

New Paradigm Concepts of Mission

Hope S. Antone¹

Why a New Paradigm?

The topic assigned to me by the organizers and planners of this conference implies the need for something new in our understanding and practice of mission. I believe that this need for something new is not simply to be in tune with the times—there is indeed a lot of discourse on paradigm shifts these days. Neither do I believe that this is just something we have to do as we observe the 100th year anniversary of the Edinburgh 1910 mission conference. Rather, I believe that the topic implies an honest realization as well as a sincere confession that the old paradigm of mission is no longer the best or the most relevant for our context in Asia today.

As I began writing this paper, I remembered a comment that Hans Ucko (a former staff in the dialogue unit of the World Council of Churches) shared with me a few years ago when I co-organized with him an interreligious program in Tao Fong Shan, Hong Kong. He said to me that as far as he was concerned, the word ‘mission’ needs to be dropped from the Christian vocabulary. His reason of course is that mission does not only carry a lot of negative connotations (ranging from its complicity with colonialism to its aggressive stance towards people of other faiths); it simply poses as an obstacle to dialogue. So as I thought of new paradigm concepts of mission, I also wondered whether we should continue to use mission simply because it is part of our inherited missionary legacy. Or, whether we should come up with something totally new since “new wine” requires “new wineskin” (Mark 2:21-23)?

Another problem that I have with mission is how it is understood and carried out these days. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, mission is “the action of sending someone to a place to do a particular job, esp. one for a government or religious organization, or the job they are sent to do.” Mission also refers to “a group of people who are sent to another place to do a particular job or to represent their country, organization, or religion, or the place where they go to do this work.” It is clear from these two definitions that mission is used not only in a religious sense but also in economic and political senses. Thus, mission can be for good or bad—such as the mission to attack another country. It is also not a monopoly of Christians; people from other religions also speak of their own mission these days.²

¹ Dr. Hope S. Antone is joint executive secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia – Faith, Mission and Unity (CCA-FMU) program area. Her portfolio includes education and ecumenical formation for CCA and a joint consultancy with the World Council of Churches (WCC) on ecumenical theological education in Asia. This paper is an updated version of her keynote presentation at the Asia Mission Conference held in Tainan, Taiwan on “Beyond Edinburgh 1910 – Asian Reflections on Mission” on September 29 to October 3, 2008.

² Like Christianity, Islam is a missionary religion. Buddhism also carries out mission like we do – in villages, in universities, in other places.

So writing this paper and just thinking about new paradigm concepts of mission has been a challenging exercise for me. Nevertheless, I thank the organizers and planners of this conference for the opportunity to think of this seriously and to share my struggle with you.

According to www.dictionary.com the word paradigm is from Latin *paradigma*; from Greek *paradeigma*, from *paradeiknunai*, to compare: *para-*, alongside; + *deiknunai*, to show.³ The same online dictionary notes that the word *Paradigm* appeared in English in the 15th century, meaning “an example, model or pattern.” Since the 1960s, *paradigm* has been used in science to refer to a theoretical framework. In 1962, in a book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn attempted to map changes in patterns of scientific thinking, noting that a given framework of thinking—which he called paradigm—tends to dominate and direct research in a given field.⁴ A paradigm shift happens when the old (previous) paradigm is abandoned in favor of a new one.

The language of paradigms and paradigm shifts entered theological discourse in the 1980s. David Bosch used this language effectively through his classic work, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*.⁵ This study of the major paradigms of mission throughout Christian history was capped with Bosch’s proposal of an “emerging ecumenical paradigm.” However, this does not represent a new paradigm as such but more of a bringing together of the good and desirable elements in recent missiological thinking.

So perhaps, in theological discourse what we have to do is to critically revisit and evaluate our old understandings and practices—in order to see where we have fallen short or gone against the radical (from *radix*, which is Latin word for the ‘root’) meanings of certain classical biblical concepts.

Moreover, in our search for new paradigm concepts of mission, we should not immediately look at new models or patterns or practices of mission. We should first look at the prevailing understanding, view or framework of mission, which then gives birth to patterns and practices. In other words, we should not only look at *how* today’s zealous missionaries from Asia strive to go on a mission trip, e.g. to Afghanistan, despite warnings from their own government and the Afghan government not to go there. Rather, we should also ask *why* they actually insist on going there or *what* it is that urges them to go there (i.e. the motivation, inspiration, or mandate).

Towards New Paradigm Concepts: Proposal from Robert Schreiter

³ www.dictionary.com accessed on 30 August 2008.

⁴ Cited by Robert Schreiter, *Liberation and Reconciliation as Paradigms of Mission* (Sundbyberg: Swedish Mission Council, 2003), 10.

⁵ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

⁶ Robert Schreiter, *Liberation and Reconciliation as Paradigms of Mission* (Sundbyberg: Swedish Mission Council, 2003).

One of the more recent articulations I have come across on new paradigms of mission is from Catholic priest and educator Robert Schreiter.⁶ In his lectures to the Swedish Mission Council in 2002, he spoke of how theologies of liberation have provided a paradigm for the conduct of Christian mission since the 1970s. However, since the shifts in contexts —e.g. the emergence of post-national security states in most of Latin America, post-Communist states in Europe, and post-apartheid societies in Africa—Schreiter feels that theologies of liberation are not enough to meet the challenges of the post-conflict situation. Therefore, he proposed that another paradigm of mission that must go hand in hand with liberation is reconciliation. He said that liberation and reconciliation share more similarities than discontinuities:

Both are concerned about overcoming oppression. Both place the pursuit of justice central to their activity. Both presume God acting in our history here and now. Both attend especially to the victims. Both seek the opportunity to engender hope for a better humanity by reference to the great biblical narratives. Both attend to the structural dimensions of oppression and conflict which need to be overcome.

...Both attend to the symbolic and spiritual consequences of social and political actions. Both are engaged in the material realities of their world, but both have an eye on the transcendent elements as well.⁷

According to Schreiter, the differences between the two are that the rhetoric of liberation, in its interest in regaining human agency for the poor, tends to emphasize the human role in liberation while the rhetoric of reconciliation places emphasis on God's role in bringing about reconciliation. The liberation paradigm promotes the dream of a future which creates new agency among the poor and oppressed; while the reconciliation paradigm sees coming to terms with a conflicted and traumatic past as the key to that future.

Schreiter's points are very important reminders for us in Asia—where theologies of liberation have been indigenized and contextualized to the point that we now have various contextual theologies of liberation in Asia—e.g. minjung theology, Dalit theology, Indigenous people's theology, theology of struggle, Asian feminist theology, homeland theology or theology of self-determination, etc. However, for many of our nations in Asia, reaching a post-conflict situation is still a far-off dream. Many of our nations are still controlled by military and dictatorial governments, some in connivance with the Empire. We still have Communist, Socialist and Maoist states and/or governments in Asia. We still have our own share of apartheid through the caste and patriarchal systems and through ethnic conflicts that are so deeply-rooted. So we definitely need to bear all these in mind in our search for new paradigm concepts of mission.

Towards New Paradigm Concepts: Proposal from S. Wesley Ariarajah + Mine

I would like to borrow the words of Sri Lankan ecumenist, S. Wesley Ariarajah, that the

⁷ Schreiter, 24.

original vision of the missionary movement that came out of the Edinburgh 1910 event “saw the proclamation of the Gospel, with the invitation to become part of the church, as the core of the missionary enterprise.”⁸ Usually called evangelization, this paradigm of mission is not only rooted in the old colonial model (i.e. “to conquer the world for Christ”) but it also constitutes a very limited and misleading view of mission. In the words of Ariarajah, “It must be said that from the perspective of challenges of our own day, its God is too small, its perception of the Gospel—too narrow, its understanding of mission—too limited, its theology—too tribal, and its concept of community—sectarian.”⁹

Ariarajah suggests four shifts in mission thinking in order for Christians to arrive at what he calls “an understanding of mission that would be credible and meaningful as we stand at the threshold of a new century and a new millennium.”¹⁰ He proposes moving from the view of mission simply as a message that we bring to or activities that we do in the world to mission as participation with God and all others in bringing healing and wholeness, justice and peace, and reconciliation and renewal in the world.¹¹ I came across these four shifts of Ariarajah when I was doing my doctoral research in 2001. Although each shift was explained only very briefly, I would like to expand them and build on them with my own critical reflections and personal illustrations. I would also incorporate, where possible, ideas from other theologians who have tried to address the question of what could be some new paradigms of mission for us today.

(1) Ariarajah named the **first shift** in mission thinking as: “from an exclusive to an inclusive understanding of God’s mission.” This has to do with our basic *framework* of mission. In the traditional paradigm, mission is understood as the task of the church to bring God, in Christ, to the “unreached” peoples. This traditional understanding of mission is similar to what Indian theologian Dhyanchand Carr called the **Noah’s ark model** of mission (Genesis 6-8).¹² Like the ark of Noah, the church comprises of people plucked out (the chosen ones) of the evil world, which is set for damnation, and who need to be kept undefiled and pure to enter their heavenly abode. As the saved, it is now their task to prevent people from jumping out of the ark and for rescuing a few others who may be drowning. This understanding of mission however is very limited and has effectively prevented the Christian community from making meaningful collaboration and partnership with others, especially those of other religious traditions or with an ideological inspiration, in their active engagement of humanizing the world. This understanding of mission also has an inherent negative attitude to the world.

⁸ S. Wesley Ariarajah, “Wider Ecumenism: Some Theological Perspectives,” in *Encounters with the Word: Essays to Honour Aloysius Pieris*, eds. Robert Cruz, Marshal Fernando, Asanga Tilakaratne (Colombo: Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue, 2004), 19.

⁹ Ariarajah, “Wider Ecumenism,” 15.

¹⁰ S. Wesley Ariarajah, “Christian Mission: The End or a New Beginning,” unpublished paper presented at the Meeting of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), October 1998. This paper was used as a reference in Hope S. Antone’s *Religious Education in Context of Plurality and Pluralism* (Manila: New Day Publishers, 2003), from which this summary was taken.

¹¹ Ariarajah, “Wider Ecumenism,” 21, (bold and *italics* supplied).

¹² Dhyanchand Carr, “Innovative Methods in Theological Education,” in *CTC Bulletin*, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (December 2003), 79-86. Narrative on the Noah’s ark is found in Genesis 6-8.

Ariarajah suggests an inclusive understanding of mission which is premised on the affirmation that Christians are in mission because God is “already present and active” in the world, bringing it unto Godself. Christians therefore do not have the monopoly of mission as if it is only for them to do and protect. God’s mission (*missio Dei*), which God carries out in many different ways, includes the creative and healing activities happening in the world but which may not be under the umbrella of the church. Through God’s participation in the sufferings of the people, God is loving, reconciling, healing, and bringing about justice and peace, even through those people and forces that do not necessarily belong to the church. This inclusive understanding of mission therefore “places the loving, caring, judging and compassionate presence and mission of God in the heart of all human affairs, despite all its ambiguities, Ariarajah added.”

In addition to this, I want to add another dimension to this inclusive understanding of mission. In the traditional paradigm, mission is seen to be about saving people. Yet even the Noah’s ark model includes animals that were also saved, pair by pair. One day, when I was a pastor of a very small rural church in the Philippines¹³, we had a Bible study on the story of Noah building an ark and a very clever youth leader of that congregation suddenly said, “Pastor, I know why the flood happened. It was because Noah had cut down so many trees to build that ark.”

With our understanding now of environmental issues, global warming and the ecological crisis, we know that there is truth in what that youth leader was saying. So an inclusive understanding of God’s mission must include a genuine concern for the rest of creation. For a long time, humanity has regarded creation as being there to serve and sustain us, and that humanity is the ‘crown’ of creation. We need to make a shift from such thinking as we are accountable to God for what has become of nature, the environment, the whole of creation which was entrusted to our care.

(2) The **second shift**: “from conversion to healing.” This has to do with the *goal* of mission. The traditional paradigm of mission has made conversion the ultimate goal of mission. This narrow understanding of conversion is really proselytism—i.e. winning of souls to Christ, or increasing in number of new adherents or church attendees. It can even include the dragging of persons from one religious community to another—or, embarrassingly so, from one denominational community to another (e.g. from Catholic to Protestant). It is this narrow sense of conversion that has rendered Christianity suspect in the eyes of people of other religions, thereby increasing the mistrust, animosity and hatred between religious communities.

Some examples of this traditional paradigm of mission, with conversion strings attached, were exposed during the rehabilitation and relief work being done to the victims and survivors of the December 2004 tsunami in Indonesia. For example, the effort of some Christian groups to intentionally send the orphaned children of Muslim families to Christian orphanages was severely criticized and exposed as having conversion strings attached.

¹³ The small rural UCCP (United Church of Christ in the Philippines) congregation that I used to serve is in the town of Zamboanguita in the province of Negros Oriental.

The new paradigm of mission challenges the narrow notion of conversion. The new paradigm of mission regards conversion as the transforming activity of the Spirit in the lives of individuals and communities, to a life oriented towards God and one's neighbor (the very essence of the gospel as described in Matthew 22:37-40)—regardless of religious or denominational labels.¹⁴ In this sense, conversion really is the work of God, not of people or of the church. It is therefore too presumptuous for us to make conversion as the goal of our mission.

Furthermore, what the church urgently needs today is to engage in mission with God toward healing, reconciliation and wholeness. There is so much brokenness, pain and suffering in Asia—because of power domination exerted over the vulnerable, those who are rendered weak and helpless—including women, children (especially girl children), other marginalized groups (e.g. ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, lower castes and outcastes), and the rest of God's creation. There can only be healing if power domination is shattered and transformed into a sharing of power that empowers everyone to claim their right to fullness of life (John 10:10b). But how can traditional missionaries, raised in very patriarchal societies and bearing the traditional mission orientation, help in breaking down this power domination mindset and practice? One can only give what one has— and that is why there continues to be a big need for real healing from all forms of brokenness, pain and suffering.

(3) The **third shift**: "from majority to minority." This has to do with our understanding of the *nature* of the faith community in mission. Closely related to the traditional notion of conversion (i.e. proselytism) is the imperialist and colonialist aspiration to church growth and development. The resurgence of denominationalism and the emphasis on church planting and church growth in most of our seminary curricula point to this desire to become the majority—as if strength can only be measured by our size or number. Today's mission practices reflect this desire to be the majority, as we in Asia allow ourselves to be spent in a minority complex that ranges between a self-debilitating attitude of careless passivity and an aggressive adversarial posture towards others.

Ariarajah however insists that we need to rediscover, reown and relearn to be at home as a minority faith community whose life is rooted in God and whose life is lived in, for and on behalf of the world. The biblical image of the **salt** (Matthew 5:13) is a good reminder of this. The power of salt is not so much in its quantity but in its quality—i.e. the ability to nourish (fertilize) the earth, bring out the taste of food (not give taste to food), and to preserve food.

Another helpful image for the Christian community that reminds us against the tendency to be the majority, to have big churches, and for our faith to be universal is the biblical image of the **remnant** community. The word remnant is used in the Bible in various senses, including as survivors of wars, plunder and the exile (in the Old Testament). It is also used to refer to the remaining faithful people (Romans 9:26-28) who are steadfast in their faith.

¹⁴ It is interesting to note that the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31) can be found in more than 20 religions of the world.

For me, the important thing that the word remnant conveys is the reminder that strength is not in number but in what God chooses to do with us, no matter how small or few we may be. That is where the significance of a motley minority group really is.

Therefore, in carrying out mission, we should not use the increase in number of conversions, baptisms, or churches built as the measures to determine success in mission—but how well we have been able to witness to the embracing love of God so that the community and the world we live in can be much more loving and just, as God had intended it to be.

(4) The **fourth shift**: “from mere doctrinal issues to deep spiritual concerns.” This has to do with the *content* of mission. Traditional mission paradigm has been focused on Christian apologetics—i.e. in trying to convince others, as much as ourselves, that our religion is superior to others, that our religion is the revelation; that it is through our religion that one can truly come to the Truth. But as Ariarajah points out, mission that is based on the usual Christian claims to uniqueness or superiority and to absolute possession of the truth (which are latent in traditional Christology) has no future. In fact, such only creates more rivalry and animosity among different religious adherents.

Before I joined the Christian Conference of Asia, I was working as Christian educator for the Dumaguete City UCCP and also teaching at Silliman University in Dumaguete City, Philippines. And because I did my MTh in Korea, a number of Korean missionaries who came to Dumaguete would visit me at the university for conversations. One time, one of these Korean missionaries came looking so tired and tanned as he was just out in the sun handing out leaflets to people and saying, “Jesus loves you.” I asked him, “So how did your mission go today?” He said, “Well, one old man tapped me on my shoulder and said, ‘Young man, I already know that Jesus loves me since a long time ago.’” I explained to him that majority of the Filipinos are Catholics and they already know that Jesus loves them just as much as the Protestants do. “Jesus loves...”, “Jesus saves...” are not new to Filipinos. The question is: what does that mean for Filipinos today who continue to struggle for a decent life in a land that is governed by corruption, injustice and paranoia about people’s movement for social transformation?

In the wake of endemic poverty, massive injustice, the widespread negative impact of economic globalization and the senseless war on terror, the intense search for meaning and for authentic spiritual life needs to be addressed. Basic to the cry for economic justice, genuine peace and reconciliation, freedom from violence and oppression, and for just dealings in international relations is a deep spiritual longing. These deep spiritual concerns that transcend religious or denominational labels should comprise the content of our mission today.

As Christians coming from different denominations, how do we witness to Christ Jesus who did not teach us to wave our denominational flags in order to be faithful to him? As Christians living among a majority of people embracing other religions, how do we witness to the love of God in Christ Jesus who came that all may have fullness of life—with no precondition for any religious flag or denominational badge?

(5) To Ariarajah’s four shifts I would like to add a **fifth shift**: “from token partnership to genuine solidarity.” This has to do with the spirit behind the methodology or practice of

mission. It is unfortunate to note that the mission being carried out today by many zealous Asian missionaries simply promote the traditional paradigm of mission.

In the Philippine experience, many of these missionaries come with lots of money, buy land and build churches and schools, using a Filipino “dummy” to fulfill the legal procedures of owning property in the country. But many of these missionaries set up their own enclaves, their own stores and schools, their own NGOs, and their own communities which then grow into country-towns. After learning English in the Philippines, they set up their own schools which attract people from their own country to study English intensively in the Philippines. In all these, they generate income and profit for themselves but not really contributing to the economy of the host country.¹⁵ It is no wonder then that in one part of the Philippines, there is a growing dislike for some of these missionaries and their people to the point that in one Indigenous community, a sad sign has been put up: *No Koreans allowed*.¹⁶ In some places like China, these Asian missionaries go as business people setting up noodle and other food factories, taking advantage of the cheap labor and resources in China. Therefore, mission today is ironically in connivance with capitalistic business enterprise. How can there be genuine partnership between people who are unequal right from the start? How can there be genuine partnership in mission if it is in fact driven by or couched in business or political interests?

The new paradigm of mission should challenge this token partnership with its economic and political agendas and strive to foster genuine solidarity with the people in their concrete human needs. To be in solidarity means to be one with another, to identify with the other, to feel strongly for the pain and hurt of the other, and to share the burden of the other as if it were one’s own. Solidarity implies the self-emptying mindset and attitude of Christ (*kenosis*) in an effort to lift up those who are downtrodden, oppressed, and dehumanized.

Cognizant that Christians in Asia constitute a religious minority, solidarity should not only be limited among Christians or among churches. Genuine solidarity should encompass interreligious solidarity. Bishop Duleep de Chickera of the Colombo diocese of the Anglican Church in Sri Lanka called for interreligious solidarity and integration in his presentation at the recent joint consultation of CCA and WCC on revitalizing the ecumenical movement. He gave several reasons why interreligious solidarity and integration ought to be a serious vision:¹⁷

1. Interreligious solidarity is biblical and theological – for God is eternal, omnipresent and ever dynamic.
2. Interreligious solidarity and integration is in a sense Asian. It will capture the imagination of Asian Christians as this is where they are already – whether

¹⁵ This was shared with me in confidence by a church leader in the Philippines last March 2008.

¹⁶ According to Rev. Fr. Rex Reyes, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, who personally shared this incident with me last March 2008 in Manila, this sign is found in a province in northern Philippines.

¹⁷ Bishop Duleep de Chickera of Sri Lanka spoke of “interreligious solidarity and integration” in his presentation at the CCA-WCC joint consultation on “revitalizing the ecumenical movement,” 1-3 September 2008 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

in relationships of harmony or of conflict.

3. Interreligious solidarity will impact the dehumanizing experiences of Asia as there is a collective religious conscience on issues such as poverty and environment.
4. Interreligious solidarity will impact the world church – especially with the waning enthusiasm for it in some global organizations.
5. Engagement in interreligious solidarity will help us deal with conflict and hope.
6. In interreligious dialogue, good and bad things emerge as one raises questions and leaves it to others to discern for themselves.

There is a lot that religious adherents share together. There is also a lot that we need to face or bear together. Hence, interreligious solidarity is the only way for us in Asia in order to survive together.

(6) To Ariarajah's four shifts I would further add a **sixth shift**: "from overemphasis of one biblical passage to an emphasis of the total biblical message." This has to do with the biblical basis for mission, which churches use as the mandate for their mission activities. The traditional paradigm of mission tends to overemphasize the so-called Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:19-20: "**Go** therefore and **make** disciples of all nations, **baptizing** them... and **teaching** them everything I have commanded you."

There are many other commissioning statements by Jesus which are found in the gospels and the book of Acts. But this one in Matthew has been given the title of "The Great Commission" by those who divided the texts into chapters and verses, thereby making the other commissioning statements seem lesser or lower than this. This commissioning statement seems indeed to be the motivation behind the zealous mission activities being done today by Asian missionaries.

Many seminaries in Asia do not only teach mission as part of their theological curriculum. They have also set up special mission training centers—where they train would-be missionaries with some language skills, cultural studies, and strategies in proselytism and church planting. Taking the so-called Great Commission as the main mandate for mission, apart from the overall biblical message, has made traditional mission paradigm zealously aggressive and overly concerned about numbers—of converts, baptisms, or of churches planted. Taking the Great Commission as the main motivation for mission, apart from the overall message of the Bible, has led to the neglect of many important passages in the Bible.

One very helpful passage is Luke 4:16-21, which describes the very essence of Christ's life and mission—where mission means bringing the good news to the poor, freedom to those held captive, sight to the blind, and release to the oppressed. While many churches would rather spiritualize the good news, freedom, sight and release, we must remember that Jesus did attend to the physicality of such conditions in his lifetime. Matthew 25:31-46 describes how life in mission can be lived in service to the least of God's people, with whom and among whom Christ is. The story of the Syro-Phoenician woman in Matthew 15:21-28 (also Mark 7:24-30) shows Christ himself being challenged to change his concept of mission

through an encounter with a woman of a different ethnicity and religion. Mark 9:38-41 illustrates to us that the close circle of Christian disciples does not have the monopoly of Christ's mission. So why should we stop them? Who are we to stop them?

In March and April 2008, my desk (Faith, Mission and Unity of the Christian Conference of Asia) organized two sub-regional consultations on "Holistic Mission in the Context of Asian Plurality." The rationale for holding those consultations reads in part:

Christian Conference of Asia affirms that our mission is really God's mission of proclaiming, sharing and living out the good news of fullness of life for all children in the household of God. We also affirm that the household of God is the whole inhabited world (*oikoumene*) and thus, all peoples, regardless of race, color, creed and faith, are already members of that household, endowed with the image of God within them, no matter whether they acknowledge it or not. Hence, mission has to be holistic—i.e. attending to the needs of the total person; affirming the divine image within them; opposing the forces that distort that divine image; and assisting the flowering or blooming of that divine image into fullness.¹⁸

So in that consultation, we critically revisited the so-called Great Commission and also looked at other biblical passages that have not been emphasized but which can also inform our search for new paradigm concepts of mission today. But it is not only a matter of what passages of scriptures are emphasized or neglected. It is also how the scriptures are read—and they must be read from the perspective of liberation. Liberation perspective includes analysis of context and relations of power, concern for structural change versus caritative relief, seeing things from the side of the poor, empowerment of the poor, and capacity to engender hope.¹⁹

Conclusion

I have given in broad strokes some paradigm shifts needed in order to have an understanding of mission that is biblically grounded but also contextually relevant. I have borrowed and expanded the four shifts articulated by S Wesley Ariarajah, and added two more. To sum up, following are the 6 necessary shifts in mission thinking and practice: (a) from an exclusive to an inclusive understanding of God's mission; (b) from conversion to healing as goal of mission; (c) from majority to minority as image of the faith community; (d) from mere doctrinal issues to deep spiritual concerns as content of mission; (e) from token partnership to genuine solidarity as methodology of mission; and (f) from overemphasis of one biblical passage to an emphasis of the total biblical message as the basis of mission.

If we must still have them, we need a new breed of "missionaries" in Asia today. We need the kind who are educators on the integral view of life; healers with a more holistic concept of healing; environmentalists who can help us detoxify and recover the sustainability of

¹⁸ From the concept paper on the Sub-regional consultations-dialogues on "Holistic Mission in the Context of Asian Plurality" organized by the CCA-FMU desk in Manila (for Southeast Asia) and Bangalore (for South Asia), March-April 2008.

¹⁹ Schreiter, 14-15.

the earth; people who are critically conscious of power—not for power *over*, but for power *with* (shared power) and drawing power *within* (empower); people who are religiously literate and who genuinely believe that to be Asian is to be interreligious.

It is my hope that this paper has served its purpose of outlining some possible paradigm shifts in mission thinking and practice for us in Asia.

If we are serious about making these paradigm shifts, we need to seriously evaluate and transform the mission orientation of our churches and seminaries, and the curricula in our seminaries and mission training centers. For as Christ Jesus himself reminds us, the new wine will indeed require new wineskin.

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