INCARNATIONAL THEOLOGY FOR A MISSIONARY CHURCH?

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The heading of Chapter 5 of *Mission-shaped Church* is 'theology for a missionary church.' The purpose of that chapter is two-fold:

► to ensure that any fresh expressions of church…are undergirded by an adequate ecclesiology [doctrine of the Church].[1]

► to suggest some theological principles that should influence all decisions about the shape of the Church of England at this time of missionary opportunity.[2]

So in that Chapter of the book we expect an adequate theological basis for the church at mission. Its focus is on the incarnation as a basic principle of God's mission, and therefore of our mission.

Incarnational mission is of central importance to the book, as it is described as one of the five values for missionary churches.[3] It is also a frequent emphasis in Anglican self-understanding.[4] I will tackle this topic under four headings:

1. Incarnation fundamental to mission.

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[1] The Report cheerfully assumes that traditional expressions of church have an adequate theological undergirding.

[2] *Mission-shaped Church*, p. 84

[3] *Mission-shaped Church,* p.81

[4] Nichols, Aidan, O.P., *The Panther and the Hind*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1993, chapter 7 'Liberal Catholicism,' and chapter 8, 'Anglican Modernism,' pp. 130-159

2. The doctrine of incarnation in this book.

3. Incarnation in Anglican self-understanding.

4. Key features of an adequate Anglican view of incarnational mission.

1. Incarnation fundamental to mission

The Report clarifies its emphasis on incarnation and mission, in the section headed 'the work of Christ –incarnation, cross and resurrection.' It claims that as incarnation was fundamental to God's mission in the world, so incarnation is fundamental to the church's mission in the world. In the words of *Ad Gentes* of Vatican Two,

> If the church is to be in a position to offer all men the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God, then it must implant itself among all these groups in the same way that Christ by his incarnation committed himself to the particular social and cultural circumstances of the men among whom he lived.[5]

The primary significance of the incarnation was that Christ was incarnate in the human race, rather than in particular social and cultural circumstances. However, as a secondary implication, the point has some power. Though we should remember that those 'particular social and cultural circumstances' were not without specific and unique theological significance, namely, the existence of God's people, a chosen race, a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. So there is not an exact parallel between Christ's relationship with Israel, and our relationship with any social group.

However the main point still stands. Mission is incarnational in that it must relate deeply and creatively with its host culture.

> A missionary church seeks to shape itself in relation to the culture in which it is located or to which it is called.[6]

One obvious and crucial example of cultural incarnation is that of translating the Bible into the language of the people. This value was of strategic importance in the English Reformation and remains a crucial issue for the Anglican Church of Australia.

There was opposition to the translation of the Scriptures at the time of the Reformation. According to Turretin, Arboreus, a Roman Catholic theologian, wrote that, 'the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular is one source of heresies.'[7]

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[5] *Mission-shaped Church*, p. 87

[6] *Mission-shaped Church*, p. 81

[7] Turretin, Francis, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Vols.1–3,* tr. G. M. Giger, P&R, Philipsburg, 1992-1997, vol. 1, p. 123

On the other side, John Smyth, pastor of the English church in Amsterdam in 1608, held that every translation however good, was bound to contain errors, and so by definition could not be used. If God had spoken in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, then those were the languages in which he should be heard![8]

In today's world, where translated Scriptures are more common in Christian churches, the contrast is with other religions.

In Judaism, there is some reluctance to use translated Scriptures. In the Medieval Tractate of the Scribes, we read: 'Five elders wrote the Law in Greek for King Tolmai [Ptolemy]; and that day was a hard day for Israel, like the day on which Israel made the golden calf.'[9]

For Islam, the Koran or Qurān is a Heavenly Book, a book kept in heaven, a 'treasured book', a 'preserved tablet' and Muhammad received a terrestrial edition of this heavenly scripture, dictated to him by the angel Gabriel.[10] The Qurān is to be preached, 'in a clear Arabic tongue,'[11] and is taught in Arabic, whatever the native language of those who learn. I well remember seeing little boys in an Islamic school in Pakistan, learning to recite Qurān in Arabic. To learn means to learn to recite from memory: 'The Qurān is learnt by heart, in Arabic.'[12]

Christians have a different view of the Bible. Martin Luther, a leader in modern translation of the Bible, combined belief in its verbal inspiration with a great commitment to its translation, and a subtle understanding of some basic rules of translation, such as shifts of word order, the introduction of connectives and other additions to clarify meaning, suppression of untranslatable terms, shifts between metaphors and non-metaphors, and careful attention to accuracy and textual variants.[13] Why should we have a translated Bible? In the words of Edward Fitzgerald, 'A live sparrow is better than a stuffed eagle.'[14]

The early Christians may have thought it possible to translate the Bible because many of them used a translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek, called the Septuagint,[15] and because they lived in a world in which most people were multi-

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[8] Nicolson, Adam, *Power and Glory – Jacobean England and the Making of the King James Bible*, Harper Perennial, London, 2004, p. 181

[9] Nida, Eugene, *Towards a Science of Translating*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1964, p. 2

[10] Widengren, Geo, 'Holy Book and Holy Tradition in Islam', in F. F. Bruce, and E. G. Rupp, [eds], *Holy Book and Holy Tradition*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1968, pp. 210-236

[11] Widengren, 'Book in Islam,' p. 213

[12] Widengren, 'Book in Islam,' p. 231

[13] Nida, *Science of Translating*, p. 15

[14] As quoted in Nida, *Science of Translating*, 2

[15] They might also have been influenced by the translation of Jesus' teaching from Aramaic to Greek, if he did indeed usually teach in Aramaic. Sevenster, J. N., *Do you know Greek?* Brill, Leiden, 1968, argued that Jesus usually taught in Greek, not Aramaic.

lingual at least a basic level. The translation of the Scriptures is a practical and obvious example of the need to enculturate Christianity.

It is one of the scandals of the Anglican Church of Australia that there is still no original Aboriginal or Koori language or dialect with the complete Bible. Anglicans have left Bible translation to the Church Missionary Society, the Bible Society and the Wycliffe Bible Translators. So much for our commitment to incarnated and enculturated Christianity.

It is one of the ironies of effectively enculturated Christianity that it is so easily blind to that enculturation, and so blind to the need to adapt to a new missionary culture, or to adapt to the changes in its own host culture. I can think of several parishes in Melbourne who adapted their style and mission entirely effectively in the 1930s, and still persist in the same model of ministry, with decreasing effectiveness, and congregations which comprise the remains of those who were members in the 1930s.

So also one of the tests of those forms of Christianity which have effectively enculturated in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s is what they will be doing in 2010. The price of success in one generation is often failure in the next. In the words of Dean Inge, 'Whoever marries the spirit of this age will find himself a widower in the next.' We need to re-think our mission strategy every five years.

The more unaware we are of your own culture, the more difficulty we will have working in any other culture. And, the more unaware we are of the ways in which we exemplify our own culture, the more we will force people from other cultures to adopt our culture.

I believe that incarnation is fundamental to mission, though that does not mean that the word 'incarnation' can be used to justify policies, actions, or theologies without further qualification. There is a bad use of the incarnation as a principle of mission, as there is also a good use.

2. The doctrine of incarnation in this Report

I am delighted to find that this Report wants good theology to undergird missionary practice, and that it recognises that the work of Christ, the incarnation, cross and resurrection of Christ is fundamental to Christianity and so fundamental to mission. I am disappointed by its three pages on this topic. What it says in good enough as far as it goes, but it is what is not said that is so alarming.

i.   The incarnation

As I have already pointed out, its statement on 'the incarnation, a world to enter' makes the point that 'God in Christ entered the world, taking on a specific cultural identity.'[16] While this is true, it is not the main point of the incarnation, which is that the Son of God took on our universal humanity. And if the specific cultural identity of Christ's people is to be asserted, then their unique role as the people of God needs to be acknowledged.

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[16] *Mission-shaped Church*, p. 87

ii.   The cross

The section headed 'the cross- a world to counter' is of special interest. The positive point that it is making is true, which is that Christ loving identification with his culture was matched by his costly counter-cultural stance within it. Costly counter-cultural stances have not always been expressed within Anglicanism, especially where it has been the established religion.

However it is what is missing that alarms me. For there is no indication that the cross achieved anything. It is merely cited as an example of a costly counter-cultural stance. While the *imitatio Christi*, the imitation of Christ, is certainly an aspect of New Testament teaching on the sufferings and death of Christ, it is scarcely adequate as a description of 'the work of Christ.' Irenaeus' comment, 'Christ became that we are in order that we might become what he is,' is a statement of the work of Christ, and only secondarily an example of mission for Paul and for ourselves. The 'work of Christ' has been used in theology to refer to what was achieved by Christ on the cross in terms of atoning sacrifice etc. This is missing in the Report.

Stephen Sykes expressed a clearer appreciation of the central meaning of the incarnation when he wrote,

> [T]he public commitment or the Anglican is to the full doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as Articles 1 to 5 of the Thirty-Nine Articles make plain…the incarnation and atonement are likewise taught within this trinitarian context. The centrality of the atoning work of Christ becomes evident in the BCP Order of Holy Communion. God is addressed as follows:
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> > …who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there [by his one oblation of himself once offered] a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.[17]

Or again, 'The heart of the matter may be spoken of as the paschal mystery ['Christ our Passover is sacrificed for; therefore let us keep the feast].[18] Or again, 'What is it then that holds Anglicans together? First and primarily, we must focus on the gracious, reconciling and unifying act of God in Jesus Christ.'[19]

As Sykes explained, the Book of Common Prayer, the Thirty-nine Articles and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons constitute 'the inheritance of faith' [Canon C. 15] of the Church of England, and therefore define the nature of being in communion with Canterbury, and therefore the meaning of what it is to be Anglican.[20]

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[17] S. W. Sykes in Ian Bunting, [ed], *Celebrating the Anglican Way*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1996, pp. 28, 29

[18] Sykes in Bunting, p. 23.

[19] Sykes in Bunting, p. 31.

[20] Sykes in Bunting, p. 23.

Of course these documents are also definitive for Australian Anglicans, as our Fundamental Declarations and Ruling Principles make clear.

The reply may be that this doctrine of the work of Christ is assumed, and did not need to be restated. However, as a friend of mine often says, 'It goes without saying so it needs to be said.' The Biblical notion of 'remembering' shows the value of the constant repetition of the saving acts of God. Furthermore, the Report claims to give 'theological principles that should influence all decisions about the shape of the Church of England.'[21] How bizarre to omit the doctrine of the Atonement when writing about the work of Christ on the cross!

Here is the doctrine of the atoning work of Christ expressed in the Homily for Good Friday.

> Christ did put himself between God's deserved wrath and our sin, and rent that obligation wherein we were in danger to God, and paid our debt. Our debt was a great deal too great for us to have paid; and without payment God the Father could never be at one with us: neither was it possible to be loosed from this debt by our own ability. It pleased therefore him to be the payer thereof, and to discharge us quite…If God hateth sin so much, that he would allow neither man nor angel for the redemption thereof, but only the death of his only and wellbeloved Son, who will not stand in fear thereof?…So pleasant was this sacrifice and oblation of his Son's death, which he so obediently and innocently suffered, that he would take it for the only and full amends for all the sins of the world… For in this standeth the continual pardon of our daily offences, in this resteth our justification, in this we be allowed, in this is purchased the everlasting health of all our souls; yea, there is none other thing that can be named under heaven to save our souls, but this only work of Christ's precious offering of his body upon the altar of the cross.[22]

The sacrifice of Christ is both atonement and example, not one without the other. 1 Peter makes both claims in these words:

> For it is to this that you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps...He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed [1 Peter 2:21,24].

However, I agree with the Report when it claims that the cost of the incarnation has been neglected. Incarnation cost Christ, and incarnation will cost us. However Atonement cost Christ too, and it is the significance and value of this cost which is lacking in the Report. A diminished doctrine of sin, and an optimistic doctrine of humanity has meant that in some cases incarnation has been no more than an easy identification with current social and cultural contexts. This leads us to the next point.

iii. Resurrection

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[21] *Mission-shaped Church*, p. 84

[22] 'An Homily for Good Friday,' from *Certain Sermons or Homilies appointed to be read in Churches in the time of Queen Elizabeth of famous memory,* [1562], SPCK, London, 1864, pp. 439-442

Again, a theological understanding of unique power of Christ's resurrection is missing. It is not the case that any example of hope restored after failure or disappointment has the same value as the resurrection of Christ. Furthermore, when the New Testament applies the power of Christ's resurrection to the life of believers, it does so in terms of death to sin, and life in righteousness, as we have just seen in 1 Peter.[23] How curious to have a section headed 'the work of Christ, incarnation, cross and resurrection' without a sound doctrine of sin, atonement, and righteousness.

A doctrine and practice of mission which does not do justice to the atonement and reconciliation achieved by the work of Christ in his death and resurrection is doomed to fail.

It is this historic and robust Anglican theology of the work of Christ in his incarnation and atoning death and resurrection which is missing from the *Mission-shaped Church*. New shapes without this old substance will not participate in the Christ-honouring mission of God in the world.

3. Incarnation in Anglican self-understanding

It might be helpful to see that the Report's claim that God's mission is incarnational comes within the context of Anglican self-understanding. For it is frequently claimed that the heart of Anglicanism is the doctrine of the Incarnation.

In my opinion this is more a tribute to the pervasive influence over the last 100 years of the authors of *Lux Mundi* of 1889,[24] than it is a substantiated interpretation of nearly 2000 years of theology within and beyond *Ecclesia Anglicana*.

In fact the move from Atonement to Incarnation made by the authors of *Lux Mundi* was an attempt to craft a new interpretation of Christianity and Anglicanism. *Lux Mundi*, was the 'founding document of liberal Catholicism in the Church of England.'[25] Its emphasis on the incarnation was refinforced and continued in Anglican Modernism, for example in H. D.A. Major's *A Modern View of the Incarnation* of 1915.[26]

At the time Canon H. P. Liddon of St Paul's Cathedral London, a pupil of Pusey and a Tractarian, noted one of the significant differences between his faith and that of the *Lux Mundi* school: 'There is a difference between the new and the old Churchmanship…the new…expects more from sinful humanity.'[27]

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[23] See also Romans 6, 8, Ephesians 4: 17-5:20, Colossians 3:1-17

[24] Gore, Charles, [ed], *Lux Mundi: A series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation,* Twelfth Edition*,* John Murray, London, 1891

[25] Morgan, Robert, [ed], *The Religion of the Incarnation*: *Anglican Essays in Commemoration of Lux Mundi* , Bristol Classical Press, Bristol, 1989, p. xi, quoting Claud Welch.

[26] Nichols, Aidan, O.P., *The Panther and the Hind*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1993, chapter 7 'Liberal Catholicism,' and chapter 8, 'Anglican Modernism,' pp. 130-159

[27] Rowell, in Morgan, [ed], *The Religion of the Incarnation*, p. 209

The Lux Mundi school were more generally criticised because, as A. M. Ramsey observed,

> in their intense concentration upon the Incarnation as the key to the understanding of the world, these writers and their subsequent followers were minimizing the Cross, the divine judgement and the eschatological element in the Gospel.[28]

Certainly Anglican history covers a wider range than the merely incarnational. It seems evident to me that some of weaknesses of the *Lux Mundi* school and movement are evident in *Mission-shaped Church*, to its disadvantage.

What happens when the incarnation becomes the sole focus of attention, without other complementary and correcting themes within Christian theology?

i.   Incarnation and Creation

Incarnation without a sound doctrine of Creation leads to Incarnation taking all the weight of God's involvement with the world. The Incarnation becomes the moment when God first relates to the world, and the Incarnation soon then loses its historical particularity, and is transmuted into the permanent and universal immanence of God. As David Newsome wrote, 'The incarnationalists of the later nineteenth century were to translate evolutionary philosophy into theological terms.'[29] Curiously, the confusion of immanence and incarnation soon leads to the loss of incarnation. The 'sacramental universe' soon becomes sacramental of God's power in nature, and not of God's grace in Christ Jesus. Aidan Nichols quotes from Bethune-Baker,

> God is in the process indwelling. The whole universe is not merely the scene of his operation but a manifestation of him in all stages of its evolution. The whole is Incarnation.[30]

Furthermore, as William Temple observed, theologies of Redemption tend to be more prophetic than theologies of Incarnation.[31]

ii.   Incarnation and words

Incarnation without verbal revelation means a dumb Incarnation of un-interpreted presence. Langmead cites Costas, who wrote of incarnational mission as meaning lifestyle without words .[32] This leads to a church which is incarnate but reluctant to speak of God to the world.

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[28] Ramsey, Arthur Michael, *From Gore to Temple*, Longmans, London, 1960, p. 9.

[29] Newsome, David, *Two Classes of Men: Platonism and English Romantic Thought*, John Murray, London, 1974, p. 81

[30] J.F. Bethune Baker, *The Way of Modernism*, quoted in Nichols, *Panther and Hind*, p. 149

[31] William Temple, as cited in Carpenter, James, *Gore: A Study of Liberal Catholic Thought*, Faith Press, London, 1960, p.186

[32] Langmead, Ross, *The Word Made Flesh: Towards an Incarnational Missiology*, University Press of America, Lanham, 2004, p. 232

I was amused recently in reading *The Minotaur*, by Barabara Vine. In it Kerstin Kvist, a Swedish woman, observes English family life in Norfolk. She attends the local parish church, and also observes the life and conversation of the Vicar of that church. Of Eric, the Vicar, with whom she has had much social contact, she observes,

> I thought then that in all the time I knew him I had never heard Eric make a single reference to God or the Christian faith or heaven or hell except when he was conducting a service.[33]

However as John's Gospel makes clear, one of the purposes of the incarnation was the verbal revelation of Christ: 'No one has every seen God. It is God the only Son…who has narrated him.'[34] There is no reason to be content with a notion of Incarnation which is only personal or sacramental, and which does not value verbal revelation in Christ's ministry and in our own. To be spiritual is not to be speechless. For 'Jesus came…preaching the good news.'[35] I am not arguing for un-incarnated words, for messages without presence. I am claiming that verbal revelation is part of Christ's incarnate ministry, and that our incarnated ministry should also include incarnated words, the message of the Gospel. Of course in our wordy world, we need respite from words. And of course words can be a cheap substitute for presence and action. However the incarnate Christ was not dumb, and the Gospel is a message to be spoken and heard.

iii.   Incarnation and atonement

Incarnation without a theology of the atoning death of Christ on the cross soon comes adrift because it easily turns into an affirmation of the world, and loses the conflict of the cross, God's judgement on sin, the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and takes on a falsely optimistic view of humanity. In the words of A. M. Ramsey,

> It is the doctrine of the Atonement which guards the difference between true and false types of immanentism.[36]

Or consider John Donne's theology of the Atonement.[37] The work of Christ necessitated the incarnation.

> He came so to us, as that he became us, not only by a new and more powerful working in us, but by assuming our nature upon himself.[38]

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[33] Vine, Barbara, *The Minotaur*, Penguin/Viking, Camberwell, 2005, p. 283

[34] John 1:18, and see also John 17: 8, 'the words you have given me I have given to them, and they have received them, and know in truth that I came from you.'

[35] Mark 1:14

[36] Ramsey, *Gore to Temple*, p. 4

[37][37] The following material on Donne comes from my St Antholin's Lecture to be given in London in June 2006, *'To bring men to heaven by preaching' - John Donne's evangelistic sermons*.

[38] Donne, John, *The Sermons of John Donne*, Volumes I – I0, [eds], M. R. Potter, and E. M. Simpson, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1953-1962, Vol. I. p. 303

In this theology of the Cross, Donne expressed the reformed theology of his day, the doctrines of Anselm, the early church, and the Bible. It was Christ, both God and man, who won salvation, by his death. The divine and human person of Christ was necessary because of the work he had to do.

> [T]o make Christ able to pay this debt, there was something to be added to him. First, he must pay it in such money as it was lent; in the nature and flesh of man; for man had sinned, and man must pay. And then it was lent in such money as was coyned even with the Image of God; man was made according to his Image: That Image being defaced, in a new Mint, in the wombe of the blessed Virgin, there was new money coyned; the Image of the invisible God, the second person in the Trinity, was imprimed into the human nature…his person fulfilled all righteousnesse, and satisfied the Justice of God by his suffering.[39]

According to Donne, we need to be saved not only because of the sins we commit, but also because of our original sin.

> In the first minute that my soul in infus'd, the image of God is imprinted in my soul…But yet *Originall* Sin is there, as soon as that image of God is there…So swift is this arrow, *Originall Sin*…as that God, who comes to my first minute of life, cannot come before death.[40]

Donne was fascinated by the idea of death.[41] However for Donne physical death carried with it the themes of God's judgement on human sinfulness and human sin. So Christ's death satisfied God.

> But in oure case it was God, that was to be satisfied; and therefore we were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.[42]

This atoning death was necessary because of our great sin, and God's great wrath.

> [W]hen mans measure was full of sin, and Gods measure full of wrath, then was the fulnesse of time…It pleased the Father, that there should be another fulnesse to overflow all these, in Christ Jesus.[43]

In that atoning death Christ endured the curse of God, making peace by the blood of the cross.

> The Crosse, to which a bitter curse was nailed by Moses, from the beginning, he that is hanged is, [not onely accursed of God as our Translation hath it], but

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[39] Donne, *Sermons*, IV. 288

[40] Donne, *Sermons*, II. 59

[41] See especially his last sermon, Death's Duel, Donne, *Sermons*, X. 229-248

[42] Donne, *Sermons*, I. 166

[43] Donne, *Sermons*, IV. 287

he is the curse of God, [as it is in the Originall] not accursed, but a curse; not a simple curse, but a curse of God.[44]

So if one rejects the atoning death of Christ, 'he makes Christ Jesus, who is the propitiation of the all the world, his damnation.'[45]

Donne summarised the gospel for the plain man, and for the greatest theologian.

> The simplest man, as well as the greatest Doctor, is bound to know, that there is one God in three persons, That the second of those, the Sonne of God, tooke our nature, and dyed for mankinde; And that there is a Holy Ghost, which in the Communion of Saints, the Church established by Christ, applies to very particular soule the benefit of Christs universall redemption.[46]

Where is this robust theology of the Atonement in Anglicanism today?

iv. Incarnation and the Trinity

Furthermore, to focus on the incarnation without the support of the doctrine of the Trinity easily leads to Arianism, and to a view of God which is formed wholly by the mode of Christ's humility as the incarnate one. This in turn leads to the tendency to sanctify failure and weakness as the only mode of Christ-like behaviour and ministry. This is more likely to happen with a strongly kenotic Christology, such as that of Charles Gore.[47]

We must be thankful that the doctrine of the Trinity has recently re-emerged into popularity within Anglicanism, for the Trinity provides the right context for a healthy doctrine of the Incarnation. It is good to see that the *Mission-shaped Church* describes the doctrine of the Trinity as one of the five values of missionary churches.[48]

Trinitarian faith lies at the heart of Anglicanism, and this Trinitarian faith protects the central doctrines of incarnation of the Son of God, the centrality of his atoning work on the cross, and his resurrection from among the dead.[49] This Gospel is at the heart of the message of the Scriptures, and this Gospel too is the meaning of the two Gospel sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Anglican theology is Gospel theology. No Mission without Gospel, and no Gospel without the atonement and reconciliation achieved by Christ's death and resurrection.

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[44] Donne, *Sermons*, IV. 296

[45] Donne, *Sermons*, VII. 321

[46] Donne, *Sermons,* V. 276

[47] Nichols, *Panther and Hind*, p. 139

[48] *Mission-shaped Church,* p. 81

[49] Adam, Peter, 'The Trinity and Human Community', in, Timothy Bradshaw, [ed], *Grace and Truth in the Secular Age*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids and Cambridge, 1998, pp. 52-65.

The Australian Baptist theologian Ross Langmead recently published a study of Incarnational Missiology. He identifies various typologies of incarnational missiology: the Anabaptist, the Radical Evangelical, Liberation Theology, Moltmann's view of Christ's anticipatory presence, Roman Catholic, and World Council of Churches and Eastern Orthodoxy.

It is illuminating to read his critique of Anglican versions of incarnational missiology.

i. It has a more optimistic view of the world, and in one version it emphasises the continuity between God's immanence and the incarnation. This can mean that incarnation becomes nothing more than a particular expression of immanence. Of course this paradoxically reduces the theological value of the incarnation.

ii. It tends to neglect the cross. It reflects a more optimistic view of the world, and the hope of a gradual evolution for the cosmos. It looks past the harshness of human experience to a serene and immanent God. It is less convincing after Auschwitz, Hiroshima and Vietnam.

iii. It tends to affirm all that is good in human society, and so is then less able to critique the power structures which support it as a church of the establishment.[50]

It could be said that when Liberal Catholicism is being more Liberal it is often difficult to distinguish its message from that of other prophetic voices in our society, and that when it is being more Catholic it seems to revert into its own closed culture and fails to engage with the realities of the world around it. Middle Anglicanism fails to be incarnational when it sees its calling as retaining the values of the past, and identifies English culture as of the essence of Anglican identity, and has no regard to the mission of the church. Both fail to be truly incarnational when they neglect the atonement, do not respect or use the Bible in their ministries, and fail to engage in verbal witness to Christ.

Evangelical Anglicanism fails to be truly incarnational when it pretends that human culture does not matter and so unwittingly imposes its own culture, and when it focuses so much on individual and eternal salvation that it fails to observe or equip its converts to engage with the realities of its surrounding culture. Charismatic Anglicanism fails to be incarnational when it imposes a total culture on its converts, and hinders their relationship with the world in which they live.

4. Key features of an adequate Anglican view of incarnational mission

The Catholic and Reformed identity of Anglicanism should lead to theology which is deeply contextual, reflecting God's universal grace, universal Saviour, and universal Gospel. Sadly, the reality often does not reflect the rhetoric, and many Anglican churches look like 'Little England'.

Attempts to render Anglicanism genuinely Australian must grapple with the fact that the perceived Australian identity is often far from the reality. Our perceived identity is

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[50] Langmead, Ross, *The Word Made Flesh: Towards an Incarnational Missiology*, University Press of America, Lanham, 2004, pp. 182-188

of outback life, whereas real Australian life is increasingly urban. Grappling with Australian identity is complex!

Perhaps the most serious issue is not that of decorative actions, but that of the membership of our churches. The Anglo-Saxon identity of the church is a major barrier. A genuinely Australian church would have to be multi-ethnic and multicultural. This requires the desire and the practice of evangelising people of every ethnic group. And this will not happen unless we are willing to assert and defend the uniqueness of faith in Jesus Christ, and the universality of the Gospel. Here is a paradox! Anglicans who prefer to believe that all religions are the same, or that we should not expect people of other religions to become Christian, are most likely to continue Anglican churches which are white Anglo-Saxon ghettoes. Whereas Anglicans who want people of any religion or none to become Christians are more likely to produce churches which reflect the eschatological hope of 'a great multitude…from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb'[51]. It would be an irony for those who delight in the extent of the worldwide Anglican Communion not to continue the energetic cross-cultural evangelistic mission which produced it. The Anglican church of Australia will be genuinely contextual when it reflects the eschatological vision of Revelation 7.

In our multi-cultured and rapidly changing society, any person in public ministry will need to learn cross-cultural ministry, and congregations will need to learn cross-cultural life as well as cross-cultural mission.

In Barabara Vine's *The Minotaur*, Kerstin Kvist comments on her local parish church.

> The Church of England fascinated me then. Now it only disappoints me. In those days I used to marvel at an institution dedicated to a religion where no one seemed to believe in God and everyone believed passionately in ritual and rubric. It was my first visit for some time and I watched rapt, as some knelt, some remained sitting, all closed their eyes in prayer, some crossed themselves, while other witnessed the crossing disapprovingly, some sang 'Hallelujah!' other 'Allelujah!' and all gave a kind of court bow, dipping their heads when the Creed was said and the words 'Jesus Christ, His only son, Our Lord' were reached. I don't know why. I didn't know then and I don't know now. Were their minds devoutly full of Christ's passion, his suffering, his descent into hell and his mystical resurrection? Or did they think of the roasting joint and whether their neighbours would be coming back after church for sherry?[52]

Mission-shaped Church makes it clear that new expressions of church must have adequate theological justification. However surely the notion of incarnation would also lead us the question the continuing theological adequacy of some of our traditional expressions of church.

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[51] Revelation 7: 9.

[52] Vine, *The Minotaur*, pp. 232, 233

The geographical structures of Anglicanism, with defined boundaries for a diocese and parish must be due for review. The word 'Diocese' comes from a subdivision of the Roman Empire. The Celtic church did not function with modern dioceses and parishes. It was Augustine, who as Archbishop of Canterbury introduced the system of geographical dioceses to England in 597, and Theodore, the first Greek Archbishop of Canterbury [668-690], who introduced the parish system into England. The parish system had begun to be ineffective by the 1300s, and that was one reason why the Preaching Orders were established, to cover this deficiency. Furthermore, the establishment of Colleges, Universities, and Hospitals and Proprietary Chapels independent of the Bishop of the geographical diocese in which they were situated was another admission of the inadequacy of the parish structure. This system of geographical analysis of the mission of the church has some uses, but it also has some disadvantages. It is especially destructive when it is used to pretend that the mission of the church has been achieved because the whole nation is covered by dioceses and parishes. And it is also destructive when it is used to stifle grass-roots initiatives in mission. There are still some advantages in retaining a geographical perspective, but we must ensure that it is our servant and not our master, and that it is effectively complemented with other patterns of mission, as it is, for example, with the Defence Force Chaplaincy.

We need to reflect on whether or not traditional forms and church life are 'mission-shaped,' and apply to them the same criteria that we want to apply to new forms.

Truly incarnational mission must include the following features:

i.   Churches and individuals who are committed to the proclamation of the Gospel to all nations.

ii.   Churches and individuals who are committed to the universal salvation to be found in Jesus Christ and his atoning death and resurrection.

iii.   Churches and individuals who are committed to paying the price of serving those who do no know Christ in order to win them to Christ.

iv.   Churches and individuals happy to give up valued customs and traditions and lifestyles in order to enable sacrificial mission.

v.   A humble willingness to accept the values of the host culture that are not opposed to Christianity,

vi.   The Gospel message of the incarnation of Christ, his life, teaching and service, his atoning death on the cross as priest and sacrifice for our sins, and his mighty resurrection and ascension.

vii.   The confidence in God the holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

viii.   A humble willingness to distinguish between matters of primary and secondary importance.

ix.   The humility to recognise that in the long-term it is the host church that has the responsibility to God to develop a pattern of Christian living that is both truly Christian and also deeply enculturated.

x.   The patience to allow time for this to happen, the realisation that it may take some time to sanctify some local customs, and that it may mean that some features of the sending culture need to be used for a time.

xi.   The realisation that without careful and thoughtful enculturation, the missionary will be imposing unnecessary burdens on the host church, and making it less able to evangelise its own people.

xii.   The awareness that incarnation means costly long-term commitment.

xiii.   The realization that incarnation is more than 'presence', and that the faith needs to be articulated, proclaimed, explained, defended, and commended.

xiv.   The realization that prayer, the reading and preaching of the Bible, the two Gospel sacraments, and an ordered ministry are essential expressions of church.

xv.   A sending church which resists the temptation to create another church in its own image, and which will give the missionary the freedom to work for a truly indigenous church,

xvi.   A serious engagement with the pattern of incarnational mission found in St Paul, who as the apostle of the risen Christ was given the particular task of cross-cultural mission into the Gentile world, and to whom Christ gave the responsibility of deciding which aspects of Judaism could be required of Gentile churches, and which aspects should be left behind.

xvii.   A serious review of the practices and priorities of the sending church, that it may put its own house in order.

xviii. The establishing and supporting of effective structures of mission in Australia and overseas.

xix.   A serious Biblical and theological engagement with the world of those to be evangelised, in order to begin to work out the shape of the intended mission, and in order to help prepare the host church to make the same evaluation.

xx.   Churches and individuals who have the wisdom and humility to resist the temptation to make others in their own image.

xxi.   Church leaders who help the Anglican Communion to make a significant contribution to the translation of the Bible into every language and dialect.

xxii.   Church leader who ensure that both traditional and experimental modes of church are mission-shaped.

xxiii. Leaders of the Anglican Communion who will focus on the question, What is the mission of the Anglican Communion to the unevangelised peoples of our world?