

In this paper I want to explore modern Western missionary strategies and their consequences, positive and negative, with the hope of finding the right principles or strategies to live missionally today. First, I will take a look at the model of Henry Venn, who was one of the first advocates for indigenous church principles. I will offer a critique of Venn's three-self missionary model by using the works of Roland Allen. Then, I will move to the present day to offer a vision for global missionary movement that comes and goes in all directions. This will be done by highlighting the work of Allen, Samuel Escobar, and David Bosch, who, along with Andrew Walls, help us understand the need for the West to acknowledge and respect the global shift of Christianity to the Majority World. My thesis is that the Western missionary strategy most needed today is one of self-emptying humility that calls us to a friendship with our global neighbors, requiring a willingness to change our paternalistic ways through an ongoing, cross-cultural conversation.

The three-self movement can be viewed as one of the best Protestant missionary models since Protestant missions began in 1792. Both American Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) and Englishman Henry Venn (1796-1873) independently came to these three tenets of self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating in the 19th century. I want to explore this movement and its claims of promoting indigenous church principles. Through African Samuel Adjai Crowther, a Church Missionary Society native pastor in West Africa, I will offer an example of successful indigenous leadership, especially in contextualization of the gospel for Africans. Afterwards, I will use the writings of Roland Allen to test this modern missionary method for biblical evidence, which may reveal flaws in Venn's system of thought.

Henry Venn grew up as part of the famous Clapham sect in southwest London. There is

evidence that Venn shared his childhood in London with African children from Sierra Leone who understood and studied the Bible.<sup>1</sup> This early cross-cultural experience affected his missiology. When Venn took over the Secretary position at the CMS in 1841, no one had "yet conceived a formal theoretical framework of mission."<sup>2</sup> He was a "central figure in the forging of mission theory" and would become one of the greatest administrators known to the history of missions.<sup>3</sup> He is known as the father of the "indigenous church" principle.<sup>4</sup> Despite this pioneering model of raising up local leaders, Venn never traveled to the countries where CMS operated. He hosted many missionaries and international leaders at his home in England, but did not make trips to the mission field. From these meetings, he kept extensive notes and also received and sent an impressive amount of letters to his missionaries. Venn had a tireless passion to solve problems and find the best solutions for indigenous church growth.

In efforts to find principles that could serve as a foundation for effective missionary work, Venn saw weaknesses in "a missionary-founded, missionary-led church. What, he asked, gave a church integrity? A church had to feel self worth."<sup>5</sup> As Wilbert Shenk states, "Venn identified three aspects of self-worth or "ingredients of a church's integrity."<sup>6</sup> They were self-support, self-government, and self-propagation. Furthermore, in order for the local church to have self-worth from the beginning, Venn saw the mission as the scaffolding and the local church as

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<sup>1</sup> Jehu J. Hanciles, "Missionaries and Revolutionaries: Elements of Transformation in the Emergence of Modern African Christianity," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 4 (2004): 150.

<sup>2</sup> Wilbert R. Shenk, *Henry Venn—Missionary Statesman*. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1983), 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Gerald H. Anderson, *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1994), 541.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 545.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

the building. Using this image, the mission was a temporary entity from the beginning. Once indigenous leadership was established, the mission moved on to another setting. Venn called this transition the "euthanasia of a mission."<sup>7</sup>

Venn's indigenous church principles came from a desire to train indigenous leadership. He said, "as early as possible, local leadership should replace the missionary."<sup>8</sup> The role of the missionary was to be "a visionary and pioneer" whose purpose was to set up the scaffolding by crossing cultural boundaries, which included mastering vernacular languages and translating Scriptures.<sup>9</sup> Venn saw St. Paul as a model of someone who was fixed on his purpose in mission, a person who did not become too important or part of the local church. "Strength of personality" was an issue for Venn in finding proper missionaries.<sup>10</sup> Only one in ten applications were accepted. Shenk reveals Venn's thoughts on this matter: "disharmony and division...grow where 'men connect their own particular work too much with themselves and too little with Christ.'"<sup>11</sup> Missionaries were not to become too attached and see the missions as their own achievements.

Venn became secretary of the CMS during the Niger Expedition period. Focusing on this event will allow us to draw out the benefits and concerns of Venn's three-self missionary strategy. Samuel Adjai Crowther of Sierra Leone can be seen as the perfect exemplar of indigenous leadership that could succeed under the three-self movement. After getting a colonial English education in his early years, Crowther went on to be one of the first students of the CMS-founded Fourah Bay College, a "Christian Institution" that offered the first university education in Western

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Shenk, *Henry*, 30.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Africa.<sup>12</sup> Crowther was taken with CMS missionaries on the Niger Expedition, an effort to evangelize along the Niger River and spur economic enterprises that could counteract slavery. While the Western missionaries proved to be less valuable to their cause, Crowther came through as an excellent evangelist to Africans and learned other vernacular languages much easier than his Western colleagues. His ability to contextualize the gospel far beyond the Western missionaries was surprisingly impressive to the CMS. Lamin Sanneh notes, "With his linguistic and ethnographic inquiries, Crowther formulated terms for Christianity as an African religion, with the use of African languages in Scripture, prayer, worship, and study to promote it."<sup>13</sup> With the Niger Expedition as a so-called "period of testing," Crowther was taken to England for more study and ordination.<sup>14</sup>

Ordained in 1843, Crowther then became involved in Venn's Native Church Pastorate that was set up in Sierra Leone in the 1840s. In the book *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity, 1799-1999*, Peter Williams says, "What Venn did in essence was to wrestle with the reality of cultural distinctiveness and to map out a missionary strategy that both took this seriously and sought to extrapolate and implement biblical and historical principles of church growth."<sup>15</sup> Venn pushed against the idea of putting national customs or "English form of Christianity" in front of indigenous cultures.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Williams says, "[Venn believed] culture and context matter and that paternalism is the enemy of the effect church."<sup>17</sup> So, in 1864, Crowther was named

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<sup>12</sup> Anderson, *Mission Legacies*, 133.

<sup>13</sup> Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley, *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity, 1799-1999* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2000), 184.

<sup>14</sup> Anderson, *Mission Legacies*, 134.

<sup>15</sup> Ward, *The Church*, 148.

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

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

bishop of "countries of Western Africa beyond the limits of [Her Majesty's] dominions."<sup>18</sup> Venn was ahead of his time in seeing the importance of indigenous leadership in establishing Christianity.

Sanneh notes the radical maneuvering of Venn with Crowther and the missionary movement in Sierra Leone. He states, "Long before it was fashionable to speak about 'the Africanization of Christianity,' the CMS had advanced the much more radical concept of leadership by ex-slaves and ex-captives."<sup>19</sup> Additionally, Sanneh calls Crowther the "chief architect" of the CMS plan to open up West Africa through his cross-cultural intelligence.<sup>20</sup> Crowther saw a beneficial relationship between Christianity and indigenous cultures. He said, "Christianity...did not come into the world to undertake to destroy national cultures...[traditional culture is] a storehouse of knowledge and original thinking."<sup>21</sup> With Venn's empowerment, Crowther used his education, experience, and cultural awareness to see the importance of translating Christianity into native terms. This is a subject that Andrew Walls has brought to the world's attention in recent decades.

Unfortunately the three-self movement did not outlast Venn or Crowther within the CMS. The hope of Venn's three-self principles and leadership like Crowther seemed to be squashed with Venn's death. In 1892, the CMS put Western missionaries back into the Native Pastorate positions, as they saw the black race inferior to whites. Despite Crowther's thirty-year term as bishop, Sanneh shares the words of a white missionary agent who said, "I feel more and more convinced that it will have to be a mixed Mission and that Europeans must lead if there is to be any genuine substantial Christianity in the Niger."<sup>22</sup> It appears to be a complete reversal of the progress made

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 192.

by Henry Venn and Samuel Crowther. Walls describes the switch from a black to white leader as a sad moment because of "manifest availability of outstanding African clergy."<sup>23</sup>

Now, I want to examine some of the causes for this change and see if perhaps there were underlying issues with Venn's thought. To start, much irony can be found in the failure of Venn to find a successor. With a movement founded on principles of passing on leadership to others, Venn did not spend time mentoring a new generation of administrative leaders. As a result, those in the CMS who were strongly opposed to Venn's ways of promoting indigenous leadership above Westerners took back the reigns of leadership.

The underlying issue for Venn and the CMS was ethnocentrism. In hindsight, we cannot read Venn's commitment to indigenous leadership principles without seeing an underlying belief that promoting Western civilization was primary to the missionary movement. Put bluntly, Venn's praxis reveals his doubts about native cultures giving Christianity a just platform. While his words reveal a disgust for missionary-led churches and paternalism, Venn's praxis reveals his belief in Western civilization as the ultimate culture. Shenk, who has done a biography on Venn and reveals him as a positively impactful missionary statesman, also brings to light this major fault. Speaking about both Rufus Anderson and Venn, Shenk reveals the ethnocentrism found in their practices. It could be argued that Venn's tragic flaw, and that of the CMS, is not seeing the native culture as equal to that of the West. Shenk reveals this through Venn and Anderson's revised definition of the word indigenous. Shenk writes, "they redefined 'indigenous church' to be one in which indigenous peoples had become competent to lead an institution that met European standards."<sup>24</sup> Shenk

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>24</sup> Wilbert R. Shenk, "Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn: A Special Relationship?," *International Bulletin Of Missionary Research* 5, no. 4 (1981): 170.

continues with his strong critique, which reveals a powerful lesson that is relevant to all who are doing cross-cultural work today. He says, "They accepted the superiority of Western culture as self-evident."<sup>25</sup> Additionally, like-minded American three-self thinker Anderson also shared this ethnocentrism. He viewed New England as "the highest and best, in a religious point of view, the world has yet seen."<sup>26</sup>

Because of this ethnocentrism, it was a great challenge for CMS missionaries to identify when it was time to "euthanize" the mission. They did not know when to let go because they believed a true church would look and feel like a Western church. This denies the local church and its leaders the ability to do anything but mimic English ways. As a result, we see David Bosch, 20th century missiologist, highly critical of the three-self movement. He says, "in practice...the younger churches, like Peter Pan, never 'grew up', at least not in the eyes of the older ones."<sup>27</sup> In addition, it has been argued by Robert Dann that the whole metaphor of the mission as a scaffolding to build the local church creates paternalism from the very beginning. He writes,

There is a basic problem underlying [Venn's] whole scheme. If a mission has put up the organizational scaffolding, then the mission has already designed the building. But the New Testament does not show us wealthy missions establishing complex organizations and then charging others with their maintenance; it shows us poor apostles preaching the gospel, teaching those who respond, and letting them develop their own fellowships in their own premises.<sup>28</sup>

Venn allowed for and wanted great flexibility for the indigenous church, but his model and underlying ethnocentrism did not seem to support his desires.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>26</sup> Robert B. Dann, *Father of Faith Missions: The Life and Times of Anthony Norris Groves (1795-1853)* (Waynesboro, Ga: Authentic Media, 2004), 452.

<sup>27</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1991), 450.

<sup>28</sup> Dann, *Father*, 458.

Having shown the success and failure of Henry Venn and the three-self movement, I now want to challenge the appropriateness and necessity of having any kind of missionary strategy. Are missionary models simply a manifestation of modernity and post-Enlightenment thinking? Shenk, in an article called "Mission Strategies," says, "one is hard pressed to point to biblical and theological explications of strategy...strategy becomes a projection of the culture of the strategist."<sup>29</sup> Shenk's words reveal that having a strategy implies cultural bias. It is with this criticism in mind that I present the thought and works of Roland Allen.

Unpopular with missionary societies, Roland Allen's (1868-1947) thoughts on mission were largely ignored. He lived after Venn and Anderson, but was highly critical of the legacy of missionary strategy they left behind. Shenk reveals, "one of the most vigorous critics of missions system during the past century was Roland Allen. Allen was the gadfly of missions, and his criticisms...were not welcomed by the mainstream."<sup>30</sup> His missionary model was not to have one, but to rely instead on the practices and principles of the early New Testament church. Allen challenged the two-part system of a mission and church because of the lack of biblical evidence for such a system. To Allen, the Holy Spirit served as the authority of missionary movement, not a system. His argument is founded on a New Testament reading that sees mission as central to the church, not an enterprise to be outsourced through a professional organization.<sup>31</sup> To Allen, missionary movement must have the markings of spontaneity of the Spirit. This spontaneity is in strong contrast with a professional organization. Allen writes,

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<sup>29</sup> Gerald H. Anderson, James M. Phillips, and Robert T. Coote, *Toward the Twenty-first Century in Christian Mission: Essays in Honor of Gerald H. Anderson* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1993), 219.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>31</sup> This thought is becoming ever so popular today, through the recent Missional Church movement in North America.

The new modern missionary organization is an addition [to the church]. With us the Church had largely ceased to be self-expanding; its members had, for the most part, forgotten its missionary character; its organization had degenerated and become stiff and rigid. But the missionary spirit was not dead, and it demanded expression. Naturally, it expressed itself in the form characteristic of a Western people in this age. It took the form of elaborate organization; it created a new organization within the Church. If we compare our modern missionary work with the missionary work of the Early Church, this is what differentiates them: with us missions are the special work of a special organization; in the Early Church missions were not a special work, and there was no special organization.<sup>32</sup>

Allen's argument reveals that, as a result of this elaborate organization, the credit for great missionary works are given to the organization, and not the Spirit. The missionaries, donors, and the organization are the receiver of the praise, not Jesus Christ working through the Spirit.

Additionally, such works had been done in the early church without the need for such elaborate organization. This early church spontaneity in the Spirit had been extinguished through the modern idea of organization. To paraphrase Allen, with buildings and institutions, men attempt to fix the time, place, and manner in which spiritual forces will take place. The mechanical is put before the spiritual. The Spirit is restricted and constricted as a result.<sup>33</sup> The organization becomes an unwelcome fourth person of the Trinity. Allen writes, "the organization of missions, being an organization *for* a spiritual work, only too often becomes in our eyes the organization *of* a spiritual work...In all our selection of strategic points...in all our talk of 'forward movements', we are constantly on the verge of this offense, of speaking and thinking as if we could organize spiritual forces."<sup>34</sup>

To Allen, the result of this "indigenous" model leads to an indispensability of missions and missionaries. Allen says, "The fatal mistake has been made of teaching the converts to rely upon

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<sup>32</sup> Allen, Roland. *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: And The Causes Which Hinder It*. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1962), 96.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

the wrong source of strength. Instead of seeking it in the working of the Holy Spirit in themselves, they seek it in the missionary. They put him in the place of Christ, they depend upon him.<sup>35</sup> The very people meant to "euthanize" the mission are the ones who make it impossible to do so. Again, Allen criticizes the Western missionary's faith in himself versus the Spirit as a major hindrance to authentic indigenous leadership. He writes, "Want of faith has made us fear and distrust native independence. We have imagined ourselves to be, and we have acted so as to become, indispensable."<sup>36</sup> This lack of faith on the part of the missionaries is a dagger directed to the soul of missionary societies. Is not the purpose of mission organizations to propagate this faith? Yet, Allen proposes that the modern missionary methods are more a faith in techniques than in God. He elaborates on this need for real faith, saying,

It is faith which we need today. We need to subordinate our methods, our systems, ourselves to that faith. We often speak as if we had to do simply with weak and sinful men. We say that we cannot trust our converts to do this or that, that we cannot commit the truth to men destitute of this or that particular form of education or training. We speak as if we had to do with mere men. We have not to do with mere men; we have to do with the Holy Ghost. What systems, forms, safeguards of every kind cannot do, He can do. When we believe in the Holy Ghost, we shall teach our converts to believe in Him, and when they believe in Him they will be able to face all difficulties and dangers. They will justify our faith. The Holy Ghost will justify our faith in Him. "This is the Victory which overcometh the world, even our faith."<sup>37</sup>

Allen's words have strong application to today's mission strategies. Despite the West's strategies that deny spontaneity of the Spirit, the Spirit has still spread like wildfire around the world. As a result, non-Western voices are speaking up for a better way to do missions.

If one spends any time surveying the present landscape of World Christianity, he or she

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<sup>35</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 81.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

will see that times have changed since the 19th century. Those in the West are no longer able to propagate a one-way street where the West serves the rest. As notable scholars such as Mark Noll, Walls, Dana Roberts, Jehu Hanciles, and others reveal, Christianity no longer has a center of gravity in the Western world. By numbers, the Global South now has more Christians than the West. The Western missionary movement has succeeded, but part of this statistical reality includes the decline of Christianity in the West. Taking into account these circumstances, a new approach to missions is needed, and the West needs to realize their need for re-evangelization. A leader of this movement has been Samuel Escobar, who strongly believes it is time for everyone to acknowledge the two-way street between the West and the Majority World.

A native of Peru, Samuel Escobar is a founding father of the Fellowship of Latin American Theologians (FTL). The FTL has existed for over forty years, providing strong Protestant evangelical thought and influencing the world through conferences such as Lausanne 1974, where Rene Padilla and Escobar pointed out the one-sided approach of Western missions that seeks the conversion of individuals without addressing their social concerns. The FTL, with their own journal and several books by its scholars, illustrates the global shift of missionary thought and the richness of scholarship coming from non-Western cultures. In numerous articles, Escobar has summarized the history of missions and laid out a hope for its future. In a recent 2003 work, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone*, Escobar brings a more complete perspective of where missions is today. Much of his thought is based upon the 1966 shift made by John Stott, a strong Western voice for the Majority to emphasis the *missio dei* in John 20:21 (“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you”) as a way to refocus missions on God, who is the real missionary in the world. This is a shift away from the Great Commission misinterpreted so

prevalently by Western culture to promote an imperialist, paternalistic, Western-mandated way of mission. Instead of man as the missionary, Jesus Christ is missionary *par excellence*. Escobar focuses on the Trinity, calling the *missio dei* a "model of mission style in obedience to the loving design of the Father, patterned by the example of Jesus Christ and driven by the power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>38</sup> Escobar draws from Roland Allen's thoughts, which so eloquently reveal the problems of modern missionary models and church growth theories as a form of "managerial missiology" compared to the ways of New Testament church.<sup>39</sup> Calling for a re-understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit, Escobar writes, "It is arrogant for missionaries to plan strategies based entirely on human logic and calculation if their Savior and Lord could accomplish *his* mission only through the power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>40</sup> These words are indeed haunting and convicting to the Western, Hegelian, Enlightenment-empowered, and strategy-focused mind.

The Holy Spirit has obviously been at work around the globe to the surprise of Western missionaries. The 20th century saw the vast expanse of global Pentecostalism and church movements like African Independent Churches and the Chinese Church, which actually grew once missionaries withdrew. Prior to these movements, Escobar demonstrates that European doctrinal patterns were "imposed though authoritarian methods and through the financial manipulation of the new churches."<sup>41</sup> As much as Venn and Anderson wanted indigenous church leadership, finances and resources were a strong incentive for native churches to continue dependency on the missionary societies. He acknowledges and applauds Allen's questioning of modern missionary

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<sup>38</sup> Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel From Everywhere to Everyone* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 25.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

methods "shaped by Western ethnocentric traditions."<sup>42</sup> He continues, "[Allen] proposed a radical change through the rediscovery and application of the apostle Paul's missionary methods."<sup>43</sup> In this approach where the "time of European and Western monologue is over," Escobar thanks Andrew Walls for leading the world in revealing how the Majority World can articulate a "new way of looking at God's Word."<sup>44</sup> In essence, those who were once receivers of God's word can now bring it back to those in the West who have lost the importance of Jesus Christ, the truth of God's word, and the vitality of the Spirit in one's daily life.

Escobar reveals that Western societies are now mission fields; therefore, Western missionaries have an important role to play when they return home. He says, "this new way of looking at the world, gained by missionaries in the course of their service, will be an important factor in the re-evangelizing of the West."<sup>45</sup> Having hope for the future of the West, Escobar points to 20th century missionaries Charles Kraft, Leslie Newbigin, and Daniel Fountain as a new "breed of missionary" who can be sent out from the West.<sup>46</sup> He says,

[They] went to the mission field not only to teach but also to learn, to be enriched by fellowship and partnership with their coworkers, brothers and sisters in other cultures and places. Their writings and attitudes show that instead of imposing an Anglo-Saxon package of method and systems on India or Africa, they went to serve and to learn, and they brought back insights and perspectives that enriched the life of their home churches. Some missiologists call this 'mission in reverse,' while others use the image of a two-way street to describe the dynamics of the process.<sup>47</sup>

These thoughts are a radical change from the cultural biases of Venn and Anderson. Whereas their methods implied the superiority of Western society, Escobar's points emphasize the mutual respect

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

and appreciation of the gospel in all cultures and that such development of cross-cultural partnerships can make a difference in other parts of the world, especially in the declining, docetic faith of the West. This is what missiologist David Bosch calls multilateral relationships producing interculturalization. In this new way, which is really a remembering of the ancient way, Escobar turns upside-down the seeming disparity of wealth between cultures. He says, "If Jesus' incarnational pattern is taken seriously by missionaries today within the social and structural realities of our time and space, mission will not be done from a platform of power and privilege, nor will the gospel be watered down to make it palatable to the rich and powerful."<sup>48</sup> It is a message of hope for the Western Christians whose real gospel is slipping from their grasp. Bosch writes that the result in the West will be to "rekindle an all-embracing faith, hope, and love in the ultimate triumph of God casting its rays into the present."<sup>49</sup>

For this to happen, Bosch writes that a fourth self needed to be added to the three-self missionary model. The fourth self is "self-theologizing."<sup>50</sup> This additional responsibility of the indigenous church, although unlikely to have happened under Venn and Anderson due to theological superiority complexes, inherently invalidates the one-way street ideology. By all cultures being able to undergo inculturation and contextualization of the gospel, the gospel can, according to Andrew Walls, both affirm and challenge one's culture.<sup>51</sup> However, Bosch points out that inculturation is never a "*fait accompli*."<sup>52</sup> It is "a tentative and continuing process," which guards a

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>49</sup> Bosch, *Transforming*, 447.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 451.

<sup>51</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, N.Y. Edinburgh: Orbis Books T&T Clark, 1996), 7-8.

<sup>52</sup> Bosch, *Transforming*, 455.

church from becoming too "homogenous" or "ingrown."<sup>53</sup> Bosch explains:

This insight has important consequences. We are beginning to realize that all theologies, including those in the West, need one another; they influence, challenge, enrich, and invigorate each other—not least so that Western theologies may be liberated from the "Babylonian captivity" of many centuries. In a very real sense, then, what we are involved in is not just inculturation, but 'intercultural.'... We need an 'exchange of theologies'... in which Third-World students continue (as they have been doing for a long time) to study in the West but in which Western students also go to study in Third-World contexts, in which one-way traffic, from the West to the East and the South, is superseded, first by bilateral and then by multilateral relationships. Where this happens, the old dichotomies are transcended and the churches of the West discover, to their amazement, that they are not simply benefactors and those of the South and the East not merely beneficiaries, but that all are, at the same time, giving and receiving, that a kind of osmosis is taking place.<sup>54</sup>

This movement leads the church to a "universal hermeneutical community, in which Christians and theologians from different lands check one another's cultural biases."<sup>55</sup> This is the new, practical model of missionary work for the benefit of all churches everywhere. Bosch's reasoning culminates in calling this a model of "creative tension," calling for "a bold humility—or a humble boldness."<sup>56</sup> Bosch describes this bold humility as a call for "a new disposition, particularly on the part of the West and Western missionaries... who have to rethink the necessity of blessedness of receiving, of being genuinely teachable."<sup>57</sup> Bosch ends his argument by saying,

Such language boils down to an admission that we do not have all the answers and are prepared to live within the framework of penultimate knowledge, that we regard our involvement in dialogue and mission as an adventure, are prepared to take risks, and are anticipating surprises as the Spirit guides us into fuller understanding."<sup>58</sup>

This is a loud call for the West to see its own arrogance and ignorance. With repentance and teachability, healing and understanding can come.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 455-6.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 456.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 457.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 489.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 456.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 489.

The world has changed since Venn and Anderson designed and carried out their modern missionary methods. The new global mission is one that celebrates, affirms and challenges all cultures. It is not based in the West; it is from everywhere to everywhere. The Western Christian, especially the Western missionary, must go into the world seeking friendship and a chance to teach *and* learn. As a result, the world may begin to catch a glimpse into the popular passage in Revelation 7:9: "there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." This passage has been all over Western Christianity in recent years, but only spoken of as a heavenly experience. Escoar, Walls, and Bosch seem to be arguing for a Western awareness that the Spirit does not desire the first experience of this image to be after our death. There will be no special, elevated section for the West in heaven; we must ask for the ability to see all cultures as equal in the eyes of God. In such a way, we will be embracing God's plan and living eschatologically, towards the promise for all to live together in creative tension in the loving presence of God.

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Maryknoll: NY Orbis Books. and which related to the church while it took the world and its needs seriously. Of course friends and others have prodded and queried and at points corrected. eds. N. no."Â Orbis Books. He would also have been aware that transitions between paradigms are as missiologically significant as the periods of relative stability in worldview and assumptions the paradigms attempt to describe. David Bosch's Work Considered.