affirmed. Missional ecclesiology's sensitivity in their own context about church growth models tends to import obsession with numbers into the caricature of church-centrism to be rejected and corrected along with the rest of the caricature.

Tambaram is thus devalued, sometimes by direct assault on church-centrism and sometimes through more subtle and perhaps inadvertent mishandling of the dynamic that led into Willingen and the development of *missio Dei*. Willingen was intended to be in continuity with Tambaram, except there was forceful criticism of church-centrism headed by Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk and Paul Lehmann. Hoekendijk considered the church an "illegitimate center" for mission theology that was "bound to go astray."<sup>16</sup> The latter part of that assessment is indicative of the tendency to see the potential theological error in church-centrism as an inherent flaw and a necessary error.

Lesslie Newbigin provides an insightful overview of the issue going into Willingen. The issue was not just a question of rejecting church-centrism on the

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<sup>16</sup> Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk, "The Church in Missionary Thinking," *International Review of Mission* 41, no. 163 (July 1952): 332.

grounds of its potential error. A plank of Hoekendijk and Lehmann's platform was more attention on what God was doing outside the church, in secular areas like political, cultural, and scientific movements. This, to Newbigin, was the real issue: understanding what God was doing in the events of the time. Whereas church-centrism's main danger was facile identification of the church and the whole of God's activity, over-identifying the movements of secular history with the activity of God is the danger on the other side of the issue.

At Willingen and in the development of *missio Dei* after the meeting, there was, then, a desire to correct for the potential error of church-centrism. But Willingen and *missio Dei* tend to be overvalued in two ways in concert with the devaluing of Tambaram. First, in their supposed correction of church-centrism, they are credited with "realizations" in mission theology that are clearly present in Tambaram's ecclesiology, for example the affirmation of the missionary nature of the church. Second, *missio Dei* prevents neither potential error, identification of God's activity too much with the church or too much with human history. God in mission becomes analogous to deism's watchmaker God.

The caricature of church-centrism, the devaluing of Tambaram, and the crediting of Tambaram's contributions to later developments can all be challenged by pointing to likenesses between Tambaram and the concerns and emphases of mission theology on this side of Willingen. These, and other likenesses build a strong circumstantial case for historical continuity of ideas from Tambaram to missional ecclesiology. Contrasts between the two point to discontinuity, much of which is a function of Christendom. Tambaram was there during the demise of

Christendom, missional ecclesiology is operating in a post-Christendom context. Despite the differences between the two, the similarities are such that one suspects common lineage, that it is a family resemblance.

### *Conclusion*

Three curiosities converged to prompt this study of the IMC's turn to church at Tambaram 1938 and the meeting's affirmation of the church in mission: suspicions that current portrayals of Tambaram and church-centric mission theology were inaccurate, personal interest in ecclesiology and the conviction that ecclesiology is a pressing theological issue today, and intellectual sympathy with and first-hand exposure to missional ecclesiology.<sup>17</sup>

The first order of business was to get the story straight. Chapters two and three undertook a close reading of Tambaram's historical context and the ecclesiology of Tambaram's official documents and presented them with little reference to current portrayals of Tambaram or church-centrism. With that foundation in place, chapter four presented the arguments of Tambaram's strongest contemporary detractors. That analysis situated Tambaram in IMC history and determined that Tambaram was in the midst of continued contention over the kingdom of God concept in terms not fully compatible with its detractors' advocacy of the kingdom.

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<sup>17</sup> My first exposure to the history of modern Protestant mission was a course at Princeton Theological Seminary taught by Darrell Guder and his teaching assistant and Ph.D. candidate at the time, John Flett.

Chapter five shifted the focus to Tambaram's position in Protestant mission history relative to developments that came after the meeting. The caricature of church-centrism was more closely examined. Using the foundational work of chapters two and three, comparisons and contrasts demonstrated that missional ecclesiology's origin story draws upon a devaluing of Tambaram and an overvaluing of Willigen 1952 and *missio Dei* mission theology.

The results of this study are relevant in at least four ways. First is the commitment to accurate history. The history of modern Protestant mission should not be plagued with error; no history done well should misrepresent the facts. Second, the errant story that church-centrism had certain features that received needed correction by *missio Dei* and that *missio Dei* fixes virtually all the problems with mission theology that preceded it is theologically sloppy. A generally accessible, uncluttered argument for the superiority of *missio Dei* is lacking in the literature because the default is to fall back on a story that this study has demonstrated is no longer credible. Poor history has engendered theological problems. One aim of this study is to provide better history for theological inquiry to work with. Third, missional ecclesiology is an active movement in current theological study. When missional ecclesiology succumbs to the caricatured storyline it has not only misrepresented the *missio Dei* tributary in its origin story, it has also fallen out of step with the seminal thinker of its other tributary, Newbigin.

Finally, ecclesiology matters. In today's theological landscape, ecclesiology "is definitely on the agenda."<sup>18</sup> With the passing of Christendom – what Andrew Walls calls "the twentieth-century fading of territorial Christianity"<sup>19</sup> – and the recognition that everywhere is mission field, Christian mission is on the agenda, too, right next to ecclesiology. Timothy Yates interacts with acclaimed Christian historian and scholar Stephen Neill (1900-1984) to explain this situation. Neill wrote, "The problem of mission cannot be discussed *in abstracto*; it becomes intelligible only as the mission of the Church."<sup>20</sup> In a statement reminiscent of both Tambaram and missional ecclesiology, Yates interpreted Neill, "it is impossible to avoid ecclesiology in the communication of the gospel, for the gospel does not come as pure message but issues from, and gives rise to, specific communities; and such communities will adopt certain characteristics which they believe express the gospel in churchly form."<sup>21</sup>

The theological question of the relationship between mission, church, and culture is abiding. The relationship is the topic of an astounding quantity of general audience books and Internet activity, especially in association with missional

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<sup>18</sup> Paul Weston, "Ecclesiology in Eschatological Perspective: Newbigin's Understanding of the Missionary Church," in *Theology in Missionary Perspective: Lesslie Newbigin's Legacy*, ed. Mark Laing and Paul Weston (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 70.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 261.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Neill, *The Church and Christian Union* (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 319, quoted in Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 127.

<sup>21</sup> Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, 127. Yates's comment is also highly compatible with the turn to the enculturation of the gospel in late twentieth-century Protestant conciliar mission and Andrew Wall's work on transmission of the gospel as cultural translation.

ecclesiology. In academic publishing, the church,<sup>22</sup> mission history,<sup>23</sup> and increasingly both together<sup>24</sup> continue to draw the attention of scholars. Yet, inaccurate history and caricature have closed off Tambaram from current inquiry into church, mission, and culture. Many of the affirmations made by Tambaram are still made today without giving Tambaram the credit. That is a historical aberration that can be fixed. But there is a more precise way in which Tambaram should not be shut off from current inquiry.

While Tambaram's affirmations of the church in mission came from the other side of Christendom, the post-Christendom context is highly important to missional ecclesiology. This may be theological grounds for rejecting Tambaram's mission theology, but more clarity is needed regarding what is rejected from the Christendom epoch, how much, and why. Furthermore, while it may be possible for two different theological systems to produce materially similar positions on church and mission from different rationale, this study suggests that the similarities between Tambaram and missional ecclesiology stem from historical continuity rather than coincidence.

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<sup>22</sup> Brad Harper, and Paul Metzger, *Exploring Ecclesiology: An Evangelical and Ecumenical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> Carlos Cardoza-Orlandi and Justo González, *To all Nations from all Nations : A History of the Christian Missionary Movement*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> John Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2010); Ross Hastings, *Missional God, Missional Church: Hope for Re-Evangelizing the West* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012); Mark Laing, "The Church is the Mission: Integrating the IMC with the WCC." *International Review of Mission* 100, no. 2 (2011); Augusto Rodríguez, *Paradigms of the Church in Mission: A Historical Survey of the Church's Self-Understanding of being the Church and of Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012).

The words of Torben Christensen and William Hutchison, written over thirty years ago, bear repeating because their statement is applicable to more than just the imperial era of missions about which they wrote:

The older missionaries and their organizers have also become, at this distance, nearly inaudible. They seem somehow out of range, and we rarely listen to them; partly because we think we know what they were saying, and because we now find much of it embarrassing. . . . [T]his slighting of the missionaries has been unwise, and our presumption that we understand their ways of thinking, simply incorrect.<sup>25</sup>

The impression given in the vast majority of current accounts is radical discontinuity between Tambaram and today (*missio Dei* and missional ecclesiology) despite shared affirmation of the missionary nature of the church, affirmation of local, contextualized churches in mission, and other affinities.

The world changed drastically between 1910 and 1928, between 1928 and 1938, and again between 1938 and 1952; all the while, Edinburgh, Jerusalem, Tambaram, and Willingen each sought to speak to their day and its challenges. Yet, each meeting, in its moment, attested to continuity with its predecessors and the great Christian tradition itself. Perhaps Tambaram has something to offer to today's theological discussions on church, mission, and culture, if missional ecclesiology is willing to re-narrate its origin story.

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<sup>25</sup> Torben Christensen and William Hutchison, *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era: 1880-1920* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aros, 1982), 5.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Special Resolutions Adopted at Tambaram

The following two “special resolutions” were adopted by the whole Council in plenary session and appended to the findings and recommendations volume.<sup>1</sup> The sub-headings are added to distinguish the official resolutions from introductory comments, which were differentiated in the source document by different typeface. The texts of the commentary and resolution, though, are verbatim.

#### *I.*

##### *Introductory Commentary*

During the discussion of the report of Section XIV [The Church and the International Order] it became apparent that a considerable number of delegates would be unwilling to approve of the report without any explanation of the omission of any definite reference to the acute situations in different parts of the world. Accordingly the following resolution was adopted by the Council.

##### *Resolution*

Throughout our session, we have been vividly conscious of the areas in the world where aggression or persecution prevails to-day. And we are not unaware of the widespread expectation that this representative world gathering of Christians should seek to voice the overwhelming Christian opinion in these matters.

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<sup>1</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 152-3.

We are penitently conscious that in the past all our nations have sinned, and that we are all involved in the system which has resulted in the present international tension and conflict. Our own gathering has been to us a convincing promise of a world fellowship in Christ which transcends all divisions of nation and race, and thus condemns the strife and conflict which so largely dominate the peoples of the world to-day.

We are even more keenly conscious of the sufferings of our fellow Christians in those areas who strive to be loyal to their consecration to Christ and of the still greater dangers which constantly threaten them. While several of our reports express our convictions regarding international conflict and its causes, we are unwilling that words of ours, which cost us nothing, should aggravate the problems and hazards of our fellow-Christians; therefore, after careful and prayerful consideration, we have deliberately refrained from any further pronouncement which might injure them. But we express to them and to all of whatever faith who suffer under aggression or persecution, our profound sympathy in their difficulties. And we call upon Christians everywhere to pray for them, to bring them practical aid, and to redouble their efforts to remove the basic causes of their suffering.

## *II.*

### *Introductory Commentary*

At the meeting of the Council on Christmas morning the chairman introduced the following resolution which had been drafted by some members of the

delegations from China and Japan. The resolution was adopted unanimously by the Council.

*Resolution*

At this time of crisis in various parts of the world, we of the International Missionary Council are deeply conscious of the suffering that has come to multitudes of people in the zones of conflict of the Far East, Spain, Palestine and elsewhere. And in particular we would express our heartfelt and brotherly sympathy for our comrades in the faith in these areas, who are passing through untold hardships and are bearing intolerable burdens. The body of Christ is one in which if one member suffers all the members suffer.

We are inspired by the faith and fortitude of our fellow-Christians both in China and Japan, in their respective difficulties during this crisis. We would especially urge upon Christians in all lands that they give generously to the work of relief in China, in view of the extensive suffering that has resulted from the exigencies of war in that land. As they carry on their tasks of Christian witness and service under such tragic and trying circumstances, we assure our fellow-Christians in China of our love and prayers.

Furthermore, we call upon Christians everywhere to give themselves to earnest prayer and effort that a way may soon be found to end this period of distress in all these areas, and that an enduring peace, based upon love and justice and the true interests of the peoples concerned, may be established. We pledge ourselves to every effort looking to the elimination of the causes of war, in order that the peoples of the earth may enjoy the blessings of peace, security and freedom.

## APPENDIX B

### Additional Examples of Tambaram's Ecclesiology

The following two excerpts, too long to include in chapter three, are exemplary of the various aspects of Tambaram's ecclesiology and the overall tone of writing in the conference proceedings.

#### *The Place of the Church in Evangelism*

This first passage contains the three opening statements of the Section IV report on the place of the church in evangelism. The text and Arabic numeral headings are reproduced as they appear in the report of the conference.<sup>1</sup> Statement three continues beyond this excerpt with further enumerated sub-paragraphs regarding the roles of pastors, full-time evangelists, professional missionaries from foreign lands, and others.

#### *The Text*

1

World evangelism is the God-given task of the Church. This is inherent in the nature of the Church as the Body of Christ created by God to continue in the world the work which Jesus Christ began in His life and teaching, and consummated by His death and resurrection. This conception of the Church as the missionary to the world is given in the New Testament. The Church's evangelism is the expression of

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<sup>1</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 35-6.

its loving devotion to Christ, and of the insight given to it by the Holy Spirit that Christ is the divine answer to the needs of men. Through the whole of its life and activities it is the essential characteristic of the Church that it reveals its knowledge of the redemptive love of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The individual Churches have often been untrue to their Lord and therefore to the nature of the Church itself. At this stage in the history of the Church and the nations, the Council is convinced that the churches in all parts of the world should examine themselves anew and should turn again to the intensive practical study of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and of the essential features of the life of the New Testament church, which from the day of Pentecost manifested a powerful corporate and individual witness entirely out of proportion to the insignificant human means employed.

Conditions in the present age are admittedly very different from those of New Testament times. There have been vast developments and changes in the social, economic and political life of the whole race. The Christian message is now being presented to men whose spiritual background is that of ancient religions or modern philosophies which have little or no connection with the channels of thought in which the divine revelation was conveyed to the world or those existing when the Gospel of Christ was first proclaimed. While these differences impose great modifications and changes on the evangelism of the churches of to-day, the changes are for the most part in the sphere of external method and organization and do not affect the essential principles of the task.

The Church's message to the world is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in all His manifold grace and power. It is the work of evangelism both to set forth the facts of His life upon earth and His teaching about God and man, and also so to exalt and proclaim Him, crucified, risen and glorified, that men may awaken to God and to a sense of their sin and separation from God, may be led to true repentance and to that act of will whereby they believe in and receive the forgiveness of their sins through Christ, and enter upon a new life of trust and obedience toward God and of abounding hope for this world and that which is to come. For its maintenance and expression, this new life involves membership of the Christian fellowship, so that he who has thus received the grace and forgiveness of God must at the same time enter the outward society of fellow-believers and in his turn become a witness to the Truth.

Evangelism, while it involves the interaction of human beings on one another, is something very different from attempts to dominate or invade the personalities of others. On the contrary, evangelism by its emphasis on a regenerating deliverance from sin, on the freedom of the sons of God, and on the hope and promise of eternal life, shows a very profound respect for human personality. The end of this work can never be attained by weak human instruments unless the Holy Spirit Himself works before them and through them. Essentially evangelism is the instrument whereby the living God through His Holy Spirit makes His impact upon the spirits of men.

The Gospel of Christ carries with it the vision and hope of social transformation and of the realization of such ends as justice, freedom and peace. A living Church cannot dissociate itself from prophetic and practical activities in regard to social conditions. True evangelism will always include a forward-looking vision, although the points of practical emphasis will vary from age to age and from country to country according to the existing conditions. Active efforts to serve the community, and faith in God's power and will to redeem it, are the inescapable consequences of the new personal relation to God which is brought to men in the Gospel. Social programs grow out of the Gospel; no one such program can claim to be the content of the Christian message.

3

The Council believes that every part of the Christian enterprise must be saturated with and controlled by the conscious evangelistic purpose, and that this should be true of the whole range of the churches' practical activities. Works of healing, education, the distribution of the Bible and Christian literature, rural uplift and social betterment hold their place for the varying ways in which they express the spirit of Christian love and compassion and interpret Christ to men. Those who take part in such activities find themselves constantly challenged by the need of winning men for Christ. Without this their witness to and interpretation of Christ would be incomplete.

### *A Message to All Peoples*

The following statement, entitled “A Message to All Peoples,” was adopted by the Council at its closing session.<sup>2</sup> It is another example of the characteristics of Tambaram’s ecclesiology described in this study.

#### *The Text*

The International Missionary Council, meeting at Tambaram in India, sends greetings to the peoples of all lands.

We are four hundred seventy delegates gathered from seventy nations and from many races of the earth to consider how we may better make known to the world the love of the eternal God as He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ.

The reports that have been brought to us from every quarter of the globe have made us realize that the ancient pestilences which destroy mankind are abroad with a virulence unparalleled. In every country the fact of war or the fear of it casts its paralyzing shadow over human hope. Race hatred, the ugly parent of persecution, has been set up as a national idol in many a market place and increasingly becomes a household god. Everywhere the greed of money continues to separate those who have from those who have not, filling the latter with angry plans of revolution and the former with the nervousness of power.

Again and again a sense of penitence has come over us as we have realized that these consuming evils are all of them man-made. They bear upon them the marks of human manufacture as clearly as the motor car or the aeroplane. Neither

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<sup>2</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 154-5.

flood nor earthquake nor dark mysterious force outside of our control produces wars or economic tensions. We know that we live involved within a chaos which we ourselves have made.

Again and again we have been forced to note that the evils that we face are not the work of bad men only but of good as well. The gravest of our disasters have been brought upon us not by men desiring to make trouble for mankind but by those who thought they did their best in the circumstances surrounding them. We do not know the man wise enough to have saved the world from its present sufferings – and we do not know the man wise enough to deliver us now.

But it is just at this point that we are forced back upon our Faith and rescued from pessimism to a glorious hope. We know that there is One who, unlike ourselves, is not defeated and who cannot know defeat. In the wonder of Christ's revelation we see God not as a remote and careless deity sufficient to Himself, but as a Father with a love for mankind, his children, as indescribable as it is fathomless. We who have looked at Christ, His Messenger, His Son, torn with suffering on a cross on which only His love for man has placed Him, have a tragic but transfiguring insight into the richness and reality of God's passion for His own. It is this insight which has taken the Christians to glad martyrdoms throughout the centuries and sent them to the ends of the earth to spread the great Good News. And in humility we record our gratitude that even in this present time evidences multiply that men and women still go forth as faithful and untiring ambassadors of Christ.

It is clear that only God can save the peoples, and that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ not only can but will. It must become clearer to us all,

however, that the instruments He demands are not men and women of ideals as such, but those who constantly in prayer and worship verify those same ideals before His august will — verify and improve and never cease to re-verify them. It is not the merely moral person whom God requires in the present crisis, or in any other, but the person who keeps his morality alive and growing through the constant refreshing of His creative touch. We can, none of us, become faultless agents of His grace, but the only hope before the world lies in those who at least attempt to know Him and to follow in His way.

National gods of any kind, gods of race or class, these are not large enough to save us. The recognition of God in Christ by no means robs a man of his nation or his family or his culture. When Christ is taken seriously by a nation or an ancient culture, He destroys no whit of good within it but lifts it rather to its own highest destiny. He does destroy exclusiveness, but in its place He causes a new quality to grow – good will – a good will which is wider than national or cultural loyalties and corresponds to the largeness of God’s love.

In our midst we have seen anew that devotion to the things of Christ will work a miracle among men and women. We have prayed, and as we prayed the barriers of nationality and class have melted. Knit by the Holy Spirit the one to the other and all to God, we have known the meaning of fellowship. We feel this to be a promise of what may be in all the earth.

We call upon our fellow Christians throughout the world to join us in a new dedication. Surely God is summoning us in these times to let go our self- sufficiency, to frequent His altars, to learn of Him, and to make His ways known in all the

relationships of life. To make Him known in the State involves labor for the establishment of justice among all the people. In the world of commerce it involves the ending of unregulated competition for private gain and the beginning of emulation for the public good. Everywhere it involves self-sacrificial service. God grant to His Church to take the story of His love to all mankind, till that love surround the earth, binding the nations, the races and the classes into a community of sympathy for one another, undergirded by a deathless faith in Christ.

## APPENDIX C

### The Place of the Church in Evangelism by The Bishop of Dornakal

#### *The Place of the Church in Evangelism*

Prior to the Tambaram meeting, Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, chairman of the study section on evangelism, wrote an essay titled the same as the study section: “The Place of the Church in Evangelism.” Azariah was highly esteemed in IMC circles and famous from his “Give us Friends” address at Edinburgh 1910.

The following is a reproduction of Azariah’s remarkable essay, which was printed in volume three of the Madras Series.<sup>1</sup> In the following section, emphases are from the original and footnotes are reproduced in the style of the original text.

A curious feature of this era is that texts refer simply to “The Bishop of Dornakal.” This applies to the byline of his written works, but also in lists or when he is referred to by others in their speeches or writings. Occasionally, Azariah’s name was placed in parentheses after the ecclesiastical title, but otherwise it was left to the reader to know that this particular bishop is Azariah. His reputation in Protestant mission circles was such that everyone pretty much knew who the Bishop of Dornakal was.

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<sup>1</sup> IMC, *Evangelism*, vol. 3, Madras Series, 30-44.

### *The Text*

That the Church is the divine society created by God for the continuation in the world of the work that Jesus Christ began through His life, death and resurrection is a truth that has not yet received universal recognition. Even such an august body as the Conference on Faith and Order that met in Edinburgh in 1937 did not quite appreciate this important aspect of the *raison d' être* of the Church. "The Church is the household of God, the family in which the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man is to be realized in the children of His adoption." "The Church is the body of Christ, whose members derive their life and oneness from their one living Head" — are very inadequate definitions of what the Church is.

The Fourth Gospel attributes the inauguration of the Church to the creative act of the risen Christ on the evening of the first Easter day. "As the Father hath sent me, even so I send you" — was the commission with which that first group of believers were ushered into the world to continue the work that Christ Himself came to do. The commission also connects its mission with the proclamation of the Gospel of forgiveness.<sup>2</sup>

While the Fourth Gospel states this in these plain words, the synoptic records clearly imply that evangelism constituted the one parting message of the risen Lord to His disciples. St. Matthew gives us the great commission and the promise of His presence in words familiar to all.<sup>3</sup> It must be noted that the command and the promise are given to the disciples as representatives of the Church of all ages. St.

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<sup>2</sup> St. John xx. 21, 23.

<sup>3</sup> St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

Mark's present ending testifies to the commission and to the fulfillment of the promise.<sup>4</sup> St. Luke preserves for us the word "witness"; "ye are *witnesses* of these things," and "ye shall be my *witnesses*... to the uttermost part of the earth."<sup>5</sup> He is also responsible for the suggestion that "Jesus *began* both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up"<sup>6</sup> thereby implying that that beginning is being continued by the Church of each succeeding age until the final consummation.

These quotations are sufficient evidence that the Church of Christ came into being by the creative will of God for the purpose of carrying on the work which Jesus Christ inaugurated by His life, death, resurrection and ascension.

Jesus Christ came to reveal the love of the Father to the world. The Church of every age exists to reveal the same to the world in every age. Jesus came to save men; the Church exists to save men too. Jesus is the Evangel; the proclamation of the evangel — of the good news of God's love and forgiveness in Christ — is evangelism. The Church is the divinely appointed instrument of evangelism to the world.

The Church of the apostolic age understood this, and there is no doubt that the expansion of the Church in that age from one Roman province to another was due to the conviction of members of the Church that they existed for no other object than to proclaim to the world Jesus and the new life proffered in Him. The Church's life and its witness were undoubtedly the secrets of the expansion of Christianity in the apostolic age. The assimilation of three thousand baptized Christians into the

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<sup>4</sup> St. Mark xvi. 15, 20.

<sup>5</sup> St. Luke xxiv. 48; Acts i. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Acts i. 1.

Church, their instruction, their common worship and the breaking of bread would have been well nigh impossible but for the voluntary work of the one hundred and twenty of the day of Pentecost. Is it not reasonable to suggest that the foundation of the churches of which we hear later — in Judea (in Lydda Acts ix. 32 and in Joppa ix. 36), in Cyrene (xi. 20), in Samaria, (viii. 5), in Damascus (ix. 2, 3, 10), in Galilee (ix. 31), and in Phoenicia (xxi. 2 and xxvii. 12) — was laid by some of those who were the recipients of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost?

The Church which later became the center of missions to the Gentiles was founded by the scattered Christians of Cyprus and Cyrene.<sup>7</sup> Laodicea, Colossae, Hierapolis and the other centers in Asia (except Ephesus) had churches, not of apostolic but of lay foundation.<sup>8</sup>

We are naturally overwhelmed as we read the Book of Acts with the missionary activities of the Apostle Paul. He certainly carried the Gospel message to the principal cities of the provinces of Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia. We must, however, certainly assume that the establishment of the Church in the rural parts of these provinces was due not so much to the personal efforts of St. Paul himself as to his converts. From the church in Thessalonica<sup>9</sup> had sounded forth the word of the Lord in Macedonia and Achaia. The church in Philippi<sup>10</sup> had entered into “fellowship in the furtherance of the Gospel” from the first day of their conversion. The church

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<sup>7</sup> Acts xi. 20.

<sup>8</sup> See Acts xix. 10; Col. ii. 1; iv. 13.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Thess. i. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Phil. i. 5.

in Corinth was enjoined by the apostles so to order its public worship that the unbeliever witnessing it would “fall on his face and worship God.”<sup>11</sup> One of the functions of the ministerial orders, says St. Paul, was “to perfect the saints for the work of ministering”; so that “through that which every joint supplieth” the body of Christ may increase “unto the building up of itself in love.”<sup>12</sup> To be always ready to proclaim the good news is spoken of as part of the equipment of the Christian soldier.<sup>13</sup> The whole Church is an army organized, equipped and engaged in a spiritual warfare against the forces that oppose God, His word and His Gospel. The seer, describing his conception of the Church as the city “coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God,”<sup>14</sup> sees its gates “in no wise shut”<sup>15</sup> that the glory and honor of the nations may be brought into it. And finally, when the glory of Jesus the Lord is fully revealed, the author finishes his book with the Church’s evangelistic call to all mankind: “The spirit and the bride say, Come; he that heareth, let him say Come: And he that is athirst let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely.”<sup>16</sup>

The sub-apostolic age affords confirmatory evidence of the part that the whole Church played in the spread of the Gospel. Readers of Harnack’s *Mission and*

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<sup>11</sup> 1 Cor. Xiv. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Eph. iv. 12, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Eph. vi. 15.

<sup>14</sup> Rev. xxi. 10, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Rev. xxi. 25.

<sup>16</sup> Rev. xxii. 17.

*Expansion of Christianity* will remember his summary of the result of his researches into early church history and literature:<sup>17</sup> — “The facts of the case do justify the impression of the church fathers in the fourth century that their faith had spread from generation to generation with inconceivable rapidity. Seventy years after the foundation of the very first Gentile Christian church in Syrian Antioch, Pliny wrote in the strongest terms about the spread of Christianity throughout remote Bithynia; in his view it already threatened the stability of other cults throughout the province. Seventy years later still, the Paschal controversy reveals the existence of a Christian federation of churches, stretching from Lyons to Edessa with its headquarters at Rome. Seventy years later, again, the emperor Decius declared he would sooner have a rival emperor in Rome than a Christian bishop. And ere another seventy years has passed the cross was attached to the Roman colors.”

The factors that led to this astonishing expansion were many. Chief among these, of course, was the nature of the Christian religion and its unique message. It could proclaim to the heathen world of that day a living God, a Savior from sin, and a power for a new life. But there is no doubt also that there were two other reasons for this rapid expansion — one, the fervor with which the ordinary members of the Church bore testimony to their faith, and the other, the corporate witness of the Church by its life and good works.

Let us take first *the testimony of the rank and file of church membership*. Harnack’s remark on this subject is quite decisive: “The most numerous and successful missionaries of the Christian religion were not the regular teachers but

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<sup>17</sup> Vol. i. p. 335.

Christians themselves in virtue of their loyalty and courage. How little we hear of the former! How much we hear of the effects produced by the latter!"<sup>18</sup> Then, again, he says: "Above all, every confessor and martyr was a missionary; he not merely confirmed the faith of those who were already won, but also enlisted new members by his testimony and his death." "Nevertheless," Harnack goes on to say, "it was not merely the confessors and martyrs who were missionaries. It was characteristic of this religion that every one who seriously confessed the faith proved of service to its propaganda. We cannot hesitate to believe that the great mission of Christianity was in reality accomplished by means of informal missionaries."<sup>19</sup>

Professor K. S. Latourette comes to the same conclusion in his recent work, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*.<sup>20</sup>

"The chief agents," he says, "in the expansion of Christianity appear not to have been those who made it a profession or a major part of their occupation, but men and women who earned their livelihood in some purely secular manner, and spoke of their faith to those whom they met in this natural fashion. It would probably be a misconception to think of every Christian of the first three hundred years after Christ as aggressively seeking converts. It seems probable, however, that many must incidentally have talked of their religion to those whom they met in the round of their daily occupations." The other mighty factor was *the corporate witness of the Church* by life and good works. "We are witnesses of these things," said the

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<sup>18</sup> Vol. i. p. 336.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. pp. 337-8.

<sup>20</sup> Vol. i. pp. 116, 117.

apostles, “and so is the Holy Spirit whom God hath given to them that obey Him.”<sup>21</sup> The witness of the Holy Spirit was evidenced by the divine power manifested in the character and tone of the Christian community. “During the third century,” says Harnack, “the mission of Christianity was being prosecuted in a different way from that followed in the first and second centuries. There were no longer any regular missionaries — at least we never hear of any such. And the propaganda was no longer an explosive force, but a sort of steady fermenting process. Quietly but surely Christianity was expanding from the centers it had already occupied, diffusing itself with no violent shocks or concussions in its spread.”<sup>22</sup> Professor Latourette supports this view also. “In its moral qualities,” says he, “lay another of the reasons for Christianity’s success. It was not merely that high ethical standards were held up before an age in which many were seeking moral improvement. Numbers of Christians found as well the power to forsake evil and to approximate to those standards. The experience of thoroughgoing moral and spiritual renewal was probably shared by only a minority of Christians. Enough of them had it, however, to give a tone to the Christian community.”

A whole series of proofs, says Harnack, is extant, indicating that the high level of morality enjoined by Christianity and the moral conduct of the Christian societies were intended to promote, and actually did promote, the direct interests of the Christian mission. Tatian mentions “the excellence of its moral doctrines as one of the reasons of his conversion, while Justin declares that the steadfastness of

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<sup>21</sup> Acts v. 32.

<sup>22</sup> Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 205.

Christians convinced him of their purity, and that these impressions proved decisive in bringing him over to the faith.”

The apologists testify to this too. “Beyond all question,” says the same author, “these Christian communities seek to regulate their common life by principles of the strictest morality, tolerating no unholy members in their midst, and well aware that with the admission of immorality their very existence at once ceases. Gross sinners were always ejected from the Church.”<sup>23</sup>

Professor Latourette, in the book from which we have already quoted, writes on this at length. The apologists dwelt on the immoralities of the pagans and on the change which had been wrought in Christians by their new life. Thus, Justin Martyr pilloried the exposure of children by pagans and the rearing of boys and girls rescued from that fate for lives of prostitution. In contrast, he pictured Christians who formerly delighted in fornication but had become chaste, who once placed foremost the acquisition of wealth but now had brought their possessions into a common stock to help those in need, who had once hated one another and destroyed one another because of differing customs, and now, in the Church, lived peaceably with men of other tribes. Tertullian challenged the critics to find “one Christian who had been accused of sacrilege or seduction or who was an assassin, or cut-purse or a stealer of the clothes of the bathers.” He declared that Christians were guiltless of lust and of some of the misdeeds of which pagan philosophers had been accused, or, that if Christians fell into such sins, they were cut off from the fellowship of the Church.

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<sup>23</sup> Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 207.

*The charitable works of the Church* constituted another effective witness to the non-Christian communities. The support by the Church of its widows and orphans, its care of the sick, the infirm, the poor and the disabled, its care of prisoners and slaves, and those requiring burial, its help to the poor during great calamities — all these acts of philanthropy made profound impression upon the heathen. “These godless Galileans feed not only their own poor, but ours; our poor lack our care,” said Julian. “When these acts of love were known, the heathen glorified the Christians’ God and confessed that Christians alone were truly pious and religious.”

To sum up. The history of the expansion of Christianity in the early centuries shows that the testimony of the general body of the Christian people and the corporate witness of the Christian community by life and works were important factors in bringing about the rapid expansion of the Church in the Roman Empire.

## *II*

Modern missions have been all too slow to recognize this truth. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Edinburgh Conference could admit that “the existence of the Church in the mission field had hardly been known hitherto to many Christian people, and even where it is known, its extent and its significance were very much underestimated.” The conference, however, marked the beginning of a new attitude of missions to churches: “We recognize,” declared one of the first conclusions of that conference,<sup>24</sup> “We recognize in the existence and growing

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<sup>24</sup> *Report of the World Missionary Conference, 1910*, vol. ii. p. 267.

strength of this church life (which has grown up in all the greater mission fields), the great witness to the world of the saving energy of the ascended Lord; and feel that its development calls for earnest and immediate study on the part of all church and mission authorities." The Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council went one step further and declared<sup>25</sup> that "There is possible now a true partnership enabling the older churches in an ever-increasing degree to work with, through or in the younger." May we not hope that "Madras of 1938" will mark even a still further advance in making the church in each country the primary factor in accomplishing the task of evangelism in that country, and making the other churches — whatever and wherever they may be — the helpers of that church — as far as they are able — in their God-given task? That task can ultimately be accomplished by that church and that church alone, and not by anyone else — except in so far as those others are its helpers.

### *III*

If this contention is right, it will lead us to accept certain practical applications of it in modern missionary policy.

1. The entire church membership should be won for evangelism. Be he or she a Christian in an older church or a younger church, everyone ought to be taught that it is the work of every Christian "to seek and to save that which is lost." The task of filling the empty churches in the nominally Christian lands belongs to the churchgoing members of those lands; the task of bringing into the Church those of

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<sup>25</sup> *Report of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, 1928*, vol. iii. p. 209.

the non-Christian faiths in other lands belongs to the Christians in these lands. The task is one and the same everywhere, and it is so stupendous that nothing less than the entire church membership is needed to accomplish it.

That every Christian is a witness and ought to witness is the ideal; but we may start even with a lower aim, namely, of making every communicant member a witness. Our age must again attest to the truth that the characteristic of this religion is that “everyone who seriously confessed the faith proved of service to its propaganda.” “One believer must produce another,” in the words of Tertullian, “just as one prophet anointed his successor” — otherwise the genuineness of his belief is open to serious question.

2. The perfecting of the believers “unto the work of ministering” is the task of all the various grades of the Church’s ministers. Evangelism is as much the work of the minister or pastor as that of the missionary. Part of the missionary’s task will sooner or later be that of the instruction of catechumens, and of pastoral care of the converts. When it comes to the latter stage, the true pastoral minister will consider his chief task to be, not merely “taking permanent care of hereditary Christians,” but equipping the hereditary Christians for the work of service — the work of ministering the Gospel to those who have not yet come under its influence.<sup>26</sup> A man must consider his pastoral ministry so far a failure if he does not see the people under his charge growing in soul-winning fervor, in missionary giving, and dedication to missionary service. Many churches are like refineries that are

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<sup>26</sup> See Dr. J. A. Robinson’s *Ephesians*, p. 182.

supposed to have done their task as soon as they refine enough oil to grease themselves with!

3. This leads us to make this remark: the tendency to exaggerate the importance of self-support must be immediately abandoned. It was openly said some years ago, and probably is held by many missions and missionaries even now, that the Church must be responsible for pastoral work and the mission for evangelism. It was also thought that until a church pays for its pastoral ministry, it ought not to undertake any missionary work. A greater heresy than this it is impossible to conceive. Evangelism is a necessary factor for growth in church life. Deprive the indigenous church of its God-given task — you will inevitably kill the divine life implanted in it. Christian giving has — it is true — an important place in developing the spiritual life; and so has Christian witness-bearing. Let us not set these things one against the other. Both are equally important: both vital to the life of the Church.

4. This leads me to make a further remark. The practice of employing paid evangelists to preach the Gospel in areas where already there is a church has the tendency to make that church irresponsible in the matter of evangelism. It matters little whether the finance for the payment of these evangelists comes from the church itself or from outside it. The fact that certain individuals are employed whose profession is to preach the Gospel has the inevitable result of effectually killing any spirit of voluntary evangelism in the Christian community. The setting apart of special workers for certain classes has also the effect of removing from the whole church the responsibility for reaching these special classes. It ought to be made

quite clear that the church itself is the responsible body for the evangelization of all within its reach; the church's money should be asked only for evangelization of areas beyond its reach and where the Church has not yet come to be.

5. All evangelistic activities of missionary societies for special classes of people, in any country — such, for example, as zenana women, educated classes, Muslims, etc.— should be directly and perceptibly related to the church of the country and should be conducted only under the auspices of the indigenous church. Pioneer work in a new field by a church from abroad is perfectly justifiable; it is inevitable; it is genuine missionary work: but as soon as any church is formed in a locality and the first batch of converts is baptized or is raised to communicant status, the responsibility for reaching all classes of people ought to be distinctly placed upon that church. To keep such specialized activities in the hands of the missionaries from abroad, or the missionary societies, too long, is so much disservice done both to the cause of evangelism and also to the local church.

6. It is no excuse that the indigenous church is too small to be entrusted with this responsibility. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" was said to a congregation of very few disciples! It is also no excuse to say that the church is not sufficiently developed to undertake such responsibilities. St. Paul thanks God for the fellowship of the Philippian Church in the furtherance of the Gospel "from the first day until now." It is again no use saying that the infant church is not spiritually adequate to the duties of evangelism. Is it not true that disuse of a limb causes atrophy? May it not be that feebleness of Christian life in a church is due to the fact that it has not exercised its function of witness-

bearing? A revival in evangelism is as likely to cause a revival of religion, as a revival of religion is likely to result in a revival of witness-bearing.

7. The Church's corporate witness has far more telling influence upon the non-Christian conscience than we have probably believed hitherto. In the great movement that is taking place in the Telugu country, it is universally admitted by all missions and churches that the reason most often given by the converts for accepting the Christian way of life is the impression produced upon them by the changed lives of the Christian community. It is the history of the first three centuries (already quoted) repeated once again on Indian soil.

Perhaps this is justly so. The world judges Christianity not so much by the number of saints it produces, as by the wider influence it exerts on a whole community — whether that community is a Christian church or a nominally Christian nation. Everybody bows before a Francis of Assisi or a Sadhu Sundar Singh; but very few conclude that there is a divine dynamic behind their lives. The transformation, on the other hand, effected on a whole community by the acceptance of the new Way appeals to the conscience of the unprejudiced on-looker, and he sees that there is a supernatural power at work in that community which has not been evidenced through any other means.

8. As soon as a church is formed in any area, the mission responsible for the founding of the church should recognize that it is its primary duty now "to perfect the saints unto the work of ministering." This has not always been done, to the great loss of the cause of evangelism. We know of districts and areas where the sending church continues to employ its resources in the proclamation of the Gospel in the

area— leaving the infant church very much to itself. The result has been a feeble, lifeless community, which comes to be a serious barrier to the advance of the Gospel in that area. When the Gospel message is proclaimed afresh in a new district its effectiveness depends upon its own inherent merits; when, however, a group of converts has been gathered, the effectiveness is divided — half depending upon the character of the message, and the other half upon the character of the community. When will missions recognize this truth?

9. I wonder if the Christian nations of the West realize the effect produced upon the non-Christian nations of Asia and Africa by their attitude toward the problems created by liquor traffic, by war, by sexual vice and by the attitude of Christian nations to the underprivileged nations of the world? We can understand the mentality of the Hindu who cried on reading the report of His Holiness the Pope's words of welcome to the legions returning from Abyssinia: "If this is Christianity, we shall have none of it."

10. Now I come to my last point. If the corporate witness of the Church is of such vital consequence for the evangelization of the world, the churches, younger and older, must be called to great acts of penitence, confession and amendment. The International Missionary Council's task is not discharged in isolation. It impinges directly on the work of the Conference on Church, Community and State and on the work of the Conference on Faith and Order. They are all inseparably interrelated. The appeal to the conscience of the whole non-Christian world to accept the claims of Jesus Christ as the Revelation of God's love and power is a task that can only be accomplished by the older churches and the younger churches working together

with one mind and purpose. Together, they must solve the problems arising out of war and peace, out of international and interracial relationships. Together, they must solve the problems arising out of the divisions of Christendom. Then the Church will move forward as one man to finish its divinely commissioned task — namely, to reveal the love of God in Christ to a sin-stricken, divided world — so that things in the heavens and things upon the earth may be summed up in Christ — to the glory of God the Father.

## APPENDIX D

### Tambaram's Affirmation of the Kingdom of God

#### *A Partial Answer to the Criticism of E. Stanley Jones*

In his criticism of Tambaram, E. Stanley Jones complained that the kingdom of God was virtually absent. He further lamented that when he successfully advocated at the meeting for some treatment of the kingdom of God, it was added to the reports as an afterthought and that even then its treatment was deficient.<sup>1</sup>

The following is a reproduction of the opening paragraphs of a subsection titled "The Social Significance of Christianity."<sup>2</sup> The chapter is comprised of the findings from Section XIII, "The Church and the Changing Social and Economic Order." This passage follows the introduction to that chapter and, thus, is the opening statement of the first subsection for that area of study at Tambaram. The passage presents a treatment of the kingdom of God that is consistent with Jones's priorities and uses language reminiscent of Jones's own descriptions of the kingdom of God in his books.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jones, *Along the Indian Road*, 169-78.

<sup>2</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 106.

<sup>3</sup> Further contrast between Jones's criticism and the tone employed by Tambaram regarding the core message of Christianity (it is not the church) is evident in the examples provided in Appendix B.

### *The Text*

Amid the confusion and breakdown of the old order to what does the Christian look for a basis of a new order? He looks for nothing less than God's order, the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God was Jesus' answer to the world's ills. That Kingdom confronted the whole of the life of sinful man with God's redemptive offer and demand. It was offered both to the individual and the collective will; the nation as well as the individual was to embody this new order. The whole life was to come under a new redemptive sway.

Where Jesus went the powers of the Kingdom of God were released. He was and is the Lord of that Kingdom. In His Church he has founded a society which is called to interpret to each generation the nature of the divine society of the Kingdom. It does this in so far as it lives by the power of the Holy Spirit and demonstrates in its own life the principles of the heavenly Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is within history and yet it is beyond history. We cannot identify the Kingdom of God with a particular system, either the *status quo*, or any revolutionary system we desire to bring about. If any of the present panaceas offered to man were realized, even in its pure form, it would not be the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom would still judge it, for the Kingdom is the ultimate order; all else is relative.

On the other hand, we must not fall into the error of putting the Kingdom of God beyond history. The Kingdom is an eternal Kingdom, but it is God's purpose that it should come within time and within this world. "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." While the Kingdom is "not of this world," and does

not derive its authority from this world, yet it acts both as ferment and as dynamite in every social structure.

The Kingdom of God is both present and future; both a growth and a final consummation by God. It is our task and our hope — our task which we face with the power of Christ; our hope that the last word will be spoken by God and that that last word will be victory. The Kingdom means both acceptance and action, a gift and a task. We work for it and we wait for it.

## APPENDIX E

### The Continental Exception

#### *Advocacy for an Eschatological Kingdom of God*

The German speaking delegates from Europe, especially those of Germany and Scandinavia, developed concern over the Anglo-American penchant for pragmatism and measuring results. They were especially sensitive to language that tended toward “building” or “establishing” the kingdom of God on earth. Their concern included both the perceived overemphasis on the kingdom of God here and now and the implicit affirmation of human agency in establishing the kingdom of God.

The following is a verbatim reproduction of an addendum to the Tambaram meeting’s findings and recommendations volume.<sup>1</sup> The addendum is entitled “A Statement by Some Members of the Meeting” and is prefaced by the editorial comment, “Presented by the Chairman of the German Delegation.” The documents do not specify this chairperson’s name. The “List of Members” (see Appendix F) presents six delegates under the heading for Germany: Alice Buhring (Berlin Missionary Society), Walter Freytag (German Evangelical Missions Fund), Karl Hartenstein (Basel Mission), Carl Ihmels (Evangelical Lutheran Mission at Leipzig), Siegfried Knak (Berlin Missionary Society), and Martin Schlunk (University of Tubingen). The most likely candidate for the chairperson is Martin Schlunk because

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<sup>1</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 150-1.

of his position as chief editor of the delegation's post-Tambaram report. The self-reported German-language version of this statement was appended to that collective report.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Text*

We recognize with deep gratitude the Christian fellowship and brotherly open-mindedness we have experienced in this meeting, and we state with thankfulness that we are one in Christ our Lord and in the faith in the Church as His body. Amidst the unrest and powerful changes of our time we feel ourselves strengthened in faith, inspired in love, confirmed in hope, so that we are ready to cooperate in facing all the outstanding problems we dealt with during these weeks at Tambaram. But we are bound by conscience to point to some vital principles of the Gospel, which must be emphasized in contrast with certain passages in the reports of some sections.

In the Apostles' Creed, we all confess together that Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead. In spite of the changes which have taken place in the aspect of the world and history since the days of the Apostles, we believe according to the Scriptures that through a creative act of God His Kingdom will be consummated in the final establishment of a New Heaven and a New Earth. Christ has conquered for us sin and death and overcome the world, so that we share with Him His Eternal Life. But at the same time this our new life is hid with Christ in God.

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Schlunk, *Das Wunder der Kirche unter den Völkern der Erde: Bericht über die Weltmissions-Konferenz in Tambaram (Südindien) 1938* (Berlin: Heimatdienstverlag, 1939), 206-8. This document does not name the chairperson, either. Nor does the collective report provide that information in its introductory chapter on the conference and the German delegation penned by Schlunk.

Sin, death and Satan are still powers of reality in our world, and we live as citizens of two different orders, until Christ Himself will appear in power and glory to transform the whole structure of this world into His Kingdom of Righteousness and Victory.

We are convinced that only this eschatological attitude can prevent the Church from becoming secularized. On this biblical basis we have to make the following three statements:

1. For this period of transition between Christ's resurrection and His Second Advent there are distinct orders which God has established and which are valid for this time of history; the sexes with their perpetual relation of attraction and repulsion, the structure of family and clan, nations with some form of government, races with their special gifts. In spite of God's love to all human beings, which does not respect persons, and the reality of the oneness of all who believe in Christ, we have to recognize the validity of these orders with their variety of gifts and tasks. Therefore, we are not allowed to dissolve these orders of sex and family, nation and race. Because communism in its basic faith denies these orders, we cannot but see it as rebellion against God. Therefore, we are unable to agree in this respect with the statement of Section 1. The same reasons lead us to disagree with some trends of the statement of Section 18.

2. In the light of God's redemptive act in the Cross of Christ, we realize that all religious groping in the non-Christian world is a most earnest attempt of the human spirit to redeem itself from guilt and death. In spite of the fact that God has not left Himself without witness, we must state that at the same time the human spirit

gropes to find God and comes under the influence of demonic powers in making its own gods and its own attempts at self-redemption. Therefore, turning to Christ does not mean an evolutionary fulfilment but a radical breaking with the bonds of one's religious past. Through His judgment Christ offers His Grace and meets the deepest longing of souls.

3. The Church of Christ, being an interim-body between the times of God Who has sent the Savior and will send Him again, is moving forward into this world to proclaim the redeeming message, that our sins are forgiven in Christ and we are saved by faith in hope. The Holy Spirit creates in this body the love of Christ, so that it is witnessing by word and deed in real brotherhood and sacrificial service for the sake of mankind. It cannot pass by the sufferings of the world, it is bound to comfort and heal the sick and downtrodden, to help and strengthen the poor and heavy-laden, to fight against injustice and social evils, to awaken the conscience of nations and mankind and so to be the light and the salt of the world. But being between the times, the Church has not to bring into force a social program for a renewed world order, or even a Christian state. It cannot redeem the world from all inherent evils, but it serves and spends itself in promoting all good works in obedience to its God-given call. Expectation of the coming Lord and His judgment means that the Church is always at work, responsive to the tasks God offers daily, highly active in witnessing by word and deed, and so proclaiming the Lord's death till He comes.

## APPENDIX F

### List of Members

The following pages reproduce the list of official participants and their affiliations printed at the end of the meeting's findings and recommendations volume under the title "List of Members."<sup>1</sup> Of note are the range and proportions of geographical regions, Western names and apparently indigenous names, denominations, and gender.

#### *I. Members Appointed by Regional Bodies*

##### *Africa*

*Angola.* Rev. J. T. Tucker, D.D., Director of the Dondi Mission, Secretary of the Aliança Evangélica de Angola.

*Belgian Congo.* The Rev. J. Ohrneman, Missionary and Legal Representative of the Svenska Missions Förbundet.

*French West Africa.* The Rev. E. de Billy, Pasteur missionnaire (Methodist Missionary Society) at Divo, Ivory Coast.

*Gold Coast.* The Rev. C. G. Baëta, Teacher at Presbyterian Training College, Akropong (1930-35).

*Kenya.* J. W. Ford, Superintendent North District and Treasurer of Friends' African Mission.

The Rev. Meshak Muurage, Pastor (Scottish Mission).

B. A. Ohanga, Schoolmaster, Maseno School (C.M.S.).

*Liberia.* The Hon. G. L. Dennis, K.C.A.R., G.C.S.A., Minister of Finance, Republic of Liberia; President, Board of Trustees; Vice-President and Head of the Science Department, College of West Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> IMC, *World Mission of the Church*, 156-68.

*Madagascar.* G. E. Burton, Head of the L.M.S. Boys' High School, Tannarive; Secretary of Inter-missionary Committee of Madagascar.

M. le Pasteur J. Rakotovao, Tutor in the Lutheran Theological Seminary.

*Nigeria.* The Rt. Rev. A. B. Akinyele, Assistant Bishop of Lagos.

The Rev. M. O. Dada, Pastor, Wesley Church; Superintendent of Lagos, Olowogbowo Circuit.

*Nyasaland.* The Rev. Isaac C. Khunga, Minister, Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian).

The Rev. W. Y. Turner, M.B., Ch.B., Medical Missionary of Loudon; Chairman of the Consultative Board of the Federated Missions of Nyasaland.

*Portuguese East Africa.* The Rev. I. E. Gillet, Principal, Central Training School, Kambini (Cambine).

*Northern Rhodesia.* The Rev. J. G. Soulsby, Chairman and General Superintendent of Methodist Missions of Northern Rhodesia.

*Southern Rhodesia.* The Rev. A. A. Louw, Jun., Missionary (Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa).

The Rev. T. D. Samkange, Superintendent, Kwenda Circuit, Methodist Church of Southern Rhodesia; Secretary of Native Missionary Conference.

*Sierra Leone.* The Rt. Rev. T. S. C. Johnson, Assistant Bishop of Sierra Leone.

*South Africa.* The Rev. J. Astrup, D.D., Superintendent, American Lutheran Mission, South Africa.

H. P. Cruse, Litt.D., Professor of the University of Stellenbosch, Cape Province. The Rev. J. M. du Toit, Secretary of the Christian Council of South Africa.

The Rev. S. Grosskopf, Missionary of the Lutheran Berlin Mission.

The Rev. C. C. Harris, Chairman of the Clarkebury District of the Methodist Church of South Africa, and Principal of Clarkebury Institution.

The Bishop of Lebombo, The Rt. Rev. Dennis Victor, D.D.

The Rev. A. F. Louw, Minister of Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika at Stellenbosch.

A. J. Lutuli, Chief of the Emakolweni tribe, Umvati Mission Reserve.

The Rev. B. J. Marais, Student Pastor, Pretoria and Witwatersrand Universities, South Africa.

The Rev. J. C. Mvusi, Travelling Secretary of the Student Christian Association of South Africa.

Miss Minnie Soga, Teacher and Social Worker, Queenstown, C.P.

The Rev. S. S. Tema, Minister of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Sending Kerk.

*South-West Africa.* The Rev. I. V. Alho, Superintendent, Finnish Mission, Ovamboland.

*Tanganyika.* The Rev. H. Scholten, Praeses of the Bethel Mission, Bukoba.

*Uganda.* The Rev. Y. K. Bina, Rural Dean of Singo.  
K. L. Kisosonkole, Schoolmaster, King's School, Budo.

*Asia*

*China.* The Rev. P. P. Anspach, President, American Lutheran Mission of Shantung.  
The Rev. Earle H. Ballou, General Secretary, North China Kung Li Hui (Regional Secretary, N.C.C.).  
M. S. Bates, Ph.D., Professor of History, University of Nanking, and Missionary of the United Christian Missionary Society.  
The Rev. Tsih-Ching Bau, D.D., General Secretary, Chekiang Shanghai Baptist Convention.  
The Rev. A. Baxter, Secretary of the China Council of the London Missionary Society.  
The Rev. Tsu-chen Chao, Litt.D., Dean of the School of Religion, Yenching University.  
The Rt. Rev. J. Curtis, D.D., Bishop of Chekiang.  
Wen Yuen Chen, Ph.D., General Secretary of the National Christian Council of China.  
The Rev. Ching-yi Cheng, D.D., General Secretary, General Assembly, Church of Christ in China.  
The Rev. Sheffield Cheng, Pastor and Secretary for Religious Education, Wukungfu Presbytery, Church of Christ in China.  
Miss Yu Chen Ch'i, Secretary for Christianizing the Home, Church of Christ in China.  
Shaowen James Chthum, Adviser, Kincheng Banking Corporation; formerly General Secretary of the Chinese Students' Christian Association in North America.  
The Rev. Earl H. Cressy, Executive Secretary, China Christian Educational Association.  
The Rev. William B. Djang, Professor of New Testament and Head of Department of Religion and Ethics, Cheeloo University.  
Su-hsuan Fong, Professor of Education and Vice-Chancellor of West China Union University.  
Mrs. Alice B. Frame, Litt.D., Secretary of Religious Education of the North China Kung Li Hui.  
Miss Margaret A. Frame, Secretary, China Council of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.  
Pao-chien Hsu, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, University of Shanghai.  
The Rev. Zang-tse Kaung, D.D., Pastor, Moore Memorial Church, Shanghai.  
The Rev. A. R. Kepler, D.D., Executive Secretary, General Assembly of the Church of Christ in China.  
T. Z. Koo, LL.D., Secretary, World's Student Christian Federation.  
The Rev. C. K. Lee, General Secretary, Swedish Missionary Society.  
S. C. Leung, National General Secretary of Y.M.C.A.'s of China.

The Rev. T. T. Lew, D.D., Professor, Yenching University.  
 The Rev. Tien-lu Li, Ph.D., Dean of Nanking Theological Seminary.  
 I Hsin Liu, Conference Secretary of Religious Education, Methodist Episcopal Church, Peiping.  
 Robert B. M'Clure, M.D., Missionary Surgeon of United Church of Canada, Honan Mission.  
 Chester S. Miao, Ph.D., Executive Secretary of the National Committee for Christian Religious Education in China.  
 The Rev. F. W. Price, Ph.D., Professor of Religious Education and Chairman of Rural Church Department, Nanking Theological Seminary.  
 The Rev. M. T. Rankin, D.D., Secretary for the Orient, Foreign Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention.  
 The Rev. R. D. Rees, Secretary of the National Christian Council of China.  
 Ti Lan Shen, Principal, Medhurst College, Shanghai.  
 The Rev. F. A. Smalley, Dean of the College of Arts, and Head of the Department of History, Political and Social Sciences, West China Union University.  
 The Rev. D. H. Smith, Chairman and General Superintendent, North China District, Methodist Missionary Society.  
 Miss E. D. Spicer, Head of Department of Philosophy (and Religion), Ginling College.  
 Tien Hsi Sun, Secretary of the National Christian Council of China.  
 The Rev. Chi-Tseng Tsai, Secretary for Young People's Work in the Church of Christ in China.  
 Chao-sin Tsai, Student Secretary, National Committee of the Y.M.C.A.'s of China.  
 Mrs. C. S. Tsai, Student Secretary, National Committee of the Y.W.C.A.'s of China.  
 The Rt. Rev. P. Lindel Tsen, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Honan.  
 Miss Pao Swen Tseng, Principal of the I Fang School, Changsha.  
 The Rev. Wallace Chun Hsien Wang, Dean of the West China Union Theological College.  
 The Rev. Bishop R. A. Ward, D.D., Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church.  
 K. C. Wong, L.M.S.H., Vice-President of the Chinese Medical Association and Secretary of the Commission on Medical Work of the National Christian Council of China.  
 Miss Yi-fang Wu, Ph.D., President, Ginling College, Nanking.  
 Y. T. Wu, Editor in Chief of Association Press, National Committee, Y.M.C.A.  
 Yung Ching Yang, LL.D., President of Soochow University.  
 Dr. Man-kwong Yue, Medical Superintendent, St. Luke's Hospital, Putien, Fukien.  
 The Rev. B. Dung-Hwe Zi, Ph.D., Principal, Barbour-Ley Theological College, Swatow.

*India.* E. Ahmad-Shah, Professor in the University of Lucknow.  
 S. P. Andrews-Dube, Member, Servants of India Society.  
 P. V. Benjamin, M.B., B.S., T.D.D., Assistant Medical Superintendent, Union Mission Tuberculosis Sanatorium.  
 The Rev. Premchand G. Bhagat, Headmaster, Vocational Training School, Anklesvar.

The Rev. W. J. Biggs, Missionary of the Baptist Missionary Society in charge of District Work among Outcasts in Balangir-Patna State.

E. H. M. Bower, President, Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association of Southern India.

The Rev. Vazir Chand, Professor, Theological Seminary, Gujranwala, Punjab.

The Rev. S. K. Chatterji, Headmaster, Union Christian School, Bishnupur.

Padipeddi Chenchiah, Chief Judge, Pudukkottai State.

Ranjit Mohan Chetsingh, Warden, Friends' Settlement, Hoshangabad, C.P.

The Rev. Canon S. T. S. Clarke, Incumbent of Zion Church, Madras.

A. Manmohan Dalaya, Principal, Edwardes College, Peshawar.

The Rev. A. Thakur Das, Pastor, Naulakha Church, Lahore.

Dayal Masih David, President, Christian Endeavor Union of India, Burma and Ceylon.

Thomas David, General Secretary of the National Missionary Society of India.

The Bishop of Dornakal (The Rt. Rev. V. S. Azariah, D.D.).

E. W. Franklin, Professor of Education and Vice-Principal, Central Provinces Educational Service, I Class.

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Miss G. Gnanadikam, Lecturer in Zoology, Women's Christian College, Madras.

The Rev. C. Goldsmith, American Baptist Mission, Assam.

The Rev. A. Haider-Ali, Pastor, Central Baptist Church, Delhi.

Mrs. Mona Hensman, Vice-President, Y.W.C.A., Madras, and World's Y.W.C.A., Geneva.

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The Rev. J. Z. Hodge, Secretary of the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon.

The Ven. Archdeacon C. K. Jacob, Principal, Diocesan Theological and Training Institution, Kottayam.

The Rev. John A. Jacob, District Chairman, London Missionary Society, Travancore, South India.

The Rev. Philip John, Missionary of the Baptist Missionary Society, Patna.

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Dr. Hilda M. Lazarus, Superintendent, Government Victoria Caste and Gosha Hospital for Women and Children, Madras.

The Rev. E. DeL. Lucas, Vice-Principal, Forman Christian College.

The Bishop of Madras, The Rt. Rev. E. H. M. Waller, D.D.

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D. G. Moses, Professor of Philosophy and Vice-Principal, Hislop College, Nagpur.

The Rev. J. J. M. Nicols-Roy, Minister, Medical and Public Health, Assam Government, and Missionary of the Church of God.

Miss B. C. Oliver, M.D., Secretary of the Christian Medical Association of India,  
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The Rev. Christa Charan Pande, Methodist Minister, Calcutta.

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The Rev. Bishop J. W. Pickett, D.D., Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church,  
Bombay Area.

The Rev. B. Pradhan, Home Missionary of the Baptist Missionary Society, Cuttack,  
Orissa.

The Rev. Augustine Ralla Ram, General Secretary, Student Christian Movement of  
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B. L. Rallia Ram, General Secretary of the Y.M.C.A., Lahore.

The Rev. M. J. Ramanjulu, Pastor and Evangelist, Nellore.

The Rev. P. S. Rangaramanujam, Superintendent, Methodist Mission, Dharapuram  
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George H. Singh, Principal, Christian High School, Jubbulpur.

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The Rev. H. Sumitra, Professor of Church History and Pastoralia, United  
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The Rev. G. Sundaram, Principal of the Methodist Boys' High School, Hyderabad,  
Deccan.

Miss H. W. Sutherland, Missionary Nursing Sister, Chingleput.

The Rt. Rev. S. K. Tarafdar, Assistant Bishop of Calcutta Diocese.

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Evangelical Lutheran Church.

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The Rev. F. Whittaker, Secretary for Evangelism and Mass Movements, National  
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*Burma.* The Rev. U Ba Han, Principal, Burman Theological Seminary, Insein.  
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Thra Chit Maung, Principal, Pegu Karen High School, Rangoon.  
Miss S. Dawson, Vernacular Secretary, W.C.T.U., Rangoon.  
Ah Syoo Sayama Ma Hannah, Supervisor, Daily Vacation Bible Schools.  
U Hla Bu, Vice-Principal, Judson College, Rangoon.  
The Rev. G. D. Josif, Principal, Cushing High School, Rangoon.  
Sayama Ma Mya Kyi, Assistant Secretary, Y.W.C.A., Rangoon.  
The Rev. U On Kin, Pastor and District Superintendent of Methodist Episcopal  
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Thra Pan. Dote, Headmaster, A. B. M. Karen High School, Toungoo.

The Rev. Il Po Tun, Pastor of the E.W.M.M. Church, Mandalay.  
The Rev. Stephan San Hoo, Deacon attached to St. Luke's School, Toungoo.  
The Rev. H. V. Shepherd, Superintendent, Methodist Mission, Pakokku.  
The Rev. H. McD. Wilson, Principal, St. John's College, Rangoon.

*Ceylon.* Miss H. de Kretser, Teacher, Colombo.

The Rev. H. L. Jacob De Mel, Superintendent, Baddegama Mission.  
The Rev. S. Kulandran, Pastor, Chavakacheri Church.  
The Rev. D. T. Niles, District Evangelist of the Methodist Church of Ceylon.  
Miss G. Robins, Principal, Farens (Girls' Bilingual School), Peradeniya.  
The Rev. R. W. Stopford, Principal, Trinity College, Kandy.  
The Rev. S. J. de S. Weerasinghe, Minister of the Grand Pass Baptist Church,  
Colombo.

*Japan.* The Rev. W. Axling, D.D., Hon. Secretary, National Christian Council, Japan.

The Rev. Y. Chiba, LL.D., Chairman, Executive Committee, Japan Baptist  
Convention.  
The Rev. E. M. Clark, Ph.D., Professor in Chuo Theological Seminary, Kobe.  
The Rev. A. Ebisawa, General Secretary of the National Christian Council, Japan.  
The Rev. S. Hirono, Pastor of the Honjo Evangelical Church.  
The Rev. Charles W. Iglehart, D.D., Ph.D., Professor, College and Theological  
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Arthur Jorgensen, Hon. Secretary, National Committee, Y.M.C.A.'s of Japan.  
Miss Fumiko Kobayashi, Religious Education Secretary, Tokyo Y.W.C.A.  
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The Rt. Rev. J. C. Mann, Bishop in Kyushu.  
The Rev. T. Matsumoto, D.D., Professor of New Testament Literature and  
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The Rev. Inoko Miura, President of the Japan Lutheran Church and Professor in the  
Lutheran Theological Seminary, Tokyo.  
The Rev. M. S. Murao, Editor-in-Chief and Manager, *Daily Christian News*.  
The Rev. H. W. Outerbridge, D.D., Secretary-Treasurer, United Church of Canada,  
Japan Mission.  
Soichi Saito, General Secretary, National Committee, Y.M.C.A.  
The Rev. K. Suzuki, Minister, Kobe Kumiai Church (Congregational).  
The Rt. Rev. P. S. Sasaki, D.D., Bishop of Mid-Japan.  
Hachiro Yuasa, formerly President, Doshisha University.

*Korea.* The Rev. H. E. Blair, Evangelistic Missionary of the Board of Foreign Missions  
of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in Chosen.

Miss E. A. Kerr, Missionary of the Australian Presbyterian Church in Korea.  
The Rev. F. E. C. Williams, Principal, Kongju Vocational Agricultural School.

*Malaya.* Mrs. C. V. Davies, Vice-President of the Malaya Y.W.C.A., Singapore.  
 The Rev. T. C. Gibson, Missionary, Secretary and Treasurer, English Presbyterian Mission in Malaya, Singapore.  
 The Rev. Y. Y. Huang, Chinese Assistant Inspector of Schools, Malacca, Straits Settlements.  
 The Rev. E. S. Lau, Pastor, Geylang Methodist Episcopal Church, Singapore.  
 The Rev. Bishop E. F. Lee, D.D., Resident Bishop for the Methodist Episcopal Church, Singapore-Manila Area.  
 The Bishop of Singapore, The Rt. Rev. B. C. Roberts, D.D.  
 P. William Tambyah, Teacher in the High School, Malacca.  
 The Rev. S. M. Thevathasan, Senior Master, Anglo-Chinese School and District Evangelist, Singapore.

*Netherlands Indies.* Miss A. L. Fransz, General Secretary, Y.W.C.A.  
 The Rev. J. Kruyt, Missionary and President of the Conference of Missionaries on Central Celebes.  
 Johannes Leimena, Government Indian Doctor of Medicine on detachment to missionary hospital.  
 The Rev. B. Moendoeng, Pastor in the Netherlands Indies Church, Batavia.  
 Mrs. B. Moendoeng, formerly teacher in the Mission Boarding School for Girls, Tomonhon, Minahassa.  
 The Rev. Abraham Pos, Lecturer in Theological College.  
 The Rev. Mas Mardjo Sir, Pastor of the East Java Church.  
 Pajaman Sitompoe, School Inspector; Member of the Executive Committee of the Batak Church, Sumatra.  
 Mr. Soetjipto, General Secretary of the Student Christian Movement, Java.  
 The Rev. W. H. Tutuarima, Chairman of the Classis Amboina.  
 The Rev. E. G. van Kekem, Missionary of the Netherlands Missionary Society, East Java.  
 S. C. Graaf van Randwijck, Missionary Consul in the Netherlands Indies, Batavia.  
 The Rev. E. Verwiebe, Ph.D., Ephorus of the Batak Protestant Church, Sumatra.  
 Dr. Wardoyo, Indisch Arts (Physician), Poerworedjo, Java.

*Philippine Islands.* Mariano Banting, Librarian, Union High School of Manila.  
 Miss M. I. Dayoan, Office Secretary, Philippine Federation of Evangelical Churches.  
 The Rev. L. G. Dia, Moderator, United Evangelical Church of the P.I.  
 The Rev. A. C. Espina, Founder and Director, Maasin Institute, Leyte.  
 The Rev. W. B. Foley, Ph.D., Minister, Union (American) Church of Manila.  
 The Rev. Santiago Gaces, Executive Secretary, Church of Christ (Disciples) of the Philippines.  
 The Rev. D. W. Hotter, Ph.D., Missionary, Methodist Episcopal Church, Manila.  
 The Rev. F. C. Laubach, Missionary, Literacy Director, Editor and Pastor, Dansalan, Lanao.  
 The Rev. E. Manuel, Minister and District Superintendent, Methodist Episcopal Church in the Pampanga-South Tarlac Dist.  
 Mrs. J. Martinez, Executive Secretary, Y.W.C.A., Manila.

Estanislao Padilla, Secretary-Treasurer, Maaao Sugar Planters' Association, Inc.,  
Occidental Negros.  
Emiliano Quijano, Government Official, Secretary-Treasurer, Philippine Federation  
of Evangelical Churches, Manila.  
The Rev. P. Rodriguez, Acting Dean, Silliman Bible School.  
The Rev. E. C. Sobrepena, President, Union College of Manila; Executive Secretary,  
Philippine Federation of Evangelical Churches.  
The Rev. J. Valencia, Minister, Secretary of the Philippine North Annual  
Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church.  
The Rev. H. W. Widdoes, D.D., Senior Missionary in General Work, United Brethren  
Mission.

*Siam.* Seng Lan Chairatana, Manager of the Phadoong Rasdra School, Pitsanuloke.  
The Rev. J. L. Eakin, Chairman, Rural Committee of the National Christian Council  
of Siam.  
The Rev. Newton C. Elder, Principal, McGilvary Theological Seminary, Chiangmai.  
The Rev. B. M. Gittisarn, Pastor of the Second Church of Bangkok.  
Nai Chua Pramunwonges, Evangelist, Churches of Christ Mission, Nagorpathom.  
Sing Kao Suriyakham, Associate Supervisor, American Presbyterian Mission,  
Chiang Rai.  
The Rev. Hui-Ming Tsang, Pastor of Churches in Jolburi, Panat and Buj, under the  
Seventh District of the Church of Christ in Siam.

*Turkestan.* The Rev. Gustaf Ahlbert, Missionary of the Svenska Missionsförbundet in  
Eastern Turkestan.  
J. J. Ryehan, Student, formerly Evangelist in Eastern Turkestan.  
J. Stephan, Student in Engineering, formerly Teacher in Yarkand Mission School  
(1908-1933).

### *Australasia*

*Australia.* The Rev. H. L. Hurst, Secretary of the London Missionary Society for  
Australia; Home Secretary of the Missionary Council of the National  
Assembly of the Church of England and New Zealand.  
The Rev. Canon H. E. Hyde, Canon of St. George's Cathedral, Perth, Australia.  
The Rev. F. A. Marsh, General Secretary, Australian Baptist Foreign Mission, Inc.  
The Archbishop of Sydney, The Most Rev. H. W. K. Mowll, D.D.  
Mrs. H. W. K. Mowll, wife of the Archbishop of Sydney, formerly Missionary,  
Church Missionary Society in Western China (1915-1933).  
The Rev. J. S. Needham, Hon. Canon, St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, N.S.W.  
The Rev. J. E. Owen, Convener, Foreign Mission Committee, Presbyterian Church of  
Victoria.

*New Zealand.* The Bishop of Aotearoa, The Rt. Rev. F. A. Bennett.  
The Rev. D. N. MacDiarmid, Director-Designate of Missions of Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.

Mrs. D. N. MacDiarmid, formerly Secondary School Teacher (1916-1920);  
Missionary.

*Pacific Islands.* The Rev. A. H. Blacket, Superintendent, Nausori Circuit, Indian Mission, Fiji.

Wilson Lima, Tutor, Methodist Teachers' Training College, Davuilevu, Fiji.

Pastor Jupeli, Vice-Principal, Rongorongo Institute, Gilbert Islands.

The Rev. H. J. E. Short, Missionary of the L.M.S., Papua.

Mrs. H. J. E. Short, formerly Schoolmistress, Perth College.

### *Europe*

*Belgium.* M. le Pasteur H. Anet, D.S.S. Liaison Officer of the Protestant Missions in the Belgian Congo.

*Denmark.* The Rev. C. Bindslev, Missionary of the Danish Missionary Society at Nellikuppam, S. Arcot, India.

The Rev. Axel F. Holt, Pastor and Foreign Secretary of the Danish Missionary Society.

The Rt. Rev. A. Malmstrom, Bishop of Viborg and Vice-President of the Dansk Missionraad.

*France.* Mme. A. M. de Billy, wife of Missionary of the Société des Missions, Ivory Coast, West Africa.

*Germany.* Miss A. Buhring, Vocational Secretary for Women's Missions in the Berlin Missionary Society.

The Rev. W. Freytag, Ph.D., Director of the German Evangelical Missions Fund.

Director K. Hartenstein, D.Th., Director of the Basel Mission.

Director C. Ihmels, D.Th., Missions Director, Evangelical Lutheran Mission at Leipzig.

Director S. Knak, D.Th., Director, Berlin Missionary Society.

M. Schlunk, D.Th., Professor of Missions, University of Tubingen.

*Great Britain and Ireland.* Miss M. E. Bowser, Women's Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society.

The Rev. W. L. B. Caley, Home Secretary of the Church Missionary Society.

The Rev. Prebendary W. W. Cash, D.D., Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, London;  
General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society.

C. C. Chesterman, M.D., M.R.C.P., Medical Secretary and Medical Officer of the Baptist Missionary Society.

The Rev. A. M. Chirgwin, General Secretary of the London Missionary Society.

The Rev. H. Cunliffe-Jones, Professor of Philosophy of Religion, Systematic Theology and Christian Social Philosophy in the Yorkshire United Independent College, Bradford.

Miss E. M. Davey, Travelling Secretary for Student Christian Movement in South of England and Ireland.

The Rev. J. W. C. Dougall, Secretary of the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland.

The Rev. John Foster, Professor of Church History, Selly Oak Colleges.

The Bishop of Guildford, The Rt. Rev. J. V. Macmillan, D.D.

The Rev. G. E. Hickman Johnson, General Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society.

The Rev. A. S. Kydd, General Secretary, Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland.

The Rev. G. F. Macleod, D.D., Minister of Govan Old Parish Church, Glasgow.

The Rev. H. P. Thompson, Editorial Secretary of the Society for Propagation of the Gospel.

Miss A. Walton, Secretary for Women's Work in Africa and Women Candidates, Methodist Missionary Society.

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*Latvia.* The Rev. Robert Feldmannis, Secretary, Missionary Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia.

*Netherlands.* The Rev. D. Crommelin, Director of the Federated Dutch Missionary Societies.

The Rev. W. G. Harrenstein, D.D., Minister of the Reformed Church of Santpoort.

Baron C. W. T. van Boetzelaer van Dubbeldam, President, Oecumenical Council in the Netherlands, and President, Missionary Council in the Netherlands.

*Norway.* The Rev. J. Gausdal, Missionary of the Santal Mission of the Northern Churches.

The Rev. T. Vågen, Secretary of the Norwegian Lutheran China Mission Association.

*Sweden.* Axel Andersson, Director of the Swedish Missionary Society.

The Rev. Knut B. Westman, D.Th., Professor of Missions and Far East Religions, University of Uppsala.

*Switzerland.* The Rev. Paul Fatton, Superintendent, Mission Suisse dans l'Afrique du Sud.

The Rev. A. Streckeisen, Secretary of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society in India.

J. D. Subilia, French Teacher, European Languages Department, Yenching University, Peiping, China.

*Latin America*

The Rev. C. S. Detweiler, D.D., Secretary of Missions in Latin America of the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

The Rev. E. A. Odell, D.D., Secretary for the West Indies, Presbyterian, U.S.A. Board of National Missions.

Alberto Rembao, Editor of *La Nueva Democracia*.

Mrs. H. P. Louderbaugh, Member of Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in U.S.A.

*Argentina.* The Rev. E. C. Balloch, Pastor of Central Methodist Episcopal Church of Buenos Aires.

Miss Jorgelina Lozada, Pastor of the Disciples of Christ Church, Buenos Aires.

Dr. Paul Penzotti, Agency Secretary of the La Plata Agency of the American Bible Society.

The Rev. B. F. Stockwell, Ph.D., Rector, Union Theological Seminary, Buenos Aires.

*Brazil.* The Rev. Derli de A. Chaves, Dean of the School of Theology of Cranbery College.

Mrs. Derli de A. Chaves, Professor of Religious Education and Sociology; President, Women's Missionary Societies Council of the Methodist Church of Brazil.

Miss Eva L. Hyde, Principal of Colegio Bennett, Rio de Janeiro, and Missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The Rev. E. M. Krischke, Rector of the Church of Ascension, Porto Alegre, R.G.S.

The Rev. H. P. Midkiff, D.Th., Missionary Evangelist of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

*Colombia.* The Rev. M. C. Escorcía, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Barranquilla, and Director, American School for Boys.

*Cuba.* The Rev. F. Gomez, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Encrucijada.

*Mexico.* G. B. Camargo, Executive Secretary of the National Evangelical Council. The Rev. Milton C. Davis, President, Centro Evangelico Unido.

Miss E. Gomez-Gutierrez, Principal of the Bible Training School for Women, Centro de Educacion Cristiana, Toluca.

The Rev. F. J. Huegel, Professor at Union Evangelical Seminary, Mexico City.

Hazael T. Marroquin, Agency Secretary for Mexico of the American Bible Society.

The Rev. A. Zambrano y Ramirez, Pastor of the United Church of Guadalajara, and President of the National Evangelical Council.

*Nicaragua.* The Rev. A. Parajon, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Managua.

*Peru.* W. S. Rycroft, Ph.D., Vice-Principal of Colegio Anglo Peruano, Lima.

*Puerto Rico.* The Rev. A. Archilla-Cabrera, D.D., Superintendent of the Presbyterian Church.

*Near East*

*Arabia.* Paul W. Harrison, M.D., Medical Missionary of the Reformed Church in America.

*Bulgaria.* The Rev. V. Ziapkoff, Pastor of the Evangelical Church.

*Egypt.* S. A. Morrison, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society.

The Rev. Tawfik Saleh, Professor at American Mission College, Assiut.

The Rev. W. J. Skellie, Missionary of the United Presbyterian Church of North America.

*Iran.* Miss A. Aidin, Principal of Izedpayman Girls' School, Yezd.

Miss Fatimeh Behaddin, Principal of Mehr School, Teheran.

The Rev. Stephan Khoobyar, Pastor of Tabriz Evangelical Church and Moderator of the Evangelical Church of Iran.

Ali Sohail-Taaroni, Business Manager of the American Church Hospital, Meshed.

The Rt. Rev. W. J. Thompson, Bishop in Iran.

*Palestine.* The Rev. Farid Audi, Pastor of Christ Church, Nazareth.

The Rev. A. Nielsen, Teacher at Newman School of Languages, Jerusalem.

The Rev. G. L. B. Sloan, Minister of Church of Scotland, Tiberias, and Missionary to the Jews.

*Syria.* Professor Lootfy Levonian, Professor and Dean of the Near East School of Theology.

The Rev. H. H. Riggs, Executive Secretary of Near East Christian Council.

F. L. White, Executive Secretary, Educational Committee of the Syria Mission, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

*Turkey.* The Rev. J. Kingsley Birge, Ph.D., Chairman, Publication Committee, Near East Mission of American Board.

*North America*

*Canada.* The Rev. J. H. Arnup, D.D., Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the United Church of Canada.

The Rev. P. R. Beattie, General Secretary, Student Christian Movement of Canada.

Frank Inrig, Vice-President, Canadian Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Mrs. F. Inrig, Vice-President, Women's Baptist Foreign Missionary Society of Ontario West.

Mrs. H. D. Taylor, Foreign Mission Executive Secretary, Women's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada.

Miss V. E. Tennant, Girls' Work Secretary, Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

*United States.* The Rev. Bishop J. C. Baker, D.D., LL.D., Bishop of the San Francisco Area of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with responsibility for Japan and Korea.

Paul J. Braisted, Ph.D., General Secretary, Student Volunteer Movement.

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