

The Interrelation between Mission and Migration and Its Implication for Today's Church

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The biblical and theological analysis of migration and mission generally exhibits strong interconnection, which means that God oftentimes uses immigrants to disseminate the message of His kingdom. Faith and tradition accompany immigrants not only as a reservoir that they habitually resort to in an effort to adjust to changing sociopolitical and economic situations, but also to influence communities they live with and encounter on a regular basis.

This essay will first discuss a few biblical narratives illustrating how God uses migration as an integral part of His mission. Next, a theological understanding of mission that makes sense of the importance of migration as a vital part of God mission will be discussed. The final section highlights the contemporary implications that present the Church in the West with challenges, but also opportunities.

Biblical Examples of Migration in Service to God's Mission

From its first occurrence in Scripture in connection with the displacement of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, migration informs major biblical narratives before it is consummated in the uprooting of St. John, who is believed to have written the last book of the Bible in the place of his exile—the island of Patmos (see Gen 3:23, Rev 1:9). The Bible is full of such stories where immigrants and sojourners are invited to participate in God's mission as agents to bless nations, people groups, and individuals (kings, leaders, prophets, etc.). The list is long and includes Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, the people of Israel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel, Jesus, and the Apostles, to mention but a few.

From a different angle, God's command at the onset of creation to fill the earth seems to have at least two missional tones embedded in migration. The first notion involves the movement of people from one place to another, which includes the propagation of their



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beliefs, cultures, and artifacts. Secondly, it entails the replenishing of God's earth as people move, live, and share ideas and experiences to enrich each other (see Gen 1:28, Acts 17:26). Geographic movement, one can say, is part of God's original plan for humanity to fulfill the "fill the earth" (Gen 1:28) mandate that follows the primordial human migration from paradise to the rest of the world.

The Bible portrays migration not only as a vehicle of mission, but also as an agent that transforms and revitalizes mission in terms of maintaining identity (distinctiveness), hope, new possibilities, and opportunities. This depiction is buttressed by instances that trace migration as having been a natural and purposive phenomenon in the history of humanity since its origin. For instance, we can see the book of Genesis as a book of migration: the displacement of Adam and Eve from the Garden, Cain's flight to foreign cities, Noah and his family's disaster-induced displacement, and the exodus of Abraham followed by that of his son Isaac and then his grandson Jacob, to mention but a few.

The Bible introduces Abraham first as an immigrant called to leave his homeland and clan to begin a pilgrimage (as a stranger, foreigner, and immigrant) to a new land on a mission to be a blessing to "all the families of the earth" (Gen 12:3). To be a stranger and an alien was a fundamental aspect of Abraham's self-understanding. Abraham's son Isaac also understood this as an integral part of God's vision for himself, a self-portrait that Isaac saw as fundamental to his being an instrument of God's mission to the nations (see also Gen 26:1–6). Thus, Abraham became the father of nations and a blessing to all people of the world—a precursor to what God would do through Jesus Christ. The call of Abraham and Sarah continues to serve as a paradigm and inspiration for God's people in all times who are called to be a blessing to nations.

In another instance, namely, at the time of exodus, God revealed his power so that the Egyptians and the nations in their vicinity would "know" Him and have His name "be proclaimed in the earth" (Exod 9:16). The "many other people" who joined the exodus show that many Egyptians knew the God of Israel when He ousted their gods. In making covenant with Israel and setting them apart as His people, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation, God wanted them to represent Him to the nations (see Exod 9:16, 12:38, 19:4–6).

Much later, the Babylonian captivity proves to be another migration story that offers a future for Israel's faith, enriching it with a new direction and impetus for the eventual re-establishment of the Jewish community in Palestine and the Kingdom of God in the world. Regarding this, Mark Lau Branson writes,

Not only were the exiles to settle in Babylon for a few generations, their relationship with their new context was beyond their imagination, "seek the shalom of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its shalom you will find your shalom" (Jeremiah 29:7). This does not fit the expectation of an immediate rescue. The enemy and this city of exile were being interpreted in ways that were profoundly disorienting.¹

The story of the young girl taken captive from Israel to Syria is another interesting biblical example of what God can do with immigrants. The girl in the story had effectively served as a missionary (though she might have not been intentional about it) as she shared

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with her captors what she knew about God’s prophet in the context of the challenge her captors faced: leprosy. Yet God used the tragedy of her captivity to bring about something wonderful in a very simple way. Her life and witness set a marvelous example of a faithful witness under trying circumstances. Her faith and testimony of the God she knew, working in the life and ministry of the prophet Elisha of her home country, finally brought the knowledge and worship of God into the country of her exile—even more, into the Syrian palace, and, later, probably the nation at large (see 2 Kings 5:1–18).

What is more, the New Testament gives a substantial account of the role of immigrants and migration in mission. Jehu Hanciles gives a detailed account of Jesus’s life based on the Gospel narratives to show that His “life and ministry embodied the interconnection of mission, the boundary-crossing movement, and the alienation of exile and migration,” arguing further that “the incarnation itself should be considered as a veritable act of migration or relocation.”²

Furthermore, the book of Acts provides a comprehensive understanding of how God used migration as it is applied in the life and ministry of the apostles, who were forced to leave Jerusalem for outlying towns, regions, and Gentile territories. Hence, the call to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and the ends of the earth came to pass as the first and subsequent disciples of Christ moved from place to place, but mostly through forced displacement in the form of persecution (see Acts 1:8, 8:1,4,5). Drawing on the immigrant experiences of Jesus, the apostles, and Paul as form and catalyst of mission, Hanciles therefore concludes that “not only do we encounter every major form of migration in the biblical account, but also the biblical story and message would be meaningless without migration and mobility.”³

The missional hermeneutical reading of the Bible proffers different perspectives of immigrants: partners, co-laborers, and co-participants in God’s mission to the nations.⁴ Based on biblical narratives, Charles Van Engen argues that, throughout history, we observe that the process of immigration, intentionally or not, has been a means for carrying out the mission of God, where He invites people to be not only the object, but also the active subject of mission and renewal of congregations and denominations.⁵ Stories related to the movement of God’s people—be it forced or voluntary—generally tie to the direct or indirect promulgation of the story of God’s salvation, forming a strong correlation between migration and mission. Based on this consideration, let’s now see how the Trinitarian vision further reinforces our understanding of the interrelatedness of migration and mission.

Migration and Mission in Light of the Trinitarian Vision

The Trinitarian vision, the communion of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, sheds some light on understanding migration as an aspect of human interconnectedness, interdependence, and reciprocity. In the Scriptures, God is depicted as the “migrant God” who is always on the move, above all, through the Incarnation (sending of the Son) and through Pentecost (sending of the Holy Spirit). Likewise, the *perechoretic* nature—mutual reciprocity within the life of the Trinity—informs immigrants’ relationship with the host community where differences would not be allowed to generate exclusion or division.⁶

The understanding of a Trinitarian mission as the mission of the Father through the Son and the Spirit includes the Church and gives rise to the conception of mission as movement that emanates from God's movement to the world through Jesus Christ:

Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission (Aagaard 1973:13). There is church because there is mission, not vice versa (Aagaard 1974:423). To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love.⁷

As one can readily observe from the above discussion, mission entails *sentness*, where the sending usually points to a movement from one place to another. It is therefore appropriate to see mission in relation to migration, where "the movement of Christian people to other places is integrated in the concept of mission."⁸

In Trinitarian studies, reference is often made to God as essentially relational. This is expressed in both Eastern and Western lines in Trinitarian faith, even though in different ways. In Jean Zizioulas' words, "since 'hypostasis' is identical with Personhood and not with substance, it is not in its 'self-existence' but in *communion* that this being is *itself* and thus *is at all*. Thus, communion does not threaten personal particularity; it is constitutive of it."⁹ In the face of the widespread assimilation of the weak and minority groups (in this case immigrants) by the powerful and dominant groups within the present globalized world (be it in the forms of Anglo-conformity, melting pot, etc.), Christian mission calls for a just and conscientious relational witness to the Gospel.¹⁰

Miroslav Volf suggests that the life of the Trinity is characterized by self-giving love.¹¹ Volf further describes that self-giving means first abandoning self-absorption and moving toward the other in order to "nourish" and "tenderly care," and in order to make "without blemish" and clothe in "splendor." Second, self-giving means the opening of the self for the other, letting the other find space in the self—so much so that love for the other, who remains the other and is not transformed into an inessential extension of the self, can be experienced as the love of the self.¹²

He further warns,

In a world of enmity self-giving is the risky and hard work of love where there are no guarantees that self-giving will overcome enmity and that the evildoers will not try to invade the space that the self has made and crush those willing to give themselves for the good of other. We will have to resist such evil-doers without betraying the commitment to self-giving.¹³

Corresponding to the relational characteristics of the Trinitarian life, Martin Luther also reminds us that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and the neighbor—in Christ through faith and in his neighbor through love.¹⁴

Zizioulas also argues that communion with the other—be it God or one's neighbor—requires the experience of the cross, the sacrifice of our own will and the subsequent act of subjecting it to the will of the other, repeating in ourselves what our Lord did in

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Gethsemane in relation to the will of his Father. Without this we cannot reflect properly in history the communion and otherness that we see in the triune God. The self-emptying move (*kenosis*) of the Son of God—to meet the other—is the only way befitting our communion with the other.¹⁵

The incarnation and the cross are dynamic ways through which the all-powerful God shows that He can make space for “self-exteriorization to the maximum.”¹⁶ This “self-exteriorization” of the Trinity can also be considered as a scatter-to-gather movement which reaches out to gather the other at the margin to the center. This understanding offers a solid foundation for the Church’s life and ministry of welcoming the stranger and making room for the other.

Contemporary Implications: Challenges and Opportunities

The forgoing biblical demonstration of the interconnectedness of mission and migration enlightens our imagination of what God wants to do through the immigrants of our time as agents of God’s mission in North America. Based on that understanding, I will discuss four implications of migration for God’s mission in the world: (1) the ecstatic nature of human nature and culture (2) equality and reciprocity, (3) new challenges and opportunities for North America, and (4) immigrants as participants in God’s mission.

*The Ecstatic Feature of Human Nature and Culture*¹⁷

People always move with their cultural knowledge, which primarily includes their religion and tradition. This movement naturally involves the transmission of tradition, artifacts, faith, and spirituality as confirmed by similar experience of several biblical characters and groups and individuals in the Christian faith and other faith traditions. The ecstatic character of human nature and culture buttressed by the phenomenon of migration, initiates and sustains a certain kind and level of change over time.

As discussed above, the notion of *perichoresis*—a Trinitarian movement/dance around the divine persons that continuously open/reach out to the *other*—also inspires the contact and coinherence between various cultural groups. This depiction of circular dancing, however, is also complemented by yet another movement that simultaneously emigrates outward to make space and incorporates *others* for God: “is not a stationary point but a person who loves by moving outward toward others.”¹⁸ These movements somewhat resemble the simultaneous centrifugal motion and the concomitant centripetal movement as per LaCugna’s observation that “the centrifugal movement of divine love does not terminate ‘within’ God but explodes outward.”¹⁹ Similarly, Zizioulas observes,

God, in Christ, moves out of himself in love, and this makes all true ecstatic. This, according to St Maximus, makes God, who is by nature unmovable, to be moved . . . toward creation, moving at the same time toward himself those who are capable of receiving his divine movement and responding to it (notably the creatures that possess freedom).²⁰

This insight about the Trinity paves a way toward a richer understanding of the nature of the Church. David Bosch, drawing on Winston Crum (1973), Hans-Werner Gensichen (1971), and T.F. Stransky (1982), among others, perceives the Church as an ellipse with two foci. . . . In and around the first it acknowledges and enjoys the source of its life; this is where worship and prayer are emphasized. From and through the second focus the church engages and challenges the world. This is a forth-going and self-spending focus, where service, mission and evangelism are stressed. . . . Neither focus should ever be at the expense of the other; rather, they stand in each other's service.²¹

Underlining the importance of the dual movement in the Church, Bosch further asserts that "the church *gathers* to praise God, to enjoy fellowship and receive spiritual sustenance, and *disperses* to serve God wherever its members are. It is called to hold in 'redemptive tension'"²² A church, apart from this "redemptive tension" would, in the words of Lesslie Newbigin, "risk becoming a self-centered existence serving only the needs and desires of its members."²³ The postmodern conception of culture also argues that cultural identity becomes a hybrid, relational entity, something that lives between as much as within cultures.²⁴ Thus, the permeability and malleability of cultures allows creativity that quickens the adaptive process and cultural enrichment toward holistic flourishing of the communities involved.

This idea has been clearly revealed in human history at different times. Andrew Walls, for instance, pointing out major historical periods that played a role in the revitalization and continuity of Christianity, notes that migration was a major factor in each of the transitions.²⁵

What is more, in the context of African immigrant churches, indigenous forms of Christian faith exhibit the way people adopt a global view while remaining faithful to local forms. Based on Lamin Sanneh's concept of translatability, Hanciles further avers that "the translatability of the Christian faith and gospel locks diversity and unity in perennial tension: each living Christian community is a model of the whole and the whole is a reflection of the individual parts."²⁶

Equality and Reciprocity

As discussed above, the Trinitarian life involves the equality of each person of the Trinity where there is no above or below, no rank (first, second, or third in importance), no rivalry or competition where one uses the other for their own interest and self-aggrandizement. Rather, Trinity as a communion of equals each free for the others is characterized by self-giving love and reciprocity, where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live in fellowship of mutual openness.²⁷ Following this line of thought, Lamin Sanneh argues,

The characteristic pattern of Christianity's engagement with the languages and cultures of the world has God at the center of the universe of cultures, implying equality among cultures and the necessarily relative status of cultures vis-à-vis the truth of God. No culture is so advanced and so superior that it can claim exclusive access or advantage to the truth of God, and none so marginal and remote that it can be excluded.²⁸

Some churches in the West that appear to be largely engaged in serving their own national, ethnic, and cultural interests would do well to turn to the global immigrant church in their midst for a fuller understanding of the Scriptures and the Christian faith.²⁹ This caveat also serves the global Church anywhere in welcoming the stranger in the growingly cosmopolitan world expedited by the twin forces of migration and globalization.

As also depicted splendidly in their culture of *ubuntu* (belongingness, relatedness), African Christians, among others, must usher the way for interdependence, togetherness, symbiosis, and mutuality with the community in their new environment. “Only *together* is [their] salvation and survival. . . . The ‘me generation’ has to be superseded by, Bosch argues, the ‘us generation’. . . . since human existence is by definition intersubjective existence” fitting to the Church as a body of Christ and as a *communitas* of common space of participation.³⁰ The presence of immigrant churches—with all their challenges—could well be a force of renewal for missionary vision and vigor in North American churches. As Tinyiko S. Maluleke rightly notes, several missiologists have recently observed that Christian mission is not something that the first world does to the two-thirds world, or men do to women, and certainly not a one-way current from the north to the south, but something from everywhere to everywhere.³¹ He further argues that the real proof for this assertion comes to pass when all participate equally and mutually in God’s mission, crisscrossing the quantitative and qualitative boundaries of race, gender, class, geography, politics, economy, and culture.³²

New Challenges and Opportunities for North America

In resonance with Craig Van Gelder’s observation that “changes made in immigration policy by the US during the 1960s and 1970s allowed for a significant inflow of persons from Africa, Central and Latin America, and the Pacific rim,”³³ Jacob Olupona notes,

Immigration is changing the religious configuration of the United States. The 1965 Immigration Reform Act contributed to an unprecedented wave of African immigrants in the twentieth century.... [T]hese immigrants have inevitably contributed to the new religious reality in the United States.³⁴

This wave of immigrants to North America has surprised American churches with new challenges. In a way, it has stirred up social disturbance caused both by cultural differences and by the social needs of the newcomers. But it also has sparked a kind of Christian life marked by enthusiasm and vitality that can have a rejuvenating effect on the host church and community.³⁵ Furthermore, it begs for new patterns of relationships with regard to “the changing pattern of immigration in recent decades [that] has introduced the reality of diverse cultural communities into the midst of once familiar and usually somewhat homogeneous neighborhoods.”³⁶ This phenomenon of immigration challenges the church to demonstrate that Christ can fashion new attitudes in people of different cultures so that they may learn to accept one another as Christ has accepted them. In today’s society of tense pluralism, such transformation is the way to becoming the people of God and participating in His mission.

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At the same time, migration seems to be a new opportunity since mission calls for a missional imagination wherein the migrants are not only objects of mission but also active subjects and agents of God’s mission among the groups they encounter in the process of displacement, flight, and resettlement. Migration, as a huge impetus for peoples’ movement across boundaries, brings people of different faith traditions and cultures into contact with one another. This dynamism, in the long run, impacts all communities involved—either directly or indirectly. In the same vein, the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) has stated emphatically that “where the Gospel has been heard and obeyed, cultures have become further ennobled and enriched.”³⁷ In consonance with the above argument, the Vatican document *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* (EMCC) also states,

In contemporary society, to which migration contributes by making it more and more multiethnic, intercultural, and multireligious, Christians are called to face a substantially new and fundamental chapter in the missionary task: that of being missionary in countries of long Christian tradition.³⁸

This seems to hold particular significance for the United States as a “prime target for immigration with a million new immigrants a year,” which, according to Andrew Walls, will lead to a rise in the US population that could reach four hundred million by 2050—entirely as a result of immigration.³⁹ This influx is a double blessing to the host nation: first, because these immigrants largely come from majority Christian and/or fastest growing churches of the south with rich evangelistic outreach experiences, and, second, because they are predominantly a relatively younger population with the evangelistic and demographic potential for self-propagation.

Immigrants as Participants in God's Mission

The invitation to participate in the Triune life (in Christ through the Spirit) enables us to share with all people the love of God through acts of hospitality. Equally, in this network of humanity, we can establish and receive harmony and ecstasy from and with others who participate in the web of human relations which we depend on for our holistic wellbeing. In the same vein, Stanley Grenz argues,

Creating this relational fullness is the work of the Spirit, who places humans 'in Christ' and thereby effects human participation in the dynamic of the divine life. Moreover, being 'in Christ' entails participating in the narrative of Jesus, with its focus on the cross and the resurrection (cf. Rom. 6:1–14).⁴⁰

Our participation in the Triune life opens up a new opportunity to partner with God. This participation, according to Daniel L. Migliore, takes the shape of faith, love, and hope as "ways of living into the image of God realized for us and promised to us in Christ."⁴¹

Migrants as pilgrims seek "to transgress all artificial boarders that impede the quest for communion with God and with other people."⁴² As discussed above, migrants frequently do not only move with their faith and traditions but also disseminate them among people they encounter in passage and/or at destination. The growing number of Christian immigrants, leaving homelands on grounds of the dynamic interplay of push and pull factors can participate as agents in the transmission of valor and vivacity experienced in Christianity of the global South toward the transformation of the West.

The non-Western world, with its rich and fully untapped potential (which includes dynamic forms of the Christian message, demographic wealth, mobility, and culture of the peaceful coexistence of religions), can play a crucial role in revitalizing churches in the West overwhelmed by ideals of Christendom and secularization. The quest for spirituality and the ubiquity of religious symbols and artifacts in the social and political landscapes, however, seem to epitomize a welcome for the return of religion as the main actor in "civic globalization" and/or healthy "glocalization."⁴³ Immigrant churches could serve as companions to their counterparts in the West toward renewal and transformation of both. Regarding the mutuality between the West and Africa, Steven Biko, for instance, writes that the Western societies

seem to be very concerned with perfecting their technological know-how while losing out on their spiritual dimension. We believe that in the long run the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationship. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa—giving the world a more human face.⁴⁴

Accordingly, addressing the multifaceted and gigantic global challenges requires more than scientific breakthroughs; it will require new ways of human relations, networking, and

participation embedded in the ethos of *communitas* and the Trinitarian life of reciprocity, mutuality, and self-giving.

Conclusion

The biblical and theological understanding of mission and migration depicts the symbiotic relationship between the two phenomena in God's work in the world. Or, put differently, migration furthers the multidirectional dissemination of the Good News *glocally* (globally & locally) crisscrossing social, cultural, and physical boundaries. What is more, the dynamic movement within and from the Trinitarian God inspires and guides the interconnectedness and mission of God's people toward a growing manifestation of His kingdom on earth.

ENDNOTES

¹ Mark Lau Branson, "Interpretive Leadership During Social Dislocation: Jermiah and Social Imaginary," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 8, no. 1 (2009): 43.

² Jehu Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 139.

³ Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 140.

⁴ Darrell L. Guder et al., ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, The Gospel and Our Culture Series (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1998), 209.

⁵ Charles Van Engen, "Biblical Perspectives on the Role of Immigrants in God's Mission," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 34, no. 1 (2010).

⁶ See Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 228. *Perichoresis*, according to Cathrine M. Lacugna, "is the life of communion and indwelling, God in us, we in God, all of us in each other. . . . The mutual interdependence that Jesus speaks of in the Gospel of John: 'I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me (John 17:20–21)."

⁷ David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series No. 16 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 390. Emphasis in the original. See also John 1:14 in Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message* (Colorado Springs, NavPress, 2002) rendering the Incarnation into the movement of God into the neighborhood.

⁸ Fabio Baggio and Agnes M. Brazal, *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 155.

⁹ Jean Zizioulas, "Human Capacity and Human in Capacity: A Theological Exploration of Personhood," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28/5 (October 1975), 409 in Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2001), 52.

¹⁰ Anglo-conformity assumes that all new immigrants in the United States should conform to the dominant Anglo culture while the melting pot model assumes that different ethnic groups in the United States should conform to a common model, but one in which each group contributes something to the new culture being created. For more, see Mark Lau Branson and Juan Francisco Martinez, *Churches, Cultures, and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2011), 88–89.

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¹¹ See Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), Ch. 3.

¹² Miroslav Volf, "The Trinity and Gender Identity" in Douglas Atchison Campbell and Alan J. Torrance, *Gospel and Gender: A Trinitarian Engagement with Being Male and Female in Christ*, Studies in Theology and Sexuality 7 (London ; New York: T&T Clark International, 2003), 176–177.

¹³ Volf, "The Trinity," 176–177.

¹⁴ See *Freedom of a Christian* (1520), in LW 31:371.

¹⁵ Jean Zizioulas and Paul McPartlan, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London ; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 5–6.

¹⁶ See Hans Urs von Balthasar and Aidan Nichols, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 28–29.

¹⁷ The word "ecstatic" here mainly refers to the self-spending and forth-going movement of people and cultural osmosis with service to other people and cultures. See also Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols., vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), 135. Here he argues that "in all their forms of manifestation the works of God's Spirit have an ecstatic character."

¹⁸ LaCugna, *God for Us*, 351.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 354. See also Lorance, "Reflections of a Church Planter among Diaspora Groups in Metro-Chigago: Pursuing Cruciformity in Diaspora Missions." Here he discusses the idea of centerpetality and centerfugality in connection to diaspora mission where the former is understood negatively as "immovability, inflexibility, and unhealthy 'long termism'" in favor of "embraced centrifugality" which is characterized by the antithesis of the former. Cognizant of Lorance's warning against self-centered and inward-looking tendencies in several diaspora church and communities, the researcher here, however, wants to perceive centerpetality as a positive movement that emerges from the Trinitarian life of *perichoretic* love, reciprocity, and hospitality.

²⁰ Zizioulas and McPartlan, *Communion and Otherness*, 26.

²¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 385.

²² *Ibid.*, 386. (Emphasis in the original)

²³ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995), 11.

²⁴ See Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*, Guides to Theological Inquiry (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 57–58.

²⁵ Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 16–25.

²⁶ Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 155.

²⁷ Shirley C. Guthrie, *Christian Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox), 93.

²⁸ Lamin O. Saneh, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity*, Oxford Studies in World Christianity (NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 25.

²⁹ Guder, *Missional Church*, 268. See also E. Randolph Richards and J. Brandon O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture With Western Eyes*, (Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity Press, 2012).

³⁰ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 362. For a detailed discussion on *communitas* see Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, The Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures, 1966 (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1969), 97. *Communitas* is a Latin term that Victor Turner borrowed to refer to "a bond of oneness beyond ordinary community, an actual communion together that does not destroy individuality but brings alive the full gifts of each participant. It is a leveling process wherein 'he who is high must experience what it is like to be low' yet accomplished in a setting that is accepting, life-giving, and unifying." See also Paul H. De Neui, "Christian Communitas in the Missio Dei: Living Faithfully in the Tension between Cultural Osmosis and Alienation," *Ex auditu* 23 (2007).

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- ³¹ Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, “A Black Missiologist: Contradiction in Terms?,” *In Mission Is Crossing Frontiers: Essays in Honour of the Late Bongani A. Mazibuko* ed. Roswith I. H. Gerloff and Bongani Mazibuko. (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2003), 113.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Craig Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 50.
- ³⁴ Jacob Obafemi Kehinde Olupona and Regina Gemignani, *African Immigrant Religions in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 89.
- ³⁵ Kwadwo Konadu-Agyemang, Baffour K. Takyi, and John A. Arthur, *The New African Diaspora in North America: Trends, Community Building, and Adaptation* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 131.
- ³⁶ Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church*, 97.
- ³⁷ WEF, “Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Need,” (Wheaton, Ill: 1983), 20., in Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 346.
- ³⁸ See Baggio and Brazal, *Faith on the Move*, 155.
- ³⁹ Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY.: Orbis Books, 2002), 81.
- ⁴⁰ Stanley J. Grenz, “The Social God and the Relational Self: Toward Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei,” In *Trinitarian Soundings in Systematic Theology*, ed. Paul Louis Metzger. (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 98.
- ⁴¹ Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology 2nd ed.* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 162.
- ⁴² William T. Cavanaugh, *Migrations of the Holy: God, State, and the Political Meaning of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2011), 82. Here it is stated that the word “pilgrim” is derived from the Latin *peregrines* the meaning of which includes “foreigner, wanderer, exile, alien, traveler, newcomer, and stranger.”
- ⁴³ See Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, Passim. See also Patrick R Keifert, “The Return of the Congregation: Missional Warrants,” *Word & World XX*, no. 4 (2000).
- ⁴⁴ Steve Biko and Aelred Stubbs, *I Write What I Like: A Selection of His Writings*, 1st U.S. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 46–7.