Mika Vähäkangas

Can the Study of Mission become Postcolonial? On Mission Studies in Today's World

The aim of this article is to sketch a general picture of what the study of Christian mission looks like today. Because there is no commonly accepted definition of Christian mission nor of how it should be studied, it is perhaps best to begin with a brief historical account: first of the missionary movements, and then of mission studies. An analysis of the present state of mission studies and related disciplines will then follow.

Waves of missionary movements as the backdrop of mission studies

In spite of the fact that there is no such a term as "mission" in the Bible, one can claim that the concept of sending plays a central role in many Biblical narratives. The Son was sent by the Father, and Jesus sent his apostles (note that the root of this word lies in the Greek *apostello*, to send) to mention the two most obvious and prominent cases. The noun "mission" began to be used in the Catholic Church about the time of its geographical expansion in the 16th century.[1] Protestants, especially revivalists, the Moravians (Herrnhuters) among the first, soon followed both the idea of overseas expansionist activities and that of calling such activities "mission".[2]

The Western missionary movement was thus born, its first wave being Catholic expansion (especially from the beginning of the 16th century and which waned towards the 18th century), often going hand-in-hand with Spanish and Portuguese colonial expansion. The second wave began with predominantly Protestant activities from the 18th century, with Catholics joining in the race for mission fields in the 19th century. This activity reachedits apex in the early 20th century. The high tide of Western missionary movement was

contemporary with West European colonial empires. The relationship between Christian mission and European colonialism was complex. It was not common for the missions to function as the spiritual departments of colonisation and yet the missions were bound to colonial powers with ties of mutual benefits and dependency, such as schooling and health care. At the same time, missions were among the few actors in the colonies that had any possibilities of critical engagement with the colonial powers. Yet, a missionary who was too critical could be barred from entering the colony.[3]

Orthodox expansion during that time took place largely out of sight of international attention, somewhat in tandem with imperial Russian expansion to the Far East and Alaska. Similar webs of interdependency were created in the symphony between the church and the Russian state. Just as with Western missionaries, the monks injected new thoughts and traditions into the lives of the locals, and acted as the harbingers of a new era. Yet, the new did not bulldoze the old, and the local new Christians were in the position of interpreting the new message in terms of their own cosmologies. This would become most vividly visible when the missionaries eventually left, such as when Alaska was sold to the USA or when missionaries gradually left "young churches" during the movements for African independence. When the missionaries had left, one could see what persisted. For example, the Alaskan Yupiits remained Orthodox in spite of the fact that there were no Orthodox missionaries from outside, and in the changed political situation Orthodoxy became an important identity marker for both their ethnic and religious belonging. In a similar manner, Christianity became an important dimension of the identity of many African nations and ethnic groups, either in the form of African local reinterpretations in African Instituted Churches or in the churches planted by Western missionaries.[4]

The October Revolution of 1917 thoroughly changed the situation of the Russian Orthodox Church: symphony with the atheistic state was not possible. Thus, while the Soviet empire continued to expand, the church needed swiftly to switch to survival mode. Eventually, much of the Orthodox world fell under the Communist expansion, and much of the rest survived as minorities in Muslim surroundings or at least feeling the pressure of Muslim neighbours. No wonder that the Orthodox role in world mission understood as Christian expansion was next to invisible during this wave of mission.

Today, we have the third wave of modern missionary movement or, as one might also call it, the first wave of the postcolonial missionary movement.

What is remarkable about it is that this time, the protagonists of Christian expansion come increasingly from the majority world, and Europe especially tends to belong to history as an area sending missionaries. The USA is still the nation sending the most full-time missionaries, but Brazil occupies the next place, with Korea following the three major European Catholic missionary-sending nations of France, Spain and Italy.[5] However, these kinds of statistics give a distorted picture: they take into account only mission activities that follow the Western European pattern of full-time missionaries. Today, African churches are expanding rapidly all over the world, albeit mostly without any paid personnel. African poverty has turned the continent into a powerhouse of Christian expansion. Christians migrating to new countries in hope of a better life move together with their churches. In this manner, every immigrant is a potential missionary.[6]

This interconnection between mission and migration is not limited to Africans only. The general pattern seems to be that Christians, especially Christians from vulnerable minority positions, tend to be more on the move than adherents of other religions. This is most visible in the conflict-ridden Middle East, which has quickly been emptied of its Christian minorities, but Chinese Christians also are more likely to emigrate than other Chinese. Additionally, at least for the Chinese, migration seems to increase the probability of conversion to Christianity among the populace of non-Christian people on the move.[7]

What is noteworthy about much of the mission from the majority world that it is geographically multifaceted and fissiparous. There is no longer a clear geographical direction of mission. Instead, these new missionaries may come from a country where Christianity is in the minority (South Korea) to a country with a Christian majority (Kenya or Finland). Likewise, the direction may be from the majority world to the west or the other way round, or it may happen between countries of the majority world.

The western missionary movement was not only geographically defined, but it also tended to be very centralised, with mission societies, mission boards, coordinating bodies functioning between the missions, global missionary conferences, and other organizations. This is not the case with the new wave of missions. There are some new churches of majority- world background that have grown into multimillion-member denominations, such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God, which is of Nigerian background.[8] The majority of the churches however, are small and emerging, and often tend to

split into two or more in times of crisis. The churches act as progenitors to each other and go through a series of metamorphoses. An example of this is the Laupias Jumala church in Turku, Finland. It was launched by a Finnish couple who at one time studied music in Germany, and who were converted in a charismatic church of Angolan background, the Bom Deus. This Angolan church, in turn, had its roots in a Congolese Nzambi Malamu-church which was founded by a Congolese who had converted to the Pentecostal faith in Mombasa, Kenya, in a rally of an American preacher.[9] While much may have changed in the course of this cosmopolitan tour, at least a couple of issues remained: a strong urge to seek te new converts and the understanding of the close proximity of spiritual realities, which manifests itself in charismatic spirituality and the tendency to launch a church of one's own with varying degrees of connections to the mother church. It is obvious that in this kind of a jungle of emerging new (and also disappearing old) churches, there are very few large organisational structures. For many, the disorganised state can even appear as a manifestation of freedom in the Spirit.

On the rise and fall of traditional missiology

One had to wait until the late 19th century and beginning of the 20th for the academic study of Christian mission to take shape as an independent discipline. Before this development, one studied Christian expansion in new areas as a part of church history, but this expansion was nott been treated as a specific separate object of study. The German Protestant pastor and later professor at Halle University (renowned as a centre of Pietism) Gustav Warneck (1834-1910) was the first to formulate questions in a manner that led to the birth of a new discipline, *Missionswissenschaft*.[10] The object of his study was Christian expansion, which at that time meant mission in the sense of organised expansionist activities from Europe and partly from North America, mostly to the colonies.[11] A touchy issue in this arrangement was the relation between missions and colonies. Warneck considered the relationship between mission and colonialism as problematic in many ways. He emphasised the independence of mission vis-à-vis colonial powers with such rigour that, even if he maintained that one should give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, he considered colonial endeavours as at least far inferior to Christian missions, if not condemnable in every case.[12] His approach, reflecting his times, was confessional

in that he strongly challenged Roman Catholic missions and theology.[13]

Warneck's challenge led to the emergence of Catholic mission studies.[14] They could be seen, on one hand, as a Catholic adjustment of the Warneckian project, and on the other hand as a continuation of Catholic ecclesiology. The resulting three major mission theological schools were based on the varying ways of understanding the nature of the Church. The German school, having its centre in Münster and founded by P. Ohm, was closest to Warneck's Pietistic ideals with a Catholic interpretation. This school interpreted mission through individual conversions, thereby seeing the Church as a communion of believers resulting from the work of God. The Belgian Louvain school, in turn, approached mission primarily as planting of the church where there was no church. Finally, the Spanish school approached mission through viewing the Church primarily as Christ's mystical body.[15]

Meanwhile, in the 19th and the early 20th century, missionaries all over the world, especially Catholics but also Protestants such as Martti Rautanen, were involved in ethnographic and linguistic studies of the people among whom they were .[16] Actually, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg (1682-1719), the German Pietist missionary to the Danish colony of Tranquebar in South India sent by the King of Denmark, should be considered the prototype of the ethnographically interested missionary. He wrote several studies of Tamil language, culture and religion.[17] These studies produced by missionaries served as the major launching pad for the disciplines ofethnography, anthropology and regional cultural studies. However, as a general rule, in missionary circles these studies were approached either with suspicion or with seeing only an instrumental value in them, such as linguistics in Bible translation.

Such studies of foreign religions and cultures in part developed into disciplines separate from mission studies, and in part they grew under its aegis. Thus, it was quite common in Germany during the 20th century to have chairs of mission studies combined with religious studies *(Religionswissenschaft)* due to the latter's genesis within mission circles. Especially the relationship between cultural/social anthropology and mission studies developed in a very complicated manner. On the one hand, missionaries were still often the ones who provided a large amount of ethnographic information in terms of knowing the vernaculars and living for extended times in the missionary fields. On the other hand, many anthropologists considered missionaries as adversaries whose aim was to destroy the religions and cultures that the anthropologists were so keen on studying. For them, Christian missions appeared as a thoroughly colonial enterprise, a form of religio-cultural colonialism.[18]

The Edinburgh 1910 mission conference, even though it was not academic, not properly ecumenical nor properly global, proved to be essential for later developments in mission studies. This was the largest conference of its kind until then, gathering participants from Protestant churches and missionary organisations mainly from Europe and North America, but also a few from elsewhere. Probably the most important dimension of the conference was that it served as the launching pad for three movements: the International Missionary Council (IMC), Life and Work as well as Faith and Order. The two latter organizations merged into the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948.[19]

The IMC organised conferences at relatively regular intervals. At these conferences the missiological discussion tended to be on the cutting edge in the sense of feeding new ideas into the discussion. From the very early days,radical questions came to be posed about the relationship between Christianity and other religions, and on how to relate to the state. In addition, the fact that after the founding meeting of 1921 in the United States, the following conferences were organised in Jerusalem (1928) and India (1938) points to the attempt to get rid of Eurocentrism from early on. The IMC was merged with the WCC in 1961.[20]

The fact that all three strands emerging from the 1910 Edinburgh meeting were together again under the auspices of the WCC led to the fact that ecumenical mission discussion gained a wider base. Gradually, not only the Protestants but also the Orthodox came to be involved. Protestants tended to view mission through expansion or relations to other religions. The Orthodox, on the other hand, viewed mission through liturgy or praise (*doxa*), teaching (*paideia*) and unity, with sanctification (*theosis*) as the goal of spiritual life. Emphasis on conversion was generally rejected by Orthodox as proselytism, often with a degree of defensiveness, especially towards Protestant mission efforts that they considered threatening.[21]

During the post-war period, Georg Vicedom popularised the Barthian idea of *missio Dei* in ecumenical mission theology.[22] Mission was no longer seen primarily as an ecclesial business but rather as God's involvement with the world where churches had their role to play. *Missio Dei*, as necessary as a certain downplaying of ecclesiocentrism may have been, soon proved itself to be ecumenical jargon open to working misunderstandings. All were in favour of *missio Dei* but there was absolutely no agreement on what it should include. Especially during the 1960's, the WCC mission thinking opened towards the

world, towards third world liberation movements, communisms and socialisms of different kinds and became active in social and political questions. The 1968 Uppsala WCC General assembly can be counted as the apex of this development and it was reflected in the following CWME Bangkok conference held in 1972/3. The Uppsala General Assembly demanded that the world should set the agenda and that the churches need to be evangelised by the world, not the other way round. These circles radically reinterpreted mission not to mean Christian expansion but rather as activities that furthered the values of the kingdom of God. This shift also meant a radical reformulation of interreligious relations, where cooperation and dialogue should reign. With regard to the latter, one must remember that it had been on the agenda already from the Jerusalem 1928 IMC conference.[23]

This vociferous advance of politically radical views in discussion of mission led to a deep division. Those Protestants favouring concentrating on the saving of souls and keeping a distance from political issues grouped themselves in 1974 into the Lausanne Movement.[24] This movement builds on Evangelical theological principles and thus did not accommodate those Orthodox views which perceived the WCC direction as equally disturbing. Similar developments, albeit with much less antagonism, took place in the Roman Catholic Church where liberation theological streams collided with a more traditional agenda.[25] While in the ecclesiastic field there was a deepening division, in academia scholars of mission sought for common platforms cutting across the denominational and conservative-liberal divides. In 1972, the International Association for Mission Studies was founded, and a year later the American Society of Missiology.[26] Both have since then worked hard to gather together mission scholars of different types.

As a result, mission no longer meant only Christian expansionist activities. It could also mean any Christian commitment to the world, be it spiritual (as in interreligious dialogue), social or political. The recipients or partners in that mission could be any individuals, groups, organisations, states or even the whole biosphere. Mission studies that had been defined by its object of study, Christian mission, ended up in a situation of disorientation, having lost its common denominator, a shared understanding of what mission is. As a result of this, the starting point of many a study in missiology is the very question of what mission is, and in some cases even the results of such studies have revolved around the same question. The most influential work of the time, the South African David Bosch's *Transforming Mission*, deals with how

the idea of mission has been changing throughout the two millennia of Christianity. Andrew Kirk even named his book *What is Mission*, while the title of the conclusion of Risto Ahonen's magnum opus is the very same question.[27] During the second half of the 20th century, studies of the "young churches"[28] or world Christianity as well as the autochthonous responses[29] to western missions and locally-led mission activities gradually became the bread and butter of mission studies.[30] Due to the relatively limited exposure of Orthodox theologians to the majority-world context, this dimension in Orthodox mission studies has remained relatively limited although signs of such can be found: for example, in the collection of homilies of Makarios, Metropolitan of Zimbabwe.[31] This was a natural continuation to the early missionary ethnographic interest. Now the local people among whom one worked often had already become Christians. When the educational level of the local Christians increased, there was a boom of constructive contextual theologies (in Protestant parlance)[32] or theologies of liberation and inculturation (in Roman Catholic terms).[33] The first- and second-generation local theologians would elaborate in which ways one could interpret the Christian message in such a manner that it would be intelligible and acceptable in the local culture. Another major area of their interest was ecclesiastically motivated studies in the religions of their cultural background.[34] Western mission scholars, in turn, studied these resulting local theologies.[35] In due time, indigenous scholars began to study both their churches and the local theologies of older generations.[36] In such manner, mission studies have become truly global.

Mission studies and related disciplines today

During the time of colonial independence after the Second World War, Christian mission became a target of ruthless criticism as the handmaid of colonialism. Missionary reactions to the critique varied. Some missionary circlescontinued as if nothing had happened, whereas most often there came to be a realisation that there was a need to quickly transfer church leadership tothe local hands. Some mission circles engaged in extensive self-flagellation, while others preferred to reject the idea of conversion altogether. In academia, the word "mission" became a dirty word. In the following, I sketch the ways in which academic mission studies have reacted to this challenge.

The early mission studies project of studying Christian mission as an expansion from the centres to the peripheries has not disappeared, but it has taken somewhat new forms. Western mission is still studied, but today predominantly historically. While previously it was theologians sympathetic to Christian mission who wrote studies that sometimes came close to hagiographies, now those who are interested in studying western mission predominantly come from outside of the field of theology. Their ideological attachment to the topic canbe anything between antagonism and support. Their interest in studying western mission usually stems from the insight that the western missionary movement has been one of the laboratories of deep intercultural exchange for almost three centuries.[37] There is thus much to learn about more- or less-successful coexistence. Today's world is in dire need of these lessons. Another insight leading to interest in the study of the western missionary movement is its profound impact on many non-European cultures, especially through social and educational work.[38] Missions are among the first organisations working in the field that is today labelled as "development cooperation". Today, historians, political scientists and scholars of development seem to be more interested in the history of western missions than are theologians suffering from a colonial hangover.

A relatively recent development is the study of indigenous activity in majority-world church history. It often takes the form of history of expansion. This is because local activity usually has been the precondition of church growth, whetherthat shift of agency is a result of planned and voluntary indigenization of the ecclesiastic structures or abrupt, such as in the case of founding of autochthonous churches.[39] In these historical studies one must combine archival material with oral sources because in many cases the written documents were either produced by the white missionaries or at least controlled by them. In such sources, much of the local initiative is anonymised or even ignored. The written material thus magnifies the foreign factor, whereas the local initiatives are left in the shadows. Oral historical approaches function as a partial methodological remedy to this dilemma. Much of this kind of research is carried out by insiders of the churches of the global south. [40] This is partly so because of the language abilities required for the research. In many cases, successful research in this kind of history requires the command of the vernacular(s), the colonial language(s) of the area and the missionaries' mother tongue(s). Only then would all the necessary material be accessible to the researcher. This often requires cooperation between researchers of diffe-

rent linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The Documentation, Archives and Oral History study group of the International Association for Mission Studies serves as a platform for such cooperation.[41] Another dimension of the relative disadvantage of the historiography of oral cultures is the fact that historical data tends to end missing when not archived. Therefore, there are projects like Dictionary of African Christian Biography with entries in the thousands.[42]

Mission theology is nother dimension of the early mission studies project that has survived. Today, mission theology is practiced predominantly in denominational theological seminaries and its role is similar to Warneck's: to argue about the authority to perform mission, the goals and methods of mission.[43] A very significant question in mission theology today is defining how to relate to other religions. During in recent decades this question has developed into a discipline of its own under the title of "theology of religions," and no longer does it always have any connection to the rest of mission studies.[44] Pluralist and relativist theologies of religions in particular can have a very negative view of Christian mission as expansion. Sometimes equivalent studies are presented as philosophy of religions, but the border between theologies and philosophies of religion is very porous.

Theologies of mission are often coupled with some empirical studies of either mission activities or church growth. Such a combination of theological constructive thinking combined with empirical data often goes under the title of "missiology." Usually, this kind of empirical study does not limit itself to the study of mission organisations but rather expands towards the study of world Christianity. There, the emphasis tends to be on local leadership and participation. Not infrequently are the researchers enchanted by Pentecostal-charismatic churches or autochthonous churches bearing a strong local imprint. This kind of study attracts a wide range of scholars. It is in direct continuity with mission studies, albeit often under new names such as "world Christianity" or "global Christianity" and "intercultural theology" (in that case concentrating more on thought than action).[45] This type of research, which tunes down constructive dimension and emphasises a social scientific approach, comes close to cultural anthropology about Christianity, albeit with a theological twist.[46]

Anthropologists are becoming increasingly important partners with mission scholars in discussion of theological background. The main reason for this development probably is the change in anthropological fields of research. When it became increasingly difficult to find proponents of pre-Christian re-

ligions in some of the anthropological fields, some anthropologists began to study local Christian communities instead. This study developed into anthropology of Christianity. This was a major step for anthropology that traditionally had been studying others, and which counted Christians as a western "us", despite the anthropologist's possible other personal religious belonging. At the same time, the field of anthropology began to expand towards the western cultural sphere as well. In such manner, the boundaries between anthropology and mission studies (in the sense of study of world Christianity) and anthropology and sociology, began to blur. When still adding to the dimension that non-western scholars study their own cultures and churches, the old categories of "emic" and "etic", once so dear to anthropologists, have been challenged and relativized from that direction as well. The emergence of the anthropology of Christianity has opened up possibilities for cooperation between anthropologists and theologians in a manner that was earlier unlikely. Theologians are able to contribute with detailed and deep insights about the thought structures behind the religious behaviour and organisation, while anthropologists help theologians to remember that all thought is rooted in life experiences. The indirect influence of this cooperation is that anthropology has begun to pay more attention to theology, in non-Christian contexts as well.[47] It seems that the line of division between the researchers of religious thought and religious action is becoming less ideological and sharp.[48]

Another direction of continuation is the study of contextual or inculturation theologies. That area is still the playground of theologians, and scholars of other academic backgrounds seldom venture into it. As noted above, the starting point was somewhat colonial, with western theologians studying the others' theological thought. This perspective has been balanced by local analyses of theologies. Especially in the west, one came to be disillusioned about the potentials of contextuality in theology when such contexts came to be more and more splintered: everyone's context differs in some ways from one's neighbour's context. Thus, what was sought after was intercultural theology[49] or the much less popular term intercontextual theology.[50] Here, the attempt is made to gain some sort of a larger applicability for theology without the pitfall of universalism, where a certain theological construct is seen as universal and not as a product of a specific context. In some circles, limitation to only Christianity has been viewed as a handicap. Thus interreligious studies or interreligious theology has been proposed. This debate is exemplified even in the name of ESITIS, the European Society of Intercultural Theology and In-

terreligious Studies, where one balances between the need for interreligious approaches and a fear of too much theological rapprochement. Here the difference with religious studies lies in the fact that here the religions involved are studied from the inside. However, the experiential turn in religious studies has meant that in some part, religious studies begin to overlap with theology, especially interreligious theology.[51]

Recently, there seems to be a post-postcolonial turn in much of majority-world theology and ecclesial life. The critique against western mission has waned, both within Christianity and without. Today, the loudest voices condemning western mission history come from Islamists and Hindu nationalists. This development is partly due to the fact that, in demographic terms, Christianity no longer is a western religion, and that the result of western mission was not the total westernisation of the world but rather the de-westernisation of Christianity. Additionally, distance in time as well as the generally increased cultural sensitivity of foreign missionaries have also tended to contribute to this development. In the western sphere, the postcolonial wave critical of mission still tends to increase, drawing much of its force and credibility from general scepticism towards religion. A religion that wants to expand and propagate its views is considered as a specifically problematic phenomenon from the point of view of the Enlightenment secular project.[52]

From the point of view of Orthodox missiology, there have been a couple of developments that have made their imprint, and one may expect that newer ones will still continue to form the agenda. With the fall of Communism, many Orthodox churches were exposed to a drastically changed situation where no longer was it a matter of survival but rather a question of reconstruction of nations with an emerging symphony with the state. This meant a strong orientation towards home mission, even if the terminology was not always employed.[53] "For an Orthodox Christian the word 'mission' sounds strange, even unknown…"[54] The rise of nationalism both within and outside the churches is a dimension that has tended to block some global views, whereas increasing migration to and from Orthodox countries forces the churches to look beyond their geographical territories.[55] Especially the shockwaves of migration launched in the aftermath of the Arab Spring have profoundly shaken the Orthodox world: the Near East has quickly been emptying of (mostly Orthodox) Christians, and there has been an inflow of migrants from the Near East migration into Greece, the Balkans and Russia.[56] One wonders if the Orthodox world will be forced to reconsider its tight na-

tional compartmentalisation and its geographical approaches to ecclesiology. However, there are signs that instead of simply maintaining defensive positions about western churches' proselytism, some Orthodox churches and thinkers are adopting a more expansionist mode in terms of mission.[57] When it comes to remaining within national borders, Kozhuharov is correct in pointing out that in vast Russia, Orthodox missionaries travel far and cross many borders, even if they stay within the country.[58] The Greek Orthodox Church has been active in church planting, especially in Africa and North America, while the Orthodox Church of Finland has been involved in mission in Kenya since the 1970's.[59] At the same time as these developments, some thinkers in Protestant theology and missiology have increasingly been finding value in spirituality and liturgy. Thus there are many more points of contact between Orthodox and Protestant mission theologies than before, while Catholics have traditionally often been in a kind of mediating position between Protestants and the Orthodox in many mission-related issues. In the ecclesiastical field as well as inconfessional mission studies, more common ground than previously seems to be emerging. However, this development does not necessarily help to bring more unity to the entirety of the discipline because of the distancing from confessional approaches of secular universities' disciplines related to mission studies.

Conclusion: How to overcome the colonial legacy in the midst of confusion?

The present state of mission studies is quite confusing. On one hand, it is clear that today perhaps more than ever, there is a need to know more about interreligious encounters, which forms the kernel of mission studies. On the other hand, mission has become so contaminated a word, and mission studies has traditionally been interpreted as a form of apologia for mission, that mission studies cannot serve as a banner uniting all those who study topics that historically and logically could easily fit under that rubric. The upcoming International Association for Mission Studies conference in Seoul, Korea , will aptly reflect the situation: the conference will have a truly global scope with a considerable number of scholars from the majority world. It is telling that the interest in studies falling under the broad category of mission is constantly

growing in the majority world, whereas (especially in Europe) the opposite is happening. Chairs of mission studies or missiology are being transformed into related disciplines with no connection to word "mission" in the title. At the same time, it is clear that the boundaries of mission studies are very porous. There is wide interest in the topics dealt with by mission scholars, but for non-theologians there exists a high threshold for joining in the mission studies debate due to its highly ideologically-biased image. This is partly due to the differences in theological and religious studies approaches, with the former having normative or at least existential goals much like philosophy, whereas in the latter traditionally creates a distance between the researcher and the object of study.

Mission studies have become de facto post-colonial in the sense that its academic activities have been moving increasingly to the majority world. At the same time, however, this very same move to the global south means that mission studies remain for a large part a relatively confessional enterprise, even if often it is ecumenically-minded. The majority-world mission studies also see themselves on a historical continuum with the earlier western missionary movement which has so widely been labelled as colonial. Today's mission scholars of the majority world often belong to churches in which at least some dimensions of the earlier mission are still cherished. It is rather more common in the countries of these missionaries' origin for one to condemn the western missionary movement outright, in the name of post-colonial criticism.

It would be of major benefit for both of the parties who in different ways are postcolonial to engage in constructive dialogue. In the mission studies produced in the global south, it is worthwhile to strive towards critically balanced views of western mission, even in the cases where it may lead to self-criticism against today's indigenised Christianity. At the same time, in the global north, it would be useful to look critically at how postcolonial argumentation is sometimes used by the ruling classes against Christian minorities. Additionally, turning a critical gaze towards the self-confessed postcolonial "I" can also be sobering: is there the possibility that my postcolonial critique of majority-world "colonial" Christianity is itself very colonial in tone and even content? Is this just a continuation of the theme that "the white man knows best", only that this time the best knowledge happens to take the form of a secularism-induced postcolonial critique?

Yet another interesting dimension in the IAMS Seoul conference, as well as in a number of recent conferences, will be the increasing Orthodox interest in participating in the global missiological debate. It is striking that scholars from the Balkans are at the forefront of this debate, and outnumber the rest of the participants from the Orthodox world.

What seems to be clear in the present state of confusion in mission studies is that this is not the end of history, but rather that there will be disputes and seismic shifts in thinking about mission. Much of this is the outcome of the snowball set in motion by the western missionary movement during the 19th and the 20th centuries. Its growth and direction already have been out of western control for some time now. The initiative in Christian expansion has shifted predominantly to non-western hands, and mission studies have been shifting towards the south as well. Hopefully, western secular academia will not lose sight of the importance of knowledge of interreligious encounters from the perspective of faith experience. Likewise, it is desirable that the global southern mission studies remain willing to dialogue with academia in the Northern Hemisphere. Finally, considering the needs of the contemporary world, as well as that interreligious encounters are the focus of mission studies, one cannot but hope that there will be a development towards interreligious mission theology in the spirit of dialogue. This development would be beneficial both for the discipline and for the world.

Notes

1 *Wolanin* 1994, 33-35.
2 See *Schattschneider* 1984.
3 For a good overview of this missionary era see *Neill* 1986, 120-379.
4 On the Alaskan Yupiit mission history and the local interpretations of the received Orthodox faith see *Cox* 2008, 95-118; 2014, 113-136. On the public role of Christianity in Africa see *Gifford* 1998.
5 Atlas of Global Christianity 2009, 259.
6 See, for example, *Asamoah-Gyadu* 2013; *Ter Haar* 2001; *Hanciles* 2008, 276-373.
7 *Johnson & Bellofatto* 2012; Wan 2003;
8 On RCCG see Ukah 2003; *Adeboye* 2007; *Vähäkangas* 2015.
9 *Fischer* 2011, 73-163.
10 His magnum opus: *Warneck* 1897-1903.
11 *Warneck* 1897, 1: ”Unter christlicher Mission verstehen wir die gesamte auf die Pflanzung und Organisation der christlichen Kirche unter Nichtchristen gerichtete

Thätigkeit der Christenheit." To be a Pietist Protestant, this definition is surprisingly ecclesiocentric in the organisational sense. However, his understanding of the Church clearly pointed towards conversion and personal piety.

12 *Warneck* 1902 (Bd. 3 I), 50-57.

13 See, for example, *Warneck* 1902 (Bd. 3 I), 53, 55 where he castigates French Catholic mission for its submission to government's colonial goals.

14 *Wolanin* 1994, 11-24.

15 *López-Gay* 1993, 25-26.

16 On Rautanen as an ethnographer see *Peltola* 1994, 120-128. On missionaries as ethnographers see *Cinnamon & Urban-Mead* 2006.

17 For an English translation of his major ethnographical/religious studies work, see *Ziegenbalg* 1869.

18 *See Cinnamon & Urban-Mead* 2006, 8-10, 13.

19 *Shivute* 1980, 25-41; *FitzGerald* 2004, 109-110.

20 On the development of the International Missionary Council, see *Shivute* 1980.

21 See e.g. *Kozhuharov* 2015, 13-53; on rejecting proselytism see *Kozhuharov* 2015, 125, 184; *FitzGerald* 2004, 146, 153; on *theosis* as the goal of mission, see *Kozhuharov* 2015, 65, 67; see also *Tillyrides* 2004, 502. For an assessment of Orthodox missiology see *Bosch* 1991, 205-210; *López-Gay* 1993, 27-30. A book that was generally considered as the Orthodox contribution to mission theological discussion at that time was *Bria* 1996. What needs to be noted, however, is that the Orthodox and the Evangelicals have progressed somewhat from the situation of mutual suspicion by means of common consultations. *Stamoolis & Nassif* 2014.

22 *Vicedom* 1960. For a detailed analysis of missio Dei in Vicedom's theology see *Haapiainen* 2014.

23 *Jonson* 2013; *Shivute* 1980, 44-47. According to *Jonson*, Uppsala 1968 changed the nature of the ecumenical movement – something that the Orthodox Churches have had problems with since then (*Jonson* 2013, 34; *FitzGerald* 2004, 152).

24 *Hunt* 2011, 81-82.

25 For a typical contemporary reconciliatory interpretation of the tension see Hearne 1984. What has to be noted, though, is that the Vatican took harder measures later on: for example, in the silencing of leading liberation theologians such as *Leonardo Boff* (in 1985 for a year and again 1991) and *Ivone Gebara* (1995). However, with Pope Francis the Vatican position towards socially and politically active theologising has changed dramatically in a more positive direction.

26 *Roxborogh* 2014, 121.

27 *Bosch* 1991; *Kirk* 1999; *Ahonen* 2006.

28 A rather typical relatively early historical study of this kind is *Smedjebacka* 1973.

29 The Uppsala mission studies professor Bengt Sundkler's *Bantu Prophets of South Africa* (1948) is a legendary early example of the mission studies interest in local responses to Western mission.

30 It is telling that the title for the history of the International Association for Mission Studies is Witness to World Christianity. *Anderson* et al. 2012.

[31] *Tillyrides* 2004.

[32] Among the Protestants e.g. *Alan Boesak* (1976), *Manas Buthelezi* (1968), *Mercy Amba Oduyoye* (1986), *Kazoh Kitamori* (1972) or *José Miguez Bonino* (1966).

[33] On the tension between theologies of liberation and inculturation see *Martey* 1993. For examples of Catholic liberation theologies see: *Gutiérrez* 1971; *Boff* 1972; *Éla* 1980; *Pieris* 1986. For examples of theologies of inculturationsee : *Panikkar* 1964; *Mulago* 1965; *Nyamiti* 1984.

[34] E.g., *Mbiti* 1969; *Idowu* 1973.

[35] In the beginning, the studies were more general in scope, such as Frostin 1988; Link-Wieczorek 1991; Küster 1995, later followed by detailed analyses of individual majority world theologians, such as *Vähäkangas* 1999; *Komulainen* 2005 or *Heaney* 2015.

[36] Majority-world scholars on majority-world scholars: *Bediako* 1992; *Martey* 1993; *Munga* 1998. For a book series on African theologians by Africans, see: *African Theology* 2003; 2006; 2013.

[37] E.g. *Austin* 2007; *Jalagin* 2007.

[38] A prime example of this kind of approach is *Comaroff & Comaroff* 1991 & 1997.

[39] Bengt Sundkler's and Christopher Steed's major work on African church history was a milestone in the emphasis on indigenous activity. S*undkler & Steed* 2000.

[40] E.g. *Ogot* 1966; *Niwagila* 1988; *Isichei* 1995.

[41] *DABOH* 2016.

[42] *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* 2016.

[43] E.g. *Ahonen* 2006; *Braaten* 2008; *Goheen* 2014.

[44] See *Knitter* 2002.

[45] See e.g. *Box* 2014; *Moreau, Campbell & Greener* 2014.

[46] E.g. *Drønen* 2013; *Hankela* 2014.

[47] A good example of this development is the special issue of *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 24/3 (2013) on theology in anthropology.

[48] One of the early proponents of increased interchange between the disciplines from the anthropological side has been Prof. Joel Robbins, the new honorary doctor of Lund University faculty of theology. However, Robbins is clear that each of the disciplines have their own tasks and different starting points which makes the relationship "awkward" in spite of possibilities of mutual learning and cooperation. *Robbins* 2006; 2013.

[49] Intercultural theology is a very popular term in the German-speaking area. For a sketch of its nature and approaches, see *Küster* 2014.

[50] "Intercontextual theology" is used in theological parlance but the only notable instance of its adoption as a program name is that of Oslo University.

[51] *Ferrer & Sherman* 2008.

[52] *Robert* 2009, 259.

[53] See *Kozhuharov* 2015, 55-131 on the Russian and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches concentrating on the national geographical or cultural area. This is, according to him, a general feature in the Orthodox world (*Kozhuharov* 2015, 133). Compare,

however, Kozhuharov's own view (2015, 99), according to which mission crossing geographical and cultural boundaries is central for a? the? Christian concept of mission.

[54] *Kozhuharov* 2015, 133.

[55] *Kozhuharov* 2015, 150-153.

[56] On Near Eastern Christians' emigration see *Sabra* 2014, 115-116.

[57] E.g. *Tillyrides* 2004, 501 points out the need for conversion. The difference here to many a Protestant perspective is his strong insistence of the sacramental life as the ideal for the convert.

[58] *Kozhuharov* 2015, 134-135, 146, 174-175.

[59] *Kozhuharov* 2015, 139; see *Tillyrides* 2004. On the FOC mission in Kenya see *Iltola* 1983.

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Tiivistelmä

Mika Vähäkangas, *Voiko lähetyksen tutkimus olla jälkikolonialistista? Lähetyksen nykytutkimus maailmalla*

Lähetyksen tutkimuksen juuret ovat läntisessä lähetysliikkeessä, jonka kukoistuskausi ajoittui samaan aikaan kolonialismin kanssa. Sata vuotta sitten alkanut akateeminen lähetyksen tutkimus oli tunnustuspohjaista ja palveli läntisen lähetyksen tarpeita. Siirtomaavallan purkautumisen ja enemmistökirkkojen kotoperäytymisen myötä myös lähetyksen tutkimus muuttui merkittävästi. Maailman kristillisyyden tutkimus muodostui tärkeäksi ja eiläntinen toimijuus tunnustettiin. Samalla siirtomaavaltakeskittymien ulkopuolelta tulevat nk. enemmistömaailman tutkijat (majority-world scholars) alkoivat saada yhä keskeisemmän sijan.

Näkypäivänä lähetyksen tutkimuksesta on vallalla monenlaisia käsityksiä. Yksi kiistanalainen kysymys koskee lähetyksen historian ja kolonialismin yhteyttä. Läntiset, taustaltaan sekulaarit tutkijat ovat tyypillisesti kriittisempiä lähetystä kohtaan kuin enemmistömaailman tutkijat, jotka lähetyksen historiaa tutkiessaan tutkivat samalla omaa historiaansa. Jälkikolonialismi näyttäytyykin erilaisena riippuen tarkastelun lähtökohdasta. Vanha liberaalien ja konservatiivien kiistely uskontoteologiasta ja sosiaalisesta oikeudenmukaisuudesta jakaa edelleen mielipiteitä. Tutkimusalan nimi ja luonne ovat myös kiistanalaisia, osan halutessa säilyttää sanan "lähetys" (mission) ja toisten halutessa luopua siitä kokonaan. Niiden joukossa, jotka kannattavat termiä "lähetys" ei kuitenkaan vallitse yksimielisyyttä siitä, mitä käsitteellä tarkoitetaan. Lisäksi osa tutkijoista lähestyy kysymyksiä tunnustuksellisen teologisen näkemyksen ohjaamana, kun taas osa pitää sekulaaria agendaa parempana.

Lähetyksen tutkimus ja sen jälkeläiset ovat epäjärjestyksen tai luovan kaaoksen tilassa, riippuen siitä miten tulkitsija tilannetta arvioi.