

An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 10:8-15 with Particular References to the  
Opportunities and Challenges of the Church's Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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## Abstract

This thesis explored and analysed An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 10:8-15 with Particular References to the Opportunities and Challenges of the Church's Mission in the 21st Century. Specifically, it is a study of the National Church of Norway's mission work in the 21st century in light of the New Testament (NT) teaching. The research question has been: What are the potential opportunities and challenges of Christian mission in the 21st century in general, and particularly for the Church of Norway as a missional church and what can the Church of Norway learn from Romans 10:8-15, in the church's mission work today?

I have done my research based on both primary and secondary materials. I have discussed and analysed the materials in light of missiology as theory and the developments of Christian missiological work. My findings suggest that the contemporary Norwegian Church mission has a significant impact in the life of believers as it is a diaconal, missional, confessional and open people's church. At the same time, the church's mission work today is clearly influenced by globalization that has both potential opportunities and challenges to do mission. Secularization of the society has brought a serious challenge on the mission work in the 21st century.

The goal Christ's calling of the Great Commission is to proclaim the gospel, making disciples of all nation through baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to keep the commandment of God. The calling is not just to be believers, but to be disciples of Jesus Christ, who believe in the triune God, and confess their faith. A true disciple of Jesus Christ, bare his/her cross, and live a confessional life witnessing Christ. Therefore, I believe and recommended that the church needs to develop strategies to evangelism and discipleship, and to accomplish Christ's commission in the contemporary world.

# Chapter I

## General Introduction

### 1.1. General Background of The Thesis

The biblical authors presented Jesus as an ideal missionary who was sent by God to save and bring restoration to humanity to glory from the state of its sinfulness and domination to glory. They present the saving significance of Jesus' incarnation, His death on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead. During His ministry on earth, Jesus called and trained the disciples and sent them to practice the mission work while He was still on earth (Matt. 10: 1-40, Luke 10: 1-23). After His resurrection, in Matt 28: 18-20, He sent out the disciples with authority to continue His mission. In the later addition to Mark's ending (16:15-16), Jesus emphasised on preaching the gospel to all creation, that Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. This commission is the commission given to the church that the churches in all times have been doing. Hence the main objective of this thesis is to undertake the analysis of Romans 10:8-15 in the light of the NT commission of mission and with the particular reference on the National Church of Norway's mission work in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### 1.2. Research Question

The main research question that will be answered in this thesis is: What are the potential opportunities and challenges of Christian mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in general, and particularly for the Church of Norway as a missional church and what can the Church of Norway learn from Romans 10:8-15, in the church's mission work today?

From this research question the following more specific questions were derive and the study pursued to answer these questions:

- What are the Potential Opportunities and Challenges of Christian Mission in the Contemporary time?
- What are the Duties of the Church of Norway as a Missional Church today?
- What can the Church of Norway learn from the letter of Romans 10:8-15, about Christian Mission today?

Even though my focus in this thesis is on the 21<sup>st</sup> century church's mission in general and the mission of the National Church of Norway in particular, I want to see the missiological

landscape since mission conference in 1910 by WCC at Edinburg, for the fact that the Norwegian Church is a member of the WCC and played a significant role in the world mission.

I chose the National Church of Norway because I will work in this church after I complete my studies, and I want to be more acquainted with the context of the church of Norway. Thus, I chose Romans 10:8-15 to focus my research on the impact of witnessing and proclamation of the gospel of the resurrected Christ on the growing secularism and people's rejection of faith in Christ in our time.

### **1.3. Motivation for the Research**

The motivation for this thesis is, first and for most I had a dream to be a pastor and preacher of the message of Christ since I was fourteen years old. I have had a job as an evangelist, assistance priest and church administrator in one of the congregations of the mega church for over twelve years in my home country. Thus, I am very much interested in preaching the gospel and witnessing Jesus Christ. Secondly, the growing secularism and people's rejection of genuine Christian faith in our time motivates me to examine its cause and to recommend that preaching the word of God to individuals and communities can heal the society and bring about change of mind and restorations.

### **1.4. Methodology and Structure**

#### **1.4.1. Methodology:**

In order to answer the research questions, this thesis confers an exegesis and theological study, and implication for mission today. In other words, the New Testament practices of Christian mission in general and the changing features of mission in the previous centuries, and the contemporary opportunities and challenges of church mission in general and that of the National Church of Norway's mission work were studied.

In order to determine the historical and theological meaning of Romans 10:8-15 (that is a central text in this thesis), a comprehensive study of historical critical method of the text and the Norwegian Church's mission work were undertaken. The exegetical study of Romans 10:8-15 has been conducted in order to understand the meaning of the text and to determine the basis and theological implication of Christian mission in the 21st century.



## 1.4.2. Structure

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one presents general introductions. Chapter two presents the ecumenical missiology, the changing features of Christian mission in the previous century, and the opportunities and challenges of church mission in the 21st century. Chapter three deals with the contemporary mission of the National Church of Norway, its opportunities and challenges in its local context. Chapter four explores the Biblical background: both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, theology of mission and the early church practice. The exegetical and theological study of the text under research is presented in chapter five. In the final chapter, the confessional identity of the Church of Norway in light of the exegetical text, the theological implication Romans 10:8-15 were discussed: and conclusion and recommendations of the whole project were presented respectively.

## 1.5. Literature review

“The National Church of Norway is an evangelical Lutheran confessional church, (...), and it is people’s church.”<sup>1</sup> It is a majority church, because majority of the population are members and are connected to it in one way or another. The church is engaged in both global and local holistic mission specifically proclaiming and witnessing the message of the gospel to the world. However, the church experience lots of obstacles in fulfilling the Christ’s commission. It is stated in the book titled *Det Kristne Norge* that:

“The National Church of Norway consists of three "circles" with the same centre: the inner circle is the group of people who regularly participate in the church's worship life, the second circle are people with church identification, occasionally go to the church, and the outer circle that have virtually no ecclesiastical affiliation (my translation)”<sup>2</sup> .

The emphasises of this social description indicates people’s commitment to participate church programs, practically to their faith. In his defence to people’s leaving from the church membership, Kåre Rånes, stated that “It is a persistent myth that those who use the church at baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals only come to church four times in their lifetime”<sup>3</sup> (translation). This statement also confirms second group of people that is described above, who come to the church services occasionally. The unbalanced proportion of people

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<sup>1</sup> Sjødal, Helje Kringlebotn (red.), Torleiv Austad, Paul Leer-Salvesen og Bernt T. Oftestad, *Det Kristne Norge: innføring i konfesjonskunnskap* (Kristiansand: Høyskoleforl, 2002), 99.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Kåre Rånes, «Folkekirken er en livsløpskirke,» *Kirke og kultur*, 124 (2020), 210-228, 211.

added to the membership of the church and people leaving the church membership every year is also an indication that many people reject their faith in Christ. According to the general assembly of the church KM 5.1/05, mission work in the Sami context is another challenge because “the missionary activities made the Sami passive recipients and were partly intertwined with the Norwegianization”<sup>4</sup>

On top of this, according to Tariq Modood, there are an influence of migration, increasing secularism and Islam in all Western European countries that is affecting the mission of the churches all over Europe, has considerable effects on the mission of the Church of Norway. There is a gap that these literatures do not show concrete strategies to evangelize or to witness Christ’s resurrection to those who are not Christians and to urge or to encourage those who reject their faith and bring them to repentance. Hence, this thesis is important that it fills the gap and provide important biblical and theological sense of evangelization of our society.

## **1.6. Missiology**

In this section few important terms to be used in this thesis were discussed. “Missiology studies can be defined as the movement of Christianity in the world, the way in which Christian faith become attached to different context.”<sup>5</sup> That means the message of the gospel of Christ reached to the all corners of the world through the Christian mission of the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom of God and diaconal ministry carried out by the churches and mission organizations. The church growth and expansion are also enhanced by teaching and baptising of the new believers and their children, who respond to the message of the gospel. Despite the influence of globalization, and secularization, the proclamation of the good news of the resurrected Christ is accomplishing its purpose of acquainting people with the triune God and God’s creation. Thus, in the next section few important terms and the ecumenical movements and the achievements since the Edinburgh 1910 will be discussed.

### **1.6.1. Mission and Missions**

The term Christian missions is all about to be sent by the Lord Jesus Christ for the purpose of evangelisation by word and deeds.

“Essentially, mission has been relegated to the specific work of the church and agencies in the task of reaching people for Christ by crossing the cultural boundaries. By contrast,

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<sup>4</sup> Den Norske Kirke møte KM 5.1/05, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Frans J. Verstraelen, *Missiology: an ecumenical introduction: texts and contexts of global Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing co. 1995), 2.

mission is broader, referring to everything the church is doing that points toward the kingdom of God.”<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, in this context, mission means God’s mission, and the missions refer to the churches’ participation of God’s mission.

### **1.6.2. God’s Mission (Missio Dei)**

Missio Dei is a Latin “word for mission of God, its central idea is that God is the one who initiates and sustains mission”.<sup>7</sup> In both creation stories (Gen. 1:1-2:3, and Gen. 2:4-3:24) God’s mission is revealed through the creation of the world and everything in it. On the sixth day of the creation, God created both man and woman in His image and likeness and gave them authority over all the created world to govern, and protect it. After the Fall (Gen. 3:1-15), even though sin governed over humanity, God did not abolish the creations, but He saved them through Noah. Later He called Abraham in order to fulfil the original purpose of creating the universe, and specially the human beings. God also made covenant with Abraham’s descendants on mount Sinai that He elected the people of Israel to be a priestly kingdom. However, since Israel was failed to fulfil the commission of God, He sent Jesus to the world and the people of Israel to find the lost and save them. Hence, Jesus preached the mystery of the kingdom of God; and also, through healing and exorcism, revealed God’s saving power.

### **1.6.3. The Great Commission**

Jesus’ selection of the disciple at the beginning of His earthly ministry was part of His mission to save the lost ones from the house of Israel. He lived as a Jew in a Jewish community; proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God to the Jews, selected His disciples from the Jews and trained them while He was still with them. After His resurrection He commanded them to go and make disciples of all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and to teach them to keep His commandment (Matthew 28:18-20); to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15), saying as my Father hath sent me, I send you (Jn 20: 21). In this great commandment, the disciples were supposed to cross the boundary and go to the all nations to make them disciples. Therefore, Christian mission in any generation could follow this model and cross the boundaries, witnessing Christ, baptizing the new converts, teaching and making them the disciples of Jesus. (This will be discussed in chapter 4)

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<sup>6</sup> A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, Gary B. McGee, *Introducing world missions: a biblical, historical, and practical survey* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004), 17.

<sup>7</sup> Moreau et al., *Introducing world missions: a biblical, historical, and practical survey*, 17.

#### **1.6.4. Evangelism and Christian Mission**

The Greek word “Ευαγγέλιον is translated as good news, the gospel, and its verb form εὐαγγελίζω means bring good news, proclaim glad tidings, proclaim, preach.”<sup>8</sup> Therefore, to evangelize is to proclaim good news about Jesus’ atoning death on behalf of the sinners, and His resurrection. Both evangelism and mission are two sides of the same coin. That means there is no mission without evangelism and no evangelism without mission. Apostle Paul’s missionary work is a good example to illustrate the relationship between the work of mission and evangelism. Paul’s missionary journeys include both taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to the unevangelized part of the world, through proclamation of the good news of the resurrected Christ and church planting, and teaching believers to stand firm in their faith in Jesus Christ.

### **1.7. Overview of the Missional Church and Mission in 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

#### **1.7.1. The Missional Church**

Since this research paper aimed to investigate about the church’s mission work in the future, I believe that, it is important to define what the missional church is, and its establishment and ministry. According to the New International dictionary of the New Testament Theology, “the Greek word ἐκκλησία, the etymological meaning of the word is to be called out, it is also translated as: assembly, meeting, congregation, gathering, synagogue or church”<sup>9</sup> The word is stated in Matthew 16:18 where Jesus said “οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν (I will build my church), and in Acts and other places. Paul emphasizes in his letters that,

“his starting point is the proclamation of Christ, and when people receive it in faith Christ becomes present and real in their experience, the Εκκλησία appears as the event in which God fulfils his election through His personal call, because of this *reason he* can speak of the called when he means the Christian community”<sup>10</sup>.

Therefore, according to the Pauline ecclesiology, the church is the gathering or community of Christians in the name of Jesus Christ and that is called for the proclamation of Christ and His resurrection.

It is written in John 20:21 “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” designates that the church is sent by Christ to do mission. Therefore, the church is sent to the world, is in mission

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<sup>8</sup> Colin Brown (edit.), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Volume two (Exeter, Devon: Paternoster Press, 1975), 107.

<sup>9</sup> Colin Brown, (edit.) *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Volume one (Exeter, Devon: Paternoster Press, 1975), 291.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

of proclaiming the good news of salvation in Christ. In the Lutheran understanding, “the church in mission refers to the local assembly of believers empowered by God’s Word and Sacraments and led by the Holy Spirit to participate in God’s mission”<sup>11</sup>. Hence, the local gatherings of believers, need to be empowered by the message of the cross and of the Holy Spirit, through celebrating the mysterious sacraments has to be involved in God’s mission by witnessing and proclaiming the resurrected Christ.

### **1.7.2. The Work of Mission in 21. Century**

The gap (geographical, cultural, language and the time gap) between the period of the biblical authors’ and the changing face of the universe: industrial revolutions, technological developments, urbanization and globalization, have influenced the ways the church handled Christian mission theology, and mission strategies throughout centuries. Throughout the history of the Church, the church experienced different social, political, and religious state of affairs that influenced her mission work. Bosch stated that:

*“the profound dissimilarities between then and now imply that it will not do to appeal in a direct manner to the words of the biblical authors and apply what they said on one-to-one basis to our own situation”<sup>12</sup>.*

The speed of technological development and changes are very vast in the current world, and the understanding of contemporary generation is endless. Therefore, we should be “creative but responsible, freedom, prolong the logic of the ministry of Jesus and the early church in an imaginative and creative way to our own time and context.”<sup>13</sup>. The essential description of paradigm shifts of the theology of Christian mission by Bosch shows the unceasing effort of the church and missiologists in order to bridge the geographical, cultural, and the generational gaps through developing contextualized missiological strategies throughout different eras for the continuation of the proclamation of Christ’s message to the world.

The changing landscape of Christian mission in the 20<sup>th</sup> century might has a great importance as it laid a concrete foundation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century theology of Christian mission and mission strategies. Namely, the churches ecumenical relationship has played a significant role in the development of mission theology and strategies to reach the whole population of the world. The

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<sup>11</sup> Jack Messenger (Edit), *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* (Geneve: The Lutheran World Federation, 2004), 27.

<sup>12</sup>David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2011, 185.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Edinburgh world missionary conferences, that western Christian leaders “were united in the conviction that they stood at a moment of unprecedented opportunity in terms of fulfilling the church’s task of taking the Christian messages to the whole world”<sup>14</sup> laid the good strategies to advance gospel preaching throughout the decades. Since then, the feature of mission has been changed rapidly. Thus, the rapid changing of the feature of missiology and mission strategies will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>14</sup> Ross, Kenneth R., Jooseop Keum, Kyriaki Avtzi and Roderick R. Hewitt (redactor), *Ecumenical Missiology* (Oxford: Regnum, 2016), 7.

## Chapter II

### **The Historical Changing Landscape of Mission and the Mission Work in the 21<sup>st</sup>**

The church exists because of the existence of God's mission. The commission "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19a) is a direct commandment given for the church. However, even though the purpose of the commission is the same from the beginning of the church, mission strategies has been changing from time to time. The world is becoming one city, easy travel and communication accesses, political awareness, scientific successes, and people's awareness to modern world trends affect mission strategies. As the result of these, several changes also took place in the Norwegian church: such as church and state relationship, religion becoming a private rather than a communal matter, and etc. Therefore, even though the purpose of this thesis is to study the Norwegian church mission work in light of the NT in general and Romans 10:8-15 in particular, it is important to discuss the protestant view of mission, and missiological changes in this chapter.

#### **2.1. The Protestant Reformation's view of Global and Local Christian Mission**

##### **2.1.1 The Scripture: Both the Hebrew Scripture and the New Testament**

The Biblical framework of God's mission (*Missio Dei*) to the world, is all about the redemption of humanity. The 16<sup>th</sup> century giant Protestant reformer Martin Luther's theology of *sola scriptura* is in focus in the Lutherans theology of mission paradigm. Paul stated in Romans 1: 16-17, that "for I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes (...) in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed." This text is central for Paul's mission in the New Testament that he preached the Christ to the Gentiles. Throughout his missionary movements he preached the gospel of Christ that brings salvation to those who believe. This text is also the protestant scriptural pattern which is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes, and brings transformation and the righteousness of God in the lives of believers.

At the indulgence controversy with the Roman Catholic church, Luther based his argument on the scripture. As Bernhard Lohse stated "in the course of dispute with Rome he was forced more and more to give scriptural critical value against specific traditions and doctrinal opinions in tension with the scripture."<sup>15</sup> Luther's view is that the scripture has a sole authority over the

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<sup>15</sup> Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and systematic Development* (Minneapolis: Fortress press, 2006), 186.

specific church traditions and doctrinal opinions. Therefore, Luther's biblical and systematic theology was based on the centrality of the scripture. Bosch stated that "Luther in particular to be regarded as a creative and original missionary thinker and we should allow ourselves to read the Bible through the eyes' of Martin Luther the missiologist."<sup>16</sup> He emphasised on Luther's theology of the sola scriptura, that the scripture is central to forgiveness of sins and salvation of humanity. Thus, the scripture is the sole centre of the church's mission that teaches forgiveness of sin and salvation through believing in the Christ.

### **2.1.2 The Priesthood of all Believers**

The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is a very crucial concept in Luther's theology, and it is important perception in the Lutheran theology of mission that all the baptized believers could participate in God's mission. Bliese states that:

"The kingdom of God as announced by Jesus: the redemptive reign of God in Christ—clearly anticipated that there would be a community of believers built up around the twelve apostles would carry the message of the good news about the kingdom to the world."<sup>17</sup>

The community of believers that Bliese is describing is the church. The church is inaugurated by Christ to participate in mission and carry the message of the cross to the whole world. However, witnessing the message of the cross of Jesus Christ is not given only to few individuals who are delegated to lead the church or mission organizations, but it is a responsibility of all baptized and spirit filled believers. Bosch also stated Martin Luther's understanding of the priesthood of all believers and said "if a Christian should find himself or herself in a place where there are no other Christians, he would be under the obligation to preach and teach the gospel to the erring pagans or non-Christians."<sup>18</sup> Even though, we are living in the most advanced world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the church finds everywhere, Christians could witness the resurrected Christ and demonstrated God's love to those who are not yet believed in Jesus. Therefore, the community of believers as the church, and individual believers who are empowered by the power of the Holy Spirit have given the task of witnessing the resurrected Christ's love by the same spirit, to other people who have not yet believed.

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<sup>16</sup> Bosch, *Transforming mission*, 249.

<sup>17</sup>Richard H. Bliese, Craig Van Gelder. *The evangelizing church: a Lutheran contribution* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005), 55.

<sup>18</sup> Bosch. *Transforming mission*, 250.



### **2.1.3. Preaching the Gospel Faithfully**

According to Martin Luther's doctrine of sola scriptura, faithfully preaching of the word of the Gospel of Christ, is the way that God speaks to the congregation. Clayton Schmit suggests that "The distinctive qualities of Lutheran preaching that is useful tools for mission are these juxtapositions: Word and Sacrament, mandate and promise, and oration and art"<sup>19</sup>. The liturgical theology is based on the understanding of God's identity, and traditional liturgical practices in the past, present and the future. The juxtapositions method of studying this liturgical theology as described by Clayton is the Lutheran contribution to Christian mission. The British Methodist Geoffrey Wainwright on his work of method of liturgical theology stated

"The focal position and function of worship, as an authoritative source for theology as well as a formative well-spring of the whole Christian life, results from it being the place of God's self-communication and saving activity as well as the human response to God"<sup>20</sup>

The liturgy of worship is a source where Christian life is nurtured, and inspired because God communicates with individual believers. An American Lutheran theologian, Gordon Lathrop explains the activities that takes place when believers gathered together before the triune God for the purpose of worshipping before the triune God. He explains the meaning of the liturgy by the concept of juxtapositions: "such as the reading of scripture next to preaching, words next to actions, a meal next to the remembrance of Jesus."<sup>21</sup> The mission of the church during the worship in the congregation it is natural that reading of the scripture from both the Old Testament and the New Testament, preaching of the word, children baptism, and Lod's supper takes place. Schattauer is interested in the formation of liturgy in his article, however, here my point is, the power of preaching is to change human life. It changes life, break the demonic powers, and it heals believers' life both physically and spiritually.

## **2.2. The Development and Changing Landscape of Christian Mission in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Under this topic, I will discuss some major events of the missiological movements that took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in order to comprehend the developments and shape of the churches' mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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<sup>19</sup> Clayton J. Schmit, «What Lutherans Have to Offer Mission in Preaching, » *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, (2003), Vol.42 (4), 356-365, 357.

<sup>20</sup>Thomas H. Schattauer «Liturgical Studies: Disciplines, Perspectives, Teaching. » *International journal of practical theology*, (2007-01-19), Vol.11 (1), 106-137, 114.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 115.

### 2.2.1 The Impact of the International Mission Conference at Edinburgh in 1910

The 20<sup>th</sup> century vigorous mission movement started with the World Mission Conference that took place in Edinburgh in 1910. There were “1,215 delegates to the conference, the overwhelming majority were men from Britain and the United States, European continent”<sup>22</sup>, and very few delegates from other countries had participated on this special conference of that era. The Western Christian leaders “were united with the conviction that they stood at the moment of unprecedented opportunity in terms of fulfilling the churches task of taking the Christian message to the whole world”<sup>23</sup>. The conference played a significant role in redefining the protestant understanding of the church and its mission to proclaim the love of God to the whole world. Hence, Christ’s commission, to the church, of taking the gospel to all nations of the world to the church was given a solemn focus that the message of the gospel to be spread to the six continents.

The world mission conference leaders “were convinced that they had arrived at a moment when political, economic and religious factors had combined to create opportunities for worldwide missionary advance.”<sup>24</sup> Christian mission to the world were not totally smooth since the inauguration of the church, but there has been difficult time that hindered world mission because of the political, social and economic challenges. However, there were also opportunities in every situation that the world mission conference leaders had conviction about. As Stephen Bevans described “there was a Christian world, the duty of which was to be a sending church, and there was a non-Christian world, which was to be evangelized, or at best be a receiving church”<sup>25</sup>. The purpose of this conference was to decide on how to evangelize the non-evangelized parts of the world, or taking the Christian message to the non-Christian world. In other words, the objective of the conference was to send the gospel from the west to the rest of the world. Hence, theologians agree that the Edinburgh world mission conference in 1910, is very important in the missiological developments that laid a concrete direction of Christian mission.

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<sup>22</sup> Kalu, Ogbu U., Peter Vethanayagamony, Edmund Kee -Fook Chia, *Mission after Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 4.

<sup>23</sup> Ross, et al., *Ecumenical missiology*, 7.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Kalu, et al., *Mission after Christendom*, 5.

### **2.2.2 The Development and Changing Landscape of Christian Mission after the First and the Second World Wars**

Both the first and the second world war created serious political, economic and social challenges on the mission of the church both globally and locally. Consequently, there was a necessity of adopting new strategies for further continuation of mission in the new situation. After the first world war the international mission council that took place at Jerusalem in 1928 and 1938 in India, accentuated the developments and expansion of Christianity and agreed to make different approach to the mission work that “the division of the world into Christian and non-Christian on geographical, territorial term had already become obsolete.”<sup>26</sup> At this time the younger churches’ participation in the mission work was given a vital place at the conference at Jerusalem. Besides the conference that took place in India emphasised on the major roll of the indigenous churches in mission work, and the mission church motivated the indigenous churches to take over the work of the mission of proclamation of the Christian message in their community.

Nevertheless, there are a continuing tension that:

“The validity and maturity of the churches on the mission field on the one hand, and the growing secularism of the so-called Christian world on the other hand, made it plain that a Christendom understanding of the world was no longer serviceable”<sup>27</sup>

The rapid growth of Christian churches in rest of the world gives the impression that the Edinburgh world mission conference’s decision of taking the gospel to the world is fulfilling its goal. However, because of the factor of growing secularism in the western countries, and rapid growth of Christian churches in rest of the world, mission became the global issue in a sense that sending missionaries became from and to everywhere, instead of sending missionaries from the west to the rest of the world.

In the aftermath of the war (1939-1945), the international mission conference (IMC) held in Canada, Whitby in 1947, focused on the partnership in obedience between the missionary and indigenous churches, with the emphasis of evangelization of the whole world. Then the IMC at Willingen in 1952, emphasized “the crisis promoted a quest for a deeper theological meaning and justification of mission that (...) a new focus on an understanding of mission as the mission

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<sup>26</sup> Ross, et al., *Ecumenical missiology*, 44.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

of God.”<sup>28</sup> The redefinition of the theological meaning of mission, the conference underlined the preaching of the crucified Christ, and invited all churches both the old and the younger churches and all believers to join together in order to take part in such historic ministry. Therefore, following the IMC, both the missionary churches and the indigenous church were urged to keep the bond of relationship in the mission field.

### **2.2.3 The Development and Changing Landscape of Christian Mission after 1960s**

At the conference in India (New Delhi) 1961 the WCC and the IMC were integrated on the ground of the fact that both stand for the same mission and proclamation of the same gospel. The mission conference held in Mexico in 1963, “focus on the challenges posed by secularism revealed how far the West itself became a mission field.”<sup>29</sup> The increasing influence of secularism in the west, global politics and the economic challenges the indigenous churches in the developing countries brought about radical changes on missiological strategies. These in turn, that the unity of the churches, contextualization of theology, witnessing Christ and salvation in all corners of the world got special focuses in missiology.

Bosch described the theme of salvation in the church mission saying:

“Just as there have been paradigm shifts in respect of the understanding of the relationship between church and mission, there have also been shifts in the understanding of the nature of salvation the church had to mediate in its mission.”<sup>30</sup>

Previously, the purpose of IMC in Edinburgh in 1910 was to send the church to the non-evangelized world. The purpose of mission is now shifted to the salvation. Salvation is not entirely a new theme of the mission of the church, but it got special attention after the mission conference at Bangkok. Bosch also underlined the meaning of salvation “in respect of the wide spectrum of human circumstances: the termination of poverty, discrimination, illness, sin, economic, political etc.”<sup>31</sup> It should be marked here that contextual theology is in effect and it deals with the emphasis cultural differences of the nation of the world, and inspires Christian mission to witness Christ to all nations of the world.

The IMC that was held at Salvador de Bahia in Brazil in 1996, was concluding and evaluation of the ecumenical mission movements in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was also a moment of thinking

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<sup>28</sup> Ross, et al., *Ecumenical missiology*, 62.

<sup>29</sup> Ross, et al., *Ecumenical missiology*, 86.

<sup>30</sup> Bosch, *Transforming mission*, 403.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

about mission work in the next epoch that will start soon. On this conference the cultural practice of the nations' being evangelized were given strong emphasis that "respects for the cultural integrity were a strong emphasis (...), but it also emphasised the need to critique and challenge cultural expression on the basis of the gospel and to be open to other identities."<sup>32</sup> It is underlined here that every cultural practice needs to be viewed in light of the scriptural teaching, it is above people's culture and it judges all cultures. This respect the identity of people being evangelized, in terms of cultural practices helps the 21<sup>st</sup> century theology of mission to give strong emphasis on the inter cultural communications.

## **2.3. Christian Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

### **2.3.1. The Factors of Globalization and the Church Mission**

"Globalization is a relational concept explaining how technological, economic, and cultural forces have fostered cultural contacts, which have reduced vast distances in space and time."<sup>33</sup> Hence, "it shapes the cultural context of contemporary mission and provides tools, resources, and opportunities for doing mission."<sup>34</sup> The certainty of the fact that we are living in rapidly changing world in which the technological, cultural, political and social revolutions that changes of the whole world is eminent. In other words, the world is becoming one big city that news and informations from one corner of the earth reaches the whole universe in a matter of an hour or less. The growth of both global and local medias like BBC, CNN, Aljazeera, Netflix, NRK, social medias like Facebook, twitter, telegram, Instagram and others through the internet are bringing the universe together. Hence, interactions and international communications, migration from one continent to the other and integrations, the growth of transportation technologies, brought about the rapid development and changes of the face of the universe. Hence, the rapid technological development and political, economic, and social changes instigated the advancements of peoples' life.

Globalization is both a challenge and provides opportunities for world Christian mission. "It as a descriptor of contemporary culture has imbued the context of doing mission supplied the resources and enormously enlarged the scale and opportunities for doing mission"<sup>35</sup> The significances of globalization that was discussed in the above paragraph contribute vital impacts

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<sup>32</sup> Ross et al., *Ecumenical missiology*, 132.

<sup>33</sup>Ogbu U. Kalu, Peter Vethanayagamony and Edmund Kee -Fook Chia, *Mission after Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010, 25.

<sup>34</sup> Kalu et al., *Mission after Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission*, 32.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 35.

to enhance the work of Christian mission. The political, economic, social and cultural changes make the efforts of witnessing Christ powerful by providing the necessary tools. It is also reasonable to think that the church has made essential impacts both in the history of Christianity and in the changing of the face of the world both by its existence, and by its mission work that is given by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Regarding the significance of globalization on the church or missionaries the Catholic theologian Walter F. Kedjierski stated,

“Those who seek to promote the Christian message as life-giving and meaningful for people today will be impacted by contemporary and cultural developments in the use of language, technology, and social structures when they attempt to express their understanding of the faith.”<sup>36</sup>

Understanding the time is crucial to apprehend the factors that impose the changes of the globalized universe in order to create strategies to promote the proclamation of the Christian message to the world. The knowledge of the contemporary situation and its impacts on our personal and communal life, and the resources available to us is important to witness Christ and proclaim the gospel to create understanding in our generation.

### **2.3.2. The Challenge of Globalization: Secularization**

As stated in the above section, globalization has brought a significant advantage in human life that the development of transportation system gave people opportunity to travel; easy access to information through information technologies, the development of Microsoft, and others tools and resources made human life better than ever. However, despite its enrichments of tools and resources for better life and global mission, globalization has created various challenges to the Christian mission both globally and locally by creating new cultures where religion lost its dominance. According to the Roman Catholic writers Bevans and Schroeder,

“As a result of this development individuals feel less and less bound by the views and values of their families, their groups, their religion, whose interpretation of life and the world are no longer simply accepted as naturally valid”.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Walter F. Kedjierski, «Papal Contributions to the Development of the Church's Missionary Spirit», *From Ad Gentes to Evangelii Gaudium* 22( 2019), 101-126, 103.

<sup>37</sup> Bevans, *Mission for the twenty first century*, 120.

It is apparent that religious communities are becoming more and more secularized as a result of globalization, and the secular ideologies are affecting the society. It appears that the secular ideology is minimizing or totally rejecting the idea of religion and the communal values, as people are choosing to live their own life that is divorced from the Christian values. Vidar L. Haanes also defines secularization “as the process that has taken place since the Enlightenment, (...) where individuals and society as a whole move away from a religious anchoring and justification for life and doctrine.”<sup>38</sup> (My translation). According to Haanes, the concept of secularization is associated with the Christian religion that people chose to live without God. It seems that people downplay the values of Christian fellowship or worshipping God and overstate the secular ideologies. The concept behind the rejection of relationship with God or faith is freedom from the old religious authorities and exercising one’s own power to decide about his or her destiny.

### **2.3.3. The Ecumenical Missiological Landscape in 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is a new epoch with a new challenge, that the overwhelming influence of globalization and secularism is leading people astray from faith and imposed also serious challenges on the Christian mission. Consequently, the engagement of the Ecumenical Christian mission in the contemporary time is focused on the understanding of the sign of the time that the technological, philosophical, political, economic, social and cultural changes that affect all aspects of life. It creates an opportunity to the missiological and theological reflections to contextualization and the shifts of global mission strategies to present the gospel in every generation. That is to say, since the Edinburgh’s conference in 1910, the church responded to the challenges that hinders the commission of Christ, through developing missiological strategies and theological reflections.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century mission strategies give the impressions of focusing on the restoration, healing and empowering of humanity in all aspects. The WCC conference on the World mission and Evangelism, that took place in Athens, Greece, in 2005, under the title of “come Holy Spirit: heal and reconcile”<sup>39</sup> is one of the missiological emphasis at the beginning of a new millennium. Though the work of the Holy Spirit will be discussed in chapter four, in this section to highlight

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<sup>38</sup>Jan-Martin Berentsen, Tormod Engelsviken, and Knud Jørgensen. *Missiologi i dag* (Oslo: Universitetsforlag, 2004), 434.

<sup>39</sup>Jacques Matthey, “Come Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile” *report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism* (Geneva: WCC, 2008), 125.

the ecumenical mission movements, brief explanation will be given. The work of the Holy Spirit in the healing and reconciliation of the world with God is emphasized on the conference. It was described that

“When the Holy Spirit blesses us with the gift of understanding, we are enabled to discern the world that is broken, divided and violent, and is in the need of healing and reconciliation”<sup>40</sup>

God’s mission or *Missio Dei* is a mission of triune God that all the three persons are involved. The Holy Spirit works significantly in Christian mission that He empowers missionaries in the work of the proclamation of the gospel, and the healing and reconciliation of humanity with God and with each other. He also calls the missionaries and all Christians to the ministry of healing and reconciliation through witnessing resurrected Christ. This is confirmed by the sub article of the conference at Athens which states “we are called in Christ to be reconciling and healing communities, mission and violence, building a culture of peace, healing, and reconciliation”<sup>41</sup> In 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, Paul stated that “God reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ,” These texts indicates reconciliation is a central theme, in the declaration of God’s forgiveness given in Jesus Christ.

The impact of the Holy Spirit in mission and calling to healing and reconciliation is also emphasized on the World Council of Churches’ Conference on World Mission and Evangelism that took place in Arusha, Tanzania, 2018. The topic of the conference “Moving in the Spirit, called to transforming discipleship”<sup>42</sup>, designates the power of the Holy Spirit in moving the individual missionaries, all baptized Christians and the society in order to make disciples of Christ. It was stated in the document of the conference that:

“We can and do believe that we are called to mission and evangelism, sharing the good news in word, deed, and life, witnessing to the gospel of grace and truth, and offering to the whole world the gifts of God: love, peace, justice, reconciliation, the power of the Cross and of the Resurrection, and the expectation of eternal life”.)<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Jacques Matthey, “Come Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile” report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism (Geneva: WCC, 2008), 126.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>42</sup> “The Arusha Call to Discipleship” *International review of mission* 105 (2016), 542-546, 542

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 545.



That means all baptized believers are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ and as the disciples of Christ to witness His resurrection to the world. Jesus called us and made us His disciples to be missionaries and participate in the transformation the world through witnessing His resurrection and reconciling people with God and even with all God's creations. Therefore, evangelism and sharing of the good news of the gospel of the resurrected Christ with the unbelievers and with each other and evangelizing of the secularized community is the responsibility of the church and individual believers in ant era. The arusha call to discipleship also reminds us the church should focus on the discipleship to overcome the contemporary secularized society.

## Chapter III

### Opportunities and Challenges of Mission in The National Church of Norway

#### 3.1 The Identity of the National Church of Norway

The National Church of Norway embraces the majority of the population of Norway. According to the official Statistics, June 2020, of the church's web site, 3,5 million people are members of the Church of Norway. The total number of the population of Norway in 1. January 2021, was 5, 391, 369. That is about 66 percent of the total population are members of the church of Norway, while around 34 % are members of other religious and non-religious groups. The Norwegian Pentecostal churches, Catholics, migrant Christian churches, are also included in this group.<sup>44</sup>

The National Church of Norway is a mega church in the country and it is an Evangelical Lutheran Church. Until recently, the church had a strong bond with the State and was called the state church: "which was used for the first time in Norwegian legislation in 1845, when it deemed necessary to separate this church from other denominations which established themselves in Norway" (translation).<sup>45</sup> Constitutionally, the king was the head of the church that the king, bishops, and priests had the crucial responsibility for the church's overall ministry. Hence, the government has been responsible for the church's well-being that:

"The state pays for the priests and takes care of the central church administration, while the municipalities cover the salaries of the other employees in the congregations and also the construction and operation of churches and cemeteries." (My translation)<sup>46</sup>

Even though the state and the municipalities are responsible to pay for the church, and employees get grant; after the constitutional amendments in 2012, the church and the state were separated and the church is no longer called the state church. Hence, the church itself is managing its administration and ministries. I mean that priests, the church leaders and its employees are responsible for the overall activities of the church.

Concerning the definition of the identity of the National Church of Norway, it is stated on the church's webpage that:

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<sup>44</sup> Den norske kirke, Kirkerådet, *Medlemsstatistikk/*, <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/om-kirken/bakgrunn/om-kirkestatistikk/>, Oppdatert: 15. June 2021.

<sup>45</sup> Peder Borgen, Brynjar Haraldsø (red.), *Kristne Kirker og trossamfunn* (Trondheim: Tapir, 1993), 129.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 120.

“The Norwegian Church is a confessional, missionary, serving and open people’s church. Mission is about what it means to be a church. Together with the worldwide church, we must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in presence, action and word - locally and globally.” (My translation).<sup>47</sup>

There are four elements in this definition, namely confession, mission, service or diaconal, openness for all people regardless of colour, race, poorness or richness.

1. Confession: - The church of Norway is a confessional church means that the Bible is central to the church’s confession, and the church accepts the ancient ecclesiastical creeds. That is to say “Central expressions of the Christian faith can also be found in the ancient ecclesiastical creeds, in the Lutheran confessions, and in ecclesiastical liturgies”<sup>48</sup> This element will be discussed in chapter six under discussion and implications.
2. Mission: - Mission is also the being of the church that the commandment of Jesus of the great commission to go out and make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them is implemented.
3. Service or diaconal: - Jesus said, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (MK 10:45). Therefore, the church also exists to serve all people who want accept the offers of the church’s ministry.
4. Open for all: The church is open for all people regardless of race and colour, poor or rich. In the above definition, the church is affirming its dedication to the commission of Christ, and its unique traits as a confessional, missional, serving and open people's church engaged to the mission of God with the worldwide churches in preaching the gospel of the resurrected Christ in words and actions.

### **3.2 The National Church of Norway and its Diaconal Ministry**

“Diakonia is gospel in action and is about compassion or charity, inclusive fellowship, protection of creation and the struggle for justice.”<sup>49</sup> Diaconal ministry or diakonia is one of the major focuses of the Church of Norway that prioritizes the ministry to the whole humanity and other God’s creations. The view of the holistic ministry of the church is based on the fact that humans are created in the image and likeness of God. This understanding of the creation of

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<sup>47</sup>Den Norske Kirke, *Kirkemøte, Misjon til forandring - Utfordringene fra Edinburgh 2010*, 3.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Diakoni, *kyrkja si omsorgsteneste*, <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/om-kirken/diakoni-og-samfunnsansvar/diakoni/>, 2020.

humanity in God's image and likeness creates the opportunity and responsibility of humans to demonstrate the gospel in action through serving one another, taking care of each other, having inclusive fellowship with each other and to take care of other creations and fight for justice.

According to the definition of diaconal ministry discussed above, the church of Norway focuses on four areas of services that fulfil Christ's commission. Even though these four elements have a very wide range of characteristics, because of the limit of words in this thesis I will not discuss these elements in detail here. Nevertheless, I want to summarize it in few sentences. The first service is charity or compassion. The church of Norway's compassion's ministry is both local and global. It believes that all human beings are in need of one another in life and offers it's help to people in all ages and who are in different crisis. The second area is inclusive fellowship. This fellowship is demonstrated through worship services, prayers, and participation of all believers in different groups. The third area is protection of the creation. The church also works on the environmental protection, and the fourth area is the struggle for justice. The diakonia ministry of the church of Norway is therefore both local and global ministry that the church offers for people around the world and to be available for people in difficult situations.

### **3.3 The National Church of Norway and its Global Mission**

“We are baptized into our local church, and at the same time into a worldwide community of believers, where Jesus Christ binds us together.”<sup>50</sup> (My translation). The Christian global mission work also recognizes the fact that believers are baptized in the local and global communities of believers because of Jesus' unconditional love and death on the cross for all humanities who believe. Therefore, the church believes that all believers have an obligation to participate in the global mission of sharing the gospel of the resurrected Christ to all humanity. Conferring with the general assembly of the Synod that took place in 2005, there are a common recognition between most of the Norwegian mission organizations and the church of Norway on the identity of the church as the missional church.

“In 1994, the Church Council resolved to establish the co-operation council between the Church of Norway and the mission organizations (SMM: samarbeidet mellom Den norske kirke og misjonsorganisasjonene) as a practical tool for cooperation between the Church of Norway and the mission organizations that see themselves as part of the church's mission work”<sup>51</sup> (My translation).

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<sup>50</sup> Den Norskekirke, Kirkerådet, *Om dåpen* <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/SMM/artikler/velkomstartikkel/>, 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Dehlin, Live Janne, *Misjon til forandring: Utfordringene fra Edinburgh: kirkemøte 2012*, 10.

According to the up dated agreements of 16/07/2020, the registered members of this co-operation include: “The Norwegian Church, The Norwegian Missionary Society, The Norwegian Israel Mission, Normisjon, Areopagos, The Mission Alliance, Himal Partner and Stefanusalliansen.” (My translation).<sup>52</sup> The Co-operation Council for congregation and mission organizations works in many countries and has a responsibility to organize collaboration between the Synod and mission organizations, which are the members of this unity. Furthermore, the “Synod challenges the congregations to realize the connections between mission, diakonia and ecumenism, in order to make visible the unity of Christ and the global community in the ministry.” (My translation)<sup>53</sup>. That is, to encourage the individual congregation and all believers to take part in the global mission in the proclamation of the gospel to all nations either by sending missionaries or by supporting the indigenous churches to continue the spreading of the message of salvation they have accepted. There are also other congregations that work with other mission organizations, which are not members of the co-operation, both in local and global context. Since my focus in this research is on the local mission of the church, I do not want to discuss the global mission of the church in detail.

### **3.4 The National Church of Norway and its Mission in Local Context**

#### **3.4.1 The Worship Services of the Church and Mission Work**

As it is the tradition of the church of the New Testament, to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, since her establishment the Church of Norway celebrate the worship services every Sunday. In addition to the main worship services on Sunday, other worship services and gatherings take place during the week days based on the need of the meeting. It is stated by the council of the church in 2005 that:

“An important strategy for the Church of Norway, as a missionary folk church, must maintain a nationwide worship celebration, and strengthen the worship service's closer to people's everyday lives.”<sup>54</sup> (My translation).

In the worship services all people gathered together in the church’s room celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the new life in Him. God sent Jesus into the world in order to provide reconciliation between Himself God and the world in which those who believe will be

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<sup>52</sup> Kirkerådet, SMM- *Samarbeide mellom kirke og misjonsorganisasjoner*: <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/SMM/artikler/velkomstartikkel/>, 2021.

<sup>53</sup> Dehlin, Live Janne, *Misjon til forandring: Utfordringene fra Edinburgh 2020*, 4.

<sup>54</sup> Den Norske Kirke, *Kirkemøte, en misjonarende kirke*, 2005, 15.

saved (John 3:16). Therefore, strengthening the worship services is vital in order to motivate believers to strengthen their fellowship with God so that they feel the closeness of God in their own life.

It is Stated in the document «Veiledning om ulike sider ved gudstjenesten» that:

“Basically, all major worship services are for all in the congregation. All baptized people naturally belong to the community of worship. Nevertheless, all Christian worship also has a missionary dimension that the congregation must constantly think through and facilitate that both the baptized and unbaptized people who wish to participate in the worship services are welcome and be part of the congregation's worship life.”<sup>55</sup> (My translation).

Explicitly, the Church is open for all people regardless of their views or convictions; believers and non-believers who want to participate in the worship, since the nature of the church is missional. Therefore, the church opens the door for all to be part of the mission of witnessing the resurrection of Jesus Christ and inviting them to participate in worshipping God, get eternal life in Christ and become an agent of God’s mission in the world.

All people who are baptised are included to fellowship with each other locally and worldwide into the believer’s community regardless of their race or life situation. In the celebration of worship services on Sunday or any other week days, believers gather together to witness Jesus’ deed on the cross and His resurrection. As the early Christians community were devoted to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42), worship services in the Norwegian church includes several elements for instance preaching the gospel, fellowship, sacraments (baptism and holy communion) and prayers. Hence, many believers are devoted in the fellowship, participating in the witnessing of the resurrection of Christ, and preaching the gospel through the participation of the Holy communion (1cor. 11:26), in the worship services.

### **3.4.2 Liturgy as Missionary Identity of the Church**

Liturgy is a rite that is rooted in the first century Christian worship where all who participate in the worship service have their role. It is described on the church’s web page that:

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<sup>55</sup> Den Norske kirke, «Veiledning om ulike sider ved gudstjenesten», *Fra Gudstjenestebok for Den norske kirke*, 2020, 2.

“The service is similar to play or drama / acting. As in the play or in the drama, a separate kind of reality is created in the worship service, within the liturgical space. In this way the liturgy can enable us to understand what is not really understandable, and it helps us to interpret and relate to God's presence and the mystery of salvation.”<sup>56</sup> (My translation).

The liturgical services comprise all activities, and the people who participate on delivering the worship service: the priests, deacons, musicians, and other lay ministers who read the daily scripture texts or who assist the priests on baptism ceremony have a significant role in the fulfilment of the worship service. It is designed in such a way that people understand and feel the presence of God in the midst of the congregation and the mystery of salvation through the celebration of the resurrection of Christ. The worship service is therefore, an interplay between different parties who participate on the services as described above and the congregation.

The missional significance of the Norwegian church liturgy is also described by the council of the church 2005, that:

“The Church expresses its missionary identity when it asks how the word through the liturgy and preaching can meet the deepest hopes and longings of the people, and take up residence in their lives in the 21st century.”<sup>57</sup> (My translation).

Personally, from my studies and experiences of the Norwegian church worship services, I have found that the liturgy is designed to communicate the word of God through different means in a way that believers feel God's presence. Essentially, liturgy of the worship services is divided into two main parts, the Word, which leads to the gospel, and the Lord's Supper, which is based on Jesus' last meal with the disciples. Therefore, it is understandable that the structure of the liturgy of the worship services is designed to replicate the Mission of the church to communicate the gospel, to address the need of the audience through intercessions, prayer for the churches' ministry and for the world.

### **3.4.3. The Baptismal Liturgy in the Norwegian Church**

People in all age groups: children, youth, and adults have right to be baptized in the church and become disciples of Christ in the church. It is a tradition in the Lutheran church that children

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<sup>56</sup> Den Norske Kirke, *Liturgi*, <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/kristen-tro/gudstjeneste/liturgi/>, 2020.

<sup>57</sup> Den Norske Kirke, *Kirkemøte, en misjonarende kirke*, 2005, 15.

are brought to the church by their families to be baptized and placed early in the process of discipleship education. There are also people who come to the church to be baptized and become the members of the believing community. For instance, there are many youths who are not baptized as children, but sign up for the confirmation and these youths are baptized throughout the confirmation period. That is because it is the time for many youths to start to think about becoming Christian and feel the power of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and decide to be baptized in the church at their confirmation day which is the most special and important day of their lives. Furthermore, adult who are not baptized at their childhood, but come to Christian faith and got understanding of the scripture and want to be members in the church are always welcome to be baptized in the church. It is interesting that all people have an access to come to Jesus through the baptismal liturgy, and be a member of the local and global community of believers.

In the church of Norway many parents choose to baptize their children during their childhood and thousands of children, youth and adults are baptized every year. According to the descriptions on the church's webpage, there are six good reasons for the decision or choosing baptism for people in all age groups. I want to summarize these good reasons for understanding here. Firstly, "the water and the promises of baptism convey God's grace and love, that to be baptized is to live surrounded by the love of God."<sup>58</sup> (My translation). Secondly, "Baptism allows us to live and grow in the faith that (...) through baptism a child introduced to the faith, so that the child gains a basis for making independent choices."<sup>59</sup> (My translation). The families bring their child in faith to be baptized into the community of believers, most importantly, for the child to receive God's unconditional love, mercy, forgiveness and blessing. Thirdly, "baptism carries through life and has a hope that carries beyond this life" (My translation)<sup>60</sup>. It is stated in Galatians 3: 27 "for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." And that indicates all who are baptized are baptized into Jesus Christ and to live a life worthy to our faith.

The Augsburg confession states the significance of baptism in Christian life. Baptism is necessary for salvation and the child or person who is baptised receives God's grace to be called God's son or daughter. The Bible clearly teaches that baptism gives salvation. It is written in Titus 3:5-7 and says, "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy

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<sup>58</sup> Den Norske Kirke, Kirkeråde, *Seks gode grunner til dåp*, [https://kirken.no/nb-NO/dåp/seks\\_gode\\_grunner\\_til\\_dåp](https://kirken.no/nb-NO/dåp/seks_gode_grunner_til_dåp).

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.



Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life”. Therefore, all who are baptized and get God’s grace through the Spirit of God, have hope for eternal life.

#### **3.4.4 Mission and the Holy Communion**

The Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two sacraments of the Evangelical Lutheran Church since reformation, and it has been celebrated in the all-Lutheran churches until today. While He was still on the earth, at the night before His suffering Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples, and He established the Holy Communion that He took the bread, and He gave thanks, and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, (...) gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:26-28). It is stated in 1 Corinthians 11:26 “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”.

Christian worship has a sacramental character is connected with the fact that it is God's service to people, and it conveys the means of grace that God has given the church”<sup>61</sup> (My translation). This grace is given through the preaching of the words of God, believers’ celebration of the holy baptism, and the holy communion, with each other. Through these sacramental acts’ believers gain access to the grace of God and to celebrate the forgiveness of sin, and to become witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, the celebration of the holy communion in the Norwegian church is also an act of Christian mission that it involves preaching the word, prayer, and confession of faith. The identity of the church as the confessional community will be discussed in chapter five or the exegetical part.

#### **3.4.5. Mission and Christian Education**

The purpose of the Christian education in the Church of Norway is stated in the Christian education plan, is “to contribute to: a systematic and coherent faith education that awakens and strengthens the Christian faith, gives knowledge of the triune God, interpretation of life and life mastery.”<sup>62</sup>(My translation). This purpose of Christian education is achieved through worship services in the church room as a different space open for learning about the Christian faith that connects knowledge and Christian practice. Hence, the goal of Christian mission in the Christian education program of the church is achieved through worship services which is both

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<sup>61</sup> Berentsen et al., *Missiologi i dag*, 199.

<sup>62</sup>Den norske kirke, Kirkerådet, *Plan for trosopplæring: Gud gir-vi deler*. Oslo, 2010, 4.

a fellowship of a community of faith and a community of learning. The content of the church worship service: scripture readings from both the New and the Old Testament, music, arts and liturgy is related to nourish the believers' worship life and are designed to spreading of Christian faith.

Christian education embraces children, adults and youth that the Church of Norway has a concrete plan for all baptized children. "The plan is a combination of a framework plan and a resource document that will stimulate the work of developing and implementing local plans for faith education."<sup>63</sup>(My translation). That means children will get Christian education or training from the age of null year until eighteen years. The plan is executed through different activities that the church invites all the baptized and unbaptized children and youth to various events. Activities Like: baby songs, Sunday school programs for children, youth program and confirmation are some examples of the disciple making events. It is also understandable that many congregations have different activities depending on the age groups that contribute to Christian education both depth and breadth.

"Confirmation has a central place in the teaching Christian faith in the Church of Norway, and is, like baptism, a broad measure that has been incorporated in all congregations."<sup>64</sup> (My translation). It is designed for the renewal of faith that the student has been baptized into at the time of baptism, to contribute to growth and strengthen believers to stand firm in their faith. Furthermore, "Christian education must reflect that the local church is part of a global community, drawing inspiration from the worldwide church and bringing children and youth into a global ministry"<sup>65</sup>(My translation). I discussed above, first and foremost we were baptised into Christ's death and resurrection to live a new life in Him (Rom. 6:4), and secondly, we were baptized into the local and global community of believers. Therefore, it is emphasised in the Christian education plan that it needs to reflect our union in Christ, and fellowship with local and global Christian community.

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<sup>63</sup>, Den norske kirke, Kirkerådet, *Plan for trosopplæring: Gud gir-vi deler*. Oslo, 2010, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>65</sup> Kirkemøte, *en misjonerende kirke*, 2005, 16.

### **3.5. The Potentials and the Challenges of Mission of the National Church of Norway in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

#### **3.5.1. The Potentials of Christian Mission in the Church of Norway**

I have discussed the potentials advantages of Christian mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in general in chapter two Under 2.3.4. These potential advantages such as the technological developments, political changing landscapes, human rights and religious freedom, have been the great potentials for the enrichments of the church's Christian mission in the national church of Norway. However, it is essential to discuss the challenges of the Christian mission in the national church of Norway in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **3.5.2. The Challenges of Christian Mission in the Church of Norway**

##### **3.5.2.1 Globalization, Secularization and Religious pluralism in Norway**

“According to the classical secularisation thesis, societies are progressing, particularly through modernisation and rationalisation, and religion loses its authority in all aspects of social life and governance, but this progress does perhaps not always mean making society to be a better place.”<sup>66</sup>

The progressive development of the world through modernisation and continuous transformation of the society and people's life is evident in the contemporary universe. As we have discussed in chapter two globalization has brought about huge changes in the face of the world, that it changed people's life style by bringing the world together. However, there are several things that came with globalization in a sense that the previous community values have been desolated and missed its dominance. Hovdelien endorses the Max Weber's view of “secularisation process as the "disenchantment of the world". “Such an understanding of the secularisation concept in Europe clearly has to do with significant social changes involving disintegration of the Christian hegemony.”<sup>67</sup>. According to this understanding religion values and practices have been declining significantly throughout the modern and postmodern periods, and religious faith become more private matter than collective matter. Thus, Christian religion loses its authority in social life as a result of secularization.

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<sup>66</sup> Olav Hovdelien, «Education and Common Values in a Multicultural Society–The Norwegian Case, » *Journal of intercultural studies*, 2015, 6.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

“Norway is dependent on striking a balance between freedom and institutional control, that there will be a need to come up with institutions that can promote social integration”<sup>68</sup>. As a result of immigration, Norway is becoming a diverse society that so many people with different cultural and traditional backgrounds characterized the society that enforces the new social integration. Hovdelien emphasized the Norwegian schools or change of education system because of the influence of globalization and migration, and he stated:

“The schools’ values base could contribute towards integration in contemporary Norwegian society, that is characterised by secularisation and disintegration of the Christian hegemony on the one hand and by the emergence of cultural and religious diversity on the other”<sup>69</sup>.

Even though, education system before 1990s was based on the Christian religion values, it is changed in order to satisfy the common values of the society. In the same way religious system in Norway has been influenced by religious pluralism and therefore, religious pluralism is becoming one of the issues the church will deal with in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Christian mission.

### **3.5.2.2. The Impact of Corona Various on the Mission of the Church**

The highly infectious virus Covid-19 which is first observed in Wuhan, China has caused immeasurable disaster on the world in all aspects. Firstly, it affected all the seven continents that a large number of the world people are infected with this virus and many people around the globe have died. It is unlikely to think that there is a country who was not affected with this various and missed the loved once. Secondly, it affected the movements of people from place to place, even in the same neighbourhood. The markets and almost all the transportation system such as air lines, ships, were shut down and the local transportation were reduced to the minimum. Thirdly, the social lives of people, church worships on Sunday and prayer meetings on the other days of the weeks were highly affected. And fourthly, the economies of many business organizations, that of the state, and individuals’ incomes were declined as a result of closing down. In one way or another, all these factors affected the churches’ mission movement both locally and globally.

In March 2020, the Norwegian government has announced the shutdown of public affairs such as cultural and sports events, and other public gatherings to fight against the infectious disease Covid-19. Following the instruction given by the authorities, the Norwegian church had been

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<sup>68</sup> Hovdelien, «Education and Common Values in a Multicultural Society–The Norwegian Case, », 6.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 3.

closed for a long time, and that closing of the church created a serious challenge for local and national church mission. Anne Veiteberg, described that:

“Even though there are people who see the threat of corona pandemic as a private matter, and perhaps do well without the worship services and church concerts, there are many who are longing for the Christian fellowship and feeling of celebration that the worship services can provide”<sup>70</sup>(My translation)

People who wanted to have fellowship with Jesus Christ through prayers and meditations, committed to participate in the worship service and celebration of holy communion, and who want to confess their faith in Christ and participate in the mission of the church; and families who wanted to baptize their children were all challenged. Therefore, the ramification of the corona Virus in Norway has enormous consequence on church’s day to day activities, people’s gathering for prayers, Christian educations, and health care.

However, the church has used alternative method such as online services that replaced the regular worship services. «It is not obvious to conclude that the actual function of an online worship service can be completely parallel to how one church will define the function of an ordinary worship service”.<sup>71</sup> (My translation). That is, the worship services and prayer meetings, Christian education, and Sunday schools are planned in such a way that the church communicate the gospel ordinarily. In addition, many believers choose to have physical presence fellowship with each other; and Sunday school children want to do activities together than online teachings. There can be several differences between the online and ordinary worship services, but as Hodøl and others describe, “it is reasonable to take the purpose behind a regular service as a starting point, especially when the situation portrays that the regular services could not be arranged.”<sup>72</sup> (My translation)

### **3.5.2.3. The Challenges of Declining of Participants on the Worship Services**

As I explained under the introduction of this chapter, over 66 percent of the Norwegian population are the members of the national church of Norway, and many thousands of members are registered in all local congregations. However, it is described in the book entitled “Det Kristne Norge” that:

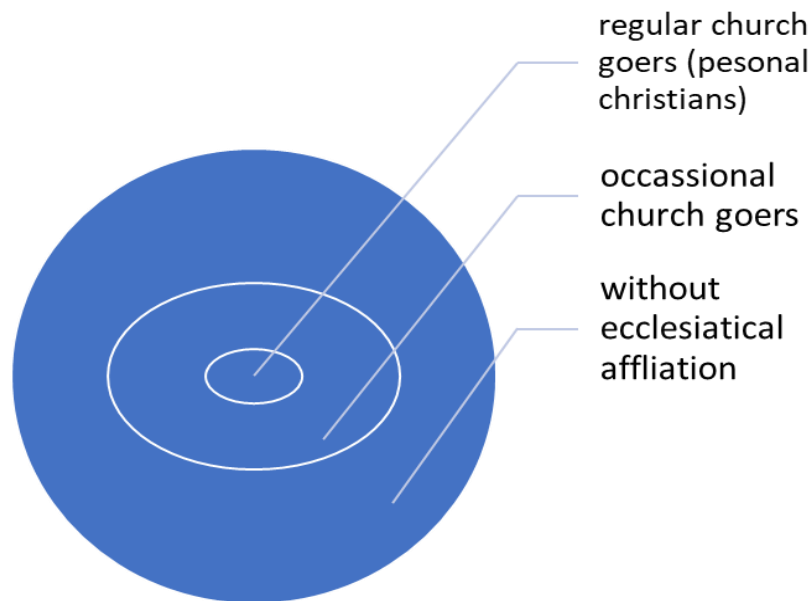
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<sup>70</sup> Veiteberg, Anne (Red.) «I skuggen av pandemien,» *Kirke og Kult ur* 126 (2021), 3-4, 3.

<sup>71</sup> Hans-Olav Hodøl, Roy Emanuelsen, Geir Christian Johannessen. «Kirker, korona og nettbaserte gudstjenester: Churches, coronavirus and online services,» *Norsk Medietidsskrift*, 28 (2021), 1–21, 2.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

“The Norwegian church consists of three "circles" or circles with the same centre, one without the other. In the inner circle is the group of people who regularly participate in the church's worship life, (...) and consider themselves personal Christians. Around this circle are people with church identification, occasionally go to the church, (..) but do not perceive themselves as personal Christians in the original sense. Those in the outer circle have virtually no ecclesiastical affiliation”<sup>73</sup> (My translation).



In the book it is designated that most of the people of Norway are connected to the church in different ways. While those who are dedicated to their faith are active in the church activities: to the celebration of the worship services, diakonia and voluntarily ministers, others are connected to the church because of the fact that they were baptized and confirmed their faith in the church and participate the church services occasionally. Kåre Rånes, states that many people “(...) attend the baptisms of their children and grandchildren, the confirmations of their cousins and aunts, the weddings of their siblings and colleagues, the funerals of their grandparents”<sup>74</sup>. My translation). He emphasised that even though, this group “are not churchgoers, but they know the church from a different perspective than the church's formal and informal leadership does”<sup>75</sup>. (My translation).

Those who categorized in the third circle sees religion from different perspectives, but they still have feelings that they belong to the community of church. There is a belief that “to break out

<sup>73</sup>Sødal (red.), *Det Kristne Norge*, 117.

<sup>74</sup> Rånes, «Folkekirken er en livsløpskirke», *Kirke og Kultur* 3 (2020), 210-228, 211.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

of oneself or to be excluded from the ecclesial community also means to be socially marginalized”<sup>76</sup> (My translation), and therefore, even though they see Christian religion from different perspective, they remain members of the church. According to Sødal, eventhood they belong to the community of the church, the third group do not consider themselves as a diligent follower of Christian faith. As the missional church, the Norwegian church has responsibility for all these groups and other who are not even members of the church, to evangelize them and baptizing their children based on their own choices.

### **3.5.2.4 The Decline of the Church Membership: Unbalanced Number of People Signing out and People Signing into the Church Membership.**

According to the churches’ statistics on the church’s web site, the Norwegian church has 3, 686, 715 members until June 1, 2020. That is about 71% of the total population including both living in country and abroad. There are also many people who sign into, and out of the membership of the church. Just to compare and contrast the data from the church’s Web page.

Table showing signing out vs. signing in of National Church of Norway membership

Year	Signed out	Signed in /registered	Remarks
2019	19,170	3,400	All the new registered were including children baptized in the church <sup>77</sup> . (My translation).
2018	11,877	2,096	
2017	15,424	2,443	
2016	41,024	3,147	
Total	<u>87,495</u>	11,086	

According to these data, most of the new registered members of the church are the children of the believers who were baptized in the church. From the statistics we can also understand that there are very few people who were not Christians in the beginning and converted to Christian faith and are registered into the membership of the church. And it seems that the new registered members who are baptized in other churches other than the Norwegian church are becoming the church members with the highest number in 2016. However, a relatively high numbers of people are signing out of the church membership every year. As the above figures

<sup>76</sup> Sødal (red.), *Det Kristne Norge*, 116.

<sup>77</sup> Norske kirke, *Kirken i tall - kirkestatistikk* (<https://kirken.no/nb-NO/om-kirken/bakgrunn/om-kirkestatistikk/>), 2019.

indicate, in the years 2016 to 2018, the number of people signing out of the church is slightly decaling from 41,024 to 11,877, but in 2019 the number raised to 19,170 people, while those signing in are also increasing to some extent, just in one year. This indicates that more people are signing out of the church membership than those signing into.



## Chapter IV

### Biblical Historical and Theological Background of God's Mission

#### 4.1. The Old Testament Background of Christian Mission

As I look at the Old Testament background of Christian mission, I firstly have to clarify the facts that the theology of Christian Mission does not explicitly exist during Old Testament as it does in the New Testament revelation. However, there are theologically relevant concrete backgrounds in the Old Testament that enlightens our understanding of the Christian Mission in general. In this part of the Old Testament discussion, I want to focus on the three areas: God's revelation both through creation and history, and the calling of the people of Israel as a priestly kingdom.

##### 4.1.1 Overall Information of the Old Testament Background of Christian Mission

In the Old Testament we do not find Christian mission explicitly as we find it in the New Testament. However, we can draw the principle of the knowledge of God throughout the Old Testament where the revelation of God opened an access to both the people of Israel as a nation and individuals. Just to discuss the relation between the revelation of God and God's mission, it is necessary to explain the meaning of revelation. The Greek word "ἀποκαλύπτω" means to uncover, or to disclose or to reveal or to make known."<sup>78</sup> That is God's revelation to humanity gave them the opportunity to know God. That is "God's revelation to God's people, to individuals and to the nations, all of whom bear testimony in different ways to God's divine purpose in history."<sup>79</sup> Christian mission is also all about the knowledge of God, and witnessing his love and goodness to all humanity. In other words, it is impossible for humanity either to know God or His love and goodness without His own self-revelation. Therefore, the purpose of God's revelation to the people of Israel, or to other nations is that those who knew God through His revelation, are to bear witnesses His love and goodness to all humanity and His creation.

The characteristics of mission work in the Old Testament can be seen from God's sending of prophets to the people of Israel and to the other nations. For instance, the sending of Moses and Aron to Pharaoh in Egypt (exodus 3:1-4:31); and that Jonah to the city of Nineveh to preach against the wickedness of the city (Jonah 3:1) so that the people of the city repent and confess

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<sup>78</sup>Colin Brown, (edit.), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Volume three (Exeter, Devon: Paternoster Press, 1975), 310.

<sup>79</sup>Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament theology in a canonical context* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 92.

their sin to escape the coming judgment. Therefore, the character of sending in the OT is that God's sending of the prophets to the nations is based on the identity of God and His love and goodness for all humanity.

#### **4.1.2. God's Revelation through Creation**

The bible presents God's mission in the creation of the world and the relationship between God and the created world. Before the creation the design of the created world was in the mind of God, that He created the universe and everything living in it (in Gen. 1:1-2:3-24). On the sixth day, God created human beings in the image and likeness of Himself to live according to His will and protect His creation. Therefore, it is stated in Psalms 19:1 "the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." In verse 2 its emphasis that the heaven and the skies reveal knowledge.

"In love, God has also shared God's mission in creation with all people, created in God's own image to be God's co-workers."<sup>80</sup>. The goal of God's creation of humanity is explicitly recorded in Genesis chapter two that "the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Gen. 2: 15). Hence, the bible shows that God's ultimate purposes to bless the whole humanity through the created order and human's responsibility is to take care of the created orders. However, on the one hand the creations fall apart after the fall, and due to disobedience of the man and the woman to God's commandments and becoming rebellious against God's will. On the other hand, God did not doom the whole human race for ever, but revealed His saving acts starting from clothing of both Adam and Eve, to His renewed covenants in aftermath of the flood, and then the calling of Abraham.

#### **4.1.3. God's Revelation through History**

God's revelation to the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob giving them a promise of blessings displays God's purpose in their lives. God's act of revelation makes God unique from other surrounding pagan gods that is "The uniqueness and universality of YHWH are foundational axioms of the Old Testament faith which in turn are foundational to the New Testament Christian faith, worship and mission."<sup>81</sup>. God's uniqueness is also revealed in the deliverance of the people of Israel from the bondage of slavery under the tyrant king of Egypt.

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<sup>80</sup>Jack Messenger (red), *Mission in Context: transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* (Geneve: The Lutheran World Federation, 2004), 23.

<sup>81</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The mission of God: unlocking the Bible's grand narrative* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2006), 71.

The Exodus is one of the greatest historical experiences through which God revealed to the covenantal people of Israel while they were under the bondage of Egyptians for about 430 years. They experienced tough situations, enslaved and exploited by the Egyptians who were the most powerful nation at that time. Therefore, the Israelites groaned and cried out for help and God heard their groaning and God remembered the covenant with the patriarchs (exodus 2:23-25).

Wright also wrote that “the Exodus stands in the Hebrew Scriptures as the greatest defining demonstration of YHWH’s power, love, faithfulness and liberating intervention on the behalf of His people.”<sup>82</sup> In exodus 6:7, God said to the people of Israel “I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.” According to Wright, “Israel comes to know three things about YHWH through exodus: that YHWH is incomparable, sovereign, and unique.”<sup>83</sup> God’s revelation to the people of Israel through extraordinary and incomparable revelation that they would come to know the ultimate truth about God’s power, and God’s mighty hand who deliver them from the hands of their enemies. Alister also described that “(...) these motifs are found in the New Testament but are supplemented by a distinctively Christian theme namely, the God self-revelation is focused, channelled, and embodied in the person of Jesus Christ.”<sup>84</sup> In Colossian 1:15 the apostle Paul wrote that “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation”. Thus, God’s revelation through: the creation, calling of the Patriarchs, the act of history, and through Jesus Christ is a demonstration of God’s identity to humanity.

#### **4.1.4. The Calling of the People of Israel as a Priestly Kingdom**

God’s calling and promises to Abraham and his descendant is steadfast, that God promised to Abraham to bless him and all the nations of the world through him (Gen 12:2-3). Wright described this Abrahamic covenant as “the tension between the universality of the goal (all nations) and the particularity of the means (through you), (...) and that is fundamental to the biblical theology of mission”<sup>85</sup> The calling of Abraham and his descendants to bless the whole nations of the world who bless Abraham is based on the special relationship between God and Abraham and his descendants. God repeatedly revealed to the patriarchs and reminded them

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<sup>82</sup> Wright, *the mission of God: unlocking the Bible's grand narrative*, 75.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>84</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: an introduction* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2017), 136.

<sup>85</sup> Wright, *the mission of God: unlocking the Bible's grand narrative*, 222.

Abraham's covenant that his decedents and the other nation around them will be blessed through him (Gen. 18:18; 22:18; 26:4 and 28:14).

The universality of God's blessing for the whole nations of the world through the particularity of Abraham's and his decedents election is a central theme in the Hebrew scripture, that the promise fulfilled by Israel's relationship with God and with the other nations. Arthur F. Glasser states that:

“God intervened in human affairs through electing Israel and choosing this people to constitute a theocracy: this meant that they would live under his direct rule and thus foreshadow the coming of the kingdom of God.”<sup>86</sup>

Israel's election as a nation is clearly described in (Exo 19:5-6) which God revealed on the mount Sinai and made covenant with the people of Israel. This covenant comprehends three basic things: that is Israel become God's treasured possession out of all nations, a kingdom of priests to God, and the holy nation. Knut Holter in his writing about the Old Testament and mission described the relationship between Israel and the other nations that “on the one hand, the peoples are portrayed as enemies of Israel and Yahweh, (...), and on the other hand, the peoples are also depicted to stand with Israel under the blessing of Yahweh.”<sup>87</sup> (My translation). That means in the Old Testament there were conflicts between the people of Israel and the other nations around them, because of the fact that the other nations oppressed them. However, the universality of God's blessing for the whole nations of the earth through Abraham makes the relationship between Israel and the other nations unique. Holter also stated that “YAHWEH is constantly perceived as God of other nations, and Israel is repeatedly thought of as some kind of means between Yahweh and the nations”<sup>88</sup> (My translation) *ibid*.

Brevard S. Childs, in his book “Old Testament theology in a canonical context, stated that:

“The distinctly priestly tradition now found largely in Leviticus and numbers are firmly anchored to the covenant's description of the people of God as holy and pilgrim people who live under marching orders.”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Arthur F. Glasser, Charles E. Van Engen, Dean S. Gilliland, and Shawn B. Redford, *Announcing the kingdom: the story of God's mission in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 91.

<sup>87</sup> Berentsen et al., *Missiologi i dag*, 199, 36.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>89</sup>Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament theology in a canonical context* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 94.

As I stated above God's election of Israel is described in exodus 19: 5-6 that Israel will be God's treasured possession out of all nations of the world, indicates the special relationship between God and Israel. This relationship depends on the Israel's total obedience as the holy nation and dependent on God's mighty leadership. Glasser also states that "because of God's theocratic presence in their midst, it was possible for them to function an incipient kingdom of God in the midst of the kingdoms of other people."<sup>90</sup> The promise given for Israel is that "you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exo. 19:6), Glasser statement, shows that Israel is a symbol of emerging kingdom of God among the whole nations of the world and has special function as kingdom of priests. The argument is that, it is important to see the functions of ancient priests in Israel, to understand the function of Israel as a priestly kingdom among the nations. Leuchter in his article "the Priesthood in Ancient Israel" stated that

"Priests were the representatives of the people to YHWH, but priests also stood as representatives of YHWH to the people in this context, identifying and clarifying the purpose of a given ritual, reifying tradition by the recitation of laws or the record of legal precedent, and preserving the catalog of hymns and prayers that the deity would expect or even demand be recited at specific occasions."<sup>91</sup>

God's revelation on mount Sinai to Israel and calling them to be God's kingdom of priests and a holy nation indicates the extension of God's covenant to the patriarchs: which in turn shows that the function given to priests in the ancient Israel is the ministry given to them, Israel has to function as priestly kingdom in the emerging kingdom of God among the other nations. The function of priests in the ancient Israel also in dictates that Israel has a political, economic, social, and spiritual role as the kingdom of priests to mediate between God and the other nations.

The universality of Abraham's blessing of the whole nation is also explicitly described in many passages in the New Testament. In the beginning of the gospel of Matthew, which introduced the genealogy of Jesus which shows the combination of both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. The genealogical account clearly explains the universality and fulfilments of the covenant of both persons. God covenant for David was "I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom" (2Sam 7:12).

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<sup>90</sup> Glasser et al., *Announcing the kingdom*, 91.

<sup>91</sup>Mark A. Leuchter «The Priesthood in Ancient Israel. » *Biblical theology bulletin* 40 (2010), 100-110, 101.

## **4.2. The New Testament Background of Christian mission**

Christian mission is more explicit in the New Testament than the Old Testament books. The New Testament is a record of Jesus' life and ministry as He was sent by God to the people of Israel. He proclaimed the coming of the kingdom of God to the people of Israel, and He also revealed the coming of this kingdom through signs and miracles. Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God in His sufferings, prayer and confessions, and death. After His resurrection from the dead Jesus commanded His disciples to proclaim the good news of salvation to all humanity and the disciples accomplished the commission and the word of Jesus reached to the world through the churches. Therefore, under this topic I will discuss the New Testament mission from the time of Jesus to the early church.

### **4.2.1. Jesus' Mission to the People of Israel**

The New Testament, particularly the four gospels depict the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Particularly, the gospel of Matthew describes the story line of Jesus' genealogy that Jesus is the son of Abraham, and the son of David (Matt 1:1-17). This description indicates that Jesus is a Jew, and from Jesus' own witness that He was sent to the lost sheep of Israel (Matt 15:24, Lk. 19:5, 9-10), Jesus' sending His disciples to the Israelites (Matt. 10:6) designates that Jesus' priority was to find and save the lost ones from the house of Israel. According to Larkin, and Williams, "Jesus' mission is related the to past, present, and future periods of salvation history and make it clear that a proper understanding of that mission must reckon with its relations to the OT,"<sup>92</sup>

When His sent His disciples to go and heal sick and cast out daemons, , Jesus refers back to the one who sent Him (Matt. 10:40, Mk. 9:37; Lk. 9:48). In these passages Jesus stated "anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." Hence, Jesus clearly identified Himself with God, and said everyone who accepts me accepts the one who sent me. These passages also indicate that mission involves both the sender and the one who is sent, that God is a sender and Jesus was the one who was sent.

In His proclamation of the kingdom of God "Jesus speaks of the presence of God in his action, particularly in the miracle, the healings and the exorcisms that (. . .) the presence of the Spirit

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<sup>92</sup>William J. Larkin and Joel F. Williams (editors), *Mission in the New Testament: an evangelical approach* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1998), 34.

of God signifies the presence of the kingdom”<sup>93</sup> In Lk. 4: 16-19, Jesus went into the synagogue in Nazareth, He read the scroll of the prophet Isaiah 61:1-2, and announced that the Spirit of the Lord is on Him, and he is anointed by the Holy Spirit and sent by God to proclaim good news to the poor, the year of the Lord and freedom for the prisoners. As the scripture says, Jesus lived as a Jew among the Jews, and He travelled throughout the region of Galilee, proclaiming the good news of the coming of the kingdom of God (Mk. 1:15; 9:1; Matt 6:10; 10:7; Lk. 17:21), and calling the people to repentance and restoration of their fellowship with God (Luke 4:18-19). He also demonstrated the coming of the kingdom of God through healing the sick, exorcisms, and performed miracles. He showed sympathy to the weak, the deprived and the poor, associated himself with the despised tax collectors and sinners and called them to follow Him.

Therefore, Jesus’ mission to the people of Israel is characterized as the calling the Jews to repentance and embrace salvation through faith in Him and in God. As Schnabel stated,

“When Jesus called His Jewish listeners to repent, he called them to correspond fully to the already existing covenantal relationship with the one true God, which means in the context of his message of the kingdom of God to accept the dawn of God’s return to Israel that takes place in his ministry of teaching and healing”.<sup>94</sup>

Israel’s election, their covenantal relationship with God and the mission given to them was discussed under 4.1.4. Even though, they are chosen to be God’s own possession and priestly kingdom, Israel failed to follow God and rejected God’s righteousness. Therefore, Jesus was sent by God to call them to repentance and restore their relationship with God. Then God’s saving promise to the people of Israel was fulfilled through Jesus’ ministry, His death and resurrection (1cor. 15:23-28; rom. 11:25-32). Therefore, it can be concluded that Jesus’ mission to Israel is the perfect model for the Norwegian church today to go out and announce the kingdom of God, and invite people who were baptized in the church and lost their faith to repentance and restore their relationship with God. The church should follow the example of Jesus’ mission to evangelize unbelievers who were not baptized and call them to repentance and believe in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>93</sup>Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian mission: Jesus and the twelve Vol. 1* (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 212.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 219.

#### 4.2.2. The Commandment of the Great Commission

Jesus' mission to save humanity is for the whole generation: the past, the present, and the future. Consequently, He called the twelve disciples trained in words and deeds and later sent them to the world (Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:13-16, and Acts 1:13). The twelve disciples were called in purpose that Jesus wanted to prepare them for the world mission they could overtake after His ascension. In Matt 4:18-22, Mk. 1:16-20, Lk. 5:8-11, Jesus' calling of the disciples to the mission He already engaged in has two stages. The first is following Jesus with a full commitment, and the second is becoming the fishers of people. Accordingly, the disciples left everything they had and followed Jesus, for the fact that as Jesus promised them their future missionary activity as fishers of people is based upon their following Jesus and becoming dependent on Him.

Jesus thought and trained and sent them to continue the mission that He has already started in Israel. Prior to His death, Jesus sent the twelve and the seventy-two (Mark 9: 1-6; Matthew 10: 1-42; Luke 9: 1 —6; 10,1—16), giving them authority over the evil spirit, to cast out demons, and to heal every sickness. The reason for the commission at this point shows that they could go out in the community and gain skills for their future mission work. And after His resurrection, He gave the great commission to the disciples to continue His work that they took over and create a significantly impact in the world mission. Hans Kvalbein stated:

“When both Jesus' and the disciples' mission can be described with a double expression, preaching and healing, this should not be perceived as two side-by-side tasks, but two sides of a unified and holistic mission”<sup>95</sup>

That is to emphasize the fact that Christian mission has two dimensions. Preaching the gospel that include the proclamation of the gospel, baptizing, and making disciples by teaching, and healing from different types of sickness and daemon possessions.

“Jesus' resurrection marked a major turning point in His status, (...) and in Jesus' teaching on mission”<sup>96</sup> The narratives of Jesus' resurrection in the all the gospels indicates that Jesus' role as a missionary is completed and the new epoch of mission is at hand. All the gospels including the book of Acts, have recorded the commandments of the great commission, that the apostles could achieve (Matt. 28:18-20, Mk. 16:15-18, Lk. 24:45-49, Jn. 20:21-23, Acts 1:8). Larkin,

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<sup>95</sup> Berentsen et al., *Missiologi i dag*, 43.

<sup>96</sup> Larkin, *Mission in the New Testament*, 44.



described that “Jesus commanded an activity that was part of His pre-resurrection ministry, indicates the scope of the disciples’ mission, and gave his disciples reassurance for the task at hand”<sup>97</sup> It also indicates that the disciple received clear instructions about their future ministry. The most important thing is that the content of the disciples’ proclamation is the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Their mission is also includes witnessing the resurrected Christ, baptizing the new converts, and making them the disciples of Jesus Christ by teaching to keep His commandment that the church is engaged itself today.

### **4.3. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament Mission**

#### **4:3.1 The Work of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ Mission**

Christian mission is a participation into the mission of triune God, that all members of the trinity involved from the very beginning of creation. Schnabel stated the Holy Spirit as:

“Who set off the liberating power of the turning point of God’s history with his people and with the world through his teaching activity through healing the sick and through liberating people from demons, thus making people visible the eschatological power of God.”<sup>98</sup>

The relationship between Jesus Christ and His mission and the Holy Spirit is described in many passages of the scripture: that is His conception (Matt. 1:20), and anointment at His baptism (Matt. 3:16-17).

Jesus was filled by the Holy Spirit and led into the desert to be tempted by Satan (Matt. 4:1), are the confirmations that the Holy Spirit involvements in Jesus Christ’s mission right from the very beginning. Jesus also described that “for the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit” (Jn 3:34). Hence Jesus revealed God and the power of the Holy Spirit through His teaching and signs.

Besides His ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 15:26-27; 16:7, 8), on the disciples before they go out to testify about His resurrection. The mission of Jesus was to continue after His death, and resurrection, that Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the starting point for the apostles’ mission, and the disciples were to wait until the promise had become reality (Luke 24:27–28).

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<sup>97</sup> Larkin, *Mission in the New Testament*, 45.

<sup>98</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian mission*, 207.

#### **4:3.2. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Early Christian Mission**

Before His ascension into heaven, Jesus gave the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon His disciples and they could wait its coming at Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). After they receive the power of the Holy Spirit they would be the witnesses of His resurrection to the end of the world. Schnabel explained that:

“The phrase to the end of the earth” emphasizes three phase plans besides the geographical references: the beginning of the time of salvation for Jerusalem, the restoration of Israel, and the inclusion of the Gentile nations in the people of God”<sup>99</sup>

Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, a starting place of Paul’s and his companions’ Gentiles mission, the place where God poured out the promised Holy Spirit on disciples, and the place where the church is born at the day of Pentecost. In the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8),

Schnabel also stated that “Jesus pointed that the restoration of Israel expected for the last days is now beginning in and through their missionary activity starting in Jerusalem and extending unto the ends of the earth.”<sup>100</sup> Jesus’ promise that after the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples mission activity at Jerusalem indicates the fulfilling the promise of the restoration of Israel and the expectation of the conversion of all nations to God through believing in the resurrected Christ. Hence, at the day of Pentecost, the promise of God was fulfilled (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8), Holy Spirit came upon the disciples of Jesus and all of them. They were filled with the power and received spiritual gifts: some of them spoke in tongues as the Spirit enabled them and others saw visions and the wonders of God (Acts 2:1-12). All people who came to the meeting from different regions saw the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples and heard the gospel with their own language and were surprised with the miracle.

Theologians agree that the church was born at Pentecost, and Peter immediately proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus and the task of mission enforced at this time. Clyde Kraus described Peter’s proclamation that “Indeed, the first cry of life from the new-born church was the proclamation that Jesus is the Lord of heaven and earth as well as the Messiah of the Jews.”<sup>101</sup> As the crowd were surprised with the event, Peter stood up with the other disciples and address the crowd and reminded them the prophecy told by Joel (2:28-32). As Glasser also stated:

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<sup>99</sup> Schnabel, *Early Christian mission*, 391.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Glasser, *Announcing the kingdom*, 262.

“The Holy Spirit must primary be seen as the driving force behind any and all movements of the people of God outward, beyond the frontiers of faith, to share the gospel with those who have not yet heard it”<sup>102</sup>

That is the fulfilment of Jesus’ word when He said “the Spirit of truth, (...) will testify about me, and you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.” (Jn 15:26-27;). Then in Matt. 10:19-20, He said “at that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you”. These two passages indicates that the Holy Spirit works powerfully in the mission of witnessing the resurrected Christ, through revealing the message of the gospel to those who committed to witness the good news of salvation through faith in Christ. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the chief agent of Christian mission and Christians or missionaries are secondary agent as they are led by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to go out and testify Christ.

In general, after the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles’ gathering in Jerusalem (in Acts 2:1-39), the message of the resurrected Christ was ramified very quickly to the other parts of the region that the numbers of believers increased (Acts 2:47; 5:14; 6:1,7; 9:31; 11:21, 24; 16:5). Believers witnessed Christ through their commitment to each other, gathering together in prayers and reading the scripture, and bread braking in their homes (Acts 4: 42-47). After the death of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60), persecution broke up in Jerusalem and Christians scattered in different places, spread the message of the gospel (Acts 8: 14-17).

#### **4.4. The Mission of the Apostles Paul**

Paul is a giant missionary of the early Christian mission. He was chosen to the mission of the proclamation of the name of the Lord to the Gentile, to Israel and their kings by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Acts 9:15; 22:14-15; 26:16-18). Peter Stuhlmacher stated that:

“Paul’s theology is a classic example of the fact that the gospel was fundamentally formulated by a circle of chosen witnesses whose spirit and a life experience played a decisive part in the formulation of the kerygma.”<sup>103</sup>

Paul’s letters to different churches and his co-workers clearly stated that he had been chosen to proclaim the name of the Lord to the Gentiles (Gal 1:15-16; 2:7; 1cor 9:1-2; 2cor 10:13-16), and he is always committed to his call to preach the gospel to the gentiles, he did not count the

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<sup>102</sup> Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 263.

<sup>103</sup> Peter Stuhlmacher, *Biblical theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2018), 253.

sufferings he had ever experienced to stop him to preach Christ. He stated in Roman 1:16-17, that “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile, for in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed ...”. Hence, Paul’s theology of mission embraces all humanity, the Jews first then the gentiles. That is also the indication that genuine righteousness of God is only revealed through the gospel of Christ and it is attained through faith not by work. Paul himself has experienced acceptance by God (Rom 15:7), and his call to the ministry of apostleship (1cor. 15:10; 2cor 2:14: rom. 1:3).

Paul’s mission strategies are clearly stated in his letters. In Acts 13:1-21:17 Paul travelled a long journey for the purpose of gospel mission. He travelled preaching the gospel, witnessing Jesus’ resurrection, teaching the new converts and encouraging them to stand firm in their faith. According to Acts 17:17-18, Paul also debated with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks in the synagogue, as well as in the marketplace. He also discussed with a group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, reasoning and explaining his conviction about Christ’s resurrection.

## CHATER V

### **An Exegesis and Theology of Romans 10:8-15**

#### **5.1 General Introduction**

In chapter four, Biblical Historical and Theological Background of God's Mission has been discussed. In this chapter an exegesis and Theology of Romans 10:8-15 will be discussed. I will discuss the broader context of the text under 5.3.1.1 that Romans 10:8-15 is part of Romans 9:1-11:36, where Paul reminds the Righteousness of God for Israel and Israel's failure to follow God's commandments. The text is a mission oriented as it is the New Testament confessional texts which teaches us believing in the resurrection of Christ, and in God who resurrected Christ from the dead, and confessing what we believe in is the parts of salvation history. It is a text where Paul also points witnessing and preaching the gospel of Christ requires sending preachers so that the people hear and believer in the good news of salvation.

In order to understand the text: first Novum Testamentum Graece, by Nestle-Aland, 28<sup>th</sup> edition for the translation of the text from Greek to English which helps to understand the original text was used. Secondly, the broad and immediate context of the text were discussed in order to see the structure of the epistle of Romans as the whole and the connection of the text with the whole letter. Furthermore, the Historical Context, and background, which helps to understand the situations in which the letter was written and the purpose of its writing were discussed. Thirdly, Third, the text was exegete and analysed using the historical critical method.

Not all steps of the historical critical method are followed to understand the text because of the limit of words in this paper, only some important steps only. Consequently, the theological message and the implication of the text for the Norwegian church was discussed in next chapter.

#### **5.2 The Text: Final Translation**

8 But what does it say? The word is near of you, in your mouth and in your heart—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching: 9 Because if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For a person believes with the heart, for righteousness, and a person confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, whoever who believes in Him will not be put to shame. 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding

in riches for all who call upon Him, 13 for Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

14 How then are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed? How do they to believe in Him whom they have not heard about? And how are they to hear without someone preaches?

15 But how are they preach without they are sent? Just as it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things?

## **5.3 Interpretation**

### **5.3.1 Introduction**

#### **5.3.1.1 Contextual Delimitation**

##### **5.3.1.1.1 Immediate Context**

The textual unit of the text starts from Rom. 9:30 with the question “What then shall we say?” In verses 30-31, the apostle contrasting the Gentiles righteousness that they have obtained by faith, and that of Israel pursued by keeping the law of Moses, but they do not obtain it, because they pursue it without faith. Romans 10:1-13, states Israel’s fail to recognize the righteousness of God and Christians confession of Christ. Verses 10:14-15 is part of Israel’s disobedience text that goes up to verse 21. And the next text unity starts from chapter 11:1, that the apostle starts with another question if God rejects Israel. Therefore, the textual unity that I only exegete are (Romans 10:8-15), is part of this large textual unit from 9:30-10:21, and it will be studied under the consideration of the whole textual unit.

##### **5.3.1.1.2 Broader Context**

1:1—17. The Introduction to the Epistle.

Paul introduces himself as an Apostle of Jesus Christ, set apart by God to preach the gospel about the resurrected Christ. Paul underlines that the Gospel is God's power to save people who believe, and the Gospel reveals God’s righteousness.

1:18-8:39. Part One: The Righteousness of God for Jews and Gentiles

Paul describes the fall, and its impact on the whole humanity that Israel was just sinful as the Gentiles, and all humanity became hopelessly and guilty before God and therefore, Jesus came to rescue all humanity.

9:1—11:36. Part Two: The Righteousness of God for Israel

1. 9:1-5. Paul's grief over the fall of the people of Israel. He presented his wish to be cut off for the sake of his people: Israel.
2. 9:6-29. God's Election and Mercy.

Paul reminds the Romans Christians that being a descendant of Abraham cannot make one righteous before God, because God can always raise faithful generations that included in Abraham's covenant.

2.1. 9:6-13 God's Free Election

2.2. 9:14-29 God's Free Mercy

3. 9:30-10:21 God's righteousness and Israel's failure.

Paul also reminds them that the Israelites rejected God's redemptive purpose by disobeying God's covenant by basing over their relationship with God by performance what the law demanded of them, but they do not know that God create a covenant family based on their faith in Jesus Christ.

3.1. 9:30-33. Paul contrasts the Gentiles righteousness that is obtained by faith and the Israel's righteousness that they peruse by the law and do not get it.

3.2. **10:1-13. Israel's Failure to Recognize the Righteousness of God.**

In verses 1-4, Paul presents his concerns and prayers for the people of Israel, and in verses 5-13, he turns to the Christian faith in the resurrected Christ and Christian confessions.

3.3. **10:14-21. Israel's Disobedience to the Gospel.**

In this text Paul describes the necessity of hearing in order to believe, and hearing is from preaching, and to preach being sent is very important. However, Israel has already heard the message but chose to disobey.

4. 11:1-32. The Way of God's Mercy.

In this chapter, Paul describes the Jewish people who know Jesus and believe in Him, and those Jewish people who do not recognize Jesus as their Messiah. Paul describes God's covenant family as a big olive tree that have been broken off, and the believing Gentile as a wild tree that has been grafted into the family tree. It indicates the salvation Gentiles through faith.

5. 11:33-36 Paul praise God for God's richness in wisdom and knowledge

12:1—15:13. Part Three: The Testimony of the Righteousness of God in the Life of the Community-

Paul describes in these chapters that because of faith in Jesus Christ both the Jews and the Gentiles are the same before God, and are Abraham's family through faith being transformed by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, both the Jews and the Gentiles could be united, forgive and serve each other in humility and love.

Romans 15:14—16:27 is a conclusion of the whole letter. In these chapters Paul discusses the issues that are creating divisions among the Roman Christians or the church. These issues are arguments about the Jewish food laws and the Sabbath, and he urges them to accept one another in love as a unified family of the Christian community. Paul closes the letter by commanding the church to accept Phoebe who was a leader of the Church of Cenchrea, and a sends set of greetings to the other co-workers.

### 5.3.2 The Structure of the Text

The chapter consists of 21 verses of which Romans 10: 8-15 is the actual text chosen for exegesis. However, to understand the flow the text the structure of the text is arranged as follows.

- I. Paul's heart's desire and prayed to God is for the Israelites to be saved. Verse 1
  - A. Paul's testimony about Israelites that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge (V. 2)
  - B. The people of Israel did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, and did not submit to God's righteousness (V. 3)
- II. Christ is the culmination of the law, and the righteousness is for everyone who believes (V. 4)
- III. The righteousness that is by the law: The person who does laws will live by them." (V. 5)
- IV. The righteousness that is by faith says:
  - "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down) (V. 6)
  - or 'Who will descend into the deep? (That is, to bring Christ up from the dead) (V. 7)
- V. *But what does it say? (V. 8 a)*
  - A. *The word is near of you, in your mouth and in your heart, (V. 8b)*
  - B. *that is, the word of faith which we are preaching: (V. 8c)*



- VI. *That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved, (V.9)*
- VII. *For a person believes with the heart, for righteousness, and he/she confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation, (V. 10)*
- VIII. *For the Scripture says, whoever who believes in Him will not be put to shame, (V. 11).*
- IX. *No distinction between Jew and Greek; (V. 12-13)*
- A. *For the same Lord is Lord of all, (V. 12a)*
- B. *Abounding in riches for all who call upon Him, (V. 12b)*
- C. *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, (V. 13)*
- A. *10:14-21. Israel's Disobedience to the Gospel*
- I. *Four Πῶς “how” questions:*
- A. *How then are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed?*
- B. *How do they to believe in Him whom they have not heard about?*
- C. *And how are they to hear without someone preaches?*
- D. *But how are they preach without they are sent? Just as it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things? (V. 15)*
- II. *Not all the Israelites accepted the good news (V. 16a)*
- A. *For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message? (V. 16b)*
- B. *Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ (V. 17)*
- III. *Did Israel not hear? Of course, they did: (V. 18a)*
- A. *“Their voice has gone out into all the earth, (V. 18b)*
- B. *their words to the ends of the world.” (V. 18c)*
- IV. *Did Israel not understand? (V. 19a)*
- A. *First, Moses says,*
- *“I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; (V. 19b)*
- *I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding. (V. 19c)*
- B. *And Isaiah boldly says,*
- *“I was found by those who did not seek me; (V. 20a)*
- *“I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me (V. 20b)*

- C. But concerning Israel he says, “all day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people (V. 21)

### **5.3.2. Background of the Texts**

In Deuteronomy chapter 28:1-14, Moses warns the people of Israel to obey the Lord their God with all their hearts and carefully follow all His commandments. Moses emphasised that they will get abundant blessing in the land they will inherit because of their obedience to the Lord and keeping His commandments. Furthermore, in the next verses 15-68, Moses described the consequence of disobedience and unfaithfulness to God’s commandment. Nevertheless, in chapter 29: 1-29 God renewed the covenant with Israel. Thus, the background of Romans 10 is clearly described in Deuteronomy 30: 11- 20 where Moses gave clear commandment for the people of Israel saying.

“It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?’ No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.” Deuteronomy 30: 12-14:

Moses was clearly telling Israel that God’s law is close to them, and it is on their lips that they confess the severity of God and teach their children about God’s law and His goodness. Moses also continued advising the people to choose life and prosperity by obeying God and abiding to His commandments. That is to love the Lord their God with their hearts, and walk in His ways. He explained God’s nearness to the people through God’s gracious gifts, love and covenants that God repeatedly renewed for them in this book (Deut. 6:4-9; 7:7-9; 11:13-15, 22-25; 26: 16-19; 28:1-14, etc). In Isaiah 28:16; God said to the prophet Isaiah “I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic, and in Joel 2:32a, Joel says “and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”. Paul quotes these verses in order to emphasise that calling upon the name of the Lord is needed for salvation.

### **5.3.3. The Historical Context of the Epistle of Romans**

When he wrote the letter to the Romans, Paul was in Corinth in the house of Gaius (Rom. 16:22-23), whom he baptised (1cor. 1:14). According to Romans 1:13, Paul was prevented from visiting the Christians in Rome, because of the mission work he had not yet completed

(Rom. 15:14-22). However, when he wrote the letter to the Roman Christians, “he had fully deployed the gospel of Christ that had been entrusted to him in the eastern Mediterranean world and carried out the work of the collection in accordance with the commission.” After his completion of his mission work in the Mediterranean world, that is, Corinth in Greece, and the modern-day Turkey, he planned to start a new mission work in Spain, and visit the Roman Christian believers on his way (Rom. 15: 23-29). However, in the above passage he also states that before his new mission in the west he had a plan to travel to Jerusalem to submit the collections he had received from the Gentile Christians. Paul also experienced serious conflicts with the Jewish Christians who emphasized the significance of keeping the laws of Moses more than the Gentiles Christians.

The New Testament does not give definitive persons or groups who brought the Christian faith to Rome. However, as Frank J. Matera stated, “it is likely that the new faith was brought to Rome by believers who went there for variety of reasons, business as well as missionary”. Many theologians believe this view, and Christianity rooted in Rome most probably before Paul’s delegation to his apostolic ministry. Regarding the ethnic compositions of the Roman churches both the Jews and the Gentile believers were worshipping together in the same churches. According to Rom. 14: 1-15:13, there were conflicts between different groups whom he called the weak and the strong. According to Matera,

“When the Jews Christian returned to Roma after the Roman empower Claudius had expelled the Jews from Roma in AD 49 because of dispute over a certain Chrestus they encountered a new situation.”<sup>104</sup>

According to Matera, when the Jews Christians were expelled from the church in Roma, the Gentile Christians became dominant and overtaken the leadership of the church. And when the Jews Christian returned to Roma conflict arose between themselves and the Gentiles Christians. Therefore, Paul wrote to unite the church in Christ and to inform them his journey to Jerusalem, future mission work in Spain and his vision of preaching the gospel.

## **5.4 Exegesis of the Text**

### **5.4.1 Detailed Exegesis**

V-8 ἀλλὰ τί λέγει; “But what does it say?” 8a

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<sup>104</sup> Frank J. Matera, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2010), 9.

The ἀλλά, shows that it is the continuation of previous verses. In verse 6, Paul describes about what the righteousness that comes from faith says and what it does. The subject of the text confirmed that the reading ἡ γραφή λέγει, is straightforwardly and logical that points the scripture as the subject, v-11.

- a. Ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥῆμά ἐστιν, ἐν τῷ στόματί σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου, “The word is near of you, in your mouth and in your heart,” verse 8b

Paul refers to Deuteronomy 30: 13-14, where Moses commanded the people of Israel to obey the commandment of their God. He describes the nearness of God to the people and His word is in their mouth so that they testify to the gracious God. According to the Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans edited by Cranfield, Emerton, and Stanton, the text:

“Indicates the essentially gracious character of the law in which God had stooped down to reveal His will to Israel and to claim each Israelites for Himself and for His neighbour: God had drawn near to them in His word which could be taken on their lips and received in their hearts.”<sup>105</sup>

God’s nearness to Israel is demonstrated through the laws given by Moses, which signifies the presence of God in the midst of Israel, and the Israelites were supposed to keep it in their hearts. In other words, Israel has to receive the words of God with their whole humanity. The instruction also includes writing these laws on their doorposts, and teach it to their children that they belong God. It might be argued that the nearness of God to Israel through the law also points forward to the incarnation of the son of God (Jn. 1:14) in whom God revealed unconditional love to all humanity and whom the church is proclaiming today. Therefore, God also expects that all who heard the message of the gospel draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance of faith (Heb. 10:22).

- b. τοῦτ’ ἔστιν τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ κηρύσσομεν, “that is, the word of faith which we are preaching.” verse 8c

In the OT (Deut. 30:11-14) God is near to Israel through the law, and in the NT through the message of the gospel of the resurrected Christ. Paul is clearly describing that this message is the message of righteousness that come through faith in the Christ. It is the message of the

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<sup>105</sup>C.E.B. Cranfield, J. A. Emerton, G. N Stanton. *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Volume II, Commentary on Romans IX-XVI and essays* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1979), 526.

gospel that Paul and the other apostles preached, that is available and comprehensible for all who believe alike the law of God that is near to the people of Israel. Paul identified “the gospel preached by himself and other Christian preachers with the law of God, (...) and that it is Christ who is the substance and innermost meaning of the law.”<sup>106</sup> Both the law of God and the gospel preached by the apostles are brought near to the people so that all who heard the message respond in faith. According to Paul’s letter to the Romans (10:4), Christ is the end of the law, that makes righteousness by faith accessible for those who believe in Christ.

V-9 ὅτι ἐὰν ὁμολογήσῃς ἐν τῷ στόματί σου κύριον Ἰησοῦν, καὶ πιστεύσῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, σωθήσῃ. “That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved:”

The conjunction ὅτι, is translates: that, because, since, or for. In this text it is best meaningful to translate it ‘because’, as it points to the content in verse 8, and confirms that confession with one’s mouth, that Jesus is the Lord and believing in the heart that God has raised Him from the dead, results in salvation. According to Cranfield, the two conditional sentences in this text are ἐὰν ὁμολογήσῃς ... κύριον Ἰησοῦν, καὶ (ἐὰν) πιστεύσῃς are parallel accusatives associating the parallel double accusative verses in Paul’s other writings “κηρύσσομεν ἀλλὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν κύριον” (2 Cor 4:5), accusative structure and in 1 Cor 12.3 and Phil 2.11, Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς is described in a nominative case.<sup>107</sup> “In view of the evidence of this clause, in which the presence of ὁμολογεῖν is suggestive, and (...) and that “κύριον Ἰησοῦν was already an established confessional formula,”<sup>108</sup> I think it is important to see the significance of the confessional formula “κύριον Ἰησοῦν” for the believing community at the Greco-Romans time. Namely “there is a close parallel in Greco-Roman political rhetoric, (...) acknowledge the emperor as a ruler, which was understood as a loyalty oath.”<sup>109</sup> The title κύριος was used as the title of the Roman emperors, and other deities at that time and Christians used the same title κύριος to Jesus Christ, indicates Christians’ acceptance of Jesus Christ as their sovereign Lord. Therefore, Confessing Jesus Christ as a Lord is acknowledging Him as a ruler, and saviour of human beings and make a loyal oath to Him.

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<sup>106</sup> Cranfield, et al *he International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments*, 256.

<sup>107</sup> Cranfield et al., *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures the Old and New Testaments*, 527.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Robert Jewett, *Romans: a commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 630.

The word ὁμολογέω according to romans 10:9-10, is “to acknowledge something, ordinarily in public, acknowledge, claim, profess, praise.”<sup>110</sup> Christian mission is therefore, a confession, acknowledgement and witnessing the Lord publicly so that others who haven’t heard about the resurrected Christ may hear the truth of the gospel (Matt 10: 32; Lk 12: 8; 1Tim. 6:12; 1Jn 2:23). As Moo described that “Paul is therefore explaining the nearness of the word of faith, the gospel, by emphasizing that it demands only a simple response, and that when responded to it mediates God’s salvation.”<sup>111</sup> That is to say, God is always near to those who believe and accept the message of the gospel that is proclaimed by Paul and other apostles, and it demands responses from the hearers of the message. And this response is believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

ἐὰν ὁμολογήσῃς ἐν τῷ στόματί σου “if you confess with your mouth” indicates the fact that believing in God and the resurrected Christ is not enough in the spreading of the gospel. Believers are expected to confess Jesus Christ as the Lord publicly.

“We take it that, for Paul, the confession that Jesus is Lord meant the acknowledgment that Jesus shares the name and the nature, the holiness, the authority, power, majesty and eternity of the one and only true God.”<sup>112</sup>

Hence Jesus’ Lordship, His authority and His nature as God is revealed by His resurrection from the dead. Therefore, Paul is emphasising Confessing Christ as a Lord, and as a saviour of humanity, is publicly acknowledging Him and accepting Him as one’s personal saviour.

The close καὶ πιστεύσῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου, “and believe in your heart”. “Heart is the centre of the wheel of human existence and life (intellectual, emotional, and volitional).”<sup>113</sup> A genuine confession should come from a sincere and deepest conviction of the heart. In the other words confession is an outward manifestation of inward beliefs, that is, we believe in our heart first and then we confess what we believe in. The content of believe in this verse is also stated by the phrase ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, “that God raised Him from the dead.” The word ἤγειρεν, aorist, active, indicative, that is the resurrection of Christ is a completed action for eternity. Thus, the apostles who were the eye witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection and the early

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<sup>110</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (Chicago, Ill, University of Chicago Press, 2000), 708.

<sup>111</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 657.

<sup>112</sup> Cranfield et al., *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, 529.

<sup>113</sup> William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Vol. 2: Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans Chapters 9-16* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1981), 345.

Christians had a conviction that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead (Matt 28:6-10, 1cor.15:4-11). Cranfield, and his co-editors of *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, stated that:

“The formulation of what is the content of the confession and faith, in terms of Jesus' being Lord has provided (...) Resurrection; for it has made it clear that His resurrection was no mere resuscitation of a corpse only for it to die again, but God's decisive and irrevocable sealing of Him who was crucified as the eternal Lord”<sup>114</sup>

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is unique that He will not die again. The resurrection revealed the lordship of Christ (1cor. 15:20; Eph 1:20-23; phi 2:9-11) to all creations. Therefore, I believe that Paul's intension was the fact that the Roman Christians have to believe in the resurrection of Christ and publicly acknowledge His Lordship so that the other hear the message. Confession with the mouth and believing in the heart here is also described in relation to σωθήση (future, passive, indicative), “you will be saved”. It is a future salvation of all who believe at the eschatological time.

V-10 καρδιά γὰρ πιστεύεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην, στόματι δὲ ὁμολογεῖται εἰς σωτηρίαν· “For a person believes with the heart, for righteousness, and he/she confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation:”

The conjunction γὰρ refers to 'in your mouth' and 'in your heart' in Deut 30.14 to confession and faith, but in Romans, 10: 9, followed the order of faith and confession in a reverse order. In this case it shows the conviction of the heart or faith come first and then confession of faith. Hence, Jewett states,

“Righteousness by faith works its miracle first within the heart, convincing it of the love of God, conveyed to the undeserving in the Christ event and thereafter evokes the oral confession, Lord Jesus.”<sup>115</sup>

The noun δικαιοσύνην, accusative, singular, it is a result of believing in heart that one's become righteous through faith in Christ. It is a miracle of change of the heart accepts the love of God, revealed through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and that leads to the right relationship with Christ. Jewett also states that “the distinction between righteousness as the gift of the right relationship with God and salvation as deliverance from sin and death developed

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<sup>114</sup> Cranfield, et al. *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, 529.

<sup>115</sup> Robert Jewett, *Romans: a commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 631.

in the earlier section reiterated”.<sup>116</sup> Here both righteousness and salvation are expressed in relationship with believing in the resurrected Christ with the heart and confessing the conviction of their faith with their mouth resulting in salvation. I personally believe that those who have been saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ have an obligation of witnessing Christ and participate in the mission of God.

V-11 λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή· Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυνθήσεται. “For the Scripture says, whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.” λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή shows that Paul quoted from Isa 28:16 ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυνθήσεται “the one who relies on it shall not be stricken with panic” in support of his view. The verb καταισχυνθήσεται (future, passive, indicative), and Paul is describing faith in relation to the eschatological salvation. That is whoever believes in Jesus Christ will not be put to shame at the present time or at the eschatological salvation (Romans 9:33; Isa 28:16).

V-12-13 οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν διαστολή Ἰουδαίου τε καὶ Ἑλλήνου, “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek” 12a. In these two verses the conjunction, we find three sentences that explains Paul’s view of righteousness by faith in verse 11. The conjunction γὰρ explains that these sentences are in support of the view that righteousness by faith, but not by the law give access for both the Jews and the Gentiles. It is stated in Romans 3:22-23, that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all can be justified only through faith in Christ and being Jew or Gentile will not make any difference. Since both the Jews and the Gentiles are equal before God because all have sinned, both Jews and Gentiles will be justified by faith, without the requirements of the observance of the Law. Jewett discussed (that I will state bellow) “the honour-shame distinctions that divided the Greco-Roman world have been eliminated by Christ whose crucifixion and resurrection revealed that He is the Lord of all.”<sup>117</sup> That means all who believe in the resurrected Christ are equal before God, because of their faith. Paul also emphasised that righteousness cannot be earned by birth right or by keeping the requirements of the law but it is received by faith in the Lord. Therefore, there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, as becoming righteous before God depends on believing. Here are the reasons why there is no distinctions between Jews and Gentiles:

- a) ὁ γὰρ αὐτὸς κύριος πάντων, “for the same Lord is Lord of all,” 12b ,

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<sup>116</sup> Jewett, *Romans: a commentary*, 631.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, 632.



The Roman emperor was being described as “he is lord over all matters, (...) and “becoming alone indisputably lord of all.”<sup>118</sup> Here the title κύριος demonstrates the acknowledgment and acceptance of the Roman emperor who is in power. He was considered as the Lord because of His power. In the contrary, the title κύριος, refers to the title for both God in the scripture, and that refers to Jesus Christ as well because He is God. This verse “for the same Lord is Lord of all” affirming the universality of Jesus’ Lordship over all creations, (Acts 10:36; Phi 2:9-11). Jewett also states that “this verse proclaims Christ as the one replacing the emperor in establishing a new realm of plenitude in which all are treated equally.”<sup>119</sup> Therefore, the Roman Christians confess the fact that Jesus Christ is the Lord of all humanity: the Lord of the Jew and the Gentiles not the emperor who is created human. The confession of the church on every Sunday worship services, on the baptismal liturgy and in everyday life is that Jesus Christ is the Lord of all humans and all creations.

b) πλουτῶν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους αὐτόν, "abounding in riches for all who call upon Him" 12c

Paul frequently describes “πλουτῶν” in his letters: the absolute richness of God (11:33; phi 4:19, “the surpassing wealth of his grace in kindness, Eph 2:7), rich in mercy (Eph 2:4), (wealth of his kindness, forbearance, and patience (Rom. 2:4) profound riches of Christ (Eph 3:8) indicates God’s richness in mercy toward all humanity. The clause εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους αὐτόν, “for all who call upon Him” specify God’s richness of mercy is particularly to those who call upon his name. “The riches of divine favour, which traditional religion has always believed would be bestowed only on the honourable, are now bestowed impartially upon all who call upon Him.”<sup>120</sup> The verb ἐπικαλουμένους: present, middle, participle, plural, is expression for prayer.

c) Πᾶς γὰρ ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσῃται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου σωθήσεται. “For Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 13

Paul quotes from the Old Testament that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered” (Joel 2:32), those whom call the name of the Lord will be saved during the judgment of God. Here the κύριος, mean God, and in Romans it refers to Christ. Jewett stated that:

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<sup>118</sup> Jewett, *Romans: a commentary*, 631.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 632.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, 633.

“Paul is applying to the invocation of the exalted Christ what in its OT context was a promise that in the critical period preceding the great and terrible day of the Lord everyone who invokes the name of the Lord will be saved.”<sup>121</sup>

Paul emphasised that everyone: both Jews and Gentiles- who call upon the name of the crucified Christ will be saved, and there is no other means to salvation. This implies public confession of faith in worship and witnessing the work of the cross of Jesus.

V-14-15a Four Πῶς “how” questions:

Jewett considered that the four rhetorical questions in these two verses “a powerful syllogism starting with the presence of saving faith and moving chronologically backwards through hearing, preaching, and sending of preachers.”<sup>122</sup> Paul is presenting his arguments, consequently, concluded his argument in verse 17, where he described “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ” by someone who preaches.

- a) Πῶς οὖν ἐπικαλέσονται εἰς ὃν οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν; How then are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed V- 14a?

The third personal pronoun plural verbs refer back to verses 12-13, to “all who call upon the name of the Lord”, and the subject of these verbs are Jews. As it is described in the above verses calling up on the name of the Lord comprises confessing Jesus Christ as the Lord. As Paul argued in verse 10, believing in Christ, whom God has raised from the dead precedes confession, and it is impossible to confess without genuine conviction of the heart. “At this point Paul is concerned to show that the Jews have really had full opportunity to call upon the name of the Lord, (...) and are therefore without excuse.”<sup>123</sup>

- b) πῶς δὲ πιστεύσωσιν οὗ οὐκ ἤκουσαν; How do they to believe in Him whom they have not heard about? V-14b?

πῶς δὲ “and how” connects the questions together, and the relative pronoun οὗ “whom” refers to the Lord that is described in this text. Church mission is making the message of the risen Christ to be heard, so that the hearers of the message respond in faith in Jesus Christ. In Rom 10:17 Paul states that “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through

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<sup>121</sup> Cranfield, et al. *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, 532.

<sup>122</sup> Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 635.

<sup>123</sup> Cranfield, et al. *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, 533.

the word about Christ". Therefore, the gospel message about the resurrected Christ and salvation through faith in Christ must be heard to create persuasion that people come to faith in Christ. That indicates the fact that it is certainly impossible for those who haven't heard the message of the gospel to believe in the gospel.

- c) πῶς δὲ ἀκούσωσιν χωρὶς κηρύσσοντος; And how are they to hear without someone preaches v- 14c?

Christian mission comprises the obligation of preaching the gospel so that it will be heard. "The concept of the herald proclaiming the new age was established in the pre-Pauline phase of the Christian mission."<sup>124</sup> Jesus Himself started His earthly ministry by preaching the coming of the kingdom of God, and revealed God's reign through performing signs and miracles. Hence, Paul reminds the role of preaching in the early church mission of spreading the message the gospel that the Roman Christians have to follow. And for Paul preaching the message of the gospel is the principal part of the Christian mission so that others hear the message.

- d) πῶς δὲ κηρύξωσιν ἐὰν μὴ ἀποσταλῶσιν; καθὼς γέγραπται· Ὡς ὠραῖοι οἱ πόδες τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων τὰ ἀγαθὰ. "But how are they preach without they are sent? Just as it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things?"

As it has been discussed in chapter four, Paul stresses on the significance of mission work in order to preach the gospel, so that people hear the message of Christ. There has to be a preacher, who preaches the message of the gospel, and the message to be heard and that brings convictions of the heart.

#### **5.4.2. Summary/ the Historical Message**

Paul describes his anguish over Israel and he reminds the Roman Christians that merely being a physical descendant of Abraham cannot make faithful before God. Israelites rejected God's redemptive purpose because they grounded their relationship with God on performance of the law rather than the requirement of faith and loving commitment. It also reminds us the story of Israel's election and their misunderstanding of God's righteousness seeking for their own righteousness. Nonetheless, their righteousness is not based on believing in Jesus Christ, and therefore, their righteousness is not based on the knowledge of God. Paul emphasises on the fact that Israel had an opportunity to accept God's gracious offer of salvation and to respond to

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<sup>124</sup> Jewett, *Romans: a Commentary*, 638.

God in obedience and becoming the light for the other nations through the life and confession. Then Paul usually uses the Old Testament texts in his letters to make his points for the proclamation of the gospel so that people both Jews and Gentiles alike hear and believe.

Paul alluded Deut. 30:11-14 in verse 10:6-8 that the text was originally stating to the Law of Moses. Paul is applying the text to Jesus' incarnation, His sufferings, His death, and resurrection. Paul is emphasising the fact that salvation is available in Christ through faith and it is for all. God's universal love and redemptive purpose for the whole humanity was stated in Exo.19:5-6, through the calling of Israel. Hence Romans chapter ten shows a call for all to believe in Christ and it is one of the greatest missionary passages in the Pauline letters. That is to say, as Israel had an opportunity to respond to God's gracious salvation, in the NT individuals who heard the Christian message could respond to God's gracious call to salvation in faith and genuine repentance. Believing in the heart and confessing with mouth is emphasized in this text that believing in the heart comes first followed by confession.

However, faith itself has several elements as we can draw from the text. Firstly, the message of the gospel has to be preached to be believed. That is why Paul says "the word of faith which we are preaching" (v.8). Secondly, the recipients of the message. And thirdly, response to the message in faith and ongoing repentance, and calling the name of the Lord in worships, in prayers and in witnessing Christ. Hearing the message is the initial stage to believe and having a life of obedience is the purpose of the mission. Fourthly, faith and confession lead to salvation. That is to say we have been saved by the grace of God through faith in Christ. And we confess our faith publicly and make Christ known through our confession. Therefore, Paul also raises questions in verses 14-15 to make his point that mission is impossible without someone preaching the message of the gospel. That also demands a sender and being sent to preach the gospel and in doing so, God is faithful carrying out the purpose of salvation in Christ.

## **Chapter VI**

### **Discussions and Conclusions**

#### **6:1 The Theological Reflections on the Norwegian Church's Confessional Creeds and Romans 10:8-15**

The definitions, nature, challenges and opportunities of the mission of the Church of Norway is discussed under chapter three. Under this chapter based on the previous discussions, I will analyse the Norwegian church mission as a confessional, missional, serving, and open people's church, most importantly in its local context, and the theological implications in relation to Romans 10: 8-15, and what the church learns from this text will be analysed. To begin with the theological content of the exegeted text and what the Norwegian church will learn from the text will be discussed.

##### **6.1.1. The Law, the Word/ The Gospel**

In Romans 10: 8-15, Paul refers to Moses' commandments for Israel in Deut. 30: 13-14. He states that God reveals His will to Israel through the law and to claim them for Himself. God is drawn near to His people through His word which the people of Israel could take on their lips and received in their hearts, live a transformed and obedient life, and witnessing the law of God to the other nations in their surroundings. Hence, Paul states "the word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim" Rom. 10:8. According to the NT writings, the trustworthiness of the message or the gospel which Paul and other apostles preached is God's birthed word, and they witnessed to this gospel. Paul and the other apostles witnessed to this gospel. For example, Paul stated "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2Timothy 3:16). Peter also stated, "no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things" (2Peter 1:20). Hence, these texts and many other confirm the fact that the gospel is God's word, and the reader readers of the epistle to the Romans were expected to believe and confess the fact. Hence, the same gospel is the inspired, authentic and infallible word of God and which is the base and the centre of the Norwegian church mission in all time.

##### **6.1.2 The Doctrine of Christ /Christology**

Paul has specific theological purpose when he wrote the letter to Romans. He describes the sinfulness of human kinds and the doctrine of salvation through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and through faith in Him and the grace of God. In Rom 3:23-25,

Paul stated "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith." After the fall, humanity (Whether the Jews or the Gentiles, lords or slaves, men or women) became equally sinned and fallen short of God's glory and grace. However, Paul pronounces that "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8). He also emphasis the role of faith in salvation and righteousness as stated "the righteous shall live by faith." (1:17) and God's sovereign choice, (chap. 8-9). Paul also teaches practical applications on the doctrinal issues like the Gentiles righteousness, the significance of faith and confession, and a deep theological truth about God, the Son of God (Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection), and the Holy Spirit.

The early Christian confessions (will be discussed under 6:2) teaches that we believe and confess that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, who came to save the sinners. John also stated "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14), and explained the incarnation of Christ. The same Christ was hung on the cross, died for our sins, and resurrected from the dead by defeating the power of death. Hence, Jesus' Lordship was confirmed by His resurrection from the dead. Therefore, Paul in his letters teaches the saving significance of Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection from the dead for our justification and revealing his authority over death.

### **6.1.3 Faith and Confession**

Faith and confession are other theological elements that Paul wanted to teach in Romans 10: 8-13 which is one of the NT Christological confessional texts. In these confessional text Paul urged believers to first and foremost believe in God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead and in Jesus' resurrection. And then to confess or acknowledge publicly that Jesus as the Son of God, being sent into the world to save humanity (Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 8:3-4), and as the Lord who became obedient to his death on the cross, and was exalted (Phil. 2:6—11), as the bearer and fulfiller of the promises (Rom.1:3-4), and who has got victory over death and all evils in the world. This teaches us the fact that faith and confession are inseparable and if we believe in Christ, we confess Him publicly so that other will hear the Christian message, too.

God's covenant on the mount Sinai to Israel as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation and God's own possession was based fully on obedience and keeping God's commandment (Exo 19:5-6), and this covenant was based on Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 22:8; 26:4). In Deut 30:11-14,

Moses taught the people of Israel that the word of the law is very near to Israel and their mouth and heart so that they may obey it. In Deut. 4: 7 the people of Israel themselves witnessed “What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? Paul also taught his readers that anyone who believes in him and call up on the name of the Lord will never be put to shame” (Rom. 10:11). This indicates that all who put their faith in Christ, who call upon the name of the Lord in confessions, and in prayers will never put to shame.

Hence, God chose Israel to be a kingdom of priest (priest nation), for a specific purpose of evangelizing the world and live a confessional life. Therefore, God gave them the law and created a special relationship, and wanted them to believe and depend on Him. However, the people of Israel had failed and rejected God’s righteousness and followed their own righteousness by fulfilling the requirements of the law. Paul’s point is not to judge the people of Israel because of their lack of faith in one God, and failing to act as the priests of nation. But he wanted his readers to learn from Israel’s history and not to fail in their mission. At this point, Paul emphasizes the fact that believing in the heart and confessing with mouth are parts of salvation processes. All baptized Christians needs to be aware of the fact that our baptism is conditioned by faith, and our confession.

Therefore, Paul urges his reader to believe in their heart the fact that God has raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and confess their faith publicly with their mouth and that they will not put to shame. “Believing with your heart” and “confessing with mouth” shows that faith and confession are inseparable, and if we believe in Christ, we should confess our faith and if we confess, we should believe. But faith comes before confession.

## **6.2 The Identity of the Church of Norway as a Missional and Confessional Church**

The sola scriptura (scripture alone) as the centre of the Lutheran church’s mission paradigm have been discussed in chapter two, and the identity of the National Church of Norway as a confessional, missional, serving and open people’s church is discussed in chapter three. I think that it is important to analyse the confessions the Norwegian church accepts and the confession that Paul teaches in Romans 10:8-13, under this topic.

“The Norwegian Church has five confessional creeds: The Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian creed, which all vote from the Old Church, and which most churches are

united on: and two from the Reformation period: The Augsburg Confession of 1530 *Confessio Augustana (CA)* and Luther's Little catechism (LK)."<sup>125</sup>(My translation)

The three confessional creeds: The Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian confessional creeds are accepted by all churches particularly, the orthodox, the Catholic and the Lutheran churches. The apostolic confession was used in the early churches before reformation and it reflects apostolic teaching about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the one church. It is stated in the book of concord that “the Apostles’ creed maintained its authority and widespread use, supported especially by its place in Western baptismal liturgies.”<sup>126</sup> The Nicene confession was prepared by the church fathers in 325 as a response to Arius, who claimed that Christ was inferior than the father. Therefore, his teaching was condemned as heretical teaching and the church fathers confirmed the equality of the three persons of the trinity, and in the same way the Athanasian creed defended the confirmation of the Church Fathers.

The Augsburg Confession of faith and the Luther's Little catechism the two Lutheran confessions were prepared after reformation. The Augsburg creed was prepared by Martin Luther and Melancton to defend Luther’s teaching and the Lutherans understanding of the scripture. “According to the concordists, the Augsburg Confession's claim upon our faith that is a genuinely Christian symbol which all true Christians ought to accept.”<sup>127</sup> It is also stated “the Augsburg confession was accepted as a kind of missional statement for the evangelical churches.”<sup>128</sup> Whereas the small catechism is a training book that comprises the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and prayers.

Hence, these confessional creeds are biblically and theologically rich that teach the scripture in the form of confessions. When these creeds, confessions and Romans 10: 8-15 are analysed, the same implications are observed. First, faith in God as the creator and sustainer of the whole world, and one true God almighty. Second, to believe and confess that God revealed Himself to humanity through the redemptive work of His Son Jesus Christ, whom we believe in our hearts and publicly confess. Faith and confessions also implant the word of God in our hearts and the word strengthen our faith in the Lord, and give us power for our future mission. Thirdly, faith and confession help us to guard comprehensive doctrine of Scripture against false teachers

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<sup>125</sup> Den Folkekirke, Kirkerådet, <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/kristen-tro/kristen-tro/trosbekjennelser/>, 2021.

<sup>126</sup> Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wenger, *The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 20.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, 29.



and heretics. For example, now a days, many people consider the Scripture as the old book, and reject their faith and the churches' ministry. Therefore, faith and confession protect from such conception of Scripture from within and outside of the church. Finally, faith and confession give the power to remain steadfast in our faith until Christ's return, to fulfill the Great Commission in our proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ by making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all that our Lord Jesus Christ commanded.

### **6.3 Mission and Confession through Worship the Services and liturgy in the Norwegian Church**

The purpose and the background of God's mission that He demand all humanity's worship and the role of the elected people of God in God's mission, were discussed in chapter four under the heading of Biblical, historical and theological Background of God's mission. The scripture teaches that there is only one true God (Deut. 6:4-6; mark 12:29-30), and this God is the object of a true worship. In the ten commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), God commanded Israel not to have other gods, but committee themselves to God's love and fellow human beings. Moses taught the people of Israel to obey the only true God and love the Lord their God with all their hearts, with all their souls and with all their strengths (Deut. 6: 4-5). In the NT this commandment is repeated by Jesus in synoptic gospels: for example, in Matt 22: 37; Mark 12,28—33, where Jesus underlined the confession of the only one true God, and the love of God, and neighbours and as the greatest commandment of God. Hence, the purpose of the mission of the church is to take the gospel to people and make them disciples of Christ through genuine relationship with God in obedience and all people, too.

The National Church of Norway and its mission in both global and local context have been discussed in chapter three. Everything the church does is to bring people to the light of the gospel and genuine relationship with God through worshiping Him. As I discussed in the above paragraph, the church worship service is the focus of the church's mission that believers gathered together before almighty God in recognition of the oneness of triune God who is a creator and provider of the universe. The gathering of believers to worship God is not exclusive, but non-believers also have a right to come to the gatherings and hear the word of God and have fellowship with believers. In this type of worship service, the whole congregation come to God in repentances, singing for God, thanksgiving, prayer for the world nations and the nations' leaders.

As Thor Strandenæs stated, “Worship is part of the fulfilment of the mission Jesus gave his disciples.”<sup>129</sup> In the worship services and the liturgy: children baptism, the preaching the gospel, hymns signing, prayers and thanks giving, and the celebration of the Lord’s Supper all point to the resurrected Christ. The church has been given this task according to the great commission and all members of the church have to participate in the mission of the church either by direct involvement in preaching, teaching, services and other ministries, as the bible says “a chosen one a royal priesthood, a holy people, a people who are the property of God, to proclaim his great work,” (2peter 2:9). Or by indirect involvement supporting those who are in mission work through prayers or financial provision.

Though, the people of Israel did hear the message of the Lord and they had no excuses, Paul emphasises on preaching the gospel so that the message of the resurrected Christ is heard. He raises a series of questions in Rom 10:14-15, indicating the significance of doing mission in the conversion of the society. Faith from the word of God, and the word has to be preached and heard. In order to preach one has to be sent. Paul himself was sent first by the Lord: “(. . .) Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel” (Acts 9: 15): and then chosen by the group of apostles while they were praying at the Antiochian by revelation from God, (Acts 13:1-3). Therefore, the church should delegate and send preacher into the society so that the gospel will be preached, because the gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes, and it is only through the gospel that the righteousness of God is revealed (Rom. 1 :16-17).

## **6.4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **6.4.1. Conclusions**

The National church of Norway is playing a significant role in the work of mission as the confessional, missional, serving, and open folk church. The church is committed to the commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28: 19-20, Mk. 16:15, Jn 20:21), and working its mission both globally with the association of the Norwegian mission organizations and global mission movements. That means the Norwegian church is engaged enormously in the participation of the global mission work WCC, CWME, in all aspects.

The church has also a concrete mission plans and mission strategies to reach all people of Norway regardless of their background, physical conditions or their ages. The invitation to the

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<sup>129</sup> Berentsen, et al. *Missiologi i dag*, 202.

worship services, includes all people who are willing to participate in the services and want to be part of the believing community. From the definition of the Norwegian church that it is open and a serving people's church, indicates that the church is open for all people who want to accept the services and willing to participate in the church activities. Being open and serving church motivates people who are not members of the church and those who participate in the church's worship services occasionally to come to the fellowship of believers and engage in the services.

As it has been discussed in chapter two, the Norwegian church has several potential advantages to do mission. The rapid technological development, cultural, political and social changes have prominent contribution to the mission of the church. There are several radio channels, TV-programs, SOS, Ptro, etc which are the products of the present technological development that the church is using for the mission purpose. There are also several challenges that significantly impacting the mission of the church (chapter three). I think the church needs to develop new strategies to accomplish its responsibility of the mission work both in depth and breadth.

#### **6.4.2. Recommendations**

This study shows, the Norwegian church mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires a new strategy for doing mission. I believe that the impact of Globalization, secularization, and religious pluralism in Norway resulted in declining of the church participants, and many people reject their faith in Jesus. Therefore, the church needs to tackle these challenges through proper strategic planning of mission in the local context. In other words, the church requires a different approach for mission to remain viable in the contemporary world. The good strategic planning for example: defining a vision and mission and building action in the specific mission areas is very important.

##### **6.4.2.1. Strategy for Evangelism**

Following Jesus' model of Evangelism, the church needs to have strategy to evangelize the society. Jesus Himself was sent by God, proclaimed the good news of God, and sent the disciples to evangelize the word beginning from Jerusalem to the end of the world (Jn 20:21, Acts 1:8), and the church is entrusted with the same work. As it has been discussed in chapter one church mission and Evangelism are not separated because of the fact that the purpose of mission is evangelism. I think it is important to define the scope of evangelism to develop strategic planning for evangelism. The Roman Catholic document *Evangelii Nuntiandi* explains that the scope of evangelism includes unbelievers and people who were baptised in the church at their childhood and later rejected their faith. It states,

“People who have been baptized, but live lives entirely divorced from Christianity, (...) know little even of its fundamental principle, intellectuals who feel that they need to approach Jesus Christ from a different stand point from that which was taught them in their childhood.”<sup>130</sup>

These statements stress that evangelization include those who have been baptized at their childhood, but do not practice their faith in God, and the intellectuals who went astray from their childhood knowledge of Christian truth might need to hear the gospel. Therefore, the church needs a new strategy to approach all people with the gospel.

#### **6.4.2.2. Strategy for Discipleship**

Church mission has definitive purpose to fulfil. Jesus’ commandment clearly declares “therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20a). The commission includes: going to people and making disciples of all nation. Jesus also taught the method of making disciples, and that is by baptizing, and teaching to obey Jesus’ commandment. As it has been discussed the identity of the Norwegian church as the confessional church, the church believes and confesses the fact that discipleship is distinctive characteristics of all true Christians whom call upon the name of the Lord in prayer and in their confessions. A true disciple willingly bears the cross of Jesus Christ and denies himself or herself, abandoning all things that hinder his or her fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

The challenges of declining of Participants in the Worship Services has been discussed in chapter three under 3.5.2.3, where some people do not perceive themselves as personal Christians in the original sense (circle II), and those who have nearly no ecclesiastical affiliation (circle III). It is interesting that many people including these two groups, bring their children for baptism in the local congregations as they were also baptized in the church. Baptism is an initiatory right to make disciples of Christ and it is essential element of worship service in the Norwegian church. I believe that this is a great opportunity for the Norwegian church as a missional church, to focus on making all the baptized (unbelieving families and children) to be disciples of Christ.

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<sup>130</sup>Stephen B. Bevans, Roger Schroeder, *Mission for the twenty first century: paper for the Symposium and consultation celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the foundation of Techny and the 125th Anniversary of the foundation of the society of the Divine Word* (Chicago: CCGM Publications, 2001), 110.

It is stated in Mark 16:16, which is believed the later addition to the text, that “whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned”. Baptism in general must result in a genuine relationship between the believer as a faithful disciple and the triune God. Romans 10:8-13, emphasizes the practical applications of this relationship that disciples of Jesus Christ must believe in their heart and confess publicly with their mouth, to defend their faith and witness the gospel. Therefore, the Norwegian church should discover and develop new strategies to teach and train all the baptized (children, youth, and adults) so that they live transformed life.

In general, the Norwegian church is playing a significant role in mission work in contemporary time. As the era we are living in is a challenging era because of secularization, the church needs to develop strategies to evangelism and discipleship. Focussing on evangelism helps to bring new converter the fellowship of believers and discipleship makes believers mature in their faith and become missionaries in their own context through confession and witness Christ to others. Therefore, focusing on these two areas of church ministry is very important to develop a strong confessional community.

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